The Nature of True Virtue

Theology, Psychology, and Politics in the Writings of Henry
James, Sr., Henry James, Jr., and William James

James Duban

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Published in 2019 by
University of North Texas Libraries
1155 Union Circle #305190
Denton, TX 76203-5017

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12794/sps.virtue-058-8>

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Madison • Teaneck
Fairleigh Dickinson University Press
London: Associated University Presses

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Associated University Presses
440 Forsgate Drive
Cranbury, NJ 08512

Associated University Presses
16 Barter Street
London WC1A 2AH, England

Associated University Presses
P.O. Box 338, Port Credit
Mississauga, Ontario
Canada L5G 4L8

The paper used in this publication meets the requirements
of the American National Standard for Permanence of Paper
for Printed Library Materials Z39.48-1984.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Duban, James, 1951-

The nature of true virtue: theology, psychology, and politics in the writings of
Henry James, Sr., Henry James, Jr., and William James / James Duban.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

ISBN 0-8386-3888-0 (alk. paper)

1. James, Henry, 1843-1916—Ethics. 2. Didactic fiction, American—History
and criticism. 3. Religious thought—United States—19th century. 4. James, William,
1842-1910—Influence. 5. James, Henry, 1811-1882—Influence. 6. James, William,
1842-1910. 7. James, Henry, 1811-1882. 8. Ethics—United States. 9. Virtue in
literature. 10. Ethics in literature. 11. Virtue. I. Title.

PS2127.E8 D83 2001
813'.4—dc21

00-049048

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

For Karen

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Acknowledgments

I am mindful of colleagues and friends who have responded supportively, in Texas and elsewhere, to various parts of my manuscript. Thanks are due Jim Baird, Ishmael Bustinza, Howard Ford, Stan Goldman, Bob Hughes, Jim Linebarger, Don Pickens, Arnold Silver, John Smith, and Bob Stevens. On several points pertaining to liberal Christianity, I am indebted to Conrad Wright Sr., and, with respect to advice about navigating the Henry Whitney Bellows Papers, to the late Reverend Walter D. Kring. The suggestions of anonymous manuscript readers have proven quite helpful. Invaluable, moreover, have been the courtesies extended by Ms. Melanie Wisner and Ms. Jennie Rathbun, Houghton Reading Room, Harvard University, and Ms. Leslie Morris, Curator of Manuscripts, Houghton Library; by Dr. Mary Kay Klein, Director, Swedenborg School of Religion; by Ms. Jean Hilliard, Librarian, Swedenborg School of Religion; by Mr. William M. Fowler Jr., Director, Massachusetts Historical Society; by Mark Dolive, Head of Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery, University of North Texas; and by Ms. Bay James Baker, Executor of the James Family Estate. Texas-sized thanks especially go to friend and scholar Alan Gribben for his close reading of this study and for his editorial contributions.

While frequently challenging the assumptions of my predecessors in James family studies, this book benefits from their diligence and insights. Alfred Habegger's *The Father* deserves special mention in that regard.

I am indebted, as well, to Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated University Presses: to Directors Harry Keyishian and Julien Yoseloff for their faith in my work; to Laura Reed-Morrison for her superb copyediting; and to Managing Editor Chris Retz for her superb professionalism and goodwill in guiding this book through production.

Of course, a book about family relations makes one mindful of departed parents Sylvia Mould Duban and Edmund Irving Duban. Mindful of his own deceased parents, William James remarked that "the mere fact that matter *could* have taken for a time that precious form, ought to make matter sacred ever after." So it does. In many ways this book is a tribute to the glowing humanism and scholarly values cherished by Sylvia and Edmund.

And to the extent that fields of consciousness are conditioned by the

past, the pedagogical and scholarly examples of Meredith Raymond, David R. Clark, Arnold Silver, Michael Colacurcio, Philip Marcus, and the late Morris Golden have been priceless throughout my career.

Finally, crucially, I am grateful for the joyful companionship of Karen Carlisle Duban and the happiness made possible by sons Edmund, Seth, and Nathaniel. Add to this the friendship and love of Acree and Corinne Carlisle, along with the unfailing good counsel of Jeffrey Duban and Henry Koocher: the circle of family affection separates the transient from the permanent, while providing inspiration for the creative and productive spirit.

* * *

Grateful acknowledgment is made to quote excerpts from James, Henry. *Henry James Autobiography: A Small Boy and Others, Notes of a Son and Brother, The Middle Years* (1956). Frederick W. Dupee, ed. Copyright © Princeton University Press. From *The Ambassadors*, by Henry James, edited by S. P. Rosenbaum. Copyright © 1964 by W. W. Norton Company Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Introduction

The elder Henry James was a theoretical socialist who, while economically "leisured," sincerely believed that human equality, fraternity, and disinterestedness would triumph over selfishness and usher in a state of heaven on earth. For that reason, his many writings consistently exalt the notion of disinterested benevolence, a virtuous ideal common among thinkers ranging from Aristotle to Kant, to Jane Austen, to the Romantics. Recalling that socialism purports to transcend selfish individualism, one is reminded of the more general history of ideas linking virtue to benevolence.¹ Indeed, a heretofore neglected Puritan-American manifestation of benevolence informs the theological socialism of the senior Henry, one that has vital significance for his writings and—through paternal transmission—for those of Henry Jr. and William James.

A notably Calvinistic gloss on disinterestedness appeared in the New York *Christian Inquirer*—a newspaper mindful, in 1851, of Henry Senior's Calvinistic upbringing and schooling at Princeton Theological Seminary, where Jonathan Edwards had been selected as president. The *Christian Inquirer* attributed the elder Henry's attacks on self-interest to "the old dogma of disinterestedness" harbored by Calvinists, that is, presumably, by Jonathan Edwards and his New-Divinity interpreters. In 1853, Edward Beecher would review such ideas about disinterestedness in *The Conflict of Ages*, a work to which Henry Senior's *The Nature of Evil* (1855) was a direct response. Later, William James would quote Edwards on disinterestedness in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. With reference to the eighteenth-century Puritan articulation of disinterested benevolence, the *Christian Inquirer* must be credited with having first attributed the theological underpinnings of Henry Senior's socialistic denunciation of self-interest to the American Calvinist "dogma of disinterestedness." Neither the newspaper column nor its vital importance for James-family studies has received attention yet from the scholarly community.

The newspaper's linking of the socialistic theology of Henry Senior to a Puritan valuation of disinterestedness casts a more illuminating light upon the elder Henry's claim, in 1843, that "'Jonathan Edwards redivivus in true blue would, after an honest study of the philosophy that has grown up since his day, make the best possible reconciler and critic of . . . philosophy'"

(*NSB*, 347).² That remark, seemingly odd when read in isolation, charts the course of this book. In broadest terms, this study is a demonstration of the persistence of Edwardsian thought in American high culture in the writings of the elder James and his illustrious sons. Overlooked, in the main, by scholars of the Jameses, Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue* (a companion piece to the volume with which it was originally bound, *Concerning the End for which God Created the World*) is especially vital for this investigation. Edwards defined true virtue as "benevolence to Being in general" and as "love to Being in general" (*WJE*, 8:540–41). True virtue, he claimed, stood opposed to the pedestrian appearances of virtue inspired by self-interest and natural instinct. What scholars of the Jameses—from Leon Edel, to Alfred Habegger and Carol Holly—have not yet recognized is that this concern pervaded the socialism of the elder Henry and has consequent implications for the works of his distinguished sons.

In other words, with a few exceptions, scholars of Henry Jr. and William continue to offer only vague generalizations about the theological socialism of the senior Henry, while commentators on "the father" overlook entirely the momentous influence of Edwardsian disinterestedness (and possibly of Samuel Hopkins's reform-oriented redirection of Edward's ideas) upon that socialism.³ Granted, what Edwards evidently meant by "benevolence" is different from what James *père* meant, as the Calvinist context in which Edwards develops that theme makes that trait available only to God's elect. Still, to the degree that Henry Senior regarded society at large as potentially embodying an "elect" state of existence, theological disinterestedness proved highly suggestive to a budding socialist.

In particular, Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue* appealed to the socialistic mind of Henry Senior because Edwards disavowed the virtue of familial love. For Edwards, the love of parents for their own children was mere self-love, an instinctive affection based on a personal relation devoid of disinterested, general love (*WJE*, 8:601–3). The elder James would have identified that broader state of virtue as harmonious with the emphasis in Fourierism on "*the enlargement of home—the extension of family union beyond the little man-and-wife circle to large corporations*" (*HAS*, 23). As John Humphrey Noyes and others have made clear, the "essential charm of all Socialisms" was to "combine many families into one great home" (*HAS*, 117) to guard against the harmful tendencies of "'the isolated family'" (*HAS*, 439). In the theology of Edwards and Swedenborg concerning "general love," the senior Henry would have seen a vehicle for combatting the perceived selfishness of "the old family unit" (*HAS*, 148) in which "an invisible, inseverable umbilical cord between the mother and child" ends up "'circumscrib[ing] her desires and ambition to her own immediate family.'" If, as Charles Lane believed, "'social science' must be brought to issue" to reconcile society and family (*HAS*, 144), then Henry Senior be-

lieved Edwards's *True Virtue*—and specifically its attack on private, personal, and familial love as opposed to general, universal love—to be an invaluable ally in that process of spiritual education and evolution.

Beyond ignoring the importance of Edwardsian theology for Henry Senior, scholars of the father have yet to relate his preoccupation with “the old dogma of disinterestedness” to his much-publicized devotion to the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, specifically on the place of “general” versus “private” love. And no one has pointed out that Edwards’s legacy and the socialism of the elder James could have merged as a phenomenalist premise that influenced the aesthetics of Henry Jr. and the philosophy and psychology of William James. One reviewer of a seminal biography of Henry Senior notes that the book “has no patience with religious speculation and . . . seems without sympathy for other nineteenth-century concerns.” Still unresolved, according to another reviewer, “is the question that has persistently shadowed James’s reputation: what was the significance of his philosophical accomplishment?”¹⁴ The first half of the book addresses such concerns, focusing on Edwards’s theology and its relation to socialism, and moves beyond the work of Habegger and other commentators on Henry Senior.

Chapter 1 of this study details, for the first time, the potential impact of Edwards’s writings—including the discourses on true virtue, free will, and original sin—on the elder Henry. Chapter 2 refers to crucial annotations in James’s personal volumes of Swedenborg’s works, and illustrates the compatibility of outlook—in terms of selfless expressions of virtue—in the writings of Jonathan Edwards and of the Swedish mystic. That correspondence tends to “rescue” Henry Senior from the Swedenborgians and from mainstream twentieth-century scholarship that represents Swedenborg as the sole or even primary intellectual influence upon the elder James. Chapter 3, in turn, analyzes the Edwards-like, disinterested outlook on virtue displayed by the elder James in his Stuyvesant Institute lectures. The pertinence of his ideas for Henry Jr. is the subject of chapters 7 through 10, which reassess the autobiographies and several novels in the context of the phenomenalist and Edwardsian concepts that permeated the James domicile and the writings of Henry Senior. Given the frequent contrast between Protestantism and Catholicism in the writings of Henry Jr., Henry Senior’s familiarity with Jonathan Edwards’s pronouncements helps to explain the novelist’s claim that “we are all of us Protestants.”¹⁵

The junior Henry’s encounter with Edwards implies more than one “Pater,” as suggested by *The Tragic Muse*. In that text, Gabriel Nash, a consummate aesthete, declares, “I shall only *be*, more and more, with all the accumulations of experience”; he also boasts, “I’ve *no* profession. . . . I’ve *no état civil*. . . . Merely to be is such a *métier*; to live is such an art; to feel is such a career!” (*TM*, 511, 27). Scholars account for such utterances

by invoking a "Paterian privileging of mere being."⁶ While British aestheticism was vital to artistic expressions of *being* in the fiction of Henry Jr., Millicent Bell aptly notes that the novelist's notions were shaped by the senior Henry's expectations that the James children simply "'be something, . . . something free and uncommitted'" (39). Moreover, as revealed in *Notes of a Son and Brother*, the James children "had only to *be* with more intelligence and faith . . . in order to work off, in the happiest manner, the many-sided ugliness of life." Chapter 1 will illustrate how, for the elder James, that state of regenerative *being* pertained to the socialistic—and, to his mind, religious—assumption that a vital "spiritual spring" could "rectify the relations and, in a word, redeem and vivify the whole mass" (*NSB*, 371). To achieve that state, according to Henry Jr.'s summary of his father's position, people had merely to become "social enough" in their cultivation of a "virtue that was more or less ashamed of itself" (*SBO*, 123–24). While tracing that emphasis on self-deprecating virtue mainly to Edwards's "love to Being in general," the present analysis demonstrates how the elder James's socialistic theology was ultimately inimical to the artistic endeavors of his son. As developed in *The Princess Casamassima* and in *The Bostonians*, the contrast between aestheticism and political radicalism constitutes the most emphatic foundation of the conflict between the two Henrys. That conflict, as we shall observe, comes into focus once we realize the degree to which the novelist surreptitiously imbues both Olive Chancellor and the Princess with the socialistic features of the senior James.

Society the Redeemed Form of Man (1879) offers the best approach to these issues. In it, Henry Senior used religious utterance to embellish his lifelong advocacy of socialistic *being*: "The sum of all I have been alleging is that we as a community are fully launched at length upon that metaphysic sea of being whose mystic waters float the sapphire walls of the New Jerusalem, metropolis of earth and heaven" (473). Heaven, he later wrote, was simply "the harvested spiritual product of our *natural* or *associated* life on the earth, of our unitary or *race* consciousness" (*SC*, 364). The phrase "sea of being" has great philosophical significance for the utopianism of the elder Henry, since he deemed socialism the divine end of "spiritual creation," a process that imparted true *being* to human consciousness and to society. All else—including nature, the moral sentiment, and capitalistic forms of governance—was, for the senior James, phenomenalist. Those appearances were *made* or constituted by God to serve as the illusory *base* into which divinity would "communicate" true substance in the process of spiritual creation and social redemption. Henry Sr. believed that this communication of *being* to insubstantial phenomena was an evolutionary event culminating in a Swedenborgian Divine-Natural Man. The elder James reconfigured the spiritualism of Swedenborg, combining socialistic politics with Jonathan Edwards's definition of true virtue as love of Being in general.

The pervasive presence of Edwardian disinterestedness in the writings of the senior Henry had an immense, though unnoticed, influence on Henry Jr. The novelist's response to *The Blithedale Romance*—"The idea that [Hawthorne] most tangibly presents is that of the unconscious way in which the search for the common good may cover a hundred interested impulses and personal motives" (AE, 19)—demonstrates that criticism of the semblance of virtue is well suited to a novelist intent on dramatizing the difference between genuine benevolence and mere pantomimes of virtue. To be sure, Henry Jr., speaking of the teleology of the senior James, admitted an inability to "be so theological" or "grant his extraordinary premises" (HJL, 3:62). Still, Edwards's outlook on virtue—seeing virtue as separate from selfish motives masquerading as benevolence—has vital implications for the characters and dilemmas of *Watch and Ward*, *Roderick Hudson*, *Confidence*, *The Europeans*, *What Maisie Knew*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors*, *The Bostonians*, and *The Princess Casamassima*. Those works offer anatomies of selfishness precisely dissected by a literary artist attentive, like his father, to the difference between true virtue and specious appearance. Edwards's categories, in fact, clarify the ethical concerns of these novels, and allow us to challenge the prevailing assumption that Lambert Strether is to be credited for his imagination and generosity.⁷

Indeed, Edwardian views of disinterested benevolence prompt a distinctly new reading of the conclusion of *The Ambassadors*: the legacy of Henry Senior's preoccupation with disinterested benevolence suggests that Strether is duped, at the very moment he resolves to depart for Woollett, by a false belief in his own disinterestedness. He is, in a word, "had" when he believes that he has risen above the deception practiced upon him earlier. We shall see, moreover, that the mechanism inspiring his delusive feeling of beneficence is the same as that used by Gilbert Osmond to seduce Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady*. This is the first study to illustrate the essential compatibility of these two novels in the self-deceiving psychology of Isabel Archer and Lambert Strether. Edwards's theology therefore offers more than a new perspective on old themes in James studies. The adoption of Edwards's paradigm by the senior Henry accounts for the otherwise evasive meaning of an early novel like *Confidence*, and unraveling this mystery offers the reader unprecedented interpretations of the closing scenes of both *The Ambassadors* and (in a related criticism of false virtue) *The Wings of the Dove*.

Chapter 6 and the book's conclusion reassess the importance of Jonathan Edwards for William James. Despite William's allusions, in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, to Edwards's *Religious Affections*, scholars have yet to notice the relationship of Edwards's equation of disinterested benevolence and true virtue to William's exploration of self-interest as a vital

component of psychology and the world of experience. Interestingly, William challenged his father's phenomenism, his reading of Edwards, and his devotion to socialism by championing the "cash value" of experienced reality, including that of pedestrian virtue grounded in self-interest. In doing so, William rejected the senior Henry's belief in the virtual reality of experience (that is, its merely phenomenistic, phantasmagorical nature), including the experience of self-interested claims to virtue. At issue for William was the reality of moralism, conscience, and responsibility. From his perspective, to regard experience as a parade of inauthentic phenomena was to devalue real human suffering and nullify any need for remorse or ethical obligation.

I would argue that the phenomenism and Edwardsianism of Henry Senior are more important for apprehending the works of William and Henry Jr. than is the mainly twentieth-century phenomenology of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. While benefiting from the insights about phenomenology offered by Paul Armstrong, Merle Williams, Sharon Cameron, Collin Meissner, and Donna Przybylowicz, my study seeks to avoid the awkwardness and dissonance of "roughly contemporaneous" contextualization. This book moves the discussion away from "the representations of consciousness at the turn of the century,"⁸ with their emphases on the "bracketing" of essences that underlie the sensorial data of phenomena. I also peer behind the novelist's attraction to the pragmatism of William James, as impressively detailed by Hocks (*Pragmatistic*), to explore the mid-nineteenth-century phenomenism of the senior Henry that stressed the illusory nature of objects and of consciousness while they awaited an infusion of true substance, or Being, from the advent of a socialistic love of Being in general.

Since the transmission of New England theology was neither directly linear nor undeviating in its manifestations, some readers may deem a progenitor-based analysis less appealing than a more eclectic examination of virtue and benevolence as those ideals manifest themselves in nineteenth-century culture. Still, the fact of the elder Henry's leaning toward Edwards, the resonance of Edwards's definitions in James-family discourse, and the enduring importance of an extraordinary father for his most gifted children justify a methodology structured around William James's premise, in "Great Men and Their Environment," that "the difference is due to the accumulated influences of individuals" (*WJW*, 1:619). While the taste or politics of some readers may lead them to prefer a more general cultural-formations approach to literary history—such as I have offered elsewhere, in readings of Hawthorne, Melville, and Thoreau⁹—pragmatic consultation of the documented *experiences* of William and Henry justifies our detailed attention to the influence upon their thinking of a father who was one of the most complex and often ignored philosophers in nineteenth-century America. If "the fermentative influence of geniuses must be admitted as, at any rate,

one factor in the changes that constitute social evolution" (WJW, 1:627), then lineal descent merits elaboration.¹⁰

In pursuing the texture of the senior Henry's attitudes toward Edwards and Swedenborgianism—especially as they pertain to issues of self-interest and benevolence—I make no claim that Swedenborg or Edwards read one another's works. Still, it is a fact that these men were historical contemporaries, and Swedenborg was a sometime resident of London, where he could have learned about the Great Awakening through the career of George Whitefield or through the popularization of Edwardsian theology in England by Andrew Fuller. But I contend that the profound rhetorical and thematic similarities in the writings of Edwards and Swedenborg derive from their common knowledge of Nicolas Malebranche's *De la recherche de la vérité* (1674–75; trans. *Search after Truth*; London, 1694). Swedenborg read this work in Latin; Edwards studied an English translation; Henry Senior seems not to have read it at all. Swedenborg basically echoes vital ideas of Malebranche that Henry Senior previously would have come across in the writings of Jonathan Edwards.

The senior Henry's encounter with Edwards's thought could have taken place during his studies at Princeton Theological Seminary, or in his readings in John Walker, or from a review of Edwards and the New Divinity in Edward Beecher's *The Conflict of Ages*. In any event, this absorption of Edwards's discourses about true virtue, original sin, religious affections, and freedom of the will became an element of the elder Henry's thinking, as well as a component of the aesthetics, philosophies, and emotions of both Henry Jr. and William James. Whether or not the novelist agreed with his father's "doctrine of redemption through merging with an undifferentiated spiritual force,"¹¹ the phenomenistic, Edwardsian, and socialistic assumptions behind his father's intellectual outlook prove helpful for understanding the works of Henry Jr.

Even though Henry Jr. seemed as ambivalent as William was about his father's notions, the philosophy of the elder James resonates throughout the productions of his accomplished sons. Why would Edwardsian theology (perhaps as modified by Samuel Hopkins) have appealed so greatly to Henry Senior? In the first place, the philosophy of Henry Senior unified alternating sentiments of socialism and revivalism—sentiments described by John Humphrey Noyes in his *History of American Socialisms* (1870), a work that encouraged utopianists to chart a more enduring record of success than had been evident among nonreligious North American communitarian societies. This particularly explains why the senior James consistently identified the evolution of socialism with "spiritual" creation, why his fictional autobiography and account of "Seminary Days" are so emphatically spiritual, and why, much to the perplexity of William James, he regarded that socialistic program as being consonant with Christianity.¹²

Henry Senior would have eschewed the nonreligious or semireligious communities that Noyes blames for the failure of most American socialisms, including the short-lived Northampton Association, Skaneateles, the Clarkson Phalanx, and the Forrestville Community.¹³ Far more successful, according to Noyes, were the experiments inspired by the religious socialism of the Rappites, the Shakers, and the Moravians. For Noyes, Ballou's Hopedale experiment (1841–56) stands out: "As it came nearest to being a religious community, so it commenced earlier, lasted longer, and was really more scientific and sensible than any of the other experiments of the Fourier epoch" (*HAS*, 119). Whether inferred from Noyes or other sources, the value of religion for socialism would not be lost upon Henry Senior, who—as the author of a spiritual tract, *The Church of Christ Not an Ecclesiasticism* (1854)—regarded himself as constructing the philosophical and theological foundation for the great next wave of American socialism.

The teachings of Edwards would have equipped the senior Henry for this sort of task. Indeed, Noyes saw socialism and revivalism as kindred events, and he portrayed the type of millennialism predicted by Edwards and Charles Finney as heralding the communes at Hopedale and Oneida: "The Revivalists had for their great idea the regeneration of the soul. The great idea of the Socialists was the regeneration of society, which is the soul's environment. These ideas belong together, and are the complements of each other" (*HAS*, 26; cf. 13–14, 228–29). That assumption virtually defines the lifelong endeavor of Henry Senior: to treat socialism as a spiritual—indeed, Christian—phenomenon commencing in "Spiritual Creation" and concluding in "Spiritual Redemption." Whereas the "Revivalists failed for want of regeneration of society," and whereas some "Socialists failed for want of regeneration of the heart" (*HAS*, 27), Henry Senior's belief, as expounded in *Society the Redeemed Form of Man*, encompassed social and spiritual regeneration. Along with other occasional agreements (and more customary differences about marital relations), Noyes and the elder James both insisted on the potential of spiritualized socialism. That underlying tenet best accounts for the general enthusiasm of the senior Henry for "the old dogma of disinterestedness" that the *Christian Inquirer* recognized in his philosophy.

The senior James's astounding play of ideas—extending from American Puritan theology to Christian liberalism and social radicalism—is what makes his corpus such a fascinating part of the life of the mind in the nineteenth century. To date, however, documents pertaining to that combination of impulses have been relatively scarce.

The most important of the recovered documents featured in chapters 4 through 6 is a long-forgotten newspaper controversy into which the elder James entered with Henry Whitney Bellows, one of the Unitarian editors of the New York *Christian Inquirer*. In that newspaper's columns, the se-

nior James implied that the Unitarian elevation of human nature was a halfway step toward a socialistic Divine-Natural Humanity. Among the most intellectually provocative and demanding of all of the senior Henry's newspaper debates, this one lasted from 29 February through 3 May 1851. Indeed, its absence from William's bibliography of his father's published writings—an absence perpetuated by twentieth-century James-family biographers—suggests that Henry Senior had allowed Bellows's attacks upon his theology to fade from public memory. He nonetheless used that exchange of ideas to sharpen his thinking, in future works, about the issues he had forcefully debated in 1851. Moreover, just as the challenges posed by Bellows to Henry Senior's theology, politics, and personal character ought to figure in discussions of Henry Jr.'s embarrassed reaction to his father's lack of vocationalism,¹⁴ so Bellows's criticism of the elder James's socialism and dependence on Edwards provides a practice exercise for the defense of self-interest that permeates the pragmatistic philosophy of William James.

Chapters 7 and 10 uncover a related criticism of the father's radicalism and socialism in Henry Jr.'s autobiographies as well as in *The Princess Casamassima* and *The Bostonians*. Existing scholarship has failed to discern the son's fundamental revolt against the politics of his father in these novels, surprisingly expressed through characteristics of Olive Chancellor and the Princess Casamassima. To illustrate the dissonance of thought between the two Henrys, I challenge generalizations about the political compatibility of father and son such as those advanced in Habegger's *Henry James and the "Woman Business."* I argue that the family shame illuminated by Holly extends to the senior Henry's socialistic agenda, recognized by his son as a violation of his father's own homage to "The Universality in Art" in *Lectures and Miscellanies*. Thus, while Henry Jr.'s autobiographies feature a combination of revelation and shamed concealment, scholars of the novelist must move beyond euphemistic utterances about the anxiety experienced by Henry Jr. over "the disjunction between his father's values and society's cultural norms."¹⁵ The full implication of passing, highly general, and ultimately evasive references to Henry Sr.'s "theological speculations," "religious platitudes," and "ideas" needs to be understood.¹⁶ Knowledge of the senior Henry's writings will enable readers to grasp Henry Jr.'s ambivalent relation to his father.

The novelist's grasp of his father's debt to Edwards allows us to respond to the suppositions of critics—from Ross Posnock to John Carlos Rowe—who align Henry Jr.'s individualism, elitism, and "restless curiosity" with various forms of post- or neo-Marxism, including the "Marxist-derived social and aesthetic thought of Adorno and Benjamin."¹⁷ To the contrary, our reading of Henry Jr. in relation to his *pater*—especially as that relation pertains to Charles Nordhoff's *The Communistic Societies of the United*

States (1875)—will show the son to be an ingeniously subtle commentator on the nature of true virtue and on the contrast between artistic creativity and what Oscar Wilde oxymoronicallly called “The Life of the Soul Under Socialism.” That life, as we shall see in this book’s conclusion, was tantamount to either political persecution or to what William James, mindful of the philosophy of the senior Henry, lamented as a condition of “moral holiday.”

The Nature of True Virtue

1

Jonathan Edwards and Henry James, Sr.: The “End” of Creation and True Virtue

THE ELDER HENRY ACCOMPLISHED A PROCESS OF SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION BY CHANNELING Jonathan Edwards's ideas about benevolence (perhaps as those were modified toward neighborly ends by Samuel Hopkins) into the reservoir of nineteenth-century socialist experimentation. Whether through firsthand reading or second- and third-generation transmission, the intellectual encounter of the elder James with Edwards's theology was crucial, though covert. The senior Henry benefited from Edwards's philosophy while avoiding public scrutiny of so controversial and—to the minds of many—so regressive a debt. The extent of that indebtedness has yet to be gauged by scholars who illustrate the devotion of the elder James to the Calvinism of John Glas, Robert Sandeman, and John Walker.¹ Considerably more investment is suggested in the elder James's excitement about “Jonathan Edwards redivivus” (*NSB*, 347) than a possible mere reference to *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*.² The senior James's allusion to Edwards also encompassed two related works, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746) and *The Nature of True Virtue* (1765). That entire set of “redivivus” doctrines—along with Edwards's thoughts about free will and imputed sin—came to figure significantly in the socialistic philosophy of Henry James Sr. The metamorphosis of Edwards's thought in the writings of the elder Henry also highlights the compatibility of Edwards's *Freedom of the Will*, *The Nature of True Virtue*, and *The Great Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin Defended*. This appreciation of Edwards came about despite the senior James's rejection of Calvinistic ideas about perdition and his response to Edward Beecher's *The Conflict of Ages* (1853).

It should be remembered that Henry Senior had a high regard for the more kindly aspects of Protestantism. While deeming “justification by faith without works” to be a “hideous dogma” (*LS*, 6), he celebrated the “fundamental truths” of “the creation, the fall, the redemption and the reconciliation of man.” For James, the problem lay not with those truths, but with the way Protestantism had “maintained these verities in a most absurd and

imbecile way" (*SSH*, 122). As he implied in *The Church of Christ Not an Ecclesiasticism*, so had every other organized form of Christianity; the only true church was the Divine-Natural Humanity envisioned by Swedenborg, although the socialistic embodiment of that church had yet to appear in the ongoing process of spiritual evolution.

The senior James articulated that process of spiritual creation and redemption with some rhetoric borrowed from the Transcendentalists of his era. Like Theodore Parker, George Ripley, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, the elder Henry disdained ritualistic worship of the mere person of Christ. Nor, since collective humanity was the consummate embodiment of deity, did the elder Henry think God to have "personal" relations with individuals (*SSH*, 229). Unlike Emerson, however, he was Puritanical in abjuring homage to the "moral sentiment"; given its tendencies toward radical individualism, excessive moralism seemed to foster ideas about a hierarchy of perceived merit antithetical to God's general—that is, to Henry Senior's mind—socialistic love. Indeed, to regard God as concerned with man's "stored-up capital" of personal "accumulations of goodness" was ultimately to see Him as "a great capitalist," oblivious to "the wealth of the race" (*SRFM*, 333, 330). Not surprisingly, therefore, the senior James despised the idea of "personal immortality," calling it "the pretension to an individual ownership" (*SC*, 337).

Far preferable was the socialism that the elder Henry saw foreshadowed by Swedenborg's Christian mysticism: it stood opposed both to the "meditative atheism" of nineteenth-century positivism (*UMF* 44:34) and to moralistic worship that envisioned God's valuing mankind's personal attributes. Here, to some degree, the senior James was indebted to the anti-Pelagianism of his Lutheran heritage. He drew upon that to lambast the "church" for fostering moralistic outlooks that alienated people from one another and, therefore, from their collective status as a Divine-Natural Humanity. For related reasons, he joined other nineteenth-century socialists in regarding institutional religion as something akin to the opiate of the masses: evangelical religion, especially, had "deadened" men's sympathies for the actual and present ills of humanity, in favor of their possible future ills; and so . . . neutralize[d] much of the energy which would otherwise have been available for the mitigation of human suffering" (*LS*, 12). That is why James believed the "church-spirit"—including what he deemed the woefully institutionalized Swedenborgianism of the nineteenth-century—to be the "evil-spirit in humanity" and the "source of all its profounder and irreparable woes" (*SRFM*, 200–201).

For the elder James, the only useful function served by the church had been its protest against the evils of "selfishness" and "private selfhood" (*SRFM*, 205, 207). Indeed, to the extent that organized Christianity had emphasized a "redeemed nature" (*SSH*, 15), the church had at least glimpsed

PRES^r EDWARDS

Jonathan Edwards

Frontispiece to the American Tract Society's 1833 edition of Jonathan Edwards's *Religious Affections*.

Henry James Sr. Portrait by Frank Duveneck. 1882. Portrait Collection, Harvard University Art Museums. pñms Am 1094 Box 3. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and Bay James Baker.

the “scientific worth [of] Revelation” (UMF 30:7)—by which phrase the senior Henry meant the importance of revealed religion for social science (or socialism). In this vein, the church laudably had celebrated a “love which vivifies our common nature, or gives us being” (*SSH*, 489–90). This is a key assumption for the senior James, whose conception of that love—which, in the act of “spiritual creation,” is thought to impart *being* to otherwise phenomenalistic expressions of human identity—corresponds to Edwardsian and Swedenborgian views about a love of Being in general.³

Edwards’s views about disinterested benevolence link the elder Henry’s celebration of “true virtue” to a specifically socialistic outlook on incarnation. James reenvisions that event as God’s as-yet-unrealized “communication” of *being*—through a spiritual, as opposed to biological, process of evolution—to the fossiform, insubstantial “forms” of capitalism.⁴ The ostensibly Christian nature of this process left William James perplexed about the need for a divine redeemer in his father’s vision of a humanitarian utopia (*LR*, 106–7); after all, the elder James had himself said that “spiritual christianity means the complete secularization of the divine name” (*SS*, 175). Still, Christ did figure in Henry Sr.’s theology, albeit as a synthesis of Puritan, Transcendental, and socialistic categories. Whereas the Puritans had deemed the New Testament the fulfillment of the Old Testament, the senior Henry thought Christ a type of the Divine-Natural Humanity envisioned by Swedenborg. Thus, the elder Henry deflected attention away from the literal events of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, and toward the evolutionary embodiment of “*His natural and adventitious manhood*” (*SRFM*, 294–95) in a socially redeemed state of *being*. Short of the relevance of the historical Christ to that regenerate social state, gospel utterances about Christ’s life reflected mere “Christian legend” (*SRFM*, 363).

The christology of the senior James therefore entails a “real and vital divine presence” in human nature—deeper than selfhood, and “deeper than any and every fact of my moral or personal experience” (*SS*, 170; cf. *M&C*). The reference to “real . . . presence” again intimates the elder Henry’s belief in God as constituting the only real *being* in a phenomenalistic world. By extension, the phrase “moral and personal experience” connotes a phenomenalistic void in need of spiritual creation and redemption through the infusion of socialistic love (*SC*, 399, 393)—that is, of true substance.

For James, the communication of *being* to phenomenalistic forms entails an incarnate Christ who, with an Emersonian flourish, would be a “purely representative person”; through the efficacy of spiritual creation and redemption, that savior would build a socialistic culture from a limited “kingdom based upon persons” (*SC*, 360). To this extent, Christ has immense significance for the elder Henry. As revealed by manuscript fragments at the Houghton Library, his vision of the crucified Christ embodies the as-yet-unrealized state of a socialistic Divine-Natural Humanity, “the

patient crucifixion . . . to all the exactions of our persistent egotism, in hope of the glorious resurrection" one day to be achieved "in our regenerate social affections and aspirations" (UMF 24).

By extension, the senior James disdains the punitive theology of Calvinism, since God's abhorrence of *personal* relations renders ludicrous the notion that "God will be personally angry with me" (NE, 267). Here and elsewhere, the elder Henry rejects the Edwardsian legacy of sinners in the hands of an angry God, along with any *Personal Narrative* supportive of either that idea or of limited atonement. First, belief in an angry God assumes a "private or personal relation" between God and persons and is therefore antiegalitarian (SRFM, 318); second, the notion of divine retribution entails a "dogmatic fouling of the creative name" (LR, 159), since God is said to punish sin that He created and perpetually sustains (SC, 222, 219; NE, 109); and, third, God cannot logically be thought to entertain personal antagonism toward phenomenalist expressions of human identity, into which He is destined to communicate real *being* in the act of spiritual creation and redemption (SC, 212–13). Belief to the contrary comprises "the fiction of a natural estrangement between me and God" evident in chronic disorders of "conscience" (LR, 184, 160; cf. SC, 295). To believe in a supernatural God who is angry with sinners is, in the senior Henry's judgment, to propose atheistically an infinite chasm between the divine and human natures that contradicts God's incarnation in humanity at-large (SRFM, 70). The elder Henry could therefore speak of "forgetting both angel and devil," since retributive "*post-mortem*" concepts disjoining God from man functioned "naturally"—as opposed to "spiritually"—in combatting Divine-Natural, or regenerate, outlooks (UMF 11). Phrased otherwise, Calvinistic severity perpetuated capitalist categories by consigning humanity to "a celestial and infernal class" (SRFM, 209).

Implicated in this rejection of Calvinistic rigor are the pangs of conscience that the senior James suffered in his youth and the relation of those bouts to the accident—significantly and tormentingly by fire—that led to the non-anesthetized amputation, through two surgeries, of one of his legs. His linking of that event to the angry God of Calvinism seems implied in a manuscript fragment in which he vehemently protests orthodox belief in divine retribution based upon imputed sin:

It is as if you, whenever your debtor failed to discharge his debt, should lop off an arm or leg of your own innocent babe hugged in vain to its mother's bosom, by way of ventilating what your flatterers might call your "essential holiness," meaning by that dishonest euphuism your altogether damnable inhumanity. (UMF 4)⁵

Perhaps for motives also related to his lost leg, the elder Henry later denied that man's "bodily or space and time limitations are competent to alienate

him from God" (SC, 208). Quite to the contrary: with respect to the development of a Divine-Natural Humanity, a "despised and degraded natural body" might, under the right circumstances, experience "growth in all health and beauty" (SSH, 250). Or, as James claimed elsewhere, the grand aim of individual, spiritual history, which he deemed intimately connected with "organized fellowship," is to divorce a person "from mere hereditary biases and dependences [*sic*], and put him on the feet of his own original and divine manhood" (L&M, 280–81). Since the elder James believed that the loss of such phenomenalistic forms as legs and arms does not mar essential manhood (NE, 298), one critic seems correct in attributing immense psychological import to Henry Senior's belief in society as the redeemed "form" of man.⁶

We may now take that argument a step further: for the elder Henry, mankind's more pervasive phenomenalism—that is, the lack of physical substance of which his amputation was a mere *type*—stands related to a vital "re-formation" (SC, 211) achievable through the spiritual creation and redemption implicit in the plenary Being of a socialistic Divine-Natural Humanity. For the senior James, that re-formation of Being out of nonbeing entails the coexistence of good and evil, the latter being a phenomenalistic pretension to identity (or what Swedenborg called *proprium*). The corresponding social manifestation of a reliance on false "property" was, to the father's mind, the phenomenon of capitalism. But transient—because insubstantial—capitalistic society, like all other phenomenalistic forms of evil, nevertheless had its use: it constituted the empty base into which the deity would communicate real *being* in the re-formative act of spiritual creation, redemption, and socialistic evolution (SRFM, 449–50; SS, 176). Moreover, to the degree that the senior Henry thought personal and capitalist phenomena to be the requisite "forms" into which divinity would communicate socialistic *being*, he felt that he had resolved what Edward Beecher had called "the conflict of ages."

Beecher had sought, through theories about preexisting evil, to reconcile God's decency with His retributive punishment of sinners. James, on the other hand, rejected the latter notion by accounting for evil without recourse to its real status, preexistent or otherwise. Evil—defined by the senior James as the phenomenalistic misnomer of selfhood and the reflection of that illusion in social hierarchy—was merely a form of "uncreation" needing an infusion of "plenary," or *substantive*, "redemption" (SC, 210) originating from socialistic divine *being*. By regarding evil as "a purely subjective experience of the creature *in alienation* from God," and by claiming that God and man could have only a communal (as opposed to a personal or individual) relationship, the senior James made what he deemed an enduring contribution to formal theology: far more compellingly than Beecher, he had "fully stated, illustrated, and vindicated those laws of the

Divine creation which permit the existence of evil in the creature, without reflecting any disparagement of the Divine Perfection" (NE, 207, 249). That Divine Perfection, of course, was the Divine-Natural Humanity of Swedenborg, for which Henry James Sr. envisioned a socialistic outcome through the process of spiritual evolution.

To appreciate how that process relates to the theology of Edwards, recall that the elder James at one point describes spiritual evolution as an extension of Puritanism—as "a certain purifying process" by which "both the race and the individual are being gradually disciplined out of selfish into associated ends" (SS, 81). Such phrasing evokes the overlooked importance of Jonathan Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue* for the abandonment of "self-love" that the senior Henry thought prerequisite for "the organization of human equality or fellowship" (SSh, 10, 11). Indeed, references to indiscriminate versus personal love (UMF 25:12) in the writings of the elder Henry evolve toward his Edwards-like use of the word "virtue" to connote a socialistic state of *being*: "devoid of all . . . personal or liminary pretensions" (SRFM, 334), it redeems phenomenalistic selfishness—and in such a manner as to suggest a socialistic appropriation of Edwards's belief that "the public weal is of greater value than . . . particular interest. . . . [O]ne single person must be looked upon as inconsiderable in comparison of the generality" (WJE, 8:451).

The tie between Edwardsian true virtue—as opposed to mere semblances of disinterested benevolence—and the phenomenalism of the elder James resides in his contrasting the "*hallucinations of our native selfishness*" with the "*reality of our social or regenerate experience*" (SS, 40; emphasis added). For the senior Henry, the occasional *appearance* of virtue under capitalism bids to become truly virtuous—that is, to exhibit "substantive virtue"—when "a LIVING society, brotherhood, or fellowship of men" will disallow all distinction of "*privilege among men*" (SS, 73, 72). That transformation, in turn, stands related to theological works that would have inspired James to tell Emerson that "Jonathan Edwards redivivus in true blue would after an honest study of the philosophy that has grown up since his day, make the best possible reconciler and critic of philosophy."⁷ The fact that the elder Henry wrote that thought on 11 May 1843, months before reading a line of Swedenborg's works, will prove crucial in explaining his later attraction to the writings of the Swedish mystic.

Between 1835 and 1837, the senior James would almost certainly have encountered the views of the late "President Edwards," as well as those of Edwards's New Divinity disciples, at Princeton Theological Seminary, where Edwards's *Religious Affections* and *True Virtue* would have been common knowledge. In addition, Edwards's *Religious Affections* had a profound influence upon the writings of John Walker (1768–1833), an Irish Lutheran whose two-volume *Essays and Correspondences* (1838) so deeply

impressed the elder Henry that he returned from England in 1839 with a copy of those volumes destined as gifts for Princeton Theological Seminary. Partly on the basis of his enthusiasm for Walker and Sandeman, recent scholarship underscores the "the rigor of [James's] early commitment to Calvinism."⁸

Viewed by William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* as a seminal work in the psychology of religion, Edwards's *Religious Affections* seeks to identify the distinguishing features of God's "elect." It also anticipates *The Nature of True Virtue* in several of its "Signs of Gracious Affections," which include the injunctions that self-love and self-congratulation must be absent from religious affection toward the divinity (WJE, 2:30, 36). As if anticipating the concerns of *True Virtue*, *Religious Affections* separates appearance and reality in defining the gracious state. To apprehend "true religion" (WJE, 2:163), Edwards discounts the following affections: those that may be "great" but that are divorced from religion (WJE, 2:132); those that are merely "natural," as opposed to regenerate, and therefore distinct from "holiness" (WJE, 2:262); and those arising from mere terror at the much-deserved prospect of perdition (WJE, 2:155–56) or from the false confidence in salvation assumed by persons "zealously engaged in the external duties of worship" (WJE, 2:163). Whether exposing the pretensions of "wild enthusiasts" (WJE, 2:287) or the self-interested motives of less passionate pilgrims, *Religious Affections* discounts spurious affections that are "not spiritual" (WJE, 2:217). In doing so, it anticipates *True Virtue* by insisting that sentiments arising from "natural affection" cannot have "the nature of virtue, or saving grace" (WJE, 2:244). (So close is the linking of virtue and grace in these texts that the American Tract Society's 1833 abridged and emended *Religious Affections*⁹ forces a connection between the two treatises with a manufactured reference to "the nature of true virtue, or saving grace" [132; emphasis added].)

As in *The Nature of True Virtue*, Edwards seeks in *Religious Affections* to separate "true religion" from "external appearances of it" by exposing affections that derive nothing "from grace, but much from nature" (WJE, 2:100, 118). Anticipating both the elder Henry's phenomenalistic outlook on morality and John Walker's three-page summary of *Religious Affections*—(done to distinguish between feelings that are "genuinely Christian and such as are spurious imitations of them" [E&C, 1:67]), *Religious Affections* and *True Virtue* decry the mere "appearance" (WJE, 2:146, cf. 182) or "resemblance" (WJE, 8:600) of either benevolence or "real holiness" (WJE, 8:560). Those appearances are little more than "counterfeit" sentiments (WJE, 2:146, 196) traceable to the natural instinct of self-interest. The attack upon self-interest may vary in the shifting rhetoric of *Religious Affections*, but the message remains constant. Foreshadowing the importance of disinterestedness in *True Virtue*, *Religious Affections* maintains

that "in a gracious gratitude, men are affected with the attribute of God's goodness and free grace, not only as they are concerned in it, or as it affects their interest, but as a part of the glory and beauty of God's nature." Edwards therefore propounds a truly gracious and transcendent love for divinity that has no "relation" to, or bearing upon, one's perceived "interest" (*WJE*, 2:248, 249). It is the difference between "*bonum utile*, a profitable good to me, that which greatly serves my interest, and so suits my self-love; or . . . *bonum formosum*, a beautiful good in itself, and part of the moral and spiritual excellency of the divine nature" (*WJE*, 2:262–63).¹⁰

Not surprisingly, *Religious Affections* rehearses the theme, in *True Virtue*, of a "love to Being in general" (*WJE*, 8:541) by comparing "the affection of love" to religious affections and, with respect to the latter, praising those affections and longings for "things that are spiritual and excellent in general" (*WJE*, 2:370). For Edwards, affections tied to self-interested motives lack spiritual importance. In these respects, *True Virtue* develops from *Religious Affections* and charts Walker's and the elder Henry's homage for the general and universal rather than for the personal and private. In fact, Edwards's regard for true virtue as disinterested benevolence appears to have helped James formulate a religious view of socialism predicated around the displacement of the particular and personal with the expansive and general. According to Edwards, secular moralists and nominal Christians who mistake self-interested action and natural emotions for "virtue" ignore the way true virtue consists of a "disinterested general benevolence" (*WJE*, 8:617), or "benevolence to Being in general" (*WJE*, 8:540). Crucial, therefore, for the socialism of the senior Henry is Edwards's insistence upon "true virtue" as a "universal system" featuring a "universal tendency" (*WJE*, 8:541, 540). Indeed, Edwards repeatedly speaks of either a "universally benevolent frame of mind" (*WJE*, 8:620), "benevolence to the universality" (*WJE*, 8:554), or "the great system of universal existence" (*WJE*, 8:541). These utterances (along with the socialization of Being in general advanced by Samuel Hopkins)¹¹ are pertinent to the rhetoric and communitarian philosophy of Henry James Sr.

Although Edwards believed in cosmic and earthly hierarchy (*WJE*, 8:546n.6), his ideas still serve the socialistic ends of the elder Henry because Edwards associates "the good of others" (*WJE*, 8:548) with what is "truly benevolent in the highest sense" (*WJE*, 8:590). Also consistent with the elder Henry's socialism—as that manifests itself in "the race-force . . . or universal element . . . dominating the family force, the moral or individual element in existence" (UMF 41: 7)—is Edwards's criticism of *the family*. According to Edwards, the semblance of virtue that emanates from "the love of parents to their children" is incompatible with the highest general good because family affection is nothing but a "natural instinct that . . . aris[es] from self-love"; in other words, that "natural affection" so circum-

scribes the sphere of goodwill as to obliterate love of Being in general. By "extending only to some particular persons or private system," such affection slights universal existence and therefore "cannot have the nature of true virtue." Edwards, of course, never would have advocated the abolition of the family, but the senior James likely found affirmation for the non-nuclear Divine-Natural Humanity in Edwards's rebuke of "natural relation" (*WJE*, 8:601–2). As remarked in the quasi-fictional autobiography of the elder Henry, "I delight to witness this outward demoralization of the parental bond, because I see in it the pregnant evidence of . . . an expanding *social consciousness*." By raising men out of their "obscene private personality, into a chaste and dignified natural manhood," that more virtuous state of existence obliterates what the elder James calls the "tie of reciprocal ownership which binds together parent and child" in isolation from "the universal family" (*LR*, 171, 174).

Granted, major differences exist in the thinking of Edwards and the elder James beyond their contrary views about cosmic hierarchy and God's capacity for personal anger. For instance, while Edwards believed that "the *divine virtue*, or the virtue of the divine mind, must consist primarily in *love to himself*, or in the mutual love and friendship which subsists eternally and necessarily between the several persons in the Godhead" (*WJE*, 8: 557), James believed divine virtue to reside in the evolution of a Divine-Natural Humanity. That Swedenborgian notion would certainly have appalled Edwards, who viewed man as naturally—that is, as quite *really*—corrupt and therefore incapable of virtue, let alone divinity.

Still, the senior Henry spoke of Edwards *redivivus*: Edwards's belief that "true virtue" is devoid of homage to "*private interest*," to the "*private self*" (*WJE*, 8:577), to a "private circle," or to a "private sphere" (*WJE*, 8:541, 540) was adaptable to Henry Senior's "scientific" approach to social relations grounded in a rejection of what Edwards had already berated as "*personal*" or self-serving "*interest*" (*WJE*, 8:577)—in comparison with "a general good Will" (*WJE*, 8:540) tied to "the universal system of being" (*WJE*, 8:554). For Edwards in the eighteenth century—as for Walker and Henry Sr. in the nineteenth—the thing to overcome was self-love related to "a selfish, contracted, narrow spirit" (*WJE*, 8:555), to a "private and personal" pleasure, to "private interest" (*WJE*, 8:578), or to a sense of "separate good" or "happiness" (*WJE*, 8:575). Featured here is a rejection of that which is "narrow," "single," and "limited" (*WJE*, 8:554, 555). Like Edwards, Walker and the elder James would come to celebrate the advent of universal and general benevolence to supplant that which is restricted and particular, whether directed to "particular persons" (*WJE*, 8:542), "particular beings" (*WJE*, 8:544), or a "particular circle" (*WJE*, 8:554). Indeed, "such limited private benevolence, not arising from nor being subordinate to benevolence to Being in general, cannot have the nature of true virtue" (*WJE*, 8:602).

The elder James channels the outlooks of Edwards and Walker through Swedenborg toward a form of socialism emphasizing God's "indiscriminate love to the race" (SS, 176). Given his socialist orientation, James's ideal mental state valorizes the "general life of man, or the universal earthly interests of humanity" over a love for one's "own class and his own sect" (LS, 10). And an Edwards analogue is suggested elsewhere by the senior Henry's linking of the "end of creation" to the notion of God's "infinite love" (SC, 202) and by his remark that the "Divine end in creation" is a "Divine Love . . . unalloyed by self-love" (SSh, 53). The rhetorical resonances between the concepts of disinterested benevolence and God's "end of creation" find precedent in the fact—common knowledge in the James family—that Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue* originally appeared in a volume entitled *Two Dissertations, I. Concerning the End for which GOD created the WORLD. II. The Nature of TRUE VIRTUE* (1765). As scholars of Edwards remark, the two volumes deal with related concepts—God's glorification of Himself as the end of creation, and the way in which this "end" (WJE, 8:437) is entirely compatible with "the creature's well-being." This correspondence results from God's imparting existence to mankind in an act of "benevolence or love" (WJE, 8:439) that simultaneously resounds to God's glory while assuring the prosperity of His redeemed creatures; through the agency of the Holy Spirit, they glorify God by practicing disinterested benevolence among themselves.

With regard to the structure of the two dissertations, "the one is the mirror image of the other; the 'end' for which God created the world must be the 'end' of a truly virtuous and holy life." For that reason, Edwards "expected his readers already to have gone through *End of Creation* . . . when first reading *True Virtue*."¹² William James—that is, Henry Senior's half brother, the Presbyterian minister who eventually left the pulpit to live off the family inheritance—appears to have examined both. Of *The End of Creation* William remarked that it "absolutely satisfies the understanding of the truth of a principle which had already possessed the heart." Moreover, William echoes Edwards's *True Virtue* in maintaining that "virtue" is synonymous with "vigorous self-denial." Like Edwards, moreover, William believed that "Legal Repentance," an exercise proceeding from the mere "nature of things," is too often "the product of self-love" (GFG, 242, 151, 16).

When the elder Henry celebrates the union of similar concepts in the writings of Swedenborg, readers should recall the primarily Edwardsian basis of such rhetoric in the James family, for the senior Henry shared with his half brother William a perspective on the selfless foundation of virtue. Granted, Henry Senior spoke on one occasion about "the possibly infidel tendency which endorses the *Edwardsian* view of morality" (NE, 254); but he did so less to criticize Edwards than to berate the misappropriation of

Edwards by New-Divinity disciples who proposed that freedom of the will, with respect to holiness and morality, is consistent with Edwards's outlook on sin and retribution. Since Henry Senior wrote *The Nature of Evil* in response to *The Conflict of Ages*, he probably had in mind Beecher's assertion that

Edwards, inconsistently, still held to a sinful nature, but Hopkins consistently developed from these principles, and the treatise of Edwards on the nature of true virtue, the doctrine that all sin and holiness consist in voluntary action, and that the essence of holiness is disinterested benevolence, and of sin is selfishness. (CA, 163)

Whatever the views of the senior James on the relation between freedom and sin (he regarded freedom as an illusion supportive of the "original sin" involved in people's possessing a moralistic sense of "independent selfhood" [NE, 143]), he seemed enamored of the assumptions behind *The Nature of True Virtue*. Indeed, he deemed conventional expressions of "virtue" to be laden with "the vice" of "selfseeking" (SRFM, 408); like Edwards and brother William, moreover, he defined "self-denial" as "the very essence of virtue." By extension, the senior James endorsed Edwards's ideas about a love of Being in general by referring "all true *virtus*—all real manhood" to a "divine and infinite personality" that involves "infinite or creative love" (SS, 156–57).

In these and other references to "true virtue" (L&M, 78), the elder Henry implies "a virtue every way identical with the broadest humanity" (SS, 167), a form of divine order enjoining that "*each particular thing exist for all, and all things in general exist for each*" (LR, 152). Edwardsian, likewise, is his juxtaposition of avaricious "self-seeking" and the far preferable state of "disinterested action, . . . of chaste and generous love" (SSh, 230). The elder James even evokes the concept of "disinterested obedience" to God to counteract the "prudential *instinct* in us, or an ever active *self-love*" (SRFM, 396–97; emphasis added). And the way the senior James admonishes persons who "expect to be rewarded" merely for abstaining from evil recalls Edwards as well: they have a "virtue . . . totally destitute of spiritual ground, being vivified only by self-love" (NE, 179; cf. 302–3). In these reductions of so-called virtue to acts of self-interest or mere instinct, Edwards becomes *redivivus* in the writings of Henry Senior—and in such a manner as to suggest socialistically that "all virtue . . . lie[s] . . . in . . . human equality." As directed toward a socialistic agenda, true virtue becomes synonymous with "a purely spiritual virtue in man," yet that "virtue . . . inheres in him only as he becomes infinitely constituted, or united with all other men" (SSh, 150, 14).

Such a socialistic state would transcend the "narrowest conventional virtue" and, through the presence of "charity towards less privileged men,"

reflect the “virtue of the gospel” (SS, 45, 82). Thus, when Henry Senior’s son William remarked that his father had championed “undiluted altruistic love” over concern for our “private selves” (LR, 22), he failed to articulate the emphatically Edwardsian nature of his father’s and his uncle William’s outlooks on disinterested benevolence. And even though a Hegelian analogue exists for the elder Henry’s reference to the growth of the family into the tribe, and for the emergence of that tribe into the nation (SRFM, 305), a manuscript fragment at the Houghton Library seems to locate the inspiration for the transcendence of “diabolical” family ties, and attendant natural affection, in true virtue:

Surely, every person . . . knows how unjust, how cruel, how diabolic there [*sic*] natural affections make us, when they are not incessantly kept in check by higher and holier ones, by a superior sentiment of what is due to universal man and to God. The utmost spiritual destitution is apparent in him who feels his natural ties to be final and unquestionable, who finds nothing worthier to love than his own father and mother, and discovers in his own brother and sister, his own son and daughter, *virtue* that he encounters no where else. [UMF 23:31–32; emphasis added]

From these and other passages, we might infer that something like Edwards’s love of Being in general is what the senior James had in mind when he associated “benevolence towards the whole” with “perfect or infinite love” (UMF 26:28).

Important for its bearing upon the elder Henry’s belief in a socialistic state of true virtue is Edwards’s conviction that God’s glorifying Himself engenders disinterested benevolence among His creatures. When Edwards remarks that “the exercise of true . . . virtue in Christians is summarily expressed by their glorifying God” (WJE, 8:479), he implies that “the communication of God’s *virtue* or holiness is principally in communicating the *love of himself*” to his creatures. In brief, Christians who practice disinterested benevolence exalt God’s glory. And crucially, with respect to James’s belief that God communicates substance to phenomenistic forms, Edwards refers to “the communication of God’s fullness,” and to God’s “communicating to the creature that happiness and joy” that links true virtue to God’s “glorious excellency” (WJE, 8:528). By thus reaffirming the link between disinterested benevolence among humans and God’s glory as the “end” of creation, Edwards advances a view of divine “communication” anticipating the related notion of “communication” that emerged in the writings of Henry Senior following his encounter with the spiritualism of Swedenborg.

Indeed, Henry Senior defines “Divine Love” as being “free of all subjective limitation, or taint of self-love”; he then turns that Edwardsian formulation into his own vision of a spiritual creation featuring a divinity whose sole delight becomes the disinterested endeavor of “forming to it-

self *subjects* in whom it may dwell as in itself, and to whom it may *commu-
nicate* itself in the plenitude of its potencies and felicities" (UMF 25:12;
emphasis added). For the senior James, that process of God's infusing the
"plenitude" of substance into the phenomenalist "forms" of humanity is
the simultaneously creative and redemptive process that imparts to human-
ity its only real *being*—by a fusion of divinity and humanity—in a disinter-
ested and benevolent state of socialism. In that respect, the "perfect love"
of God's beneficent communication of Himself to what "is not Himself"
becomes mirrored not only in humanity's abiding by the Golden Rule, but
in the ability of social creatures to "love others . . . even more than we love
ourselves" (SRFM, 407). Thus, Edwards's *Two Dissertations*, with its im-
plied relation between "true virtue" and God's "end" of glorifying Himself
in creation, provides a workable schema for the Divine "communication"
that the elder Henry regarded as the virtuous "end" of history in a Divine-
Natural Humanity.

Still, the *redivivus* Edwardsianism of the senior Henry is creative and
provocative. For instance, to advance his socialistic agenda of laying the
blame for "evil" on the corruptions of capitalism, he invokes Edwards's
criticism of the way natural instinct masquerades as true virtue; he then
infers from that assumption, as Edwards never would have, the nonexist-
ence of personal or moral evil. Thus, the elder James simultaneously eche-
oes and enlarges upon Edwards's treatise by claiming that we would not
credit a lion with "courage" because the beast's "nature controls him, and
anticipates whatever of honor or shame might otherwise attach to the indi-
vidual subject." For related reasons, the lamb accrues no "moral virtue"
simply because of its "agreeable *natural* contrast" to the lion. By exten-
sion, we ascribe no "moral obliquity" to a fox, given the "purely natural
trait[s]" that it exhibits. "All these cases," says Henry Senior, are "generic
and natural instead of individual or moral, and you accordingly acquit the
individual subject of all praise or blame therefore" (NE, 87–88). By simi-
larly regarding capitalism as a force that dictates misguided standards of
conduct and that mischannels human spontaneity into expressions of vice
and crime, the elder Henry deduces from his Edwardsian premise some-
thing that could be labeled "the mere *nature* of evil."

Indeed, the very title of Henry Sr.'s *The Nature of Evil* assumes added
significance for readers sensitive to the pun implicit in the word "nature"
as employed by Jonathan Edwards in *The Nature of True Virtue*. In what
appears to be a radical adaptation of Edwards's strategy—and to ends that
would obviously have appalled Edwards—Henry Senior treats *moral evil*
as Edwards had treated *mundane* virtue by tracing moral evil to the natural
(and therefore pedestrian) self-interest associated with misdirected stan-
dards of social compunction. That coercive force implies a perverse "de-
pendence" (NE, 71) that starts to seem habitual—indeed, almost

instinctive—because of the ways in which “the very nature of man” causes people to conform to, or to stray from, moral standards on the basis of perceived self-interest (*NE*, 72). Here and elsewhere, reflecting upon the mere nature of evil, the senior Henry exploits Edwardsian categories. For instance, with reference to slave owners, Henry Senior believed that “Every man *by nature* is an aristocrat”; the “love of distinction” leads one to “respond *instinctively*” to opportunities “to be personally elevated above one’s fellows” (*UMF* 7; emphasis added). From the point of view of coercive self-interest and natural instinct, then, moral evil becomes oxymoronic: “Moral evil is only a negative attestation of the limitation and dependence which the rational subject is under to society, or his fellow-man.” Since individuals act “according to . . . conceptions of duty and interest” (and the senior James here means *self-interest*), the intellect has “no quarrel with”—that is to say, needn’t accept personal responsibility for—“the existence of either physical or moral evil” (*NE*, 71–72).

Phrased otherwise, these perceived evils “are not in themselves evil” because they are “purely instinctive or organic loves in man.” Far preferable, by implication, to these self-interested standards of conduct emanating from the nature of man is an “*unforced . . . spontaneous goodness*” manifest, for instance, in “disinterested or spontaneous” (*SRFM*, 195, 363, 88) worship. These states of expression (akin to Edwardsian disinterested benevolence) are, for James, the utopian outcome of God’s communication of socialistic Being to vacant phenomenalist forms. In and of themselves, the forms are inherently incapable of being “saddl[ed]” with “responsibility” (*SS*, 176). When people actually abide by spiritual laws, they do so exclusively—and Henry Sr.’s rhetoric here reverberates with Edwardsian sentiment—“by *virtue* of the Lord’s power constraining us to do so in spite of our *natural tendencies*” (*CLC*, 250; emphasis added).

More complex than even this creative appropriation of Edwardsianism to repudiate moral evil is the way in which the senior Henry bends Edwards’s ideas about free will and imputed sin to suit the regenerate notion of a socialistic Divine-Natural Humanity. That process of extrapolation is fascinating, because it pinpoints the intersections in Edwardsian thought of such concerns as free will, disinterested benevolence, and idealistic constructs supportive of imputed sin. If only from his response to *The Conflict of Ages*, we know that James was familiar with Edwards’s effort, in *Original Sin*, to argue against the diversity of personal identity on the grounds that humanity’s corporate existence—extending from Adam and Eve to the present—is sustained moment-by-moment by God’s power. Indeed, as one twentieth-century scholar has argued, *Original Sin* evokes humanity’s most utter and complete dependence upon a sovereign God by reducing humanity to a mere divine *thought*.¹³ Unremarked by William James was the Edwardsian precedent, in *Original Sin*, for his father’s “liv[ing] and

breath[ing] as one who knew he had not made himself, but was the work of a power that let him live from one moment to the next, and could do with him what it pleased" (LR, 13–14).

In Beecher's *The Conflict of Ages*, Henry Senior would have read that Edwards "held that God established a personal identity between Adam and all his posterity with respect to Adam's first sin." And since Edwards "took the ground that there is no such thing as identity or oneness in created objects existing in successive moments, 'but what depends on the arbitrary constitution of the Creator,'" then all identity "'depends on God's sovereign constitution.'" In other words, human identity is a function of God's will. As remarked by Beecher, Edwards "proves . . . that preservation or upholding of objects, or persons, is a mere series of new momentary separate creations, which are united as the same identical existence, not by the nature of things, but by God's will" (CA, 315, 342–43).

This is the emanative outlook that James exploits when he combines Edwards's argument against distinct identity with the Edwardsian definition of true virtue to infer the socially redeemed state as God's "end" in creation. Like his half brother William before him, James suggests a connection between Edwards's *Two Dissertations*, but to make a case for socialism by implying a relationship between those treatises and the theory of perpetual creation articulated by Edwards:

Now the only possible way for a man [to love his neighbor as himself] is to feel that he is *not* self-centred, that his life is *not* his own personally, but belongs to him in strict community with his neighbor; thus that he and his neighbor are both alike dependent at every moment for every breath of life they draw upon one and the same merciful and impartial source. In other words a man loves his neighbor as himself only by *virtue* of his first loving God above himself, or supremely. (SRFM, 268; emphasis added)

In thus drawing upon these varieties of Edwardsian thought to advance a socialistic philosophy, the senior James beneficently links the idealism that supports Edwards's corporate view of humanity in *Original Sin* to the notion of general love advanced in *Two Dissertations*. Whether by chance or design, he also subsumes a Hopkinsian emphasis on neighborly love within a broader Edwardsian idealism. But whereas Edwards associates humanity's divinely sustained and dependent identity with the egoism and selfishness targeted in *The Nature of True Virtue*, James extracts an opposite connotation from the "corporate" premise of *Original Sin*: from the phenomenalistic nature of isolated human existence, he infers an object for the communication of divine *being*, so that infusion of a love of Being in general becomes a prerequisite for the evolution of a Divine-Natural Humanity.

Indeed, to the degree that both Edwards and the senior James regard human identity as phenomenalistic—for Edwards, a function of divine thought or power; for Henry Sr., an illusion “made” by God to establish the needed “base” for the communication of divine Being or substance—the elder James’s manipulation of Edwardsian categories highlights the harmony between Edwards’s criticism of pious semblance, in *True Virtue*, and the idea of corrupt humanity sustained by God in *Original Sin*. Although with a highly different application by the senior James, the consistency between those treatises informs his belief that “[God’s] own intelligence discerns me in . . . a spiritual relation [to Him], or as utterly devoid of life in myself, and as vitally dependent therefore upon Him.” Edwards had assumed from this dependence the corruption of humanity; James, however, infers from the mere idea of human identity the hollow base to be infused with “living tides of love wherewith [God] perpetually enriches my interiors” (NE, 270), to receive the substance of universal, social, and therefore regenerate Being.

The religion of socialism advanced by the senior James intimates, as well, the relation of *Original Sin* and *True Virtue* to Edwards’s treatise about *Freedom of the Will*. The compatibility of those works emerges in James’s sense of human identity. The senior James rejected the notion of autonomous will through recourse to phenomenalistic appearances, including the illusion of self-originating power: “viewed spiritually, . . . this appearance turns out a gross delusion. God knows that the power I seem to possess in myself is a sheer fallacy so far as that seeming is concerned; that it comes from Himself exclusively at every moment” (NE, 271). Here the religious philosophy of the senior James clarifies the links among the phenomenalistic outlooks on identity, virtue, and freedom in *Original Sin*, *Two Dissertations*, and *Freedom of the Will*.

Indeed, in *Freedom of the Will* Edwards had combatted his era’s moralistic philosophers by reducing all notions of human freedom to predetermined “motives” and “preferences” to deny the existence of a self-determining will. That Edwardsian notion pervades Henry James Sr.’s *The Nature of Evil*, especially those passages in which the elder James responds to views about “the automatic or self-determining power of the will.” Like Edwards, he denies that man has any such “power” of “self-determination,” since the will “invariably obey[s] the strongest motive” or greatest “preference” (NE, 274–75). For the senior Henry, though, the outcome is radically different from the indictment of human nature that a loss of free will implies for Edwards. The elder Henry evokes the concept mainly to exonerate human nature from charges of moral evil.

At issue for Henry James Sr. was the pernicious tendency of New Divinity to “mak[e] sin voluntary.” Rather than countenance such “philosophic imbecility,” which would locate real evil in a real selfhood, he summons

Edwardsian rigor to denounce the "self-determining power of the will" (NE, 259). Behind his relegation of personal "power" to the status of mere "appearance" and "gross delusion" (NE, 271) rests his Edwardsian sense that the will hasn't sufficient "power of determining itself independently of all motives, independently of all foreign influence," for that is "the precise characteristic of Divine power" (NE, 264). Given the socialistic orientation of the senior James—and the need implied by that outlook for his regarding personal shortcomings as offshoots of a corrupt social organization under capitalism—he finally berates New Divinity theologians (and, by extension, any secularists who likewise deem humans to be independent, autonomous beings) for seeking to "vindicate the Divine justice in the condemnation of sin." At issue—and having serious implications for his effort to regard sin as a social construct—is whether sin is "altogether moral," and whether "the sinner himself must be proved wholly chargeable with his sin" (NE, 264). The elder James obviously thinks *not*. He makes his point by combining the phenomenalist element of "appearance" with Edwards's ideas about true virtue, human existence being a subset of divine cognition, and the fallacy of an independent will:

the natural world is not at all the world of reality, but only the world of appearance. The truth of things is that EVERY THING EXISTS SOLELY BY THE DIVINE POWER; but to the sensuous intelligence of man this truth is wholly unrecognized, and every thing is deemed to exist by some inherent natural force of its own. (NE, 309)

These conclusions correspond to those already rehearsed by Edwards in *True Virtue*, *Original Sin*, and *Freedom of the Will*. Read in conjunction with the ideas of Henry Senior that indirectly show the linkages between *True Virtue* and Edwards's *God's End in Creation*, this passage, and others like it, suggest that the elder Henry systematically appropriated Edwardsian theology for the construction of a socialistic program. However radically unorthodox this resurrection of "Edwards redivivus," the religious socialism of Henry James Sr. has the virtue of delineating (as no one before him had yet done) the absolute consistency of Edwards's major treatises.

2

From Edwards to Swedenborg: Henry Senior's Search

THE EDWARDSIANISM OF HENRY JAMES, SENIOR—WHETHER DERIVED FROM JOHN Walker or from first-hand study at Princeton Theological Seminary—clearly relates to the writings of the eighteenth-century Christian mystic Emanuel Swedenborg. Although existing scholarship sees Swedenborg as the main inspiration for the elder Henry's religious philosophy, the senior James more likely admired Swedenborg's writings because those reminded him of the most admirable feature of Edwardsianism—that is, a love of Being in general—without the limitation of Edwards's angry God. The elder James implied that readers who were already inclined to value benevolence over selfishness would inevitably and advantageously find their way to the thinking of Swedenborg: "Every man who sincerely loves the neighbor, or whose zeal for the human race is at least equal to the zeal he is in the habit of expending on his own account, is bound eventually to stumble on [Swedenborg's] unostentatious books, and reap the abundant stores of nutriment there" (*SRFM*, 138). For the senior Henry, that love of neighbor would already have been conditioned, beyond the New Testament, by the theology of Edwards. What the elder James located in the writings of Swedenborg was a liberal and mystical amplification of Edwardsian points compatible with nineteenth-century socialism.

In America, Swedenborgianism pervaded socialistic communes because it provided a spiritual basis for Fourierism. As John Humphrey Noyes remarked, "Fourierism had Swedenborgianism for its religion" (*HAS*, 550; cf. 263, 548–49). Nonetheless, Noyes felt that Swedenborgianism was ultimately "not favorable to Communism or to close Association of any kind" because "Swedenborg in his personal character was not a Socialist," the mystic respected "the ordinary principle of private property," and nineteenth-century Swedenborgianism was insufficient to "dissolve old-fashioned familism" (*HAS*, 589, 591). Noyes's reservations might also account for the elder Henry's Edwardsian approach to Swedenborg, especially as it pertains to a definition of True Virtue that is inimical to "private" (*HAS*,

592) familial sentiment. Edwardsianism allowed the senior Henry to extrapolate from the mystic Swedenborg a more socialistically aggressive program of disinterestedness than was otherwise evident in the Swedish visionary's writings.

Philosophical affinities between Swedenborg and Edwards may be traced to Nicolas Malebranche's discussion of disinterested benevolence in *Recherche de la vérité* (1674–75). That treatise was a particularly significant influence upon Swedenborg's articulation of a love to Being in general. Moreover, a translation of *Recherche de la vérité* is thought to have shaped many of Edwards's ideas about disinterested benevolence in *The Nature of True Virtue*. With respect to general love, Swedenborgian theology helped the elder Henry launch an Edwardsian craft toward socialism; he navigated these currents along the channels of eighteenth-century Swedish mysticism and New Light theology by catching the breeze of nineteenth-century Christian and social liberalism. By following the currents from Malebranche to Edwards and Swedenborg, and from Edwards and Swedenborg to the senior Henry, contemporary readers can understand, perhaps better than William James, how his father imparted to "the various elements in Swedenborg's teaching an extremely different accentuation and perspective relation to each other, from anything other readers have been able to find" (*LR*, 112).

Swedenborg (1688–1772) was a scientist-turned-biblical exegete whose research into mathematics, mineralogy, anatomy, physiology, hieroglyphics, and linguistics bears upon the prophetic cosmology that he advanced on the basis of his reported encounters with spirits, angels, and interplanetary beings. Among the most important writings of Swedenborg, including those heavily annotated and underlined by the elder James, are the multivolume *Arcana Coelestia* (1749–56), *The Worship and Love of God* (1745), and *The True Christian Religion* (1771).¹ Here and elsewhere, Swedenborg seeks to overcome the Cartesian dualism of body and soul through a celebration of "correspondences" between the natural and spiritual worlds. For Swedenborg, all such correspondences developed from an emanation of divine thought culminating in *Maximus Homo*, a union of spirits, angels, and humanity cosmically joined in bodily shape and illustrating universal love. Indebted to the idealism of Malebranche, to Leibniz's theory of "*harmonia praestabilita*," and to Christian Wolff's notion of a universal language emerging from a system of *philosophia mathematica universalium*, Swedenborg's conception of *Maximus Homo* featured spiritual societies transcending individual selfishness. That angelic state of universal, communal love—the revolutionary implications of which Andrew W. Carnegie noted in his turn-of-the-century critique of communism—is one of the Swedenborgian emphases that the elder Henry blended with a theory of Christian socialism.²

Crucial to this and to other dimensions of the senior James's thinking is the Swedenborgian "doctrine of series and degrees," a principle that spiritualized the natural world by implying that "there is nothing in the entire universe that does not belong to a series or represent a degree in a series, with the exception of the first substance of nature."³ In the writings of the elder Henry, that correspondence between the spiritual and natural worlds finds reiteration when he quotes Swedenborg's belief that "'the ultimate of divine order is *in the nature of the world*.'" Implicit here is a continuity between spirit and nature compatible with the senior James's view of redemption as the infusion of creative Being into the illusory forms of nature. That process rescues humanity from its "temporary phenomenal dimensions" by imparting the substance of "universal unity" to vacuous individualism (SC, 283, 346; cf. 322). For Henry James Sr., the substantive—that is, the "ultimate" (SRFM, 216)—outcome of that spiritual creation is a state of socialism embodying Swedenborg's ideas about a Divine-Natural Humanity.

In the copies of Swedenborg's works owned by the elder Henry, hundreds of underlinings, annotations, and sketched fingers (indicating *nota bene*) attest to the enthusiasm with which he read the writings of the Swedish mystic, initially upon the advice of Mrs. Sophia Chichester in 1844.⁴ Thereafter, the senior James celebrated Swedenborg's disclosure of relations between the worlds of "thought" and "substance," and he resented the "cheap and easy" (SRFM, 62, 340) opinion—one he had observed at Princeton Theological Seminary—that Swedenborg was a raving lunatic. For the elder Henry, the prospect of a Divine-Natural Humanity was its own evidence (NE, 315–16). Reading the present into the past, he remarked that Swedenborg's volumes stood to remedy "our gathering political and social perplexities" (SRFM, 310) by helping contemporary thinkers to "ventilat[e] the philosophic contents of the christian revelation" (SS, 127).

In these and other references to Swedenborg's ideas about the "philosophic contents" of the gospel (SRFM, 60), the senior James had in mind "the philosophic basis of creation." With that phrase, he hinted at Swedenborg's belief that human existence and consciousness, like other phenomenalistic expressions of nature, are mere forms awaiting "spiritual creation" through an infusion of divine substance, or actual Being (SSH, 102; SS, 27–28, 192; SC, 413). The phenomenalism that the elder Henry inferred from the writings of Swedenborg allowed philosophy to be contemptuous of the "unreal existences" of "*time, space, and person*" (CLC, 2) and therefore "indifferent to what naturally *constitutes* existence or gives it outward body" (SRFM, 241–42).

As for the sensations of identity and freedom surrounding that body, those—to use Swedenborg's terminology—were so much selfish "*proprium*" awaiting the communication of divine love (that is, of fellow feeling) through

spiritual creation (AC, 2:433; SS, 34). For the elder Henry, this infusion of general love into the phenomenalistic forms of self and society would occur in the "regenerated" socialistic state. The prospect of an incarnation of Being into nonbeing caused the senior Henry to infer from Swedenborg's outlook on spiritual creation a corresponding doctrine of spiritual redemption (SC, 413; SS, 56–57; SSh, 279–80). Phenomenalism, therefore, was what the elder James perceived as the necessary foundation, or base, suggested by Swedenborg's mystical vision of God's use of "natural ultimates" to infuse Himself into the mere forms or *constitution* of so-called nature. For that reason the senior Henry rejoiced in the prospect of a socialistic heaven on earth as a function of the Creator's bringing "the dread and formidable spiritual world itself into our own keeping, as it were, by harnessing it and taming it down to the *phenomena* of men's familiar natural history" (SRFM, 239–40; emphasis added).

Belief in that spiritual creation allowed Henry James Sr. to join Swedenborg in denouncing personal righteousness and institutionalized religion, both of which the senior Henry deemed phenomenalistic manifestations of delusive *propria*. Referring to Swedenborg, Henry Senior regarded "moral or subjective consciousness" as "fallacious." By implication, he consequently related personal consciousness to the experience of righteousness and connected these delusions to a specious "moral hypothesis of creation"—that is, to either biblical or scientific accounts of creation—because scripture and science arrogantly mimic moralism in attributing real or substantive qualities to features that are mere phenomenalistic backdrops for spiritual creation (SS, 65).⁵ Since *all* is vacant prior to that spiritual creation, neither the elder Henry nor Swedenborg customarily discerned—and here James's textual italics are vital—any "*essential* difference between saint and sinner, angel and devil" (CLC, 12).

The senior James more so than Swedenborg: Swedenborg periodically suggests that, in the absence of evil, moral excellence counts for *something*. As he declared in a passage of *The True Christian Religion* that Henry Sr. marked, "the Lord . . . draws near to every particular person, in proportion as each person knows and acknowledges him, which is in proportion as each knows and does his commandments, which are, that he shun evils, and do good" (TCR, 402). Such thinking occasionally leads Swedenborg to exalt personal piety, causing the elder Henry to complain about the "devout temperament" that sometimes led Swedenborg to "inclin[e] . . . to an over-indulgent estimate of the merely pious element of the church" (SC, 309). But this was a rare admission for the senior James, who typically lauded Swedenborg's criticism of persons who attribute "an original or causative influence, instead of a purely ancillary or ministerial one, to morality in human affairs." Swedenborg, says the elder Henry, reminds these people that "selfhood" is "the evil principle in existence" (SRFM, 65, 69). Since

phenomenalism renders man "prone to evil and falsity," Swedenborg "denies . . . personal distinctions among men" and, more often than not, "refutes the possibility of a moral righteousness on man's part before God" (*SSH*, 33–34).

The senior James—in what amounts to an extension of this regard for moralism as a phenomenalist misnomer—joined Swedenborg in rejecting ecclesiasticism. Summarizing Swedenborg's views, the elder Henry viewed the church as conferring "no real, but only a typical righteousness" during a period of a parishioner's "SOCIAL immaturity" (*SS*, 74, 85). By implication, at least for Henry James, Sr., spiritual creation would fill that phenomenalist void of moralism and ecclesiasticism with the true virtue of a socialistic love of Being in general. Swedenborg, Henry Sr. insisted, saw a "nearly extinct virtue" sanctifying all of humanity. That "virtue" was a "divinely generated *proprium*, or selfhood, in man." This state of "charity" featured "benevolent actions" directed away from "class preferences" and toward "the general life of man, or the universal earthly interests of humanity" (*LS*, 6, 13, 10–11). Here imposing an Edwardsian reverberation of "true virtue" upon Swedenborg's outlook, and then drawing a socialistic moral from the mystic's thought, the elder James nonetheless follows the editor of Swedenborg's translated works in distinguishing between human *proprium*, "what is properly one's own[,] . . . used by [Swedenborg] to express the self-hood of man . . . when separated from the influence of divine goodness and truth," and "celestial" *proprium*, which signifies "the things which are of the Lord" or "vivified by the Lord" (*AC*, 1:60 n., 62, 67). For the elder Henry, the only sanctified or virtuous property is the general or spiritual property of *Maximus Homo*.

The Edwardsian and socialistic perspectives that the elder James imposes upon Swedenborg's aversion to moralistic worship support the assumptions of both Swedenborg and Henry Senior in rejecting an "angry God." God has little to be angry with, since—to quote one of the elder Henry's annotations on the coverpage of a volume of Swedenborg's writings—"Man never of himself produces any false or evil, these proceeding from the evil spirits attendant upon him" (*AC*, 1). With respect to good and evil, the spiritualism of Swedenborg, along with the phenomenism that the senior James deemed part and parcel of Swedenborg's outlook, denies absolute distinctions between heaven and hell. Since "Swedenborg makes nature the realm of *uncreation*," he offers "a breath of health to the deepest heart of hell" (*SRFM*, 131). The senior James follows Swedenborg in deeming "hell" to be "the love of self" (*SRFM*, 255; cf. 196)—but that *proprium* is, by definition, as vacuous as hell itself. To the senior James, therefore, the phenomenism of Swedenborg's writings renders the distinction between heaven and hell entirely "*provisional*" (*SRFM*, 57)—a perceptual limitation (*SRFM*, 94) standing between debased human *proprium* and the

see 1036 for some more characterizing description
on regeneration. The man of the church at this
day studies much the history of faith, but little the
source of love.

THE

HEAVENLY ARCANAE

See 9199 & 9315 for the Lord making
himself the

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OR WORD
OF THE LORD

Divine Good

Communism UNFOLDED, the Law of Heaven

BEGINNING WITH THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

10.723

TOGETHER WITH

WONDERFUL THINGS SEEN IN THE WORLD OF SPIRITS
AND IN THE HEAVEN OF ANGELS.

BY
EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

By an angel Hydr. 786
in the word is VOL XII.
signifies something
of the Lord. 11.157

LONDON:

JAMES S. HODSON, 112, FLEET STREET;
WILLIAM NEWBERRY, CHENIES STREET, BEDFORD SQUARE;
EDWARD BAYLIS, MANCHESTER.

1840.

See 10.758 for the alarm of spirits at
the bare idea of being reunited to their ma-
terial body, and their disgust at their former state
fidelity to this subject.

spiritual redemption that will result exclusively from the infusion of true Being into the mere void that encompasses pretensions to evil and righteousness alike.

For the elder Henry, this absence of any substantive complaint about evil, nature, or hell implies that God is unable to be angry with the vacant forms into which He will communicate the true Being, or virtue, of socialism. Henry Senior seems to have deduced as much from still other passages of Swedenborg's works that he heavily marked. For instance, in *Angelic Wisdom Concerning the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom*, he was impressed with Swedenborg's belief that, since "God is *Esse* itself," created things, including human identity, can have nothing of this *Esse* save that which God imparts from his own Being, for "all created things, in themselves, are inanimate and dead; but they are animated and vivified by this, that the Divine is in them and they in the Divine." Beyond concluding from this (in a marginal annotation) that "Creation is a purely *subjective* work on God's part" (AW, 18, 19), the senior James inferred from "the pregnant little treatise" containing these passages that "God creates *ex vi termini* only forms or subjects of life in which He may dwell as in Himself" (CLC, 157). By implication, the elder Henry sees in Swedenborg's utterances a phenomenalist premise that underlies spiritual creation and—by virtue of that event's capacity to make the "organic loves in man serviceable to spiritual loves, just as foundations are serviceable to houses" (SRFM, 195)—Swedenborg's rejection of an angry God.

Swedenborg thereby helped the senior James overcome the seemingly horrid side of Edwardsianism. With respect to the "wrath of God, . . . impending upon all manner of unrighteousness," the elder Henry proclaimed, "I do not . . . overstate my intellectual obligations to Swedenborg, when I say that his spiritual disclosures put an effectual end to this insane worry and superstition on my part forever" (SS, 171). In this and in other references to Calvinistic ideas about perdition, the senior James implies that people behave as lunatics when they credit the phenomenalist forms of unrighteousness or evil with enough substance to merit divine attention, let alone anger. Indeed, in one of the most heavily marked passages in the volumes of *Arcana Coelestia* owned by Henry James Sr., Swedenborg writes that "the Lord . . . is never angry," mainly because He is so "infinitely above all infirmities" as to be incapable of being "angry with such poor and miserable dust as men are, who scarcely know any thing they do, and can do nothing of themselves but what is evil." This reference to humanity's status, along with Swedenborg's utterance that "with the Lord there is no principle inclining him to anger, but only to mercy" (AC, 1:507), appears to be among the passages in Swedenborg's writings that led the senior Henry to formulate a phenomenalist argument against the reality of sinners being in the hands of an angry God. The elder James again interprets the

principle at issue to be that of God's inability to express "personal anger" at vacant forms awaiting spiritual creation through a perpetual infusion of general love (*NE*, 270).

Beyond helping to liberate him from the severity of Edwards, Swedenborg's view of a spiritual creation allowed the elder James to develop the socialistic potential of Edwardsian theories concerning disinterested benevolence. Swedenborg believed that God could not possibly punish mankind or cast it into hell, for—and here I quote a passage scored by the senior Henry—"God is love itself, mercy itself, and goodness itself, and being these, . . . he cannot be angry, wrathful, or vengeful" (*TCR*, 322). That, according to the elder James, is why Swedenborg assumed the secret of Heaven to be God's "indiscriminate love" (*SS*, 176; cf. *AC*, 1:40)—specifically, the disinterested love embodied in charity. Since that formulation of God as Love hearkens back to Swedenborg's view, in a paragraph marked by the senior James, "THAT ALL THINGS IN THE CREATED UNIVERSE ARE RECIPIENTS OF THE DIVINE LOVE," and that all creation "is an image of God, and therefore full of God" (*AW*, 18, 19), the elder Henry derived from Swedenborg's writings a theory of spiritual creation quite compatible with the most *virtuous* tenets of the socialistically pregnant love of Being in general espoused by Edwards.

The doctrine of creative "ultimates" helps to unite the thinking of Swedenborg and Edwards with regard to ideas about a general love of Being available to both men in the writings of Malebranche. As summarized by the senior James, Swedenborg's doctrine of "nature" as the "*ultimate* of creative order" (*SC*, 283) amounts to God's imparting His preexisting Being to that which He is *not*—that is, to the implicit lack of Being implied by the phenomenalist forms of nature, including "natural identity" (*SSH*, 430). This "spiritual creation" finds reiteration in the elder Henry's Edwardsian description of something akin to love of Being in general: "God, being infinite love—which means love without any . . . *self-love*—lives only by communicating Himself to whatsoever is not Himself" (*SRFM*, 125). Far from discounting their value, the Creator regards phenomenalist forms as "forms or subjects of life in which He may dwell as in Himself" (*CLC*, 157). And not coincidentally, James Senior celebrates humanity's phenomenalist participation in this process with an Edwardsian play on words: "by virtue of the creator's infinitude to determine itself to objective natural form" (*SRFM*, 215). Phrased otherwise—in a manner linking Edwardsian theology to Swedenborgian mysticism—the elder Henry James is celebrating God's "creative virtue" (*SSH*, 73).

Vital to Swedenborg's and the senior James's conception of spiritual creation as true virtue is the distinction between God's making and His creating: "Creation, or the giving absolute being to things, logically involves a subordinate process of *making*, which is the giving them phenom-

enal or conscious form" (SS, 15). For both Swedenborg and the elder Henry, God ultimates Himself only into that which he is not—that is, into nonbeing; God declines, by implication, to create humanity *ex nihilo* since only He possesses Being that, having existed forever, is uncreated. To create humanity *ex nihilo* would make humanity, without the benefit of prior union with God, partakers of real Being. Since—and Henry Senior here quotes Swedenborg—God “cannot create another which shall be life in itself, because the life which is God is uncreated, is unbroken,” a creation of humanity *ex nihilo* would essentially and therefore ludicrously divide God from himself (NE, 136; SRFM, 211–12). Thus, God *makes* phenomenalistic forms in order to *communicate* His substance disinterestedly to them in the redemptive act of spiritual creation. To the mind of Henry James Sr., therein lies the most vital tenet of Swedenborg’s conception of correspondences between the natural and the divine (SSh, 47, 63; SS, 33, 192).

These correspondences also unite the thinking of Edwards, Swedenborg, and the elder Henry on the function of love of general Being in the act of spiritual creation, or in God’s “end” in creation. Since Swedenborg envisions spiritual creation as a gesture of disinterested benevolence—God communicates his essential Being, in an act of consummate love and wisdom, to what He is not—then God’s “end” in creation, with respect to those creatures who “ultimate” His Being, results in a society that functions, by way of correspondence, upon the regenerate principle of general love. This is the Swedenborgian (and, through an association of ideas pertaining to *Two Dissertations*, Edwardsian) point implied in the senior James’s quoting *Arcana Coelestia* thus: “He who loves good in the neighbor more than the neighbor himself, loves good itself (which good itself the Lord alone is) and therefore loves the Lord” (SRFM, 120). The similarity of Swedenborgian and Edwardsian perspectives on the link between God’s essence and human charity appears to have impressed itself upon the senior James. On the rear flyleaf of his copy of Swedenborg’s *The True Christian Religion*—the title of which evokes an aspect of Edwards’s *The Nature of True Virtue*—he transcribed a passage from Swedenborg that, in extolling God’s charity and general love, chances to make a point reminiscent of Edwards’s *Two Dissertations*: “The man who receives that love is conjoined with God, and loves his neighbor by virtue of the love of God.”

Indeed, after marking Swedenborg’s utterance that “it is the very nature of true love to delight in serving others, not selfishly, but from disinterested affection” (AC, 1:210), Henry Senior might have wondered whether Swedenborg had access to the writings of Edwards. Although that scenario is possible, the point is perhaps moot, because both Edwards and Swedenborg were preceded by Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715) on the matter of disinterested benevolence. Edwards appears to have read *Recherche de la vérité* in one of the translations available in the Yale library, for he

listed "The Search After Truth" in his "Catalogue" of readings and later crossed out the entry, as if to signify that he had finished the book.⁶ Swedenborg, in turn, transcribed copious passages from *De inquirenda veritate* into his *Philosopher's Note Book*, including many paragraphs about disinterested benevolence. Although removed by half a world from Northampton, Massachusetts, Swedenborg could therefore have sounded quite Edwardsian to the senior Henry.

No record exists of the elder James's having read the French metaphysician Malebranche, whose ideas were summed up, in June 1856, in an issue of *The Monthly Religious Magazine* that reviewed a number of points analogous to James's Edwardsian analysis of Swedenborg. An article entitled "The Character and Philosophy of Malebranche" discussed the controversial Cartesianism of Malebranche and his belief that all operations of human understanding are linked to God's infinite reason. Also mentioned was the correspondence between nature and God that Malebranche inferred from nature's being a constant emanation of divine "power," the force of which imparts substance or "being" to mere appearances or phenomena, "in a constant act of creation" (378). And the notion of God's status as the only true Being evolved from Malebranche's belief in God's status as Being in general—an idea that he derived from the Cartesian *cogito*.

According to *The Monthly Religious Magazine*, Malebranche's seventeenth-century theory amounts to this: "When I consider that I am, I am conscious, not only of my own individual being, but of the conception of being in general; that is to say, of being without restriction, the infinite; that is to say, *of God*" (383). From that assumption follows the connection, in Malebranche's thinking, between divine love and the human virtue of general love—between God's *end* in creation and the disinterested benevolence he urges upon His creatures: "Men can love, only because God urges them incessantly towards good in general, that is, towards Himself; for God, having created them only for Himself, never preserves them without turning and urging them towards Himself." This "urging," by implication, results from Malebranche's sense of the relation between divine will and human choice, for the latter is conditioned by virtuous "motives" (393). Thus, Malebranche's *The Search After Truth* presents many of the ideas that the elder Henry would have come upon, with innovative emphases and applications, in the writings of Edwards and Swedenborg.⁷

The precise line of transmission among Edwards, Malebranche, Swedenborg, and the senior James is uncertain. Still, we may speculate that, when the elder Henry read and annotated passages from *Arcana Coelestia*, those resonated for him with the Edwardsian premise that disinterested love of a neighbor, through acts of charity, stands related to the general love of God. Consider, for instance, the following: on the front flyleaf to the twelfth volume of Swedenborg's *Arcana Coelestia*, the senior

Henry partly transcribed and partly paraphrased an utterance in paragraph 10,308: "The Reason why love to the neighbor is Divine is because no man can love his neighbor from himself." After a subsequent reading of that volume, he remained so impressed with the utterance that he transcribed it again—this time, with minor modification, as the sole annotation to occupy the volume's back flyleaf. In *Arcana Coelestia*, the actual passage marked by the senior James, reads as follows:

By Love Divine is meant love to the Lord, and love towards the neighbour; the reason why the latter love is also Divine is, because it likewise proceeds from the Lord; for no one can love the neighbor from himself, for in such case he loves the neighbor and confers benefits upon him for the sake of himself, which is to love himself. (AC, 12:294)

Here—as in a similar passage (from Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Wisdom*) quoted by the elder Henry because it links disinterested affection to an act of "willing" derived from God (*SRFM*, 213)—a combination of ideas ties together the thinking of Malebranche, Edwards, Swedenborg, and the senior James on issues ranging from the nature of true virtue to God's end in creation and to the achievement of that end in a disinterested will (that is, one constituting its own motive) imparted by God. Whatever the exact nature of association and transmission, these ideas, common to at least these three of the elder Henry's intellectual predecessors, must figure into whatever scholarly formula is brought to bear upon the problem of influence.

My own "equation" postulates that Edwards encountered many of his ideas about motive, preference, love of general Being, and Being-as-divine-emanation in Malebranche's *The Search After Truth*. So did Swedenborg, who copied similar passages from his 1689 edition of *De inquirenda veritate*.⁸ Those passages, along with Swedenborg's excerpts from other philosophers, have been translated from the Latin and collected in a volume that Alfred Acton titled *Philosopher's Note Book*. The *Philosopher's Note Book* has the benefit of illustrating how Swedenborg was attracted to ideas in *The Search After Truth* that seem also to have influenced Edwards—ideas that would cause nineteenth-century American followers of Swedenborg to infer a direct link between Swedenborgian and Edwardsian thought.

The *Philosopher's Note Book* contains passages that bring to mind the idea of emanation in Edwards's *The Great Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin Defended* and the notion of love to Being in general in *The Nature of True Virtue*. Indeed, Swedenborg copied Malebranche's designation, in *De inquirenda veritate*, of natural existence as a function of divine "ideas" and "will" (PN, 404) and of God's presence in the human mind as the

“‘presence of a Being without any particular restriction, a Being in general’” (PN, 408). Sin, by implication, was the sin of loving the “‘particular good’” rather than the “‘universal good’” (PN, 392). As in Edwards’s formulation of “‘natural’” approximations of virtue, and as in Swedenborg’s formulation of “*proprium*,” Malebranche attributes the failure “‘to love God for the sake of himself’” to mankind’s addiction to personal “‘satisfaction’” and “‘self-love’”: “‘For we no longer love anything except for the reason that in loving it we hope for some advantage, or because we perceive some pleasure in the act itself’” (PN, 258-59). By “‘pleasure,’” of course, Malebranche referred (as would Edwards) to “‘instinct’”; in contrast, a true love for “‘good in general’” springs solely from a pious motive—that is, from “‘a love . . . from election’” (PN, 257). According to Malebranche, that divinely inspired love (PN, 417) necessarily renders a person’s homage disinterested.

There, finally, in the connection between regenerate human will and divine disinterestedness, resides the foundation for Malebranche’s belief—as similarly reiterated by Edwards in the very structure of *Two Dissertations*, and by Swedenborg in his writings about divine love and wisdom—that God’s glory is, by virtue of its being His own *end* in creation, the occasion of benevolence among humans. Human charity is simply an extension of God’s “will”: “‘We love a thing only because God loves Himself; and . . . unless He continually impressed on the human mind, a love like to his own, that is, that motion of love whereby we are affected towards the good in general, we would love nothing, would will nothing.’” Malebranche deems the apprehension of such truths about “love” akin to a “‘new sensation of the mind’”—indeed, like “‘a sense of the sweetness’” (PN, 57, 58)—of general love. This rhetoric is nearly identical to that used by Edwards in *A Divine and Supernatural Light* to define the Holy Spirit as a new sense of the heart. The writings of Malebranche—including passages transcribed by Swedenborg—accordingly offer a formulation of disinterested benevolence that would have enchanted Swedenborg and Edwards alike for its merging of ideas pertaining to a limited will, inspired sensationalism, and creation viewed as divine thought or power—all geared toward a charitable or benevolent “end.”

Of course, whereas Edwards, in *The Great Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin Defended*, discerned the reality of imputed sin in the emanative or idealistic connection of Adam, Eve, and their posterity,⁹ Swedenborg does just the opposite. Since, for Swedenborg, there “is no other idea of God than that of a Man,” the fact that all creation “is an image of God, and therefore full of God” (AW, 5, 19) exalts *Maximus Homo*, or the GOD-MAN. For the senior Henry, in turn, the divine emanation creating human consciousness implies a “dependence upon God so vital and absolute” as to “obliterate” all “superficial differences” based upon either social legis-

lation or definitions of "good and evil alike" (*SSH*, 32). Thus, while appearing to echo Edwardsian ideas of man's total dependence on God, the elder Henry learned from Swedenborg how to transform an idealistic dependence on God into an exalting rather than a debasing vision of human nature.¹⁰

The senior James, apparently unschooled in Malebranche, would likely have equated Swedenborg's ideas—whatever the mystic's claims to extra-terrestrial inspiration—with enlightened Edwardsianism. The elder Henry, after all, believed that "Jonathan Edwards redivivus . . . would, after an honest study of the philosophy that has grown up since his day, make the best possible reconciler and critic of . . . philosophy" (*NSB*, 347). To a great extent, Swedenborg was, for Henry James Sr., Edwards *redivivus*. Indeed, something like this praise for a liberalized Edwardsianism, particularly with regard to disinterested benevolence, seems implied in Henry Senior's belief that the "honest mind" goes to Swedenborg "simply to find light upon the philosophy of the gospel, or ascertain what its internal or universal and impersonal contents are" (*SRFM*, 60). He elsewhere echoes the assumptions of *The Nature of True Virtue* by contrasting Swedenborg's attention to "universal love," along with the "charity" associated with "the general life of man," with the regrettable fact of "selfishness" (*LS*, 8-10). The rhetoric is Edwardsian, the object Swedenborgian and socialistic.

The elder Henry could well have recognized a kindred association of ideas when he scored and checked the passage of *Arcana Coelestia* that relates "true love" and "disinterested affection" (*AC*, 1:210). With respect to such notions of "charity, or brotherly love," he—again advancing an Edwardsian formulation to summarize Swedenborgian utterances—held that "the nature of things" prevented moralistic "piety" from in any way approaching the stature of "charity, or brotherly love" (*LS*, 11). Indeed, in a passage from *Arcana Coelestia* next to which the senior James placed a large "X," he could have found confirmation of an Edwardsian point about the nature of true virtue: according to Swedenborg, "true love," "true joy," and "true life"—such as that "tasted by the angels"—differ remarkably from "self-love," which contains but the mere "resemblance to life and to joy" (*AC*, 1:17). When, therefore, the elder Henry quotes Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Wisdom*, "'to enjoy our own pleasure in another, and not his pleasure in ourselves, is not love; for this is to love one's self, and not one's neighbor'" (*SSH*, 112; cf. *SS*, 26-27) there would, to the mind of a person schooled in *The Nature of True Virtue* rather than *The Search After Truth*, be an Edwardsian resonance.

Perhaps for this reason, Henry James Sr. treats Swedenborg's notion of charity as resembling true virtue. With rhetoric just as Edwardsian as it is Swedenborgian, the elder Henry remarks that charity, for Swedenborg, stood opposed to the "bond . . . of reciprocal selfishness, prompting each to love only himself in the other" (*LS*, 8). An Edwardsian temperament may simi-

larly have led the senior James to mark a passage in *Arcana Coelestia* that exalts heavenly societies because those are “altogether irrespective of the parents, children, kinsfolk, and relations, on earth, and of any particular person,” and are instead “regulated solely by the differences of mutual love and faith” (AC, 1:274). Although this sentiment is remarkably akin to Edwards’s belief that familial affection lacked a basis in true virtue, Swedenborg’s emphasis was not sublunary enough to have suited the taste of most socialists, including the American reformer John Humphrey Noyes, author of *Bible Communism* (1848). Still, in a related passage marked by the elder James, Swedenborg had labeled as “unprincipled” the person who “has no interior love for another, but only loves him so far as he is subservient to his own ends and purposes” (TCR, 502). By contrast, and as represented by the senior Henry in *Letter to a Swedenborgian*, “the coming church” requires men to “love their fellow man, not because he happens to be their kinsman, or neighbor, . . . but simply because he is man” (LS, 19; cf. SRFM, 196). The elder James also argues that the selfishness of ecclesiasticism opposes the true virtue of God, especially since the Church habitually degrades “virtue into a mere instrument of personal gain.” Here and elsewhere, the senior Henry musters Edwardsian rhetoric to lament, “Christian men have looked upon virtue, not as the absolute end of their existence, but as a means to that end, which is individual aggrandizement” (LS, 21). Henry Senior thus combines Edwardsian and Swedenborgian ideas in an attack upon ecclesiasticism reminiscent of Edwards’s derisive assessment of self-interest in *The Nature of True Virtue*.

While it is impossible to say how much of this outlook Henry James Sr. derived from Edwards before encountering similar notions in Swedenborg, the elder Henry most certainly would—even without recourse to Malebranche—have recognized the dramatic correspondences between the two thinkers. He would likely have deemed the disinterestedness of Swedenborg a corrective to that of Edwards, whose *The Nature of True Virtue* implies a limited covenant of grace. Perhaps with Edwards in mind, the senior James complained about the way the Church had “accepted virtue as a divinely appointed means to a divinely appointed end, which is the individual aggrandizement of a portion of the race.” That is, Edwardsian—as opposed to Swedenborgian—disinterestedness ignores God’s “absolute end” in creation by debasing “virtue” to “the established price of the divine favor, as entitling the saint to a more benignant treatment than the sinner, but not as in itself the sum of the divine bounty” (LS, 21). Lacking Swedenborgian metamorphosis, Edwardsian virtue was, to the mind of the elder Henry, ultimately antidemocratic, antisocialistic, and intrinsically selfish in its limited recognition of God’s end in creation. Edwards’s Calvinism was, finally, inconsistent with the otherwise inspired doctrine of disinterested benevolence.

Evidence for the elder James's forging links between the writings of Swedenborg and those of Edwards is suggested by the senior Henry's markings in still other of Swedenborg's works, including chapters in *On the New Jerusalem* that deal with "OF LOVE IN GENERAL," "OF LOVE OF SELF, AND THE LOVE OF THE WORLD," and "OF LOVE TOWARDS THE NEIGHBOR, OR CHARITY." In a heavily scored passage pertaining to the "general manner" of knowing God, Swedenborg impressed the senior James with the virtuous utterance that "the Lord himself is neighbor in the supreme sense" (*ONJ*, 55). At issue for Swedenborg—as it had been for Edwards—was the difference between "love in general and particular" (*ONJ*, 48). Coming to Swedenborg from a conflicted Edwardsian heritage, the elder Henry would have valued a mystical writer who could advance the notion of a universal, general love, while—to quote again from the annotations of the senior Henry—"expos[ing] . . . the hypocrisy of our ordinary profuse confessions of sin" and illustrating "the absurdity of supposing the Lord to be really angry with men."¹¹

Whatever the precise conveyance of ideas from Malebranche, Edwards, and Swedenborg to the senior Henry, *The New Jerusalem Magazine*, widely read among nineteenth-century Swedenborgians, manifested connections between the thought of Swedenborg and Edwards on the issue of love and benevolence and on the relation of human will to God's creative sovereignty. With respect to the second of these concerns, Peleg W. Chandler, in an 1871 article about Jonathan Edwards, objected to the "atrocious" nature of Edwards's doctrines but deemed as noteworthy the resemblance, with respect to the issue of free will, between Edwards and Horace Field. Field was a religious seeker in England whose book, *Heroism; or, God our Father, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent* (1867), maintained that "the only reality is God, and creation but an appearance." According to Field, humanity's experience of free will was also apparational. In his discussion of Field's outlook, Chandler refers to an unnamed author who believes that God creates such "'illusion[s]'" in order that those might be "'correct[ed] by revelation.'" (Might Chandler have had in mind Henry Sr., whose works had been reviewed in *The New Jerusalem Magazine*?) Chandler then relates these assumptions to the outlook on free will harbored by Edwards, as well as to Edwards's emanative view of imputed sin. Chandler concludes that both Field and the unnamed author are essentially advocating the position of Edwards: "[Field] nowhere alludes to Edwards, but, if not familiar with his system, it is a singular coincidence" (*NJM*, 43:596–601). Chandler's observation should hardly come as a surprise: Field, as it turns out, was enamored of the religious philosophy of the senior James to the point of feeling that it opened "'the very door of heaven'" (quoted in Habegger, *Father*, 483). Field also presented Henry Senior with a copy of *Heroism*, inscribed "To Henry James, Esq., With the author's kind regards . . . 20 April 67" (that

book is housed in the library of the Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Mass.). Since Chandler nowhere finds reference to Edwards in Field's text, the Edwardsianism he associates with Field may have been inspired by Field's approval of the Swedenborgian theology of Henry James Sr.¹²

The New Jerusalem Magazine itself sounds Edwardsian in its summation of Swedenborgian benevolence. Although without reference to Malebranche, the magazine consistently reiterates Swedenborg's tenets of love and virtue with rhetoric echoing that of *The Nature of True Virtue*. For instance, an article entitled "Self-Love Essential Evil" (1831) chastises persons who regard "natural affection" as an "essential virtue" and who are so foolish as to believe that unregenerate persons, inspired by "profit" and "self-love," are capable of acting from "disinterested" motives (*NJM*, 4:338). That emphasis finds elaboration in an article about "genuine love for our neighbor" (1835): "merely natural men" are incapable of "a disinterested love of doing good," an action that is ultimately "identical" with "the glory of God" and with the "ultimate end" of beneficence (*NJM*, 8:287, 289, 290). Whether by coincidence or design, this phraseology evokes the concerns of Edwards's *Two Dissertations* with respect to God's end in creation and the relation of that end to benevolence among people.

As *The New Jerusalem Magazine* was published out of Boston, writers for that journal—though without reference to Malebranche—sensed the rhetorical and theological proximity of Swedenborg and Edwards on the issues of self-interest and benevolence but wished to distance themselves from Edwards. In an 1829 article entitled "Jonathan Edwards's Two Dissertations" (*NJM*, 3:155–57), one writer felt compelled to remind "readers what sort of doctrines have been held, even by those who at this time hold a high rank among the orthodox writers." The phrase "even by those" grudgingly acknowledges parallels between orthodox outlooks and the teachings of the New Church. In this reticent spirit, the same writer summarizes the concerns of Edwards's *Concerning the End for which God Created the World* and *The Nature of True Virtue*; he also quotes passages in which Edwards makes God the "end" of "virtue," and in which Edwards regards "the public weal . . . of greater value than . . . particular interest"—features of Edwardsianism compatible with the teachings of Swedenborg.

The difference, says the writer for *The New Jerusalem Magazine*, resides in an untoward attribution of selfishness to God in Edwards's suggestion that "God's virtuous disposition, appearing in love to holiness in the creature, is to be resolved into the same thing with love to himself." While warning that this suggestion of selfishness in God may represent "the most entire and absolute perversion of the truth of which we have any record," the reviewer nonetheless concedes that "even Mr. Edwards could not write such sentiments as these, without anticipating that this objection would arise in the mind of the reader." Thus, while implicitly voicing disdain for

Edwards ("even Mr. Edwards"), the reviewer fairly cites Edwards's demonstration of why notions of the glory of God and humanity's general interest can be entertained simultaneously. Evident here is an ambivalence on the part of American Swedenborgians toward Edwards that recalls a similar ambivalence in Henry James Sr.

Like the elder Henry, though, the reviewer concludes, with respect to true virtue, that Edwards was unfaithful to his own best doctrine. Edwards, claims the reviewer, subverted the doctrine of disinterestedness when celebrating "benevolence to '*being*, simply considered,' or '*being in general*.'" Without bothering to explain that Edwards had, for the purpose of exalting the concept of disinterested benevolence, shown selfishness to be the foundation of familial pretensions to virtue, the reviewer misreads Edwards by claiming that Edwards had settled upon "downright selfishness, as the basis of all virtue." The point of value for the current discussion is that the Swedenborgian reviewer deeply respects the Edwardsian concept of love of Being in general but, like the senior James, implies that Edwards misguidedly advocated an ultimately selfish perspective on benevolence. By implication, then, Swedenborg had not.

The elder Henry eventually traveled beyond Edwards and Swedenborg in his formulation of socialism. Whatever his attraction to the sentiments of each theologian concerning the need to favor the universal and the general over the personal and the particular, neither writer had explicitly developed the political implications of their shared doctrine. Edwards's failure to do so was predictable; Swedenborg, on the other hand, simply found the "race-sentiment" an "impracticable" pursuit, given the "old devout *cre-dos*" that constricted him (SC, 317). Still, the prospect of achieving a socialist state characterized by disinterested benevolence revealed Edwardsian implications, as the senior James suggested in his pronouncement that "the question resolves itself into this: *whether it falls within the scope of divine power to create a virtuous race upon the earth*" (LS, 22). Even Swedenborg, complained the elder Henry, had neglected to adapt his description of angelic love and wisdom—passages that Henry Sr. scored in abundance, as they advocated disinterested affection—to earthly applications (SC, 311).

For Henry James Sr., the challenge was to construct a theory of "actual virtue" that circumvented the specious and ultimately "unrighteous conflict between nature and spirit" (LS, 22). As revealed in the elder James's unpublished manuscript fragments, Swedenborg failed in this regard because, whatever the Swedish mystic's disclosures about "the famine of our selfish hearts towards God," Swedenborg did "almost nothing to satisfy the needs of our social or unselfish reason, by shedding any similar light upon the destiny of the race, or the historic issues of human nature itself" (UMF 46:14). More was needed: one had, finally, to address the nature of true virtue by realizing that nature was not at odds with virtue; man was capable

of achieving "*celestial conditions . . . in natural forms*" because the coming church would "reconcile the hitherto unmanageable fact of self-love with the unimpeded operation of divine laws." Therefore the senior Henry envisioned Swedenborg's *Maximus Homo* as a state resulting from the natural reconciliation of "self-love in man, with the law of universal love in God" (*LS*, 23).

This wish of the senior James to reconcile true virtue and human nature led to his perception of the French social scientist Charles Fourier (1772–1837) as the socialistic thinker whose communitarian *phalansteries* might bring about a heaven on earth. One of the elder Henry's unpublished manuscript fragments mentions the "hidden harmonies which link the natural and spiritual worlds" that were everywhere implied by the French genius. Whereas Swedenborg had sought to "fashion an eternal heaven out of the human race" and had wished to "regenerate our very nature itself, so as to make it an every way fit abode for his eternal indwelling," Fourier, to the mind of the senior James, had done all this through a mechanism that seemed to assure humanity's improved "social existence" (UMF 46:15–19). According to the elder Henry, "human nature was never destined to remain selfish but out of selfish to become social" (UMF 26:159). If Edwards and Swedenborg had stressed the need for general benevolence, Fourier convinced Henry Sr. that "society . . . and not selfishness . . . unlock[s] the secrets of human destiny" (UMF 46:15–19). For Henry Senior the socialistic embodiment of disinterested benevolence—whether harbored by Edwards or Swedenborg—was, finally, the *arcana coelestia*.

3

The Beauty, Spontaneity, and Sociability of Virtue: Henry Senior's Stuyvesant Institute Lectures

DELIVERED IN NEW YORK DURING THE WINTER OF 1850–51, HENRY SENIOR'S SIX lectures at the Stuyvesant Institute led to his lengthy and until now forgotten exchange of letters with the *Christian Inquirer* from 29 February through 3 May 1851. The winter lectures, which he collected in *Lectures and Miscellanies* (1852), were "considerably amplified in passing through the press, as scarcely to fall any longer within the customary lecture-limits" (*L&M*, ix). The lectures evolved out of his *Moralism and Christianity* (1850) and probably owe their considerable elaboration to the attack upon them in the *Christian Inquirer*. Revised and expanded in their published form, the lectures respond, in some measure, to the later newspaper controversy while serving as our only extant guide to what precipitated the debate in the first place.

Edwardsian ideas about "true virtue" pervade these lectures and illuminate important concerns in the newspaper controversy. The editors of the *Christian Inquirer* responded instinctively to the socialism, antimoralism, and lingering Calvinism of the elder James. As we shall observe in chapter 4, their debate with him may well represent the most impressive liberal Christian rejoinder in the nineteenth century to the legacy of Edwards. The lectures themselves, however, are so imbued with a socialistic appropriation of Edwardsian theology as to set the stage for that later clash of ideas between James and his Unitarian detractors.

The first of Henry Senior's six lectures is "Democracy and Its Issues." A pun exists in the word "issues," since the essay wends toward socialism by virtue of the author's belief that democracy leads away from monarchy and aristocracy and toward the more "purely social manifestation," or what he calls the "rule of the whole . . . as against that of a mere majority" (*L&M*, 7, 6). The elder Henry approaches socialism through the categories that had shaped his Edwardsian outlook in *Moralism and Christianity*; he again exalts a general love when celebrating the spontaneous "instincts of the universal

human heart," the broadened "interests of humanity," and "the reign of infinite Love." Whereas Edwards regarded the Holy Spirit as the sole conveyor of a love of Being in general, Henry Senior departs from Edwards over the crucial issue of agency. For James, universal benevolence emerges from "the righteousness of . . . instincts" and from people acting "spontaneously" to "do the right thing in all places and at all times." Thus, Henry Senior modifies the Golden Rule to accommodate that redemptive spontaneity: "Every man will *freely* do unto others as he would have others to do unto him" (*L&M*, 9, 11). Once again Henry James Sr. challenges the deterministic premise of Edwardsianism in his formulation of a love of Being in general as inspired by a human spontaneity existing apart from social contingency or moralism. James equates that spontaneity with the disinterested love of socialism, or what he will later call a "spontaneous and supernatural force" that conveys "virtue" (*L&M*, 291).

Evoking Swedenborgian correspondences to describe a "scientifically adjusted" (*L&M*, 13) harmony between the private and public spheres of social existence, Henry Senior appropriates Edwardsian sentiments to celebrate a socialist program that favors the "universal" over the "private" (*L&M*, 20) and "goodness which is infinite or divine" (*L&M*, 17) over personal pretensions to self-worth. The tendency to value the "universal" over the "private" (*L&M*, 20) remains Edwardsian, but the outcome is socialistic, equating "human unity . . . broadly organized" with the cessation of "class legislation" (*L&M*, 23). While retaining the "sacred individuality" associated with spontaneous disinterestedness, the elder Henry posits a scientific "communism which flows from the free individuality of man" (*L&M*, 25, 26). He predictably deems that state to be antimoralistic, inasmuch as *dutiful* social comportment strikes him as redundant among "perfect humanity" (*L&M*, 31, 34). And because the hierarchy of manhood implied by moralism strikes him as an antidemocratic obstacle to a socialistic Divine Humanity (*L&M*, 37), Henry Senior associates moralism with an anti-utopian outlook on property. That is the topic of his second lecture, "Property as Symbol."

Recalling his concern in *Moralism and Christianity* with true and false *propria*, the second of the New York lectures deduces from "the sentiment of personal property" a "profound humanitarian meaning" (*L&M*, 55, 57)—that of Divine Humanity. This more "universal" *proprium* of selfhood is said to be "absolute and unconditioned upon circumstances." Though the utterance sounds Swedenborgian, by virtue of "an exact correspondence between man spiritually viewed . . . and the entire phenomena of the visible universe" (*L&M*, 60, 61), the inspiration remains Edwardsian in its juxtaposition of the private and general, the particular and universal, and the "merely personal" and "infinite" (*L&M*, 76). Moreover, a socialistic modification of Edwards's denigration of self-interest in *The Nature of True*

Virtue emerges as the lecture links "moral law" and "moral wealth," especially when Henry Senior indicts moralism for being "an affirmation of the sacredness of private property." Such self-gratifying and limited *propria* are said merely to serve a "community of natural interests" (*L&M*, 67, 71, 68) reminiscent of Edwards's disdain for natural, limited, and self-interested pantomimes of virtue.

Far preferable, for James, is the "true virtue" of "manhood," which is "not generated reflectively . . . but spontaneously." This disinterested virtue characterizes "humanity" in its transcendence of "any merely personal difference we exhibit to other men." Modifying Edwards to fit socialistic ends, Henry Senior regards the ignoble "conscious virtue" of moralism to be a merely "private" and therefore a "spurious" imitation of the unconscious (and disinterested, amoral) *propria* of "all things that have life" (*L&M*, 76–79). Here he signifies something akin to an Edwardsian love of Being in general. True virtue is possible only in a socialist state that makes self-interested semblances of virtue—that is, tangible or moral *propria*—dissolve into the genuine, general virtue of brotherhood: "When a perfect society or fellowship obtains among men, it will vacate all those morbid and morbidic *virtues* which grow out of our present social dislocation, out of our present unreconciled *interests*" (*L&M*, 78; emphasis added). This second lecture of Henry Sr. culminates in a celebration of the "unitary and divine man" whom "science" reveals to have universal qualities spontaneously opposed to the "personal," the "private," the "interested," and the "particular" (*L&M*, 78, 79, 89, 90). That man, for Henry Senior, is the Artist, whose spontaneity issues in "some conception of . . . beauty with which . . . his inmost soul is aglow" (*L&M*, 113).

Henry Senior explores that particular subject in his third lecture, "Universality in Art." As in *Moralism and Christianity*, the Artist, for reasons arguably tied to the attraction of the elder James to Edwardsian ideas about true virtue, figures as the prototype of a Swedenborgian Divine Humanity. The very title, "Universality in Art," intimates a connection between aesthetics and Being in general that recalls Edwards's use of true beauty to illustrate the universal tendencies of true virtue. Edwards had stated that "virtue is the beauty of the qualities and exercises of the heart," so that "when it is enquired, what is the nature of true *virtue*? this is the same as to enquire, what that is which renders any habit . . . of the heart truly *beautiful*?" To establish the tie between the truly beautiful and the truly virtuous, Edwards distinguishes "'particular' beauty," which is inferior in its "limited . . . private sphere," from the "'general beauty'" that characterizes something "viewed most perfectly, comprehensively and universally." And just as "true virtue" is divorced from self-interest or utility, so "the beauty there is in true virtue" remains distinct from "connections and consequences" (*WJE*, 8:539–40, 620). Because Edwards emphasizes intrinsic worth over

tangible benefit, his logic anticipates the way that this third lecture raises Art above pedestrian contingency.

Vital to the disinterested vision of beauty and art in the writings of both James and Edwards is the way in which Edwards, following Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), distinguishes between “primary and spiritual beauty consisting in a spiritual union and agreement” and the “secondary kind of beauty, consisting in uniformity and proportion,” and in the “natural agreement of one thing to another” evident in “some adaptedness of the agent to the object.” Moralistic appropriations of such symmetry are said to exist in “relative duties; duties of children to parents, and of parents to children; duties of husbands and wives; duties of rulers and subjects; duties of friendship and good neighborhood” (*WJE*, 8:566–69). However commodious, these relations are neither truly beautiful nor truly virtuous, for “‘virtue’ is a certain kind of beautiful nature, form or quality” that provides an “‘immediately’ pleasant” sensation, “agreeable ‘in itself,’” and unconnected to any other factors that, either through utility or association, urge admiration. “Such . . . indirect agreeableness or eligibleness in things, not for themselves, but for something else, is not . . . beauty” (*WJE*, 8:619). Like gracious affections, accordingly, true beauty must have a foundation of excellence within itself, not from a “conceived relation . . . to self, or self-interest” (*WJE*, 2:240).

Henry Senior, in his consideration of “the nature of Art universally,” recasts Edwardsian ideas about the disinterestedness of true beauty and virtue in terms of humanity’s sovereign spontaneity, which is neither conditioned nor “relative.” For instance, because Art never confesses “the parentage either of necessity or duty,” the elder James classifies a shoemaker as an artisan rather than an artist, mainly because the self-centered economy of shoe-making falls short of a general love for either the enterprise or humanity. Bringing to mind the secondary order of beauty described by Jonathan Edwards, the shoemaker “is animated in his vocation not by any inward attraction to it, *not by an overmastering love* of making shoes, but simply by the desire to make a living for himself and his *family*” (*L&M*, 101–3; emphasis added).

At issue here is the Edwardsian question of “ultimate ends.” When Edwards defines an ultimate end as “that which the agent . . . loves, values and takes pleasure in on its own account, and not merely as a means of a further end,” and when he asserts that such an end is “agreeable . . . in itself, and not merely for the sake of something else” (*WJE*: 8:405, 411), he foreshadows Henry Senior’s definition of Art as that which “involves its own end, or is complete in itself” (*L&M*, 115; cf. 113). For James, therefore, the Artist remains aglow with something akin to an Edwardsian “beauty above nature and beyond the range of our private affections.” As such, the Artist sets the tone for a socialistic utopia characterized by “a universal

spirit manifesting itself in all forms but compromised by none" (*L&M*, 116, 117).

Not wishing, however, for his selfhood to be subsumed by that utopia, Henry Sr. defines individuality as the occasion for, and the potential of, every person to be in contact with the universal. In that sense, "individuality" is said to be a recognition of the "relation between me and universal nature, of a certain unity between my soul and the soul that animates all things" (*L&M*, 124, 125). By that, James means the inspired *proprium* and "genius" that link man with "God or the infinite" (*L&M*, 234). Perhaps realizing the impractical and undesirable prospect of an oversoul of general sameness, Henry Senior concludes "Universality in Art" by stepping back from Edwardsian severity; he speaks of the "equatorial or perfect man" whose "individuality" (*L&M*, 136) is artistically established by an "incessant equilibrium" of such forces as "charity and self-love" and of "good and . . . evil" (*L&M*, 130–31). Art is now said to arrive at the "indifference of the two" in a way that allows people simultaneously to promote "the public good" and advance "their own interests" (*L&M*, 132, 133). Still, this concession to self-interest is nominal, since Henry Senior elsewhere perceives no antagonism between self-interest and social interest in the forthcoming utopia. That so-called "scientific" society emerges in his fourth and fifth lectures, titled "The Old and New Theology."

Quasi-Transcendental, "The Old and New Theology" maintains that "social thralldom" and the sectarian affiliation of "the ritual church" stand in opposition to "a truly divine or perfect life for man on earth" (*L&M*, 140, 142). Whether the Old Theology be that of Calvinism, Unitarianism, Universalism, Roman Catholicism, Presbyterianism, or Mormonism, Henry Senior opposes sectarianism on the grounds that it "presumes a contrariety between God and man which is not merely disclaimed by every advance of science, but which is directly oppugnant to the mission of Jesus." For similar reasons, he laments how the Old Theology places humanity in dependent and (worse) "meritorious" relation to God (*L&M*, 144). This configuration is repugnant to the senior James, who supposes that Christ's efficacy resides in a universal and reciprocal relation featuring "the declaration of a perfect unity between man *as man* and God." Stated otherwise, "to be at one with one's kind, must imply the being at one with God" (*L&M*, 146)—that is, a Divine-Natural Humanity.

Sanctifying secularism justifies the senior Henry's aversion to sectarianism, which "begets the conception of God as a person finited from man by space and time." The elder Henry attributes that shortcoming even to Swedenborgianism, which fails to recognize that God is man and man is God. The New Theology, on the other hand, "disavows every sect, because it authenticates all mankind in avouching God to be the inmost and inseparable life of every man." Adopting a Transcendental rejection of "the literal

or personal facts of the four gospels," including historical facts about "the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ," Henry Senior posits the divinity of "universal man" (*L&M*, 147) on grounds similar to Emerson's belief that "the definition of *spiritual* should be, *that which is its own evidence*" (*ECW*, 3:56). The elder James simply defines that Emersonian postulate as an outcome of social "science": "Doubtless this theology being spiritual constitutes its own evidence, and can neither be much advanced nor much retarded by ratiocination. By its very terms it excludes all outward or miraculous attestation, appealing only to the scientific intellect . . ." (*L&M*, 147).

Nor can social science abide the notion that God's creativity arises from *will*—for to will something is to lack something, and that implies "want" or insufficiency (*L&M*, 152–53). God's creativity is envisioned, instead, as a consummate state of disinterestedness and thus corresponds to the "scientific" aspect of "the *spontaneous*" nature of God, and of his Divine Humanity: "It is precisely here that the immense scientific advantage of the New Theology appears, for in making God creative *in se*, or by dint of His essential perfection, *it necessarily makes the creature His image, and so binds science to the celebration of the divine infinitude*" (*L&M*, 154, 152, 153).

Nowhere is that correspondence between divinity and humanity more important than in Henry Senior's rejection of the Edwardsian premise that man's dependency upon God originates from man's being a mere expression of divine *will*. The senior James takes issue with the notion that "[We are] dependent on his will, and conformed to his will in the manner of our being, as we are for our being itself, and in conformity of our will to his will, on whose will we are . . . most perfectly dependent" (*WJE*, 8:595). To the contrary, "unless our continuance be grounded in something else than the divine will, unless it be grounded in the essential and immutable perfection of God, we have a wretchedly insecure hold upon existence." To circumvent the (Edwardsian) premise of humanity's being "dependent upon [God's] will," the New Theology of Henry Senior "denies that creation is an exhibition of the divine will . . . and affirms it to be the operation rather of the essential perfection of God" (*L&M*, 154–55). Yet, insofar as that perfection culminates in the Divine Humanity, the elder James can champion the humane ideal of self-willed spontaneity—"what gives dignity to man is, that he unlike all other existences possesses a soul, that is to say, finds his principle of action exclusively within him" (*L&M*, 220)—that he elsewhere describes as a precondition for universal, general love. In these and other respects, Henry Senior is both liberated from but indebted to Jonathan Edwards.

Creative ambivalence likewise appears in James's effort to humanize Christ. He does so by distinguishing between the "finite personal side" of

Christ, as confronted by the Jews, and the "infinite and spiritual side" (*L&M*, 156) that betokens the divinity in every person. This spiritual side conforms to Edwards's sense of a virtuous "*union with Being in general*" (*WJE*, 8:548). Henry Senior, who harbors an anthropomorphic regard for the Savior, describes a related temperament that "lifted [Christ] out of all *private or partial affinities*, and gave him *unity with universal man*." James sounds Edwards-like (recalling the concerns of *The Nature of True Virtue*) in his suggestion that any adoration of Jesus "in behalf of his own personal glory" rather than "in behalf of universal man" perversely sees in Christ "an ulterior selfish aim" behind the appearance of "purest benevolence" (*L&M*, 156-57; emphasis added).

Similarly reminiscent of assumptions that inform *The Nature of True Virtue* is Henry Senior's criticism of orthodox ideas about blood atonement. That concept ascribes to the Deity natural motives of rapacious instinct that negate true virtue: "The relation between God and man induced by this transaction" evokes "the relation of indifference which the vulture is under to the dove, which the tiger is under to the lamb, when once its hunger has been effectually appeased" (*L&M*, 160). Raising a point that will prove central to his quarrel with the *Christian Inquirer*, Henry Senior remarks that the Old Theology so imbues humanity with an "abject fear" (*L&M*, 159) of the Deity as to alienate people from Him, and thus from their Divine Humanity.

Society structured around Divine Humanity would liberate itself from notions of a personal Christ or of personalized standards and hierarchies of morality that tend, in the judgment of Henry Senior, to separate people from one another and from their own divinity. To make that point in "The Old and New Theology," he resorts to the old standby of berating "the fanatical sanctity the Jew arrogated to himself" when Christ was "the vindicator of universal man" (*L&M*, 162; cf. 182). The love of Christ for an "enlarged humanity" helps Henry Sr. conclude that "God is one and his creature one." As such, Christ "represents universal man" (*L&M*, 163) and thereby renders absurd the concept of, or necessity for, either a covenanted people or a divine mediator infinitely elevated above humanity (*L&M*, 172). Anticipating a key point of contention between himself and the *Christian Inquirer*, Henry Senior maintains that Christ had no quarrel with "man as man," but only with conventional notions of personal righteousness as espoused by "the Scribe and Pharisee" (*L&M*, 173).

James similarly faults proponents of "the current morality" for believing that Christ respected "finite," as opposed to "infinite," righteousness. In so doing, they subject Christ to a less-than-virtuous status by suggesting that "his enterprise of benevolence" was somehow compromised by the same "ulterior selfish end" exhibited by persons who "aspired to the divine communion by the purely negative method of differencing [themselves]

from others" on grounds of morality-laden "righteousness." Quite the opposite is true, for the elder Henry: Christ avowed his common humanity by finding himself in the "most genial and friendly relation" with "the sinner not the saint, the harlot not the Pharisee." The point arising out this recourse to Edwardsian ideas about true virtue is anthropomorphic and implicitly socialistic: "God is one, and his creature one" (*L&M*, 174, 173, 175). Seeking thus to eradicate any "antagonism between God and man" or between man and man, Henry Senior appeals to the "light of [social] science" to "bring down heaven to earth, or what is the same thing, to sanctify the secular life of man" (*L&M*, 189–91).

That same object informs Henry Senior's fifth lecture, a continuation of "The Old and New Theology" that returns to Edwardsian categories to advance a socialist agenda. Featured, again, is the outcry against the "private tie" of a Jewish covenant standing in opposition to Christ's mission of "universal brotherhood" (*L&M*, 196), while orthodox respect for the historical person of Jesus is said to deny the true virtue of the deity—"the whole *beneficent* work of the Christ"—by negating his universal incarnation in humanity and "converting Jesus into a monster of *self-seeking*" preoccupied with "personal supremacy." Decrying (with Edwardsian rhetoric) "the *instincts* of a low prudence or expediency" to which orthodoxy panders in thus "contemning the spirit of humanity" (*L&M*, 199, 201; emphasis added), Henry Senior celebrates a humane manifestation of Christ transcending the "personal" and "private" (*L&M*, 204). Bringing to mind Edwards's reverence for benevolence to Being in general, the elder Henry distinguishes "between that worship which springs up spontaneously in the soul, and legitimates or seeks every *living* form of expression, and that which is . . . enforced only by considerations of future profit and loss" (*L&M*, 214). In this juxtaposition of benevolence and self-interest, Henry Senior again employs Edwardsian rhetoric and categories to validate the notion of a Divine Humanity.

What the elder Henry salvages from orthodoxy is an assumption of the equality of all souls before God, including those of "the harlot, the thief, the drunkard" (*L&M*, 206). To his mind, self-promoting claims to personal gradations of righteousness impede the scientific basis of God's universal expression in a humanitarian spirit, the positive outcome of which ought to be "the absolute unity of the divine and human natures" (*L&M*, 232, 237–38). The "science" behind this outlook occupies the last of the six lectures, which in many respects is the most Edwardsian in tone and tenor.

Entitled "The Scientific Accord of Natural and Revealed Religion," the lecture at first modifies categories reminiscent of Bishop Butler's *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (1736) to infer from the harmony of nature and revelation a program of socialism. In 1827, Thomas Chalmers had advised Henry Senior

to read Butler's *Analogy*,¹ and the senior James appears to have done so diligently enough to have retained sufficient mastery of the text to have steered its assumptions, over two decades later, toward socialism. Whereas Butler had sought to defend the miracles of scripture by way of analogy to equally incredible, but nonetheless factual, events in nature, the last of Henry Senior's six lectures depicts the accord of the divine and the human in a socialistic state of being. Believing not only in the analogy of the human and the divine, but in their ultimate confluence, Henry Senior feels compelled to challenge the processes of naturalistic reasoning that prevent humanity's recognition that there is "no revelation of [Christ] possible save through man" (*L&M*, 294–95).

First, James contends that "revealed religion" connotes "the union of the divine and the human." Advocates of natural religion ignorantly assume that divinity resides in some power "superior to nature" (*L&M*, 248) and therefore external to human nature. How, then, explain the discrepancy between God's reality—as attested with some success by natural religion—and the divine immanence in man propounded by revealed religion? Their reconciliation comes through an understanding of the way natural religion comprises a halfway station to the spiritual fact of a Divine-Natural Humanity.

A belief in a divinity superior to man ranks foremost among James's objections to natural theology. Such misplaced attestations of a Deity are vestiges of primitive man's fear of natural changes—shifts from heat to cold, from pleasure to pain, from light to darkness. A Deity external to human nature conveniently accounts for these breaches of continuity and at the same time affords an opportunity for unevolved man to impose the "idea of personality" upon the imagined source of such power (*L&M*, 253, 259). Hence, the "infant mind" of the race is prone to superstition—and ultimately to polytheistic formulations that cause humanity further to divest its own identity of the garb of divinity. That state of ignorance simultaneously postpones the advent of the "divine *humanity*" while enabling people to remain "ignorant of the advantages which flow from organized society or fellowship" (*L&M*, 259, 262–63).

Still, Henry Senior credits this superstitious, religious mindset for rightly inferring that a special affinity exists between God and man, and that God possesses a "livelier sympathy with humanity than with mere nature." That inference is the "famous first step which involves all the rest"—by which James means a "spiritual evolution" affirming "the humanity of God" (*L&M*, 264–65), or "the realization of the unity of the divine and human natures" (*L&M*, 267). To defend this communal, unitary outlook on divinity, Henry Senior summons an Edwardsian critique of family affection: were social unity to embrace "the family only"—or, by implication, any other limited or privileged group—then the "spiritual recognition of the divine unity"

would be hampered by a restrictive and exclusive covenant psychology. Failing to manifest a universal and "broadly human" love for all men, the God of such a religious system would know no "sympathy with man as man, but only as Egyptian, Jew, or Roman." Implicit here is the demise of monotheism for persons who would partition the "divine regard" (*L&M*, 275-77) by denying the unity of God as manifest in a socialistic Divine-Natural Humanity.

To the extent, therefore, that Henry Senior wishes "to develop in universal man a certain divine force" (*L&M*, 281), Edwardsian rhetoric characterizes those sections of the sixth lecture that advance the socialistic agenda—phrased in terms of human unity—that James regards as supportive of monotheism. He speaks, for instance, of enlarging the sphere of sympathy and intelligence from a "narrow" dependence on "natural relations" to an "enlarged sphere" of association approaching the "development in the race" of "the unity of . . . man" (*L&M*, 284-85). Although the elder James invokes the ideas of Swedenborg and Auguste Comte on social and intellectual progress, the presence of Edwards reverberates throughout these socialistic musings, which daringly emphasize the ultimate parity of man and God.

Crucial, in this regard, is the way in which the elder Henry speaks of the God-Man as exercising "a virtue" divorced from "any obligation either of necessity or duty," inasmuch as respect for social contingency amounts to self-interest. Instead, the God-Man exercises a "spontaneous or supernatural force—that which attaches to his inmost self exclusively, and denies any outward inspiration" (*L&M*, 291). Having equated spontaneity with something akin to the disinterestedness of Edwardsian virtue, Henry Senior sees in this spontaneity a link between Divine and human will that establishes "a connection of absolute *solidarity*" between Jesus and "the rest of mankind, making us the legitimate heirs and fellows of his splendor" (*L&M*, 294). Although Jesus may not have "perceived the immense scientific bearing of his own pretension" (*L&M*, 297), James portrays the advance of history as the unfolding of the basically socialistic purpose of the Christ.

Toward the conclusion of his sixth lecture, Henry Senior becomes more openly political in charting the tendency of "the Christ, or divine man" to address "the lowest and most oppressed aspects of humanity." Seeing in the Christian equality of all souls before God "the blood red wine of democracy . . . infused into the veins of mankind, there to generate incalculable political and social issues" (*L&M*, 302-3), the senior James posits the "spiritual unity and equality" championed by Christ as synonymous with an "auspicious social democracy, whose utterances are as yet infantile and stammering" (*L&M*, 306, 307). Foreshadowing his forthcoming newspaper exchange with the *Christian Inquirer*, Henry Senior identifies humanity

with its Deity and claims that the vice of drunkenness will not be resolved through personal initiative, but only through “the gradual elevation of entire humanity out of the mire of self-contempt, and into the unlimited fellowship of Christ’s divinity” (*L&M*, 309).

Here, of course, the elder James implies that social structure, rather than personal character or turpitude, occasions the ills of society. And having—by the time he finally published his significantly expanded lectures—endured his three-month, often humiliating debate with the *Christian Inquirer*, Henry Senior perhaps took added satisfaction in ending his sixth lecture by stressing the opposition between gospel truth and “class-interests” (*L&M*, 310), for he does so as part of a closing attack against the institution of the priesthood. According to the elder Henry, “the clergy of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston” have virtually gone on “holiday” when confronted with the social ills of “ignorance, intemperance, licentiousness and loathsome want,” all the while collecting unwarrantable “tithes” (*L&M*, 313–14). In sum, the clergy had come to typify class privilege, social injustice, and the main obstacle to a public recognition of “The Scientific Accord of Natural and Revealed Religion.”

Lacking the original manuscripts of the New York lectures, we must continue to speculate about the degree to which Henry Sr. enlarged his lectures well beyond their original length. He doubtless did so, in part, to respond to the objections of his Unitarian critics in the New York *Christian Inquirer*. As the following chapter reveals, those objections were devastating, especially with regard to the newspaper’s two-front attack upon Henry Senior’s personal character and the old dogma of Edwardsian disinterestedness.

4

“The old dogma of disinterestedness”: Henry Senior and the *Christian Inquirer*

SO WELL RECEIVED WERE THE SIX LECTURES AT THE STUYVESANT INSTITUTE DURING the winter of 1850–51 that Henry Senior thought he had found his calling at last: “Of one thing at all events no doubt remains,” he wrote Edmund Tweedy. “All parties unite in telling me that I must do nothing else for a living, but disseminate the gospel of the divine humanity now henceforth and forever.” For reasons other than the leisure afforded him by inherited wealth, the elder James had reason to aspire to a career in lecturing. He was a devoted thinker and writer; he had received generous praise for his lectures; he had even been classed alongside Emerson in the *New York Tribune*. As one scholar remarks, Henry Sr. would “never be more famous” than he was directly following the New York lectures.¹

The elder Henry, elated about his new profession, made plans several months in advance to repeat the lectures at Boston’s Masonic Temple, where Emerson and others were to be in attendance. Henry Senior boarded a train for that purpose the day before the opening lecture, on 4 November 1851, but he cancelled the series and returned to New York in anguish, claiming to be ill. He more likely suffered from nervous uncertainty about the quality and potential reception of his lectures, for he asked James T. Fisher, who had arranged his Boston visit, to tell Emerson that the lectures were undergoing improvement. “Something other than a physical indisposition,” remarks Habegger, “had destroyed the lecturer’s resolution. Whatever it was—disappointing ticket sales, some critical remark from Emerson or Fisher, some hint of Boston’s keen-eyed intellectual hauteur—James hadn’t been able to face it.”²

Henry Senior told Fisher that the revised lectures would “do my thought so much more justice” and “be *perfectly* apprehended.”³ Does this not imply that the lectures had already been imperfectly apprehended in some

widely discussed public forum? Indeed, on 30 October 1851, the elder Henry voiced outright insecurity about these lectures: in a letter to Emerson, he complained about the “loud-mouthed imbecility” of the lectures but defended the essential “thought which is in them, or rather seems to me to struggle to be in them.” For some reason, James now thought it impossible for those lectures directly to convey “vital truth”; at most, they could “plant some rude formula” for truth in the memories of auditors whose “spiritual chemistry” might facilitate their intellectual liberation. As for his newfound skepticism about the capacity of his lectures to impart truth—he would soon abandon the profession of lecturing altogether—Henry Senior blamed organized religion: “Our crazy theologies forbid ideas to come into action any further than our existing institutions warrant” (*TWJ*, 1:71–72).

This attack upon institutional Christianity, in the context of the disillusionment of Henry Senior about the capacity of his lectures to effect immediate reform, may have been inspired, in part, by a lengthy, exacting exchange of letters between him and the New York *Christian Inquirer*, a weekly Unitarian newspaper founded in 1846 by William Kirkland. Following that newspaper’s harsh review on 29 February 1851 of the six Stuyvesant lectures, James and the newspaper each generated six heated letters through 3 May of that year. The exchange, which occupied numerous columns of the *Christian Inquirer*, was among the most important—and perhaps the most excruciating—of the senior James’s career. Yet those letters have evaded scholarly cognizance, thereby preventing students of Henry Senior from realizing that he later transformed several of his letters to the *Christian Inquirer* into the so-called “A Very Long Letter” addressed to a fictitious “MY DEAR ———” in *Lectures and Miscellanies* (1852). In that volume, Henry Senior did not remind readers of the existence of the *Christian Inquirer*’s often virulent—and consistently devastating—ripostes.

Who wrote the *Christian Inquirer*’s unattributed responses to Henry Senior? A search of the Henry Whitney Bellows Papers, located at the Massachusetts Historical Society, reveals that Bellows (1814–82), a Unitarian minister in New York City, single-handedly took on the elder James. Known in Unitarian circles as the intellectual heir of William Ellery Channing, Bellows had been the chief editor of the *Christian Inquirer* from October 1846 (following Kirkland’s death) through June 1850. He was, moreover, in the audience at Henry Senior’s New York lectures.⁴

The Bellows Papers reveal that Bellows was ambivalent about the lectures of Henry Senior. On the one hand, he could tell the Reverend Nathaniel Langdon Frothingham, a Unitarian clergyman in Boston, that Henry Senior offered “a brilliant course of Lectures, theoretically no worse than Emersons [*sic*] & far better in some aspects.” On the other hand, Bellows insisted that the elder James countenanced “pestilent abominations.” Moreover, while advising Cyrus A. Bartol that Henry Senior “is worth twenty

honourable Churchman. I want liberty to be as other-
wise as a heterodox as I choose - a thing not
permitted in our ranks yet, where a baptised
Unitarian turns up its nose at the ab-
solute egotism or even the more insipid
mediocrity. I hope I shall persuade
somebody in the course of ten years that
my comrade has as regular a law, as their
satellite - but whether or no, I have no
intention of cutting off any portion of my
tail to prevent its catching fire in the sun
or dropping off ^{with cold} in a ^{hypothermic} space.
I've been busy as a beaver since we parted.
How long is that? My winter has been a
very satisfactory one. I have a pile of
far better work, than I ever made in the
same space before, & feel as if I had no
right to rest. Yesterday I finished my
lengthy response to Mr. James, who finishes
up in this week's paper. My two re-
maining articles appear in this & the
next Inquirer. When Wentworth, tell me how
it looks. I think I have done exceedingly
well - if no where else. If not obliged to
follow him, I could of course have treated the
subject much better & more exhaustively.

Henry Whitney Bellows to Cyrus Augustus Bartol. 24 April 1851. Bellows discloses his primary authorship of all *Christian Inquirer* letters directed at Henry James Sr. Henry Whitney Bellows Papers, courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

T[heodore]. Parkers, O[restes]. Brownsons & Allcotts [*sic*]," Bellows could predict that the elder Henry's "radicalism will frighten all but the sagacious." Wary of Bellows's partial admiration for a socialist freethinker, Bartol answered, "I must try to shake you a little from your admiration." As the debate progressed, Bellows did not disappoint Bartol, who eventually wrote, "Indeed throughout you have handled the argument so far as I can see perfectly to this conclusive confutation." The degree to which Bellows was thought to have bettered the senior James is conveyed in Bartol's opinion that James's "philosophy is fatuity, & contains beggings of the question, reasonings in a circle & reductiones ad absurdum without end—I am glad you have published him for the sake of your own clear & beautiful replies which I think must have used up his peculiarities for the readers of the *Inquirer*."⁵

The theological outlook of the elder Henry was radically at odds with that of Bellows. Indeed, Henry Senior would have been a predictable target for Bellows, whose sermons, discourses, and newspaper editorials were critical of individuals who (like Henry Senior and Emerson) "depersonalize" Christ.⁶ Also, the *Christian Inquirer*'s quarrel with the Transcendental and socialistic outlook of the senior James is in accord with Bellows's general skepticism about the secular tendencies of Transcendentalism. That theme finds later elaboration in Bellows's *Religious Education from Within and from Above* (1857) and *The Suspense of Faith* (1859). The idea of a Divine Humanity—whether Transcendental or socialistic—comes under attack in Bellows's faulting Emerson, in *Suspense*, for "making the . . . human and the divine . . . one and the same." Moreover, Bellows's response to Emerson in the late 1850s features the same espousal of human depravity found in the 1851 assault upon the socialism of Henry Senior.⁷ Fighting radical brushfires with hellfire was within Bellows's liberal Christian repertoire.

With respect to socialism, it is worth noting that Bellows had toured France in May of 1848, a few months following the country's most recent revolution. His letters to the *Christian Inquirer* exhibited an open-mindedness about the revolution's "ultimate beneficence," mainly because Bellows viewed the event as a harbinger of "civil and social regeneration" to be brought about by "constitutional government" and "just laws." By 1851, however, the Fourieristic socialism of Henry Senior struck the *Christian Inquirer* as entirely lawless in tendency, especially in its advocacy of uninhibited passion and instinct. Bellows had certainly not bargained on that as a dimension of "popular rights."⁸ He eventually allied himself more closely with the newspaper's 5 August 1848 attack upon "The French Ouvrier." In those columns, the *Christian Inquirer* denounced a "socialist revolution" featuring mere "anarchy" and bloodshed. Whatever the cries of "'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité'" reported by Bellows in the 15 July 1848 issue of the *Christian Inquirer*, the newspaper's 5 August columns recog-

nized that the revolutionary spirit was essentially godless, and therefore immoral in tendency: "The great difficulty is, that France lacks religion. . . . She needs the ten commandments more than a new charter." By 1851, faced with Henry Senior's anti-moralistic socialism, Bellows, alert to radicalism at home, prepared for the battle.

Bellows's columns in the *Christian Inquirer*, intermixed with the lengthy rejoinders of Henry Senior, belie William James's claim that the clergy of that era dared not break a "blank silence" with "passionate and definite resistance" to his father's ideas. The alleged absence of "the faintest tremulation on [the] stagnant pool" (*LR*, 12) of the clerical milieu is an inaccurate summary of Unitarian New York's published challenge to the theological ideas of his father. Since the *Christian Inquirer* had Boston subscribers and a "Boston Correspondent," the lucid and compelling responses to Henry Senior in that paper would have circulated in Boston, en route to which city the elder James experienced such anxiety over the quality of the lectures he had believed canonical.

The exchange of letters reveals the extremes to which Unitarians could still go in confirming humanity's fallen condition when liberal Christianity was confronted with the utopian and ultimately deterministic and antinomian tenet that sin resides in society rather than in human nature. Mainstream Unitarians, of course, were appalled already by the Transcendental tendencies of their radical brethren. What to make of an even more egregious radicalism, one that lay all blame for human shortcomings on social organization and other factors external to the faculty of human will? As Bartol remarked to Bellows, with an eye to Henry Senior, "we cannot consort with all the free-thinking of the time—James,—Miss Martineau," among others. "When both Christian doctrine & morals are dissolved in *speculation*, we begin to think there is something wrong in the *menstruum*."⁹ Confronted with Henry Senior, Bellows sided conservatively with the *Christian Inquirer's* "Prospectus" concerning "Reform," as articulated on 7 April 1849: "We commit ourselves to the care and direction of Gospel truth, . . . not promising that we may not go further than the van of ultraism, nor that we may not lag behind the rear of the most conservative." Might conservatism have appealed to Bellows and other Unitarians who saw in the ultraism of Henry Senior an enlarged picture of themselves, with respect to the philosophical and political tendencies of denying the divinity of Christ and of glorifying human nature to the point of having the Divine Humanity displace an external and transcendent God?

The question has more than theoretical pertinence. In 1846, William Henry Channing, writing as Secretary of the American Union of Associationists at Brook Farm, hinted at the connection between Unitarian theology and socialism with his threefold motto:

"Unity of man with man in true society,
 "Unity of man with God in true religion,
 "Unity of man with nature in creative art and industry."

By 1870, John Humphrey Noyes openly presumed the intertwining of Unitarianism and socialism by claiming that his Oneida community "really issued from a conjunction between the Revivalism of Orthodoxy and the Socialism of Unitarianism." Giving special attention to the Unitarian clergyman William Henry Channing's earlier socialism in the 1840s, Noyes believed that the history of contention between Calvinists and Unitarians amounted to a contest between religious and political ways of structuring life: Calvinism "had for its function the carrying through of the Revival system"; Unitarianism, "the development of Socialism."¹⁰

Noyes could infer as much from the fact that the leading participants of the Brook Farm association—Ripley, Dana, Channing, Dwight, and Hawthorne—had struck his contemporaries as issuing "as much from transcendental Unitarianism as from Fourierism." He also knew that in 1844 Elizabeth Palmer Peabody had attributed to William Henry Channing (the "eloquent expounder of Socialism") the "spirit of his great kinsman," William Ellery Channing. Indeed, Noyes went so far as to praise the development of "American Socialism" as "the main significance of . . . Unitarianism." After all, "Unitarianism produced Transcendentalism; Transcendentalism produced Brook Farm; Brook Farm married and propagated Fourierism; Fourierism had Swedenborgianism for its religion; and Swedenborgianism led the way to Modern Spiritualism."¹¹ In the early 1850s, however, these various conclusions would have perplexed the less-activist Unitarians who confronted the spiritual socialism of Henry Senior. If, as the orthodox thought, Transcendentalism was Unitarianism gone to seed, then moderate Unitarians should not, through sheer neglect of Henry Senior, abide the weeds of socialistic license and determinism nourished by their own glorification of human nature and their humanization of Christ.

Socialistic determinism could, after all, turn tyrannical: in 1856–58, Henry Senior praised the 1851 Second Empire dictatorship of Louis-Napoleon. For the elder Henry, political consensus evolving out of the perfection of the Divine Humanity was apparently too long in coming to allow for the confusion and obstructionism inherent in democratic autonomy. Whereas, in 1850, James had lectured about democracy's leading up to socialism, by 1866 he saw such progress being stymied; he therefore deduced that the state should not distinguish between "public and private interests," and he condemned fractious democracy as the "the crowning invention of human stupidity." Earlier, despite the imprisonment and execution of liberals and the silencing of the press under the Second Empire, Henry Senior informed the New York *Tribune* that Louis-Napoleon was a

clever socialist who had consolidated power in himself to compensate for the factionalism of the regular French socialists. The elder James euphemistically rationalized tyranny and murder by arguing that "the political evolution of mankind is ended, and . . . it only remains to inaugurate their social evolution in an orderly manner."¹² In other words, the end justifies the means, so long as the end is utopian and therefore not subject to debate.

The *Christian Inquirer's* 1851 responses to James's New York lectures reveal the degree to which liberal Christians felt obliged to combat the deterministic tendencies of American socialism. For a historian of philosophical radicalism, the exchange of letters would be worth recounting for that reason alone. But there is more. Cut off by the paper, which insisted on the "final word," Henry Senior appears to have concluded his forays through the overall form and structure of *Lectures and Miscellanies* (1852). That volume commences with the "improved" New York lectures, which Henry Sr. says were "considerably amplified in passing through the press" (ix). The "miscellanies," which until now have appeared to be random additions to the volume, are actually quite relevant to the newspaper exchange and arranged in such a way in *Lectures and Miscellanies* so as—without explicitly mentioning the controversy—further to rebut, and even to ridicule, the assumptions advanced by the *Christian Inquirer* a year earlier. Henry Senior was thereby able to refute his Unitarian critics without resurrecting their public criticism of him. In *Lectures and Miscellanies*, the disguised "A Very Long Letter" functions this way, as do Henry Senior's other "miscellanies."

For this reason, readers of *Lectures and Miscellanies* need to review as a foreground the epistolary battle between Henry Senior and Henry Whitney Bellows. If *Lectures and Miscellanies* was James's "most ambitious book to date,"¹³ it was so, in large measure, because of the exacting exchange of ideas between the elder Henry and the *Christian Inquirer* that had taken place from 29 February 1851 through 3 May 1851, and because of the revisions the newspaper controversy precipitated up to the time that the expanded lectures went to press in March 1852.

What follows is more than a summary and analysis of each letter in the newspaper exchange between Henry Senior and the *Christian Inquirer*. This chapter seeks to focus on the newspaper's recognition of the elder Henry's Edwardsianism, as implied by the volley of ideas pertaining to "the old dogma of disinterestedness."

("MR. HENRY JAMES'S LECTURES," *Christian Inquirer*, 29 February 1851, 1–2)

In this first notice of Henry Senior's lectures, Bellows says that "we have never listened to any course of lectures of a more exciting and suggestive character." That flattering assessment did not, however, preclude a sum-

mary judgment of Henry Senior as a "dangerous thinker and reckless speaker." While granting that the elder James had set forth a "complete system of religious philosophy," Bellows mocks him for being both like and unlike "a Pantheist, a Swedenborgian, an Emersonian, [and] a Socialist." In these and in other terms, Bellows distances moderate Unitarians from Transcendentalism. (How much more threatening Henry Senior's socialism must have seemed— given, first, its untenable elevation of human nature and, second, the implied determinacy of historical materialism and its absolving of people from personal sin and responsibility.)

The *Christian Inquirer* retreats just long enough from Unitarian praise for human nature to address the abandonment of accountability implicit in James's view that man is perfect and that evil evolves from corrupt social organization. While Bellows applauds the elder Henry's high regard for "humanity," he rejects Henry Senior's admiration for "the spontaneous, involuntary, passionate part of us." That, he claims, stands to obliterate "all moral distinctions." In a reversal of Unitarian confidence in human rectitude, Bellows argues that Henry Senior's glorification of the Divine Humanity erroneously sees human character as being at all times "pure, holy, disinterested, [and] Christlike." But since human spontaneity actually partakes of "gross, selfish, [and] unholy" elements, the elder James's philosophy appears "vile and degrading in its tendencies." Moreover, in juxtaposing the "disinterested" with the "selfish," Bellows seems aware of an Edwardsian underpinning to Henry Senior's lectures. Bellows's response coincides with his quarrel, elsewhere, with Transcendentalism;¹⁴ in both cases Bellows draws upon Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue* to criticize unwarrantable or utopian exaltation of human nature.

At issue was moral accountability. Unable to abide the socialistic premise that all differences of character are attributable to "society," which supposedly "tyranniz[es] over humanity" and is liable for "the wickedness and vice of the world," Bellows instead ascribes corruption directly to "man's nature." In so doing, he champions the personal responsibility that evolves from the idea of human freedom cherished by Unitarians. Socialistic claims about a spotless human nature misdirected by the non-"scientific" structuring of capitalist society evoke for Bellows a disgust reminiscent of Unitarian objections to the determinism of Calvinists. The "fatal power of circumstances" purportedly evident in socialism, says Bellows, resurrects "the doctrine of hereditary depravity" and the "involuntary" baggage that Bellows associates with Henry Senior's "passional" outlook.

Because the resulting "moral indifference" appears to abandon the "distinction between those who do right and those who do wrong," Bellows claims that "Mr. James's theory might be taught in hell with just as much truth and just as little comfort as it is on earth." So, too, Henry Senior's socialistic assumption that God does not hate sinners, but only sin: that

speculation overlooks the "personal character" in which the "ethical element" manifests itself. While Unitarianism disowns the concept of imputed sin, the socialistic method of "relieving man's conscience or whole nature from disrespect" seems radically wrong to Bellows, and for reasons pertaining to free will. Deftly anticipating Henry Senior's belief that "the vicious man invites our sorrow, for he is the victim of habits against which his will is powerless,"¹⁵ Bellows refuses to ascribe "the origin of sin" to "governmental and other accidents." He instead concludes that sin touches "man's essential nature." Just as Channing had chided Calvinism for robbing humans of freedom and responsibility, so, by 1851, Bellows found it necessary, when examining the utopian and deterministic premises of socialism, to safeguard voluntaristic theology by resuscitating the bosom serpent. With respect to the evolution of American church history, that is the most important feature of the *Christian Inquirer's* opening cannonade upon the elder Henry.

("LETTER OF MR. JAMES," *Christian Inquirer*, 8 March 1851, 2)

Though Henry Senior had chosen not to answer the charges of "A New Antinomianism" leveled by the *Christian Inquirer* in its 13 April 1850 review of *Moralism and Christianity*, he responded immediately when the newspaper attacked his New York lectures. His opening remarks go to the heart of the matter: "I am supposed to be in error upon the point of moral responsibility." To refute this charge, while maintaining the integrity—and finally the divinity—of human nature, the elder James distinguishes between responsibility of the sort that the *Christian Inquirer* assigns to human "character" and responsibility for one's "actions." The causes of, and motives for, the latter may be justifiable (as in killing for reasons of self-defense) or simply, and more usually, the fault of society. Nor does Henry Senior tolerate the antinomian stereotype of his rejection of "moralism": "natural conscience," he claims, is at least sufficient to have people be generally accountable for their actions, although good Christians must recognize that homage to natural conscience must be superseded by "the profounder revelation of righteousness in the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Here, as he would time and again during his career, the senior James evokes the insufficiency of ethics in Christianity. What is needed, he implies, is greater reliance upon Christ. Still, Bellows recognized that, for Henry Senior—as occasionally for Emerson (in the Divinity School Address, for instance)—Christ is finally subsumed within humanity. Bellows feared that the elder James had carried either the Unitarian and Transcendental humanization of Christ to an untenable—that is, a socialistic—outcome.

When pondering pre-utopian society, Henry Senior maintained a somewhat rhetorical distinction between Christ and humanity; at best, humanity

exercised an "imperfect righteousness," but never a state of sinfulness. In fact, in the *Christian Inquirer* columns penned by Henry Senior—which precede that part of his career in which he deals with sin as a phenomenalistic form awaiting spiritual creation and redemption—he conceptualizes "sin" as a "a purely legal relation of man to God, whether the law which vitalizes the relation be that of the private conscience, or some established social institution." The elder Henry thereby positions himself to acquit human nature of turpitude by laying the blame and responsibility for sin at the doorstep of the unscientifically structured (i.e., capitalistic) society.

Seeking thus to dissociate "sin" from "character," the senior James refers—as he would repeatedly in years to come—to the love of Jesus *not* for the "devout and honorable classes" but for the harlot, the adulterer, the liar, and the murderer. He asserts the enmity of Christ for "existing moral distinctions among men," since "the end of the gospel was to relieve, and not intensify, man's conscience of sin." For Henry Senior, only a small step exists from Christ's apparent disregard for the inner character of humanity to the socialistic premise that what is deemed to be sinful behavior merely obeys "the influences of . . . natural and social environment." From the point of view of "science" (by which James means social science, or socialism), the only righteousness is that reflected in the "gift of God to universal man."

Here drawing silently upon the criteria for true virtue espoused by Swedenborg and Edwards, Henry Senior disdains the "narrowness" of anything other than universal sanctity. Thus, whatever his "private affection" for many such persons whom he counts as friends, he sees "that their social position is disastrous to the interests of humanity." By implication, with regard to an impending socialism, the elder Henry displaces the Holy Spirit with the secular—but still universal—spirit of humanity. Having elsewhere maintained that Jonathan Edwards would "'make the best possible reconciler and critic of . . . philosophy'" (NSB 347), Henry Senior now channels Edwards's universal and disinterested criteria for true virtue to socialistic ends. By the fourth installment of the newspaper exchange, the *Christian Inquirer* would identify and provocatively address that Edwardsianism.

("REMARKS ON MR. JAMES'S LETTER," *Christian Inquirer*, 8 March 1851, 2)

Responding, in the same issue of the newspaper, to the 8 March letter from James, the *Christian Inquirer* locates a main point of difference in his nullification, through Christ's atonement, of "'existing moral distinctions among men'" and in his belief that "'the end of the gospel was to relieve, and not intensify[,] man's conscience of sin.'" With respect to such passages, Bellows recognizes a tie between socialism and antinomianism: Henry Senior's views of (social) "science" wrongfully encourage the idea

that "sin is an accident, growing out of human circumstances" that will supposedly vanish in a political utopia. To that assumption, Bellows retorts—with unexpected orthodoxy and vigor—that "sin is an evil disposition of the soul." Neither Thomas Hooker nor Nathaniel Hawthorne could have sounded more Calvinistic in advocating a "fountain of all injustice, folly, wrong, misery, in the selfish and wicked heart of man." As in his criticism of Transcendentalism, Bellows thus borrows a Calvinist lance to joust with socialistic determinism.

Nevertheless, while acknowledging that Jesus showed contempt for a pharisaic holiness, Bellows still holds that Christ would have valued "men *really holy and good*," such as John the Baptist, Nathaniel, Matthew, Zaccheus, and Lazarus. Bellows therefore relinquishes an orthodox stance by challenging Henry Senior's denial of "any meritorious goodness" in people, for that outlook of the elder James tends toward antinomianism by discouraging "any complacency of the good, any discomplacency of the bad." The abandonment of moral distinctions, says Bellows, urges a cessation of moral "anxiety" and thereby abolishes "moral (i.e. human) responsibility." Because Bellows locates "goodness and righteousness" in "an essential rectitude of heart," he veers sharply around his initial emphasis on a true awareness of sin, hoping to derail the unwelcome boxcar of socialism now linked to the progressive train of ideas espoused by Christian liberalism.

Bellows similarly challenges Henry Senior's ideas about moralism's being the mere similitude of virtue: "mock-piety and hollow goodness" seldom deceive, says Bellows; nor is all goodness mere show, for "there are real distinctions among men—truly good, and only seemingly good." Jesus can hardly have despised that "essential goodness . . . appertaining to the individual *will* and heart" (emphasis added). Here Bellows attaches the notion of genuine goodness to volition, relying on liberal Christian belief in freedom of the will—even that of a sinner—to combat the deterministic emphasis upon "circumstances" in the elder Henry's so-called science of socialism.

("LETTER FROM MR. H. JAMES," *Christian Inquirer*, 22 March 1851, 1)

Cornered by an insistence upon discernible moral distinctions, Henry Senior abandoned all niceties: he claimed that the *Christian Inquirer*—in defending the "essential goodness" of some persons over the alleged depravity of others—had mimicked Jewish pretentiousness and formalism.

That anti-Semitic strategy is familiar enough: defining the "Jew" as one who "expected the coming of the Christ to bless him, on the ground of a certain righteousness, moral and ritual, accruing to him from the observance of the law which had been handed down to him directly from God," the elder James reminds the *Christian Inquirer* that Jesus violated this popular

expectation by "*enjoining repentance from sin upon all, without distinction.*" Henry Senior sees in the newspaper's attack upon his antimoralistic philosophy "the venomous outrage" of "Jewish prejudice" in conflict with "a doctrine which overlooked all existing distinctions of good and evil among men." To criticize Henry Senior is, therefore, to recrucify Christ in the nineteenth century: "We may, indeed, exclaim against the baseness of the Jew in sacrificing the truest life in history. But by what right? For change only the name—the transaction belongs as much to us."

The elder Henry sees in the newspaper's celebration of the "'essential goodness'" of "certain persons" a presumption easily dispelled by Edwardsian notions about the mere appearance of true virtue. Again evoking, without identifying, the Edwardsian distinction between the personal and the universal, James seeks to dismiss the "particular eligibility" of Jewish and Unitarian moralists by emphasizing "universal love" and "universal brotherhood." That more general outlook renders absurd any moralistic pleas for "private righteousness" and for Jesus to mark personal gradations of character. Christ, says Henry Senior, "affirmed the total indistinction of saint and sinner in divine regard, and suspended every one's acceptance with God, not upon any tawdry moral differences between himself and other men, but purely upon his deferential acknowledgment of himself as the true Christ of God."

Faced with Unitarian reluctance to believe that Christ could have found "no real, no *meritorious* goodness on the earth," the elder Henry argues along Edwardsian lines in pondering the "nature" of virtue. The goodness of which the *Christian Inquirer* speaks, says James, is reducible to "the exercise of all the genial and kindly affections of our *nature* [emphasis added]"; but clearly, no one—and least of all Christ—"regards this goodness as *meritorious*, or as constituting any very divine achievement in humanity." Such goodness is, after all, an expression of mere "nature," and "Jesus as the Christ of God had nothing whatever to do with this kind of goodness." Although modified for the occasion, the tactic is essentially that of James's predecessors, Edwards, Swedenborg, and John Walker, who had criticized uninspired approximations of true virtue or righteousness.

Henry Senior also attempts a *reductio ad absurdum* of his reviewer's moralism: seeing variances of perfection in human nature leads, he claims, to the impious thought that "God is not supreme over his own creation, but allows his creature to fall under the dominion of some adverse power." Such a hierarchical view of creation returns Christianity to a "slough of Calvinism." Since James here and elsewhere fails to publicize his own debt to Edwards, the pejorative reference to threadbare Puritan theology suits his purposes when he debates Unitarians. As for the *Christian Inquirer's* earlier reflections on socialism and determinism, the elder Henry argues that if God deterministically arranged the universe so as to have some people

be "really good" and others "really bad," then Unitarians advocate "antinomianism gone delirious." Obviously feeling that he has cleverly responded to his reviewer's attacks, Henry Senior concludes his second letter by acknowledging the limited extent of his own antinomianism: "This letter," he wryly admits, "exceeds all lawful limits." About that, at least, he was correct.

("REMARKS ON MR. JAMES'S [SECOND] LETTER," *Christian Inquirer*, 22 March 1851, 2)

While granting that Henry Senior knows the difference between good and evil and virtue and vice, Bellows chides him for believing that "Jesus had nothing to do with these distinctions." Nor can Bellows abide the elder James's belief that Christ's mission was divorced from moral distinctions pertinent to salvation "beyond the grave." With respect to "God's earthly kingdom," Bellows hints that the philosophical theology of Henry Senior is as antispiritual as it is immoral. And considering the place of ethics in this world and the next, Bellows ties the issue of "man as a responsible creature" to the "moral and personal" nature of Christ's mission. The intersection of those two concerns establishes the crux of Bellows's difference with James.

This connection of a "personal" Christ to human ethics brings to mind Bellows's newspaper editorials from 1849–50, when he was the lead editor of the *Christian Inquirer*. He had sought to reconcile morality and piety by stressing humanity's subordinate relations to a personal God, and by arguing that "personality" is "the highest . . . thought inhering in our conception of God." He believed, as well, that the correspondence between human and divine personality allows religion and ethics to coalesce in a disciplined vision of morality: "Morality has no binding force . . . until it is connected with piety, which is the ownership of moral qualities in a personal God."¹⁶

By 1851, Bellows followed that same line of reasoning in challenging Henry Senior's claim that Christ deems the "greatest moral sufferer" to be on a par with "the greatest moral enjoyer." Only an "utterly mistaken and wrong-headed" belief in an impersonal—and therefore amoral—God could cultivate such "intellectual recklessness." Thus, Bellows rhetorically asks of Henry Senior, "Is God a moral Being with him? or has he any personality? and is it possible for an argument to proceed respecting God's feelings towards the moral distinctions in human conduct and character, between parties, one of which recognizes the Divine personality, and the other not?" Since the anticipated response is *no*, the objections of the elder Henry "to the ordinary Christian doctrine of God's love for human goodness and hatred of human evil" appear traceable to a frivolous, quasi-Transcendental "rejection of God's personality or self-consciousness; in which case, what Mr. James calls God may be rightly enough supposed indifferent to good and evil, because indifferent to every thing!"

Emerson, we recall, had earlier disowned the Unitarian habit of dwelling "with noxious exaggeration about the *person* of Jesus," since "the soul knows no persons" (*ECW*, 1:129). Similar ideas had already caused Bellows—in a 9 March 1850 *Christian Inquirer* editorial, "The Essential of Christianity"—to define the permanent feature of faith in Christ as a "confidence in the great objective fact of Christ in his living personality." Now, faced with a socialistic spin-off from Emersonianism, Bellows equated the abandonment of *personal* views of God—an abandonment inherent in the concept of a Divine Humanity—to the relinquishment of human responsibility engendered by historical materialism and determinism: "It is only the doctrine of responsibility to God which is in dispute, and this turns wholly upon God's personality. If the spirit of humanity be Mr. James's God—the impersonal force which blossoms in our being—then it is idle for him to talk of responsibility." In thus defining the difference between "philosophical and Christian spiritualists," Bellows concludes this letter by emphasizing the question still most at issue: "Not whether *man* is a moral being, but whether *God* is a *moral* being."

("MR. JAMES'S THIRD LETTER," *Christian Inquirer*, 29 March 1851, 2)

Henry Senior would postpone his answer to that question. His third letter instead straddles orthodox ideas and assertions for several reasons: to articulate a response to gradations of moralism, to formulate an (arguably) Edwardsian rejoinder to Unitarian views of a "personal" Christ, and to interpret Christ in such a manner as to make Him consonant with a socialistic vision of Divine Humanity.

Despite the dissonance of imputed sin and socialistic confidence in human nature, the elder Henry himself invokes an orthodox outlook on depravity (perhaps in an effort to outdo his reviewer) just long enough to challenge the assumptions of his Unitarian opponents: "I cannot but be sensible . . . of a certain impediment in addressing Unitarians, which I do not feel in addressing the Orthodox." Given orthodox belief in total depravity, "it would be no matter of surprise to the Orthodox that I should say Christ denied the relevancy of the moral distinctions among men," for "they regard the gospel as viewing men only in one aspect, that of unmixed sinfulness, and as utterly repudiating, therefore, the eligibility of one man to another in the divine regard." Having offered this challenge to the *Christian Inquirer's* personal and private confidence in salvation, the elder Henry draws upon Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue* to undermine Unitarian insistence upon gradations of "moral distinctions" among people. The orthodox view of Christ "so far from exacting any *preliminary* virtue" from the saved, "excluded even the allegation of it by appealing to them only as sinners."

This refusal to entertain even the "allegation" of "virtue" evokes

Edwards's similar disgust for pretensions to virtue. At the same time, the senior James believes that Unitarian "personal pretension" to righteousness reduces the "public" character of Christ to "a mere private significance." Drawing, like Edwards, upon the idea of love of Being in general as the only valid definition of virtue, Henry Senior juxtaposes the "universal love" of the gospel with the diminution of Christ's character implicit in the compatibility of Unitarian moralism and the vision of Christ as a "private attorney" ensnared in "personal interests."

For James, that limited view of Christ stands related to a broad range of Christian biblical criticism, which, rather than treating Scripture "as you would take any other book, at its *prima facie* significance," seeks to reconcile the Bible with "private or sectarian" modes of "interpretation." The elder Henry here implies that Unitarian biblical scholarship opposes the literal and, to the judgment of Henry Senior, the more universal import of the Gospel.

In response, moreover, to the accusation that his socialistic belief in a Divine Humanity renders moot the scriptural concept of an afterlife, the senior James again directs Edwardsian theology toward socialistic ends. He distinguishes between the private and the universal in a way that envisions "'a new heavens and a new earth'": "For by so much as I suppose the Christ concerned with my *individual* destiny beyond the grave; by so much as I suppose him occupied with my *personal interests* in any manner; exactly by so much do I limit his *universal* or *humanitary significance*" (emphasis added). Readers familiar with the path of ideas leading from Malebranche to Edwards and Swedenborg; from Edwards to Walker; and then from Edwards, Swedenborg, and Walker to Henry Senior may here recognize the transformation of universal love into the key feature of the "science," or universal brotherhood, cherished by the elder Henry.

Here, then, Edwards becomes *redivivus* for Henry Senior as the best possible reconciler of contemporary theology. At the same time, the place of Edwards in James's thinking allows us to question the sincerity of the commendation he offers his Unitarian critics at the end of this third letter. There he gestures toward a spirit of cordiality by praising "the great private worth of Unitarians." The backhandedness of this compliment would not have been lost upon Henry Whitney Bellows.

("REMARKS ON MR. JAMES'S THIRD LETTER," *Christian Inquirer*, 29 March 1851, 2)

The response of Bellows to the preceding letter is among the most important of the series because of his insights into the place of the personal and the private in theology. Since James's religious philosophy appeared to be influenced by orthodox notions of disinterestedness, Unitarians (whether they acknowledged doing so or not) had to debate the underlying assumptions of Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue*.

Bellows was quite equipped to address the Edwardsian point at issue, having elsewhere drawn upon *The Nature of True Virtue* to contest the deification of virtue espoused by Transcendentalists.¹⁷ Still, the debate with Henry Senior was different, for the Edwardsian attack upon the moral sentiment proffered by James stood to subvert the far more reasonable emphasis upon virtue espoused by Unitarians. Bellows's reply to the third letter of Henry Senior therefore became a long-overdue liberal Christian challenge to Edwards's discounting of the personal, the private, and the fact of self-interest in the practice of virtue and spirituality. (Here, Bellows foreshadows some of the most essential points of William James's ideas about the metaphysical and personal appeals of "interest," treated in more detail in chapter 6).

Apparently familiar with Henry Senior's background at Princeton Theological Seminary, Bellows condemns the elder James for introducing Calvinism, "the worst part of his old theological training," into "his new philosophy."¹⁸ After all, the determinism of both orthodoxy and socialism renders moral distinctions as irrelevant to salvation as does the inclusiveness of Universalism. Calvinistic "fatalism" is said to err on the side of an "exclusive number"; that of "Universalism and Mr. James," on behalf of "all alike."

Following a brief thrust at the senior Henry's disparagement of biblical criticism and scriptural interpretation, Bellows turns to the truly "proper" point, that being the place of the "private" and "personal"—and the relation of those to "moral distinctions"—in the realm of religion and virtue. Targeting Henry Senior's belief that "Christ denied the relevancy of the moral distinctions among men to the question of man's acceptance with God," Bellows again laments the elder Henry's denial of "divine personality," as well as the misguided belief that Christianity has "no reference to individuals." Differing *"toto caelo"* from the *Christian Inquirer*, Henry Senior is said to profess that "the great object of the gospel is *public*, not *personal*" (emphasis added). Bellows responds to this distinction in ways that directly bear upon Edwards's belief that true virtue is general and public rather than private and personal.

Claiming that God, in the "highest idea of him, is a *person*," and that men are likewise "persons," Bellows seeks—through this correspondence between God and the humanity created in His image—to establish the legitimacy of self-interest in theology. In so doing, Bellows undermines the selfless conception of true virtue that Henry Senior had inherited from Edwards, Walker, and Swedenborg. With rhetoric applicable alike to the senior Henry and Jonathan Edwards, the *Christian Inquirer* anticipates the radical empiricism and pragmatism of William James (then nine years old): "There are no important interests in the universe but *private* interests; no happiness which is not particular; . . . no salvation

which is not personal. It is the *public* part of the gospel influences which is accidental, not the *private*."

Even more compelling in this response to the denigration of "the private" is the *Christian Inquirer's* use of the Golden Rule to sanctify selfishness: "Man's nature is in one view essentially selfish; and Christ has sanctified its selfishness, by making self-love the measure of fraternal love." In this sense, a love of Being in general is impossible without a proper self-love: "I could not surrender my essential being and essential well-being to save the universe." Here, too, Bellows anticipates key tenets of William James, relative to the place of private sentiment and constructive selfishness in the religious impulse.

Bellows's subversion of disinterested outlooks on virtue goes further: in a dramatic reversal of the Edwardsian belief that the appearance of true virtue is reducible to base selfishness, Bellows holds that the appearance of selfishness—expressed in the hope for an afterlife, for instance—is actually akin to divine will and pleasure: "The desire of immortality and of future happiness (of the highest kind) is in one sense a selfish desire, but it is a selfishness which belongs to our—being, and which is not separable from the personality even of the Supreme Being, who is always represented as infinitely happy." Discounting, by implication, the Edwardsian premise that God is angry, Bellows insists that any love of Being in general must first take account of private "being," since "man's highest interests are . . . private interests."

Hence the argument—one that reconnects general love to "the personal responsibility of the private man"—that "Christianity had *all persons* for its object, and was therefore public; but in that its public object was always *private* souls, it is in a far deeper sense *private*." For Bellows, therefore, the collective or general is a function of the private: "If Christianity have a main object, . . . it is the salvation of the private soul, and of the world only as it is a collection of private souls." In this inversion of Edwardsian thought, Bellows adds—again foreseeing William James's challenges to philosophical abstractionism and rationalism—that "every thing human must become personal and private before it has a real existence. All the *virtue*, all the truth, all the piety in the universe, exists in persons" (emphasis added). Bellows here confirms the bond between the Gospel's saving power and "private conduct and character." By implication, our private endowments as moral beings are "infinitely important to the preservation of our souls." At the same time, this rejoinder to Henry Senior provides a stunning challenge to the ideas of Edwards—and Edwards's friend Samuel Hopkins (1721–1803)—about a love of Being in general, or about a disinterested benevolence isolated from the personal, the private, or self-interest.

("MR. JAMES'S FOURTH LETTER," *Christian Inquirer*, 5 April 1851, 1-2)

Henry Senior not only published a reply to the newspaper's elevation of the personal and private in religion, but he later reprinted his response (that is, his fourth, fifth, and sixth letters), with only minor changes, as "A Very Long Letter" in *Lectures and Miscellanies*. In letter four, he uses an "autobiographic form" to confess that he, too, once harbored personal and private outlooks on theology but eventually outgrew those. He then attacks the concept of God's having personal and private regard for humans and their righteousness: liberal Christianity, he suggests, regresses to the destructive nature of Calvinism by elevating the personal and private over the public and universal. In effect, the elder Henry uses the *Christian Inquirer's* masterful response to his third letter as the occasion for a moral argument against Unitarianism, all the while salvaging his ostensibly scientific appropriation of Edwards's emphasis upon general virtue.

James makes his point in stages. First, he observes that Christianity is at odds with Old Testament notions of individual righteousness. He then compares those private outlooks on religion to his own early efforts, when he was himself under the dominion of Calvinism, to experience a "conscience scourging[,] . . . *personal* relation with Deity." That exercise entailed "morbid" self-abasement. Although his "conscience of sin" was for a time soothed by a "profession of faith," organized theology ultimately offered "no consciousness of righteousness in its place." Hence arose a "remoteness from God, my sense of utter disproportion between Him and me" that Henry Senior thinks antithetical to a scientific society characterized by Divine Humanity.

In this letter, Henry Senior describes the obstacle to universal brotherhood implied by "righteousness," which he again associates with "a certain exclusive hope on the part of the Jew towards God" and with the misguided "assurance of God's personal love," for which he claims to have once longed. Although this confessional tone at first seems perplexing, the "autobiographic form" of his letter resembles the confessional strategy of Jonathan Edwards's *Personal Narrative*, a major point of which concerns Edwards's dismissal of personal merit from the act of salvation. Because Edwards admits to having been repulsed by predestinarian theology before coming to adore the sovereignty of God, he feels even more justified in criticizing the like-minded assumptions of his liberal eighteenth-century opponents. The confessional quality of Henry Senior's fourth letter allows him to use a similar tactic against his Unitarian audience.

With respect to disinterestedness, he explains how his spiritual progress entailed a moving beyond the personal and private hope for God's favor toward the "spirit of universal love"—that is, God's socialistic "spirit of humanity." Far from agreeing with the *Christian Inquirer* in holding the

personal and private to be spiritually ennobling, James contends that the "personal Christ belonged to the Jew alone" and that Jewish moralism, with its adherence merely to "the letter" of the law, is no cause for celebration.

Approaching an Edwardsian notion of a love of Being in general through reference to "universal love," the elder Henry seeks to transform the division of deity and humanity by positing an "active relation" with the spirit of God, a relation that would usher in Divine Humanity in its transcendence of the "personal," "passive," and ultimately "external person" of Christ. Those regrettably "sensuous" impressions not only separate man from God but also result in feelings of "emptiness," "destitution," and "imperfection" by divorcing people from one another—to the point of alienating them from a corporate, universal deity. Henry Senior thereby goes beyond his anti-Semitic inclination to shame those who elevate the personal, the private, and the selfish in matters of perceived righteousness; he now claims that the concept of personal righteousness debases human nature, thereby posing an obstacle to Divine Humanity.

In asking, "Could the great God take satisfaction in seeing himself perpetually aggrandized at the expense of his own creature?" the elder James suggests that the *Christian Inquirer's* elevation of the "private" and the "personal" in religion makes Unitarians susceptible, with respect to the "debasement" of human nature, to much the same charges as had been leveled by Channing against Calvinists. Still, a socialistic agenda impels Henry Senior to combine Edwards's emphasis upon universal love (in opposition to self-interest) with liberal Christian disdain for a tyrannical deity to formulate the "scientific worth" featured in the "ingress" into "present society" of that "divine righteousness which consists in the spirit of mutual love, the spirit of universal human brotherhood." And if the Divine Humanity is not constrained by the limitations of moralism, neither is God, who is not a moral being, since "a moral being is necessarily in outward relation to other beings, to whom he may do good or evil; which means that a moral being is necessarily a finite being."

Although he had not necessarily gotten the better of his opponents, Henry Senior at least survived another round of the exchange, seeking as well to redirect the focus of the debate toward the proposition that God is "indifferent to moral distinctions among men" only to the degree that He regards those as "ends, not as means."

("REMARKS ON MR. JAMES'S FOURTH LETTER," *Christian Inquirer*, 5 April 1851, 2)

Bellows and his coeditors recognized that, eccentricity notwithstanding, Henry Senior had posed a formidable challenge to the moralistic underpinnings of Unitarianism. The newspaper replied with an exquisitely crafted mid-century ratification of liberal Christianity that sought to recon-

cile moralism with doctrines of grace by associating, through a broad historical stroke, Henry Senior's anti-moralistic outlook and "the old dogma of disinterestedness, which exacted that a man should be willing to be damned for the glory of God, before he could be saved." In thus generalizing about an idea that emerged from Samuel Hopkins's New Divinity alteration of Edwardsianism, but which eventually became linked to popular conceptions of Consistent Calvinism,¹⁹ the response of the *Christian Inquirer* to the elder James's fourth letter broadens, and makes explicit, the range and significance of the history of ideas involved in the debate. (To his discredit, Henry Senior would arrange for that high-minded debate to slip from public memory, even as he quoted selectively, in *Lectures and Miscellanies*, from his own contributions to the newspaper exchange.)

Responding to Henry Senior's lament that the soothing of his "'consciousness of sin'" left him "without . . . 'consciousness of righteousness,'" Bellows claims that the orthodox upbringing of the elder James made him oblivious to the value of "sanctification" (that is, the holy deeds of saved persons) in the quest for "justification" (that is, redemption). Recalling categories that had been debated in America since the Antinomian Controversy of 1636–38, Bellows illustrates the liberal Christian legacy of Anne Hutchinson's excommunication for her insistence, in the main, that sanctification did not necessarily amount to evidence of justification. Although Unitarians rejected Calvinism, they nonetheless had inherited the theocracy's elevation of sanctification in the morphology of redemption: "No difficulty," claims Bellows—and with rhetoric that John Winthrop and Thomas Shepard would likely have found comforting—has "ever existed in regard to God's complacency in the penitent and spiritually-minded," since "sanctification *was* righteousness and justification." Little wonder that, a year earlier, the *Christian Inquirer* initially responded to Henry Senior's *Moralism and Christianity* by labeling his philosophy "A New Antinomianism."

In seeking to reconcile righteousness with free grace, Bellows establishes a basis for replying to the senior James's belief that a personal (and therefore righteous and moralistic) wish for God's favor diminishes God's "general" disposition toward humanity at large. Since Bellows frowns upon "the old dogma of disinterestedness," his criticism goes beyond (or, rather, behind) Henry Senior's disdain for moralism to suggest that the Edwardsian and Hopkinsian dissociation of private from general interest in the eyes of God is specious: "We do not doubt that He who sends his rain upon the just and unjust . . . has a Creator's and a Father's interest in every human creature, whether Henry James, or John Smith, or Tom Jones—a *general* interest in him as a human being, a *special* interest in him as an individual human being."

These textual italics suggest that a true love of Being in general necessarily

encompasses—rather than diminishes—the personal, the private, and the special. Not surprisingly, Bellows inverts Edwardsian displeasure with familial affection to suggest the compatibility of moral relations and general love: "There are moral relations sustained by these individuals to this common father—such as *children of the same family*, and the same *common love*, sustain towards a good earthly parent—all sharing alike the same *general support*, but each having a *special altitude* of confidence, distrust, sympathy, or alienation, according to their moral affinity to their upright father" (emphasis added). Here, eighty-six years following the publication of *The Nature of True Virtue*, Henry Whitney Bellows bridges the Edwardsian schism between the private and the general with the assumption of a "moral affinity"—sometimes more, sometimes less—between people and God. That affinity comprises the *general* (as opposed to *natural* approximations to) virtue inherent in the familial relation between God and man: "It is this moral and spiritual relation as opposed to, or as annexed to, the natural one, that it seeks to rectify." Thus, whereas Edwards and Henry Senior had discounted the "nature" of private, personal, and familial approximations of virtue, Bellows's insistence upon moral relations between God and humanity allows, in *general*, for "man's proper relation to God, without ignoring" that which the elder James vilifies as "'the natural personality of the subject.'" Here, Bellows chances to anticipate William James's vision of religious truth as comprising relations and processes inseparable from human consciousness.

Having reconciled the private and the general to his own satisfaction, Bellows draws even more boldly upon Edwardsian rhetoric in "agree[ing] with Mr. James . . . that the *general or universal* relation of friendship which God . . . sustains to our whole race, independently of moral distinctions, has been mischievously kept out of view by the [liberal Christian] church, in its earnest desire to give urgency to the moral side of our relation to God." Bellows here admits that moralistic theology has, in effect, been one-sided—but only because of the contempt heaped by Calvinists upon the "nature" of human nature in their "jealous exclusion of nature, as a witness and representative of the Divine character maintained by the church, as the guardian of revelation."

What appears *naturally* ordered is a balance between moralism and revelation, an interplay of the personal and the universal elements of theology. For Bellows, the private and the "moral" provide access to "declarations of the Divine benignity made in God's universal providence." This implicit challenge to views that would sever the personal from universal "benignity," or benevolence, allows the *Christian Inquirer* to question Henry Senior's underlying premise that moral distinctions lead to highly exclusive rather than obviously general ends. The newspaper agrees, for instance, that "Christ came to do away every exclusive claim," but it denies "that

moral distinctions are *exclusive*," since morality is the "highest ground" of Divinity, and since "the relations into which moral distinctions among men bring them towards God, are therefore as *universal* in following a uniform law, as they are diverse and pregnant of consequences, good and bad" (emphasis added). The implication is that moral distinctions, while personal, are still essential for connecting humanity to universal Being.

Hence, the newspaper's more flagrant challenge to the Edwardsian and Hopkinsian assumptions supportive of Henry Senior's rebellion against moralism. Bellows seeks to reconcile self-love and personal seeking with disinterestedness: "Christian anxiety about salvation, constantly tends to purge itself of all forms of self-love, but the highest." That highest expression of self-love involved in a personal seeking after redemption is ultimately unselfish and therefore compatible with true holiness or virtue: "The old dogma of *disinterestedness*, which exacted that a man should be willing to be damned for the glory of God, before he could be saved, was a rude expression of the *unselfish nature of a personal seeking* for the favor of God" (emphasis added). Bellows here implies that Edwardsian theology needed to outgrow its divisive outlook on the personal and the beneficent—a schism that had endured into the nineteenth century—and that the time for intellectual liberation from Edwards was at hand. To this degree, Bellows's quarrel with the elder Henry became a vehicle for Unitarians to deal more forcefully than had their Arminian predecessors with Edwards's views on true virtue.

Bellows also targets the unfaithfulness of the elder James to an Edwardsian fountain of inspiration: after all, the love of Being in general implied in Henry Senior's yearning for "brotherly love" and "philanthropic enterprise" can exist only in Christendom, and only under the inspiration of "hearts . . . whose hopes are raised above the world." Anticipating the thrust of his *Religious Education, from Within and from Above* (1857), Bellows reminds readers that only this "upward direction" of faith and hope have been the "parents of charity" or benevolence. James, on the other hand, through a horizontal identification of the church "with his own original errors of opinion" (i.e., a socialistic Divine Humanity), forecloses the exclusively religious prospect of general love.

("MR. JAMES'S FIFTH LETTER," *Christian Inquirer*, 19 April 1851, 1)

Henry Senior could not abide the *Christian Inquirer's* belief that God is moral and that secular theology forecloses the possibility of benevolence. His fifth letter wrestles with both issues, all the while advancing a socialistic agenda through further and more emphatic adaptations of Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue*.

The elder James reiterates his belief that "the perfection of God renders him indifferent to the moral distinctions among men as *ends*, but not as

means." Crucial for the way James merges the notions of divine and human perfection is his insistence that the Creator is characterized by self-sufficiency of the sort that must necessarily be reflected in "his creature," for "an imperfect creature cannot come from a perfect Creator." In maintaining that God can create nothing "imperfect," by virtue of its being "insufficient to itself, or conditional," Henry Senior advances the claim, as he had done in his New York lectures, that unconditioned spontaneity (something akin to what Edwards, in *Freedom of the Will*, had described as the divine capacity of self-impelled will, existing beyond deterministic preference and motives) is a prerequisite, among humans, for disinterested universal harmony, or benevolence: "Man, in order to be perfect, must lead a spontaneous life. . . . That is the life of God in man."

Benevolence, far from being at odds with socialism, becomes an outgrowth of the non-moralistic state of Divine Humanity most compatible with spontaneity. Moralism, on the other hand—along with its exploitative scales of hierarchy—is said to be destructive of genuine fellowship: "Take away unequal or discordant relations among men, and you take away the only basis of morality." Stated otherwise, morality is at the basis of class conflict: "For morality always proceeds upon a conflict of interests between its subjects." Do away with social inequality, and you render morality moot by virtue of everybody's acting disinterestedly, or—what is the same thing for Henry Senior—spontaneously: "In making my interests harmonic with those of my fellow-man, you make my conduct purely spontaneous or involuntary, and hence, divest it of moral attributes."

"Choice" between right and wrong is not even at issue here, since the Divine Humanity will allow no occasion for the exercise of a right or wrong choice: man will spontaneously do the just thing. This association of spontaneity with Edwardsian disinterestedness and virtue is suggested by James's use of spontaneity elsewhere: the expression connotes Edwardsian true virtue, since spontaneity stands in contrast to "merely instinctual good" (SSH, 59) or to "[self-] interest or duty" (CLC, 159 n), all the while connoting the "true man" who "spontaneously devot[es] himself to the welfare of all" (SRFM, 448–49).

Henry Senior's fifth letter to the *Christian Inquirer* appears likewise to draw upon Edwardsian and Hopkinsian notions of disinterestedness to advance a socialistic vision based in the belief that "a perfect society or fellowship among men would utterly destroy morality; for where no divided interests exist between men, but the interest of each is that of all, of course no possible occasion can arise for their discrimination into good and evil." The "perfection of the creature" is suggested in this amoral vision of a Divine Humanity, as is the "welfare of all," or state of "mutual love" that, in opposition to "organized inequality," becomes the socialistic progeny of Edwards's love of Being in general. Never imagining—as Edwards cer-

tainly would have—the degree to which lust for power might mar even the most assiduous social engineering, the elder James could fancy the “removal of our existing social inequalities, or the destruction of arbitrary privilege, in order to lift the whole race of man into the plenary fellowship of the Divine perfections.”

(“REMARKS ON MR. JAMES’S FIFTH LETTER,” *Christian Inquirer*, 26 April 1851, 2)

Before responding, on 26 April 1851, to the fifth letter of Henry Senior, the *Christian Inquirer* of 19 April printed a paragraph announcing that “the crowded state of our columns induces us to postpone any notice of [that is, response to] this communication for the present.” The *Christian Inquirer* invited the elder Henry to “give us his concluding letter for next week,” in order to allow the paper to “be better able to say our last word with more justice to him,” and without “obtain[ing] any advantage of him by this silence.” Bellows, however, had privately planned to benefit from the delay by forcing his correspondent to submit his sixth and concluding letter without James’s knowing the contents of the *Christian Inquirer*’s as-yet-unpublished answer to his fifth letter.²⁰ On 26 April, in the same issue of the *Christian Inquirer* containing the sixth and final letter of Henry Senior, Bellows, ostensibly in reaction just to James’s fifth letter, published columns critical of the assumption that “the life of God is not a moral life.” Bellows’s penultimate letter in this exchange went to the heart of Henry Senior’s use of Edwardsian ideas about true virtue and unconstrained will, as those pertained to a socialistic Divine Humanity. In the week that followed, Bellows would be free to have the final word—or so he erroneously thought (see chs. 5 and 6).

In his columns of 26 April, Bellows refutes the idea that divine excellence consists of spontaneity, or isolation from contingency (what Edwards would have called *preference*). Since God’s perfection consists in His “affections and judgment” being “perfectly pure and holy,” that essential holiness precedes the secondary matter of the Deity’s “infinite power and perfect will to carry [His affections and judgment] out in action.” Bellows here undermines the recourse to *spontaneity* used by Henry Senior to divorce morality from Divinity and then to distance moralism from Divine Humanity: “Were [God’s] affections unlovely and his judgments unjust, however unlimited and unconditioned they might be, he would not be worthy of respect or obedience—he would be an imperfect being.” Mere freedom or spontaneity, whether human or divine, makes not for perfection.

Nor does Bellows believe that God’s autonomous exercise of “a perfect standard of right” renders God amoral. Rather than follow the senior James in associating moral compliance with Edwardsian aversion to conditional, self-interested pantomimes of virtue, Bellows holds that “conformity to an

New York, April 4. 1851.

My dear Bartol; Thank you for your agreeable statement of James. I believe we agree entirely in regard to him. In my discussion with him, I have been anxious to leave the widest margin to my opponent, so as to win his (his followers) confidence, if possible & do them some good. Is there any other way of conducting an argument with the least hope of effecting any change in our opponents' minds, but by confessing every grain of truth which we can lift out of his system? Sharing with James the disadvantage of following his lead, I may not have made out as strong a case, as a positive statement of the ground we occupy, would allow. But I hope to do that in the two numbers that remain.

My letter to Miss Ware, which has excited your mock jealousy, was in return for a most interesting & valuable letter from her accompanying my maternal grandfather's miniature, which has been to this time in a branch of the family with which Mrs. Ware maintained a close intimacy. I feel greatly indebted to you for excellent parishioner. It will be among the pleasant expectations of my next visit to Boston, to see

Henry Whitney Bellows to Cyrus Augustus Bartol. 4 April 1851. (4 May 1851? See chapter 4, note 20.) Henry Whitney Bellows papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. Bellows suggests that he will compensate for Henry Senior's "lead" advantage in the newspaper exchange.

absolute standard of right, is the primary essential idea contained in moral action," all other factors being "secondary, or accidental" to the fact of morality itself. Bellows appears to recognize that something like Edwards's outlook on truly free will—defined as a non-conditioned and self-motivated will—informs Henry Senior's disinterested, and therefore amoral, conjectures about divine and human spontaneity. In response, Bellows claims that God is moral not because of any contingent "disposition," but because of His inherent moral perfection. The point, which more than any other undercuts Henry Senior's belief that "the perfection of God renders him indifferent to the moral distinctions among men as *ends*, but not as *means*" (19 April), is that "the moral element enters . . . into the most absolute idea of God. It is not incidental or mediatory, but absolute and final."

By extending this rejection of parity between spontaneous disposition and absolute goodness to the concept of a Divine Humanity, Bellows rejects Henry Senior's "whole argument . . . touching the incidental or mediatory nature of morality in humanity." In so doing, Bellows implies that the value of moralism is scarcely diminished by theories of socialism cleverly sustained by Edwardsian ideas about true virtue or a self-willing will: "You do not take away the only basis of morality by taking away 'unequal or discordant relations among men,'" for "the basis of morality is not difficulty of *choice*, or *opposition to self-interest* or *inclination*, but the existence of an absolute right, with a felt obligation to it" (emphasis added). Further criticizing James with logic subversive of Edwardsian perspectives on freedom and virtue, Bellows posits the compatibility of moralistic theology, divine standards, and natural inclination: "The good man does not grow less moral by becoming more conformed in his dispositions to the moral standard—that is, more like to God. On the contrary, he becomes more moral, as moral action costs him less effort, by becoming more *natural* to him" (emphasis added). In exalting rather than denigrating the *nature* of virtue, construed moralistically, Bellows's reply to Henry Senior cuts down Edwardsian disclaimers of the propriety of natural sentiments in religion.

More critical, still, of Henry Senior's Edwardsianism is Bellows's contention that Gospel injunctions about "love to man" imply voluntary "moral affection"; so, by extension, does the general love of humanity to its own kind: "Is not the sentiment of justice held in solution in the affection of love? And is not the law of spiritual life, by which the love of man has become the predominate emotion of the soul, a law in which the *will* of man is more intensely active than in any other state?" Here, *will* is an exalting component of general love. By contrast, the socialistic scheme of "making man perfect, by making society perfect first" abdicates personal responsibility and opens the door to the perverse freedom of action synonymous with mere license. Moreover, even if one grants James his glorification of spontaneity, "what reason has [he] to suppose or assert that

spontaneousness would produce wisdom and love in man? We think man so different a being from God, that we think *restraint* to be just the thing which his 'wisdom and love'-lacking nature requires." For Bellows, Henry Senior's "theory of identity of Humanity with God," along with its attendant "freedom to human passions," stands merely to inaugurate the "letting hell loose on earth." Evoking Puritan categories, Bellows can at best concede that every man has the "option to be a sinner or a saint." Still, that individual capacity cannot sustain the ideology of socialism: "we . . . believe in no *necessary* progress of the race."

Bellows goes even further in his response to socialism by explaining why the notion of a socialistic Divine Humanity—predicated on something like Transcendental intuition—is ultimately atheistical and anti-Christian: "By 'acknowledging the exclusively inward or spiritual being of God,' which Mr. James recommends in his closing paragraph, we can understand nothing but denying his existence." In a related denial of God's pertinence for socialism, Bellows foreshadows, again through reference to Transcendental concepts, the creation of much-larger-than-life statues of Stalin and Lenin: "'To become emancipated from all outward allegiance' to God, which is to mark the perfect state, is equivalent to us, with self-worship—the most dangerous form of idolatry the world has ever seen."

This is essentially the premise used by Bellows in *Religious Education, from Within and from Above* (1857) and *The Suspense of Faith* (1859) to attack the materialistic—as opposed to the spiritual and religious—basis of Transcendental self-reliance, which acknowledged nothing beyond or "above" human self-sufficiency.²¹ In thus responding to the Transcendentally tinged socialism of Henry Senior, Bellows would have had to indulge in courageous self-reflection with regard to the Unitarian assumption that "the ultimate reliance of a human being is and must be on his own mind." For, if "to confide in God, we must first confide in the faculties by which He is apprehended,"²² then by 1851, Unitarians had to ponder (beyond the self-reliant excesses of Transcendentalism), the politicized embodiment of idolatrous self-worship in socialism. In its critical response to the elder Henry, Bellows peered unflinchingly into the sometimes sorry state of human nature.

("MR. JAMES'S SIXTH LETTER," *Christian Inquirer*, 26 April 1851, 1)

Unable to reply to the as-yet-unseen attack of the *Christian Inquirer* upon his fifth letter, Henry Senior concluded his exchange with the newspaper by claiming that moral differences "depend altogether upon an imperfect social organization"—but that a state of society devoid of "moral differences," far from being "disorderly," is "the very consummation of law and prophecy." Henry Senior adjudged it so on account of the compatibility of spontaneity with the ethical import of the Golden Rule:

In operating a perfect equality among its subjects,[society] fulfils [*sic*], according to the golden precept of Jesus Christ, all morality. But if so, then it follows that a society or fellowship among men which places man in exact harmony with his natural appetites and passions, affords the only possible fulfilment of all law and prophecy, the destined basis of God's kingdom on earth.

James here makes no concessions to the moralism of his Unitarian opponents. He simply suggests that their best conceptions of moralism are moot, since those tediously reiterate a spontaneous general love, or a "definition of morality ratified by the universal mind of man." Thus, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; FOR THIS IS THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS."

Having sought, therefore, to configure morality as a subset of the Golden Rule—which he associates with socialistic, spontaneous, universal love—Henry Senior turns with renewed conviction to the notion of unfettered passion, which is, he claims, likewise consistent with the Golden Rule, conceived of as "relations of exact equality between man and man." He believes, in fact, that "ample gratification of all his appetites and passions" is "absolutely *indispensable*" to the interests of society and is the "necessary basis of God's kingdom on earth." To explain why, James must obviate misconceptions "springing from the popular misuse of the word *passions*."

The reasoning of the elder James relates to his socialist agenda. Using the word *passion* in its "scientific strictness" to connote such principles of action as "Love, Friendship, Paternity, [and] Ambition," he posits those as springs of activity that "clothe human life with beauty" when "left to their free [i.e., spontaneous] development." Still, unpropitious social "circumstances" can render those springs "morbid" and unnatural. In what is simultaneously an appeal to Fourieristic open love and to the socialistic belief that the origin of evil and vice resides in social organization rather than in human nature, Henry Senior offers his most provocative defense of spontaneity:

Love, for example, is habitually betrayed to disappointment by our present unscientific social arrangements, and the subject consequently is incessantly driven to revenge or other disorderly manifestation. And so with all our passions. They are all alike capable of being stung, *by the tyranny of outward circumstances*, into the most subversive action.

To the extent, therefore, that society is arranged unscientifically—that is capitalistically—Henry Senior views "the passions of anger, revenge, avarice, etc." to be "unnatural," contorted expressions of "the divinely implanted springs of action in human nature." Having blamed society for

corrupting these springs, the elder James pleads for passional license as the inlet to moral perfection: a state of society allowing for the gratification of every appetite of man's body and soul "affords the destined and only possible fulfillment of all morality, affords indeed the indispensable basis of God's kingdom on earth." He is, in other words, saying that the *end* sought by moralists is achievable only through the spontaneous exercise of passions that tend disinterestedly to serve the common good. True virtue cannot exist in isolation from human spontaneity, which renders unnecessary the compulsory nature of moralism.

For reasons relating to that "perfect equality among men," Henry Senior, in a further effort to render moot the elevation of morality, refers to the Golden Rule as Christ's "famous definition of morality" and sees that rule as encouraging the indulgence of passional spontaneity. In the removal of "everything like organized injustice or inequality," the issue is no longer the corruption of human nature, but the correction of whatever social misorganization mischannels the spontaneity of human nature away from ends deemed moral. Henry Senior describes how the world needs only the "*organization* of this equality by society, to begin its eternal Sabbath." He further considers social engineering of this sort entirely compatible with "the free enjoyment of . . . natural appetites and passions" and with advantages derived from natural "genius," as opposed to those secured through "*arbitrary* advantage." In this closing letter, therefore, James foregrounds the socialistic direction of his musings while seeking to have spontaneity subsume moralism, just as socialism will supposedly emerge from anti-democratic politics.

("REMARKS ON MR. JAMES'S SIXTH LETTER," *Christian Inquirer*, 3 May 1851, 1-2)

In his concluding columns, Bellows suggests that Henry Senior is at war not simply with the present order of morality, but with "*morality per se*." Refusing to accept the elder James's assertion that the *Christian Inquirer* values morality merely for its influence upon "social order," Bellows asserts that "the essential worth of morality, independent of its influence," is its enduring attraction: "If moral distinctions were driven from society, we should not care whether it were orderly or disorderly, more than we now care whether a herd of beasts live in peace or conflict with each other." Bellows similarly challenges Henry Senior's socialism by magnifying morality as an absolute standard—albeit one from which people are apt periodically to stray:

Even if it were *proved* that the moral distinctions recognized among men had . . . converted society into the hell which Socialism now pronounces it, we would sooner stand by the moral distinctions with the Social Hell at-

tached, than take Mr. James's Social Heaven, with the moral distinctions detached.

The newspaper takes this position because, unlike James, Bellows distinguishes between morality as an end rather than a means to some end: the concept of a "moral standard," according to Bellows, provides the transcendent light that allows people to witness aberrations in morality without surrendering its intrinsic value.

As for the elder James's equation of morality with the Golden Rule, Bellows regards that effort as mere "legerdemain," for "a rule of right action and a definition of morality are very different things. One is a guide in the application of moral principles; the other, a scientific description of the principles themselves." By extension, Bellows utterly rejects the identification of moralism with the Golden Rule featured in Henry Senior's socialist agenda: "In direct opposition to our correspondent, then, we are compelled to say that 'Morality, by the consent of all intelligent minds,' does *not* mean 'the doing as we would be done by, or a relation of strict equality between man and man.'" Conditions of equality, according to Bellows, encompass voluntary, degrading conditions of "mutual untruthfulness, injustice, and enmity." While the perverse satisfaction of involved parties may entail egalitarian reciprocity, the agreement is not "*moral*," since "the morality of an action lies not in the satisfaction of the parties to the action, but in its conformity to a standard elevated by the moral Lawgiver." Effecting a *reductio ad absurdum* of Henry Senior's equation of mutual benefit and the Golden Rule—and at the same time challenging the belief that vice is not immoral—Bellows remarks, "Paramours in lust may be mutually contented with their reciprocal treatment, but this does not make their relation just or moral." Vice, the newspaper goes on to argue, is immoral and criminal to the degree that it produces misery and departs from "the eternal law of right, binding God and man."

Having, in his previous letters to the elder Henry, summoned up Calvinistic musings about human turpitude to invalidate the unwelcome socialist agenda, Bellows now praises human nature in a final assault upon the chaos promised by the senior James's "allowing the utmost freedom to all the appetites and passions of human nature, as constituting the perfection of man and society." What people need is not "the utmost freedom . . . for our appetites and passions, but for *man*; nor for a part of our nature, but for the *whole*," including "the reason" and "the conscience." In suggesting that Henry Senior's spontaneity ignores "the head" by catering to "the passions," Bellows distances the socialistic musings of Henry Senior—including the assumption that "the *organization* of equality" is "equivalent [to] the complete satisfaction of every passion in every man"—from anything like the confidence in rational and moral faculties in religion espoused by Unitar-

ians. This, it should be noted, is a critical moment in the newspaper exchange and goes to the heart of what Bellows perhaps feared to be a socialistic tendency of liberal confidence in human nature.

According to Bellows, Henry Senior's ineptness at "moral charioteering" was regrettably consistent with still another contentious issue separating liberal Christianity and socialism: whether to believe in a God residing above human nature. The elder James had simply abandoned the conventional notion of a "Divine Ruler or Sovereign at present," thinking that God "will *take* his throne, or rather his throne will *appear* when the world is finished, if He be not rather slowly coming to consciousness in humanity." In the meantime, the notion of an impersonal God struck Bellows as completely at odds with Christianity: "Indeed, nothing amazes us so much in Mr. James's opinions, as that they should seek shelter in Christian theology." This, according to Bellows, is "the sublimest intellectual effrontery that has ever fallen under our notice." The *Christian Inquirer* therefore suggests that, while a self-deceiving elevation of human nature has nothing in common with Unitarian celebration of human rectitude, Henry Senior's godlessness is at odds with Christianity itself.

Having thus resolved the apparent crisis in Christian liberalism occasioned by socialism, Bellows finishes by faulting James for having strayed from "Christian philosophy" by seeking to fathom the "mystery of God" without "seeking him through Christ, so far as he is to be considered as a known Being." By replacing the "personality of God" with a socialistic Divine Humanity, Henry Senior "loosens the foundation-stone of ethics and social order." Thus, the elder James is simply not worth further attention: "He writes a very graceful hand upon water, and argues with great plausibility, and no conviction for us." Then follows a far more sardonic point: "We do not doubt his sincerity or his moral worth, (if he will excuse what to him must be such improper phraseology,) and we part with him in the best temper, and with hearty thanks for his careful consideration of every personal propriety in this long discussion." Trading tit for tat with reference to Henry Senior's earlier recognition of the "personal worth" of Unitarians, Bellows's concluding reference to his correspondent's "personal propriety" suggests that the elder James had fallen far short of general standards of truth, virtue, or comprehension.

This exchange between Henry Senior and the *Christian Inquirer* is revealing for several reasons. With respect to the history of ideas—and specifically to the political tendencies of Christian liberalism—it constitutes one of the most incisive attacks by Unitarians upon socialism. At the same time, Bellows's response to the elder James stands among the most cogent liberal Christian declarations against ideas supportive of Edwardsian skepticism about true virtue and human freedom. Although overdue by 1851, and while limited (as Bellows knew) mainly to a small circle of readers, his

statement was still brilliant in essence and, despite its dormancy until now, ranks among the most intellectually rigorous of liberal Christian replies to ideas inspired by Edwards.²³

As for Henry Senior, the exchange with the *Christian Inquirer* rehearsed the idealism of *Lectures and Miscellanies* (1852). The bruising newspaper controversy is also important for the way it conditioned and sharpened James's attitude toward Unitarianism. For instance, though he was pleased to have Henry Whitney Bellows in the audience of the New York lectures, by 1854 the elder Henry decried Bellows as "the Unitarian bishop" (*CCNE*, 29). Thereafter, Henry Senior would berate Unitarianism for offering a "penurious" response to Calvinism (*SRFM*, 10), for turning "virile" religion into "feeble . . . sentimentality" and "devout comedy" (*SSH*, 14, 199; cf. *CLC*, 179), for constituting "a mere school of good manners" (*SRFM*, 394) stifled by a "benevolent afflatus" (*NE*, 235), and for coexisting with atheism and pantheism under an "Iscariot apostolate" (*CLC*, 76–77; cf. 202). Opposed to all forms of ecclesiasticism, Henry Senior—perhaps because of the exchange of letters with *The Christian Inquirer*—commenced to harbor a lifelong enmity for Unitarianism.

As suggested in the exchange of letters, however, the hostility emerged from the reluctance of Unitarians to concede that their optimism about human nature might well lead to socialism. Thirteen years after his battle with the *Christian Inquirer*, James returned to this issue when he complained that Unitarianism reflects the "nascent regenerate consciousness of the race which is being vitalized by the advancing tides of God's holy spirit in humanity, the spirit of human society fellowship or equality" (*SSH*, 141 n). Thus, while he continued to regard Unitarianism as "a development of the church's latent spiritual stupidity and senility" (*SRFM*, 388), and as "totally imbecile as a philosophic doctrine," he also deemed it "blessedly significant and welcome as an historic fact" (*SSH*, 141 n). Referring to Unitarianism as a "so-called 'radical'" religious movement, he maintained that Unitarian emphasis on "Christ's humanity" was "a mere negative attitude of mind" (*SS*, v–vi), for Unitarians had failed to proclaim the ultimate incarnation of Christ in general human form. Although Unitarianism had democratized the church by denying its supernatural hierarchy, thereby turning the church into "a cultivated and beautiful mundane society," Unitarianism had not gone far enough in acknowledging the advent of a Divine-Natural Humanity: "The self-styled visible church must eventually and infallibly merge in a regenerate natural society, or a brotherhood of men established upon the widest scientific induction and experience" (*NE*, 344–46). Thus, as his career progressed, Henry Senior would relate Unitarian confidence in self-sufficiency to other phenomenalistic forms of selfhood or to a society standing in need of spiritual creation and redemption (*SSH*, 14–15).

Still more concerns of the newspaper debate find elaboration in the elder Henry's later discourses, which deny that God sustains personal relations with individuals and which detail the relations between personal conscience and class consciousness (*SS*, 60; *SSh*, 184). Moreover, Henry Senior would continue to equate virtue with the broadest possible humanity (*SC*, 353–54; *SS*, 167) and to insist that, rather than attaching to individuals, evil is attributable to inequality evolving from faulty social organization (*CLC*, 105, 222 n; *SSh*, 33, 478–79; *SRFM*, 269–70, 389–90). As in the newspaper debate, so in his later writings: "responsibility" for evil becomes negligible since phenomenalism erases evil and consequences alike from the realm of true Being or substance (*SSh*, 455). That argument, as we shall now see, pertains to the idealism of *Lectures and Miscellanies* (1852). Seemingly innocuous and arbitrary, the miscellanies take Henry Senior's argument with the *Christian Inquirer* to an "ideal" level of discourse.

5

The Virtuous Idealism of Henry Sr.'s *Lectures and Miscellanies*: Edwards, Emerson, and Henry Sr.

IN A "PREFACE" (DATED MARCH 1852) TO *LECTURES AND MISCELLANIES*, HENRY Senior omitted explicit reference to his quarrel, a year earlier, with the *Christian Inquirer*. Yet, probably as a result of his exchange of letters with that newspaper, he "considerably amplified" the New York lectures (*L&M*, ix) when preparing those for his *Lectures and Miscellanies*. While the published lectures doubtless contain the improvements Henry Senior had promised Emerson, the miscellanies in the volume counter his adversaries at the *Christian Inquirer* without deigning to mention them. Still, for the benefit of readers who, by 1852, still remembered the newspaper debate, Henry Senior refers obliquely to it: "The *Miscellanies* comprise some pieces that have been previously published in another form." Nothing more. He was, in effect, acknowledging that the miscellany entitled "A Very Long Letter" derived from his 5 April, 19 April, and 26 April 1851 letters to the *Christian Inquirer*. As for the other *Miscellanies*, he says that those essays have "generally . . . been taken directly from the author's portfolio," by which he implies their newness.

James wrote and arranged the miscellanies so that they would reinforce his revised lectures and simultaneously fortify the one-sided rendition of the newspaper controversy selectively re-presented in "A Very Long Letter." Consider, for instance, a change in phrasing that occurs between Henry Senior's sixth and concluding newspaper letter of 26 April 1851, and the reiteration of the point in "A Very Long Letter." Seeking, in his newspaper column, to respond to the *Christian Inquirer*'s belief that "a state of society devoid of moral differences must necessarily be a disorderly state," the elder Henry wrote, "I wish to occupy my last letter with a correction of that inference." By the time he composes "A Very Long Letter," correction after the fact is no longer at issue: "But as you, who are not very familiar with

speculation in this direction, may infer that a state of society void of moral differences must necessarily be a disorderly state, *let me anticipate that inference*" (*L&M*, 395; emphasis added). This strategy of disarmament though anticipation appears to be a pervasive function of the overall structure and arrangement of *Lectures and Miscellanies*, relative to the elliptical reiteration of Henry Senior's earlier debate in "A Very Long Letter."

The table of contents for James's *Lectures and Miscellanies* illustrates the volume's direction:

LECTURES.

LECTURE I.

Democracy and Its Issues 1

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The Old and New Theology: Part I 139

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The Old and New Theology: Part II 195

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MISCELLANIES.

The Laws of Creation 317

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Speaking in the third person, Henry Senior announces in the Preface that the miscellanies are unified around a common theme, upon "the truth"

of which "the entire worth of his speculations depends." That theme is *idealism*, or what the elder James refers to as "the relation between object and subject." In his miscellanies, he will argue the validity of the idealistic outlook—or the supremacy of thought over matter—to illustrate the "unexampled brilliancy" of "theology," as "fortified by science." By "science," he means socialism, the verity of which he will now base in an antimaterialistic outlook that will discredit the assumptions of his Unitarian detractors. Unitarians, after all, preposterously believed that "one and the same law operated man's spiritual and material life" (*SRFM*, 389). At the same time, the idealism of the miscellanies takes Henry Senior beyond his quarrel with the *Christian Inquirer* to reconcile Transcendental, Edwardsian, and socialist thinking. Ultimately, then, *Lectures and Miscellanies* addresses the Emersonian audience that Henry Senior had been reluctant to face in person in Boston. Like Unitarianism, Transcendentalism was, to the mind of the senior James, a halfway house to socialism. As will become evident below, this was especially true of Emersonian idealism and of Emerson's notion of "representative men." Both seemed compatible with the socialistic tendency of Edwards's "love to Being in general."

The miscellanies advance this synthesis of Edwardsian and Transcendental outlooks by equating divinity and humanity through the medium of exalted thought. Thus, if the idealistic tenet proves false, "if the objective sphere of human existence is material, or external to the subjective, then the relation of God to man is of course external" (*L&M*, ix) and debasing to human nature. Thus, in *Lectures and Miscellanies*, the validity of socialism is linked conceptually to idealism. However, in 1852, Henry Senior steers clear of what, by 1869, he would denigrate as the "pure or objective idealism" of Kant and Hegel, whom he faulted for making "the finite a mere transient experience of the infinite." An advocate of a Divine Humanity, James disowned systems of pure idealism that, in order to "grasp the infinite, . . . had only to resort to the cheap expedient of eliminating the finite." Such notions either resurrected the theological dissonance between a perfect divinity and an infirm humanity or caused God and man to "become mutually undiscoverable, being hopelessly swamped to sight in the ineffectual mush of each other's subjective identity" (*SS*, 4–10).

In 1850 Henry Senior was less guarded about idealism. Upset with William H. Channing's review of *Moralism and Christianity*, the elder James wrote, "It is a miracle that you should have omitted the charge of Idealism, which would have had some faint show of truth."¹ The idealistic musings in the "Miscellanies" combine God and humanity in the process of *thought*, and they imply the antispiritual and ungodly tendency of the *Christian Inquirer's* insistence upon a deity external to human nature. Indeed, this is the unified impact of the miscellanies entitled "The Laws of Creation," "Berkeley and His Critics," "God," "Man," "Responsibility," and "Morality."

Some of these miscellanies acknowledge a relation to the essays that precede them (*L&M*, 333, 346); all of these miscellanies anticipate and prepare the reader for "A Very Long Letter." That reiteration of Henry Senior's concluding letters to the *Christian Inquirer* becomes something of a dramatic monologue, conveying the semblance of debate while James assumes the point at issue.

The elder James uses the technique of a dramatic monologue in at least two of the essays leading up to "A Very Long Letter." In "Berkeley and His Critics," for example, Henry Senior asks a rhetorical question of an imagined auditor and then exclaims, "What! no answer?" (*L&M*, 337). Well, of course not—any more than the unnamed recipient of "A Very Long Letter" ("MY DEAR——") is capable of bellowing rejoinders to the rhetorical inquiries now posed to him. Consider the letter's utterance, "you express a solicitude to know why . . ." (*L&M*, 375). The *Christian Inquirer* had hardly been politely solicitous of Henry Senior. No longer faced with a weekly rebuttal of his views, the elder James, in the miscellanies generally (and in "A Very Long Letter" specifically) takes firm control of the debate.

This time around, as suggested by "Spiritual Rappings," Henry Senior so orchestrates matters as to reduce those who disagree with his views about social science and divine humanity to the status of spirit rappers. Persons like that, as indicated by the miscellany called "Intemperance," refuse to see that society, rather than individuals, perpetuates evil. The miscellany "Christianity," in turn, repeats the socialistic and Edwardsian point about universality, a matter with which James had concluded his debates with the *Christian Inquirer*. The difference here resides in the idealism of the miscellanies, which mainly respond to an Emersonian audience in an effort to reconcile public and private life through socialism.²

Since, in 1851, the elder Henry asked Edmund Tweedy to assure Emerson that the New York lectures were to be improved, Henry Senior would likely have thought Emerson inclined to applaud the idealistic drift of the miscellanies. "Idealism," after all, is the outcome of Emerson's *Nature* (1836). Says Emerson, "A noble doubt perpetually suggests itself, . . . whether nature outwardly exists," since "without relations of time and space," the mere "appearances" of external reality may be "inscribed in the constant faith of man" (*ECW*, 1:52–53). For persons disposed to dismiss idealism out of hand, the "Prospects" chapter of *Nature* addresses the pragmatic consideration that an idealistic epistemology is more ennobling of human nature than is empiricism. This Emersonian point was not lost upon James. He believed that consummate dignity resides in the Divine Humanity, which can flourish only in a socialistic milieu of general love devoid of moral or economic hierarchy. That assumption accounts for the fusion, in the miscellanies, of the idealistic outlooks—beyond that discussed in the miscellany devoted to Berkeley—traceable to Emerson and Edwards.

Recall how Jonathan Edwards had, in his treatise on *Original Sin*, invoked a doctrine of idealism. He suggested that, since humanity exists only as an emanation of divine thought or power, people share a corporate identity enmeshing them in the fallen characters of Adam and Eve.³ With attention to such categories, I have elsewhere shown how Henry Whitney Bellows, realizing that both Emerson and Edwards were idealists, sought to reshape the self-sovereignty implied by Emersonian idealism into the more ennobling reliance upon God implicit in Edwards's conception of sinners dependent for their existence upon the mere thought of an angry God.⁴ The miscellanies of Henry Senior, on the other hand, abandon the baggage of original sin in order to equate humanity and God in the process of subjective thought.

In harmony with the argumentative strategy of Emerson's *Nature*—which idealistically bridges the gap between the *me* and the *not me*—James crosses the threshold from humanity to divinity: Man “must . . . disown every finite or disunited object . . . short of God himself, which brings the whole realm of the differential and finite *within* his proper subjectivity.” That subjectivity, which comprises the essence of both God and man, resides within an “exclusively . . . inward or ideal sphere, invisible and inaudible to sense” (*L&M*, 320, 324–25). The opponents of the elder James, by contrast, perpetuate a crass empiricism that causes them to wallow in “the infancy of human development” (*L&M*, 327). They fail to realize that human consciousness alone, the essential “*I*,” imparts meaning to “the natural universe” and that, without that consciousness, the natural universe—while possessing a substance of its own—literally makes no sense (*L&M*, 330). Henry Senior implies that *all* objections to his idealistic outlook derive from an untenable empiricism, and that the ideal epistemology of a Divine Humanity is simply impervious to such coarse levels of *knowing* or of *debate*.

Written as “a *pendant* to the preceding paper,” the second miscellany, “Berkeley and His Critics,” advances and clarifies the senior Henry's reliance upon idealism to support the truth of a Divine Humanity. The point that he makes about Berkeley is that—despite Dr. Johnson's hurt foot—Berkeley never denied the physicality of the world; Berkeley merely insisted that it became “incognizable” in isolation from human consciousness. The world's “selfhood was not absolute, but relative, or conditioned upon a certain limited intelligence.” What the elder Henry finds so attractive in Berkeley's thinking is the way “the Bishop had an idea, perhaps not fully acknowledged by his own consciousness, that man was the real *substratum* of the universe, the only logical or supersensuous entity, and that matter accordingly had a merely superficial or phenomenal existence” (*L&M*, 333–35). The drift of this defense of Berkeley is clear: James sees the elevation of human consciousness to a level of “supersensuous” vitality as an intima-

tion of the divine in the human: "Idealism does nothing but assert the purely phenomenal nature of material things. I must hold to this conclusion, because I insist upon God's essential *humanity*, and upon man consequently as His only true creature" (*L&M*, 334, 339). Beyond helping to realize the essential divinity of man, idealism allows Henry Senior to respond covertly, in "Berkeley and His Critics," to the *Christian Inquirer's* moralistic defense of material "personality" with regard to man and God. Idealism permits the elder Henry to reaffirm an Edwardsian—and ultimately socialistic—tenet of universality in response to the newspaper's earlier defense of singular personality.

Evoking his 5 April 1851 statement in the *Christian Inquirer* that God has no personal or moral interest in, or special esteem "for me, Henry James," as opposed to "that unscrupulous John Smith, and that prayerless Tom Jones," the second of Henry Senior's miscellanies drives home his antimoralistic and ultimately socialistic point by speaking "not . . . of the finite or differential man . . . , but of the unitary or universal man." The senior James thereby imposes an Edwardsian standard of disinterestedness and universality upon a supersensual philosophy that appears creatively to merge the idealistic outlooks of Edwards, Berkeley, and Emerson. That union of philosophies allows Henry Senior to advance his socialistic and ostensibly scientific love—beyond man viewed "as John Smith merely or Isaac Newton"—to humanity in general. Only slightly modifying the language of his comment in the *Christian Inquirer*, the second miscellany speaks of "the grand and living unity of which these superficial varieties, called John Smith and Isaac Newton, spring." That grand and living unity is, of course, the Divine Humanity. The *Christian Inquirer's* base skepticism and materialism notwithstanding, "this force lies beyond the sphere of sense, belongs exclusively to the ideal sphere" (*L&M*, 339-40). As in his previous miscellany, James here responds to the *Christian Inquirer* while preparing his readers for his post-"scripted"—and literally depersonalized—rendition of that debate in the upcoming "A Very Long Letter."

First, though, Henry Senior deflects the *Christian Inquirer's* objections to his amoral view of God. This he does in the miscellany "God," an essay that casts God's *creativity* as purely ideal and therefore "a spontaneous procedure." That spontaneity, in turn, is amoral because God's creativity is said to precede and occasion such constructs as space, time, and will, and all other derivatives from God upon which morality depends for its existence. Completely self-sufficient, the "CREATIVE" nature of God precedes "any phenomenal activity, any action conditioned in time and space" (*L&M*, 342). Because divine creativity "constitutes the sole being of the universe" in its transcendence of "space and time," James concludes from the "purely ideal personality" of God that God "disclaims both physical and moral qualities." Although in the newspaper controversy the elder James had ob-

jected to the notion, expressed in the miscellanies, that morality "grows out of . . . relations to other beings," he now draws upon idealism to fortify his claim, as voiced in the *Christian Inquirer*, that God is not a moral being. Because God "constitutes the being of all things, nothing can by possibility be exterior to Him." Henry Senior thereby infers the impossibility of God's standing in moral relation to *anything*: "His perfection is destitute both of physical and moral dimension" (*L&M*, 342–45).

The underlying assumption is that God is "absolute being or being in Himself" and creatively gives "being to all things" (*L&M*, 345). That premise, in turn, allows Henry Senior to extract from the nonmoralistic nature of God the "ideal selfhood" (*L&M*, 347) of "Man"—absent, that is, moral and personal constraints that alienate people from the spontaneity of their Divine Humanity, forcing them to flounder in conscience-ridden anxiety about their responsibility for sin, erroneously presuming God's personal, rather than universal, regard for man. Such are the concerns of the miscellanies "Man" and "Responsibility." "Responsibility" charts the canyon separating self-proclaimed sinners from their destiny as a Divine-Natural Humanity; "Man" idealistically reconnects Divine Creativity and human spontaneity. In both chapters, Henry Senior responds indirectly to points already posed by the *Christian Inquirer* so as to render them irrelevant by the time that readers, without knowing it, revisit James's newspaper letters in "A Very Long Letter."

"Man" asserts that "the divine perfection is strictly though very grandly human" because "the grand distinctive trait of man is his subjection to an ideal selfhood, or his power of acting, not in obedience to either physical or social constraint, but in obedience to his own ideas of goodness, truth, and beauty." Implicit, of course, in this "ideal" and divine conception of humanity is a rejection of "moral subjectivity, or subjection to society." Evoking the undeviating social demeanor of "the bee . . . , the ant, or the beaver" (*L&M*, 346), James condemns instinct-oriented servitude as degrading. In the *Christian Inquirer*, Henry Senior had similarly rejected the glorification of personal morality because of its appeal to self-interest and natural instinct, both of which stood opposed to an Edwardsian state of universal love. In *Lectures and Miscellanies*, he continues to dismiss moralism on those grounds, but he reenvisioned Edwardsian disinterestedness in terms of transcendent (and arguably Transcendental) idealism.

In "Man," Henry Senior recasts Edwards's disinterested benevolence as a function of idealism. Man obeys "an end discretely interior, or superior, to both his physical and social organization, to both his *natural* and *social interests*, an *ideal* and infinite end, which incessantly moves him to give it actual expression and ultimation" (*L&M*, 348; emphasis added). The senior James here merges idealism with Edwardsian thoughts about true virtue. The idealism of Henry Senior stands in glowing contrast to the natural

instinct and self-interest that, from an Edwardsian perspective, subvert a love of Being in general. As transposed into the concerns of the miscellany "Responsibility," that subversion has everything to do with the misguided empiricism of so-called sinners preoccupied with "the old traditions of hell-fire" (*L&M*, 358) rather than with the ultimately ideal confluence of man and God in a realm transcending personal "regard" on God's part for either a John Bunyan or a Benedict Arnold (*L&M*, 361).

The miscellany "Man" urges the ideal union of God and man through the voice of an imaginary citizen who denigrates blameless moralism and righteousness as being on a par with self-interested acquiescence to a social bribe. He craves, instead, a truly virtuous "righteousness which shall inhere in myself, which shall not be adventitious." Uniting Edwardsian true virtue with philosophical idealism, the citizen equates that true righteousness, or disinterestedness, with "my ideal or potential self," which necessarily disclaims "every merely relative and finite characteristic." Divorced from self-interest—having "nothing either to gain or lose by contact with others"—this person would ideally impart his divine goodness to others in the act of fulfilling his essential humanity: "Life accordingly with him is a rich and serene endeavor to enact his essential manhood, to impress his latent and plenary divinity upon the solicitous world around him." Not surprisingly, this citizen concludes his reflections by more explicitly defining idealism as the state which will most likely effect the universal love of Being in general that Henry Senior appears to have so valued in Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue*. According to the citizen, persons capable of seeing beyond moralism feel that life transcends the selfish "receiving [of] good things" in order to bring "forth from the depths of his *ideal*, from the radiant centre of divinity within him, a beauty so peerless, a *benignity*—a candor—a *magnanimity so universal*, . . . as to make nature's gifts spontaneous, and fill the attentive universe with applause" (*L&M*, 351–54; emphasis added). With respect to the social application of disinterested benevolence, this is certainly "Edwards redivivus," but now through the midwifery of Berkeleyan and Emersonian idealism.

The miscellany entitled "Morality" features a related play of ideas. Although James is customarily critical of the "personal" and the "private," in "Morality" he idealizes those concepts, simultaneously responding to Unitarian detractors and deploying Edwardsian sentiment to woo the likes of Emerson and Thoreau to the cause of "social science." To that end, "Morality" proposes that only in a "perfect society"—that is, one that is "scientifically organized"—is moralism dignified, and *that* by virtue of its redundancy. In a perfect world, private and public inclination will exist in "loving unity" and reflect "spontaneous respect and devotion." Currently, though, the "extreme inequality prevail[ing] between the public and private element" demeans morality into a coercive vehicle for subjecting the

private to the social: "Our morality measures . . . not the reconciliation of these interests, but the degree in which one allows itself to be depressed by the other" (*L&M*, 362–64).

In the newspaper controversy, Henry Senior had cast moralism as pharisaic pride, hinting, in his letter of 5 April 1851, that moralism stood to tyrannize over the "true divine spirit in man" by encouraging "a zeal for certain institutions, no matter how oppressive these may be to the *general* life of man" and by promoting the cultivation of "private interests" (emphasis added). Moralism, here set as the cornerstone of the institutional oppressiveness so loathed by Transcendentalists, stands in opposition to an Edwardsian love of Being in general. Picking up on this alignment, "Morality" depicts moralism as the "institutional" enemy of human dignity. In effect combining an Edwardsian quest for universal benevolence with the Emersonian belief that society everywhere conspires against the manhood of the individual, the senior James complains that "what enhances my morality . . . is not my genial humanity, or the relations of undeviating justice," but "my willingness to spend and be spent for the interests of society, my willingness to sustain its existing institutions at whatever damage to my private interests" (*L&M*, 364).

At first, this Transcendental glorification of "private interests" seems at odds with the disinterested premise of Edwards's "general" outlook on true virtue. But the inconsistency is short-lived. Through recourse to idealism, Henry Senior seeks to unite "private sentiments or personal sympathies"—as against the implied moralism of institutional tyranny—with "the fact of man's divine origin or derivation," which "ensures him a destiny which shall render his outward life purely servile or ministerial to his inward one, and so make his social relations, or the relations he is under to his fellow, freely tributary to his divine ones, or the relations he is under to God." In thus seeking to counter the "despotic influence" of "society" and its coercive moralism, James addresses man's "ideal" nature. Idealizing the personal, private, and individual dignity of humanity into a "realization of Deity, or infinitude" (*L&M*, 365), he reconciles Edwardsian and Swedenborgian disinterestedness with Emersonian individualism.

Something akin to that synthesis of individualism and Edwardsian universalism informs James's description of Emerson in a manuscript fragment that appears to have been a draft or variant of the elder Henry's much longer, two-part manuscript concerning Emerson. Having casually used the expression "true virtue" early in the fragment, Henry Senior later celebrates Emerson's genius as essentially disinterested and as the socialistic approximation of the Divine Humanity: Emerson's is not a "selfish, reflective genius, but a spontaneous, social, productive one." For that reason, according to James, the example of Emerson stigmatizes "unholy and unwholesome private pretension" in typifying universal qualities that embody

a "divine natural manhood" which "leaves no manner of ground for our private or exceptional sanctity to stand upon" (UMF 51: 64, 73, 78).

This union of Edwardsian and Emersonian thought also links a Northampton love of Being in general and Concord notions of transcendent dignity and higher law. The union fortifies Henry Senior's quarrel, in the miscellanies, with moralistic—that is, institutional—tyranny, for he casts the oppression of society as a violation of man's "infinite destiny." For Henry Senior, that "infinite ideal"—as Edwards would have said of benevolence—opposes "the obedience of [man's] merely natural appetites" and the base moralistic "motives" associated with "outward interest," as enforced coercively by "police" (L&M, 365–66). Far preferable, for James, is the spontaneity that he associates with Edwardsian disinterestedness and that he attributes to Emerson: "His consciousness is not in the least moral, subjective, depraved; it is wholly aesthetic, objective, spotless. He is as nearly as possible without the sentiment of selfhood, which is the sentiment we all have either of acute or chronic disaffection to our kind" (UMF 51: 74).⁵

When, therefore, Henry Senior argues simultaneously against moralism and social tyranny, he relies upon a conception of spontaneity (that elsewhere seems to resemble Edwardsian benevolence) that counters natural instinct and self-interest. The elder James conceived of spontaneity as possible only as an expression of unconditioned behavior, the sort of behavior that Edwards thought beyond the range of human preference and motive. Henry Senior felt that humanity could achieve "the divine life or perfection, which life or perfection consists in an infinite ability, or an ability unlimited by any thing external to the subject" (L&M, 367); much the same might be said of the elder James's capacity to arrive at his conclusions by way of idealistically reconciling social science—now cast as Transcendental dignity standing in opposition to institutional oppression—with the "best" of Swedenborg, Emerson, and Edwards.

Pertinent to this conception of a universal social science is Emerson's *Representative Men*. Speaking in quasi-idealistic terms, Emerson had argued that the great men of history—Plato, Montaigne, Swedenborg, Shakespeare, Napoleon, and Goethe—had merely embodied the ideas latent in every soul. These men "saw that things were representative" and that "men are also representative" of both things and "ideas." Beyond emphasizing the importance, therefore, of human "thought" and "the distinctive benefit of ideas" for his representative men, Emerson teeters upon an expression of collectivism that would have appealed to Henry Senior's vision of social science. In defense of humanity's representativeness—that is to say, of its essential collective nature—Emerson denounces the "fence of personality" as an obstacle to popular emulation of "the key to the power of the greatest men," since "their spirit diffuses itself." And with language further anticipating Henry Senior's rejection of the merely *personal*,

Emerson celebrates a "commonwealth of souls" discernible through "the central identity of all the individuals." Where James holds that the individual must merge into a general existence, Emerson claims that "all that respects the individual is temporary and prospective, like the individual himself, who is ascending out of his limits into a catholic existence."⁶ For the elder James, that "catholicism" would necessarily be socialistic.

Emerson would probably not have been completely surprised by Henry Senior's inference. In *Representative Men*, after all, he had denounced capitalism and its attendant hierarchies by criticizing the "self-esteems" and "exclusions" that Henry Senior would likewise have deplored:

Here is great competition of rich and poor. We live in a market, where is only so much wheat, or wool, or land; and if I have so much more, every other must have so much less. I seem to have no good without breach of manners. Nobody is glad in the gladness of another, and our system is one of war, of an injurious superiority. Every child of the Saxon race is educated to wish to be first. It is our system; and a man comes to measure his greatness by the regrets, envies and hatreds of his competitors. (CWE, 4:26-27)

When combined with Emerson's idealistic perspective on representativeness, such passages would have been all too alluring for the senior James.

Like Henry James Sr., moreover, Emerson discerns in humanity "one essence collected or distributed" (CWE, 4:11). Whereas the elder James had sought to bolster the notion of "the ultimate revelation of God in human nature" by referring to Christ as the "representative divine man" in his newspaper letter of 19 April 1851, he takes the Emersonian analogue to a socialistic conclusion in the miscellany "Morality," suggesting that

what our imperfect society does for the king or the governing class, the perfect society will do for all men. For the king does but *represent*, and is nothing in himself beyond any other man. . . . He *represents* the perfect man of the future, who shall reign over the whole earth. . . . Both the king and the priest do but *represent* or typify this lordly man, the man of destiny, the true son of God." (L&M, 369; emphasis added)

To the mind of a socialist, Emerson's representative men are not adequately representative.

This connection between socialism and Transcendentalism is clarified by a manuscript of uncertain date in which the elder James criticizes the insufficiency of *Representative Men*. While admiring Emerson's universal goal, Henry Senior nonetheless laments that "Mr. Emerson virtually defeats" the "true scope" and "divine significance" of *Representative Men* because Emerson's examples of representative men possess too much of an individual rather than a "spiritual," "representational," or "infinite" nature. In

this revealing manuscript, James also sees in Emerson's book a failure to celebrate "natural modesty," thereby suggesting that "these men . . . , far from *representing* the truths which are the infinite riches of the mind, turn out to be so many finite or personal embodiments of its wealth." In thus juxtaposing the "personal" with the selfless "infinite," Henry Senior concludes that Emerson's representative men failed to reflect the true virtue of humanity: they "abstract from the indigent race itself all the virtue they possess, or impoverish it to the extent of their personal lustre." To the mind of the elder James, therefore, Emerson only "partially" admits the "truth" that a representative man ought to be the "temporary mask or scaffolding which the divine being uses to conceal himself from our affrighted and superstitious observation, while he is slowly building up the edifice of human nature in proportions fit for his eternal inhabitation" (UMF 51: 16-20).

The elder James had been unsuccessful in convincing the Unitarians of the socialistic direction of a shared belief in human dignity, but he still had Emerson to work on.⁷ In the process, though, he seems to have overlooked Emerson's belief that institutional and social reform is futile in isolation from purified and devout hearts. With respect to pretensions to disinterested benevolence, Henry James the novelist would pick up where his father's ideas leave off. With regard to the very possibility of disinterestedness, William James's "interest" in his father's Edwardsianism merits special attention, alongside a discussion of Henry Senior's dramatic if abbreviated resurrection of the *Christian Inquirer* exchange in "A Very Long Letter."

6

“A Very Long Letter” and the “Interest” of William

TO INTRODUCE THE CHALLENGE POSED BY WILLIAM JAMES TO THE EDWARDSIAN disinterestedness advocated by his father, the current chapter explores senior Henry's efforts to silence his opponents at the *Christian Inquirer* through the deployment of a dramatic monologue in the section of *Lectures and Miscellanies* entitled “A Very Long Letter.” Without acknowledging its origins in the *Christian Inquirer*, “A Very Long Letter” replies to several arguments posed to the elder Henry by the newspaper. At the same time, “A Very Long Letter” evades the objections, voiced in the newspaper's letters of 29 March 1851 and 5 April 1851, that “*private* interests” and “personal seeking” are components of religious beneficence and the religious sentiment. For that reason, the current chapter features a discussion of William James's defense of self-interest in his psychology, philosophy, and views about religion.¹ William's attention to “interest” picks up where the *Christian Inquirer* of 29 March 1851 left off, when Henry Whitney Bellows insisted that “Man's nature is in one view essentially selfish; and Christ has sanctified its selfishness, by making self-love the measure of fraternal love.” Henry Senior's socialistic outlook on Edwardsian disinterestedness finds an even more compelling repudiation in the “interest” of William, whose views could not be silenced by dramatic monologues or other rhetorical devices employed by his father.²

Preceding miscellanies methodically flow toward “A Very Long Letter” in the course of the book's surreptitious (and retrospective) anticipation of objections posed by Bellows to Henry Senior's allegiance to the “old dogma of disinterestedness.” Since, in *Lectures and Miscellanies*, the elder James never mentions the effective rejoinders of the *Christian Inquirer*, “A Very Long Letter” features a contrived salutation to an anonymous “MY DEAR _____” and commences with an only slightly modified rendering of the first paragraph of Henry Senior's letter to the *Christian Inquirer* of 5 April 1851.

The dramatic quality of “A Very Long Letter” foreshadows Henry Senior's much later reference to drama in order to characterize anything phenom-

enalistic that falls short of the love of Being in general typified by socialism. For example, in 1863, the elder Henry offered an Edwardsian criticism of ideas about a "conviction of sin" because those fell short of being "a real conviction." Such notions of sin were "mere[ly] dramatic" feelings perpetuated by self-interest, specifically "in the interests of God's subsequent mercy"; sin, therefore, was "a simulated or artificial state of feeling enforced upon the *dramatis personae*," pretenders to "the religious drama" (SSH, 175). In related arguments calculated to reduce his opponents to the mere semblance of Being, the elder Henry refers to hypocrites as "ACTORS, unconsciously playing a part to which they are noway Divinely summoned" (SRFM, 82-83); he likewise refers to unredeemed humanity as possessing "merely seeming and dramatic existence" (CLC, 253). Lacking spiritual creation—that is, failing to acknowledge the divine efficacy of socialism—all pretensions to knowledge or substance furnish "only a preliminary theatre" (SRFM, 50) to regenerate life.

Highlighting the strategy of "A Very Long Letter," the senior James appropriates techniques of the dramatic monologue in later writings as well to advance tendentious points while appearing to be openminded. For instance, *Society the Redeemed Form of Man* features the following illusion of dialogue: "And if you, dear friend, ask me hereupon to state more explicitly what I mean by our civic constitution, I will do so with all necessary fulness and dispatch" (SRFM, 400). Another such instance of James's use of the dramatic monologue to convey the impression of debate where none exists is featured in *The Nature of Evil*: "'What!' you exclaim, 'is not the will of God . . . the fountain of all morality?'"—to which Henry Sr. purports to respond, "I am far from questioning the truth of this proposition, properly understood" (NE, 30). "Properly understood," of course, implies that this position is in error and in need of correction. As in the case of unregenerate similitudes of either virtue or true Being, mere shadows wait to evolve to the fullness of substance represented by the vision of Henry Senior.

That, at least, is what he hoped would occur between the publication of his lengthy exchange of letters with the *Christian Inquirer* and the re-presentation of that debate in the dramatically conceived "A Very Long Letter." Entirely absent in *Lectures and Miscellanies* is the ingenious retort of Henry Whitney Bellows to Henry Senior's Edwardsian outlook on virtue and selfishness. Gone, too, is Bellows's exquisitely crafted charge that socialism and Calvinism deterministically denigrate human freedom. If not exactly his "Last Duchess," the imaginary correspondent of "A Very Long Letter" does become James's last antagonist, doomed to curtailed and curtailed exhibition and to a biloquistic, elliptical, and—at least to the mind of Henry Senior—"ideal" response.

While the elder James fancied that "A Very Long Letter" had finally bested his Unitarian detractors, the dramatic silence that he imposed upon their ideas would not endure. Indeed, the insistence of the *Christian Inquirer* upon the place of personal interest in theology would eventually find reiteration and amplification in the writings of William James. Widely read in both Edwards's and Henry Senior's works, William, in his writings about psychology, pragmatism, pedagogy, and religious experience, offers a refutation of disinterestedness that resembles the claim of the *Christian Inquirer* that self-interest has a quite legitimate, because inevitable, place in religious experience.

Attention to William's concern with "interest" allows us to go beyond scholarship that has traditionally recognized the way that Edwards's celebration of religious affections helped mold William's defense of varied approaches to religious belief.³ Remaining to be explored is how the psychological fact of "interest," as viewed by William, poses the most probing of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century responses to what the *Christian Inquirer*—challenging the socialistic theology of Henry Senior—referred to as "the old dogma of disinterestedness."

Whereas Henry Senior spent much of his life channeling Edwardsian and Swedenborgian disinterestedness toward socialism, William devoted a career to repudiating the thoughts of deterministic monism. In doing so, William rejected systems of philosophy, like his father's, that posited transcendent principles of unity and antecedent abstractions as the inevitable Being of phenomenalist and inconsequential forms (WJW, 582, 601), including forms of consciousness and personal identity.⁴ William, through a system of pragmatism and radical empiricism, instead emphasized the "functional identity" (WJW, 197) of states of consciousness, the reality of relations existing in fields of consciousness, the highly personal dimension of cognitive reality, and the absolutely vital nature of *interest* in psychology, religion, and ethics.

Inasmuch as *The Varieties of Religious Experience* draws upon several of Edwards's works—including *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746), *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Works of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls* (1737), and *An Account of the Life of the Late Reverend Mr. David Brainerd* (1749)—William would have been attuned to the vilification of "interest" entailed in Edwardsian virtue. William, for instance, quotes the passage of Brainerd's diary in which the young minister disclaims any "virtue" in his prayers because of the presence of "'self-interest'" (VRE, 213). With respect to Edwardsian standards of general love as the foundation of virtue, William easily could have quoted a letter sent to him in 1867, in which Henry Senior insisted that "creative love is purely objective as having no subjective ends, no taint of drawback of self-love" (TWJ, 2:709).

At the same time, William recognized that a rejection of the mere appearance—or the phenomenalist nature—of benevolence underlay all such Edwardsonian skepticism about pretensions to virtue: for the orthodox, the “roots of a man’s virtue” prove “inaccessible” because “no appearances whatever are infallible proofs of grace” (*VRE*, 20). As an empiricist, though, William took issue with the assumption of Edwards and Henry Senior that self-interest and natural instincts are either negligible or damnable phenomena. Indeed, William’s attraction to the value and varieties of experience relates in large measure to his aversion to recurrent philosophical efforts—whether by Plato, Hegel, Tolstoy, Bradley, Royce, or Henry Sr.—to insist upon the illusory nature of matter, or the unification of “nonentity and concrete Being” (*WJW*, 511). William held that “a mere bare fraud is just what our Western common sense will never believe the phenomenal world to be” (*WJW*, 871).

Both in his psychological and theological writings, William acknowledges “reality” and “solidity” but *not*, as his father had argued, as manifestations of transcendent, monistic Being. Having as early as 1867 written some long letters to debate his father over the issues of phenomenism and reality (*TWJ*, 2:712–13), William came to regard the *real* as a combination of vital phenomena, including “a conscious field *plus* its object as felt or thought of *plus* an attitude towards the object *plus* the sense of a self to whom the attitude belongs” (*VRE*, 499). By everywhere validating the active, individualistic perceiver, for whom any given “appearance . . . may not be an illusion” (*WJW*, 228), William redeems phenomenism from the monists and rationalists who had discredited it. Also, in an emphatic repudiation of monistic contempt for the phenomenism of human identity, William predicates cognitive apprehension upon the “*existence* of personal selves,” upon “personal consciousness” (*WJW*, 154, 153), and—most significant for William’s response to the Edwardsonianism of Henry Senior—upon the suggestion that the essence of a thing exists in harmony with personal, psychologically grounded “*interests*” (*WJW*, 335).

Henry Jr. drew upon that same sense of “interest” in 1905 to answer William’s sardonic remarks oconcerning the novelist’s predominantly psychological novels:

Why won’t you, just to please Brother, sit down and write a new book, with no twilight or mustiness in plot, with great vigor and decisiveness in the action, no fencing in the dialogue, or psychological commentaries, and absolute straightness in style. Publish it in my name, I will acknowledge it, and give you half the proceeds.

When, in reply, Henry Jr. writes of William’s constitutional inability to enjoy the psychological drama of *The Golden Bowl*, and when the novelist

adds, "I see nowhere about me done or dreamed of the things that alone for me constitute the *interest* of doing the novel,"⁵ he wryly evokes for his brother the underlying tenet—featured throughout William's writings on psychology, pragmatism, and radical empiricism—of the sanctity of personal interest.

The novelist would have known that his brother viewed disinterestedness as an untenable speculation violating the most basic features of cognitive development and natural selection. Because, as William had told Henry Senior, "Sensation, perception, and reason apparently have their roots in the life of the nervous system" (*TWJ*, 2:713), and because self-interest is traceable to neural instinct and response (*WJW*, 905), the "interests which we bring with us . . . are the very flour out of which our mental dough is kneaded" (*WJW*, 904). Thus, rather than follow either his father or Edwards in denigrating self-interest, William claimed, "On zoölogical principles it is easy to see why we have been endowed with impulses of self-seeking and with emotions of self-satisfaction and the reverse," for "each mind, to begin with, must have a certain minimum of selfishness in the shape of instincts of bodily self-seeking in order to exist" (*WJW*, 189). Whereas Edwards and Henry Sr. had faulted uninspired appearances of virtue on the ground that those were reducible to natural instinct and selfishness, William deemed pious disinterestedness to be unattainable. Given the "interest" entailed in the very existence of "*me* or *mine*," William regarded as "fundamental" the "psychological fact" that "no mind can take the same interest in his neighbor's *me* as in his own" (*WJW*, 172).

Beyond implicitly challenging the concept of disinterested benevolence, this celebration of *interest* elevates individualism, egotism, and privacy to a stature unimagined by Henry Senior, who had, like Swedenborg, perceived such *propria* as obstacles to redemption, and who hoped socialistically to "harmonize human interests" (*L&M*, 388). William posits the "concrete reality" of religious conviction as a "private personal destiny" that, as part of "a monumental chapter in the history of human egotism" (*VRE*, 499, 491), belies the premise behind philosophical adoration of general Being: "Why from Socrates downwards, philosophers should have vied with each other in scorn of knowledge of the particular, and in adoration of that of the general, is hard to understand, seeing that . . . *things* of worth are all concretes and singulars." Far from conceding anything like his father's Edwardsian glorification of real Being as an expression of universal, general love, William holds that "the only value of universal characters is that they help us, by reasoning, to know new truths about individual things" (*WJW*, 232). As for the proposition—shared by his father and many others—that one should exalt the "general" over private interests, William anecdotally recalls the Adirondack story of a man who shot a bear by aiming "'at him generally'"; William protests, "But we cannot aim 'gener-

ally'; if we do, we miss our game." He instead adopts a piecemeal approach to reality, based in "our little interests as they change from hour to hour" (WJW, 334).

William therefore would have been loath to acknowledge a love of Being in general as the foundation of true virtue because, among other reasons, he would have questioned the assumption that a singular, non-pluralistic approach exists to "true" values. Unlike the rationalist, monist, or absolutist, the pragmatist or radical empiricist maintains a *provisional* approach to truth: "Truth is not a stagnant property inherent in [an idea]. Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events. Its verity *is* in fact . . . a process." Similarly, "Realities are not *true*, they *are*; and beliefs are true *of* them." By implication, then, "our psychological ascertainments of truth are in mutation" and "the concrete truth *for us* will always be that way of thinking in which our experiences most profitably combine." William disdains the "unanalyzable virtue" accepted by static rationalism in its failure to acknowledge the mutability of "truth" (PMT, 97, 272, 108, 213).

William tacitly targets conceptions of virtue harbored by his father; his critique of Edwardsian virtue takes us well beyond the more obvious dismissal of Calvinism featured in the aversion shared by William and the elder James to ideas about original sin and retributive predestination.⁶ Moreover, William's moral argument against Calvinism goes significantly further than the conventional liberal Christian reaction to Edwards, because the younger James, in his writings about "interest," uses Edwardsian logic to combat Edwardsian ideas about disinterested general love. Just as Edwards had argued that appearances of true virtue are traceable to self-interest and natural instinct, so William suggests the same about Edwardsian conceptions of disinterested benevolence.

For example, William claims that the "supernaturally infused condition" of grace described in Edwards's *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* is attributable to an "exceptionally high degree of natural goodness" (VRE, 239); he likewise exploits an Edwardsian mind-set by speaking about "Charity and Brotherly Love"—including that described in the conversion narrative of Mrs. Edwards—as a "natural psychic complex" that "carries charity with it by organic consequence." To the extent that even Mrs. Edwards's "love to all mankind" features an "organic affinity between joyousness and tenderness" (VRE, 279-80), it is reducible to "a particular interest in the conceiver" (WJW, 509). As William remarks elsewhere, "Laws of the Ideal" are "dictated by subjective *interests* pure and simple" (WJW, 894). This commandeering of Edwardsian logic in order to interpret the disinterested benevolence of Mrs. Edwards as an expression of natural instinct harkens back, first, to William's premise that (psychologically considered) reasoning in any shape relates to the "reasoner's temporary interest"

(*WJW*, 336), and second, to William's conclusion that a conception of anything's appearing "true" relates to the manner in which such perspectives about truth satisfactorily serve the "particular thinker's purpose" (*PMT*, 297).

That insistence upon the psychological, or natural, inevitability of "interest" is, then, compatible with William's most emphatic reduction of disinterested benevolence to idealized self-interest:

Probably no one can make sacrifices for 'right,' without to some degree personifying the principle of right for which the sacrifice is made, and expecting thanks from it. *Complete* social unselfishness, in other words, can hardly exist. . . . That old test of piety, "Are you willing to be damned for the glory of God?" was probably never answered in the affirmative except by those who felt sure in their heart of hearts that God would 'credit' them with their willingness, and set more store by them thus than if in His unfathomable scheme He had not damned them at all. (*WJW*, 189)

Here William goes a step further than had the *Christian Inquirer* when, in seeking to *reconcile* personal seeking with benevolence, Henry Whitney Bellows told Henry Senior that "the old dogma of disinterestedness, which exacted that a man should be willing to be damned for the glory of God, before he could be saved, was a rude expression of the unselfish nature of a personal seeking for the favor of God" (5 April 1851). William may or may not have been familiar with Bellows's effort to reconcile personal seeking and disinterestedness; regardless, he adamantly redefines pretensions to disinterestedness as idealized self-seeking. Because his broad challenge to Edwardsianism and Hopkinsianism relies on the premise that "the sympathetic instincts and the egoistic ones are . . . coördinate" (*WJW*, 190), he predictably lauds a "virtue with horny hands and dirty skin," for "every other virtue poses; none is absolutely unconscious and simple, and unexpectant of decoration" (*WJW*, 866). This is Edwardsianism, but with a vengeance.

By extension, William's response to ideas about disinterested benevolence encompasses socialistic applications of that concept. Having already apprised the elder Henry of the continuity "from the mineral to the highest form of social love" (*TWJ*, 2:713), he elsewhere defines communal respect for "disinterested" generosity as something that, benefiting "the community as a whole," is consistent with its "survival interests." William subverts the Edwardsian and Hopkinsian foundation of his father's socialism by classifying the "social affections" under the rubric of Darwinian "survival interests" (*WJW*, 900, 899) and by further classifying these "direct social self-seeking impulses" as "probably pure instincts" (*WJW*, 181). But little matter. What finally counts—and here William draws more positively upon Edwards's descriptions of one of the signs of grace—is not any pre-

tension to true virtue, but rather "the nature of that exalted virtue's fruits—fruits for us, of course, humanistic fruits" (*PMT*, 235).⁷ To this degree, the "interest" of William constitutes still one more "issue" related to the exchange of thoughts between Henry Sr. and the *Christian Inquirer* concerning "the old dogma of disinterestedness"; it suggests, as well, that William's monumental achievements as a psychologist and a radical empiricist merit reassessment in the context of William's interest in the "nature" of virtue.

“Your father’s *ideas*, you know—!”:
Henry Jr.’s “Prized Phenomena”

CONCERNING HIS PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF GEORGE ELIOT, HENRY JAMES JR. said that a certain “‘relation’ . . . helped me to squeeze further values from the intrinsic substance” of her novels (*MY*, 578). Similarly, the phenomenism, Edwardsonianism, and socialism of the elder Henry can illuminate the concerns and aesthetics of Henry Jr.’s three-volume autobiography and his works of fiction.¹ Although Henry Jr.’s personal library included only two of his father’s works, those volumes explore themes that coincide with the creative endeavors of the novelist. Henry Jr. owned *Lectures and Miscellanies* (1852).² That book, which the James children associated with their father’s professional writing (*NSB*, 279), contained a vital chapter on the disinterested enterprise of the “artist,” whose productions were said to be created in isolation from economic self-interest or related social contingencies. The library of Henry Jr. also contained *The Literary Remains of Henry James* (1884), edited by William James and praised by Henry Jr. for its comprehensive, analytical introduction to the “extraordinarily complex, . . . worked out, . . . original, and intensely personal” (*NSB*, 335) philosophy of their father. Other references to *The Literary Remains* (*SBO*, 5; *NSB*, 340, 348) suggest that Henry Jr. read widely in it.

Significant for our inquiry into the tie between the creative speculations of father and son is the fact that *The Literary Remains* includes the senior James’s posthumously published *Spiritual Creation* (1882 MS). This was the *summa* of a life devoted to articulating the process by which true Being, or socialism, evolves from the phenomenistic “forms” of life that God “makes” in order to infuse them with the true Being of general love of one’s kind. As we shall now observe, those ideas influenced Henry Jr.’s autobiographical utterances, his thoughts about the art of the novel, and his attitude toward British aestheticism.

I here concur with the view that “James knew more about his father’s [theological] scheme . . . than he allows the uninformed reader to see,” and that Henry Senior’s theory of spiritual creation had numerous implications

Henry James in the early 1880s. pf MS Am 1094 Box 2. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and Bay James Baker.

for the art of his novelist son.³ Although Henry Jr., as an adolescent, abstained from the “poured-out cups” of his father’s treatises, he still drank “largely at the source itself, the personally overflowing and irrigating” (*NSB*, 331). That daily exposure to the philosophy of his father resulted less in his being enamored of, or averse to, notions of spiritual creation than in his developing an appreciation for ways in which the father’s “phenomenal” inconsistencies were oddly in line with both artistic inspiration and socialistic contempt for the fine arts. That creative contradiction becomes central to Henry Jr.’s conflicted recollections of “the father.”

The philosophy of the senior Henry so pervaded the James household that Mary James constantly had to console her children with the phrase, “Your father’s *ideas*, you know—!” (*NSB*, 333). Of those ideas, one remained highly guarded throughout *Notes of a Son and Brother*. Henry Jr. nowhere speaks frankly about his father’s theoretical “socialism.”⁴ Rather, he indirectly alerts us to the senior James’s zeal for “‘human fellowship’” and—without detailing the ruthless political implications attendant upon such social reorganization (as would be dramatized in *The Princess Casamassima*)—romantically asserts that his father’s philosophy clamored for application “to the whole field of consciousness, nature and society, history, knowledge, all human relations and questions, every pulse of the process of our destiny” (*NSB*, 335).

Henry Jr. was familiar, therefore, with the broadly renovative tendency of his father’s political theology, but the novelist was reluctant—at least when creating a family history—to elaborate upon the politics of the senior James. The father made ideas accessible, like “so many droppings of gold and silver coin on tables and chimney-pieces, to be ‘taken’ or not according to our sense and delicacy” (*NSB*, 331). Henry Jr. took more than he left, if only because what he rejected—mainly of socialistic mint—accrued much “interest” for his career as a novelist who made a “profession” of taste.

In this vein, Henry Jr. capitalized upon his father’s homage to Edwardsian and Swedenborgian expressions of disinterestedness. As noted above, Henry Senior’s vision of spiritual creation featured a general love that was the outcome of a divine and benevolent infusion of true virtue and Being into otherwise illusory (because phenomenalistic) forms of supposedly selfish (because capitalistic) existence. Henry Jr. quotes his father’s remark about “‘Jonathan Edwards Redivivus’” (*NSB*, 347) and seems to have been familiar—mainly through the assimilation and reiteration of such ideas in the philosophy of Henry Senior, and, later, through his brother’s explicit attention to Edwardsian notions of interest in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*⁵—with Edwards’s belief that the mere appearance of virtue is reducible to either natural instinct or to self-interest. Consider, for instance, Fanny Assingham in *The Golden Bowl*. Rather than acknowledge the social and personal benefit that motivates her to be a misadventurous match-

maker, she complains that she is merely a "creature of pure virtue" and "sympathy" who has allowed her "disinterestedness, her exquisite sense for the lives of others, to carry her too far" (GB, 414). The transformation of "true virtue" to "pure virtue" seems telling, given the Edwardsian and Swedenborgian ideas about disinterestedness that Henry Jr. would have inherited from the elder James.

Variations on that regard for virtue as a general love counteracting selfish motives and natural instinct also pervade the nonfictional prose of Henry Jr. Although unremarked by existing scholarship, reverberations of that inheritance show up in the literary reviews, prefaces, and autobiographies of the novelist. He notes, for instance, that his father "only cared for virtue that was more or less ashamed of itself"—in other words, a virtue that took no personal self-satisfaction in its own existence. Henry Senior abhorred "the *conscious* conscience" (SBO, 123–24) and not surprisingly frowned upon pretensions to virtue that were linked to self-interest. Bringing to mind the specious pretensions to "generosity" and "benevolence"—as well as the bankruptcy of disavowals of "personal interests" and "selfishness"—by those who prey upon Nanda in *The Awkward Age* (289, 278, 222), the novelist quotes his father's aversion to the "arrant deviltry" that "transact[s] itself in the name of benevolence," including any act of charity undertaken simply for the "sake of profit it yields to my own self-complacency" (NSB, 378).

In a related manner, when speaking of his fondness for settings associated with the Byronic age, Henry Jr. self-effacingly attributes the feeling more to "the 'special effect', in some deep associational force, than in a virtue more intrinsic" (AN, 165). Although casual, the remark still echoes Henry Senior's Edwardsian sense of virtue as that which is not contingent upon beneficial association with something beyond itself. Not surprisingly, therefore, Henry Jr. used related rhetoric to describe his father's devotion to the writing of philosophy: Henry Senior, requiring "no ghost of a reward in the form of pence," exhibited a "magnanimity" marked by "selfless detachment" in the "interested order." Such, indeed, was "piety" (NSB, 330–34).

That such piety was in some way Edwardsian is an inference we may draw from the homage shown by Henry Jr. to the memory of Minny Temple, who succumbed to consumption in 1869. The notion of virtue as a general love transcending personal interest suffuses the novelist's sense of this favorite cousin who died in her youth. He sanctifies her memory—beyond reference to her George Eliot-like embodiment of "a generous woman"—in terms reminiscent of Edwards's regard for virtue as a love of Being in general and of Henry Senior's belief in such general love as existing apart from prescriptive moralism. Both categories merge in Henry Jr.'s description of Minny as possessing spontaneous virtue and as boasting a surname with religious overtones. Although events around Minny "took place as if

primarily in relation to her interest: that is in the interest of drawing her out and displaying her the more"—they happened "without her in the least caring." Indeed, she exhibited "morally nostalgic indifferences" to her own selfhood "that were the most finally characteristic thing about her." Typifying the most humanistic legacy of that Puritan temperament, Minny, "at no matter what cost to herself," had an "instinct" directed less at self-interest than at "see[ing] others fairly exhibited; not as they might best please her by being, but as they might most fully reveal themselves." Aptly, therefore—with respect to the transmission and transformation of Edwardsian ideas extending from father to son—Henry Jr. summarizes Minny's engagement with the "play of life in others" as "her care . . . for life in general" (*NSB*, 509, 523).⁶

If Minny displayed the spirit of true virtue inherent in general love, then William James, because of his broad humanism, exhibited—especially in his "triumph over *distaste*" in various "relations," "exposures," and "judgments"—a "high virtue" (*NSB*, 430) that vividly exposed the self-centeredness of less generous minds. Among those falling short of this mark were the ostensible reformers in Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance*. As summarized by Henry Jr., that novel reveals the motives behind pretensions to the "successful surrender of self." Indeed, "the idea that [Hawthorne] most tangibly presents," said Henry Jr., with Edwardsian flourish, "is that of the unconscious way in which the search for the common good may cover a hundred interested impulses and personal motives" (*AE*, 19). Of course, such hypocrisy is also evident in society at large. In *Washington Square*, for instance, the opportunistic Townsend—anticipating Merton Densher's designs upon Milly in *The Wings of the Dove*—poses as "disinterested" and "benevolent" when he is actually "selfish and shallow" in his pursuit of Catherine (*WS*, 90, 109, 101).

Henry Jr. similarly faults persons for "skilfully feigning a virtue not in the least native to them" (*AN*, 283). Such people act as a foil for Mary James, who died in 1882. Reflecting upon her "great natural beneficence," and echoing his father's use of Edwardsian benevolence to formulate a theory of spiritual creation, Henry Jr. says that the thought of his mother provided him with a "belief in certain transcendent things—the immanence of *being* as nobly created as hers—the immortality of such a *virtue* as that" (*N*, 229; emphasis added). Similarly, in the preface to *What Maisie Knew*, Henry Jr. evokes his father's equation of true virtue with the Being that imparts substance to phenomenistic forms in the process of spiritual creation. In a passage that strikingly recalls the union of Edwardsian virtue and spiritual creation in the philosophy of his father, Henry Jr. says that Maisie's "virtue" conveys substance to the shallowness and emptiness of other characters. Maisie does for the adults of that novel what, in the theory of

spiritual creation advocated by the senior James, virtuous Being does for phenomenalist forms.

This process is manifested in the way Maisie's "exhibitional virtue" is said to lend "to poorer persons and things, by the mere fact of their being involved with her and by the special scale she creates for them, a precious element of dignity." Resembling the phenomenalist base that facilitates the regenerative process of spiritual creation, the selfish and shallow parents and stepparents of Maisie receive from her an infusion of freshness into "appearances in themselves vulgar and empty enough." To these phenomenalist forms Maisie conveys virtuous "*solidities*, connexions—connexions with the 'universal'" (emphasis added) that they "could scarce have hoped for" apart from such involvement with her. In isolation from Maisie, therefore, Beale and Ida have neither "objectivity" nor intense "*being*" (AN, 147). Aptly, therefore, and with rhetoric that brings to mind Henry Senior's many references to the difference between substance and appearance, Henry Jr. remarks that Maisie's virtuous bewilderment provides "the *hardness* of the unforgettable" (emphasis added) to the scene, and that this solidity makes the "scant unredeemed importances" of her adult protectors "*appreciable*" (AN, 148). This is nothing less than Henry Jr.'s recasting of Maisie as a reincarnation of the elder James's vision of spiritual creation. That process of artistic assimilation likely occurs less through self-conscious design on the part of Henry Jr. than through a nearly habitual manipulation of ideas that preoccupied Henry Senior, ideas that surface anew in his son's artistic attempt to articulate a redemptive, creative perspective on otherwise irredeemable circumstances.

An even more profound indebtedness to the father emerges in the novelist's suggestion that, because Maisie disinterestedly imparts solidity to the phenomenism and selfishness of her parents, "they become, as she deals with them, the *stuff* of poetry and tragedy and art" (AN, 147; emphasis added). The novelist here alerts us to the more aesthetic legacy occasioned for the creative writer by the points of contact among phenomenism, benevolence, and solidity. For instance, while Henry Jr. casually uses benevolent rhetoric to describe his encounter with the old National Gallery—"the virtue of the business was . . . a good deal more in what I brought than in what I took" (MY, 570)—the novelist more significantly draws upon the concept of true virtue to define his own "love of letters" as "the most disinterested of careers" (NSB, 317). This temperament corresponds remarkably to what we have already explored as Henry Senior's use of Edwardsian categories to help define the ideal stature of the artist.

That calling finds further expression in the preface to *The Ambassadors*. The novelist spurns "'judicious' sacrifice to a particular form of interest" because "composition alone is positive beauty" and because, in a work of art, "virtue can be essentially but the virtue of the whole." While necessar-

ily overlooking the socialistic context that Henry Senior felt uniquely sufficient to elicit the most general and virtuous behavior, Henry Jr. follows his father in rejecting "the cause of the moment" (AN, 320) in order to luxuriate in the aesthetic whole of the artistic creation. Such an aesthetic indulgence, in turn, comprises—at least to the satisfaction of Henry Jr.—the *substance* of creation that his father would otherwise have associated with social redemption: the "'story' . . . puts on . . . the authenticity of concrete existence" and "then *is*, essentially—it begins to be" (AN, 311-12). This tie between spiritual creation and the art of the novel bespeaks a connection between creative writing and Henry Jr.'s reminiscences about the Edwardsian musings of the senior James.

In fact, ideas that resonate with the solidity of true Being in *Spiritual Creation*, as well as with Henry Senior's Edwardsian conception about the disinterestedness of art, dominate the recollection of Henry Jr. of his father's aversion to any "particular form of success"—including, oddly, William's prospects of becoming a professional artist—or worldly calling for his children. As remembered by Henry Jr., "What we were to do . . . was just *be* something, something unconnected with specific doing, something free and uncommitted, something finer in short than being *that*, whatever it was, might consist of" (NSB, 268).⁷ Whether or not Henry Jr. understood the Edwardsian inspiration for his father's preference for virtue as its own end—over "this, that or the other more technical thrifty scheme" (SBO, 126)—the preference of the elder Henry for free-floating, generalized "pre-occupation" nourished Henry Jr.'s artistry.

This is especially so with regard to the senior Henry's celebration of various forms of "failure" or "*waste*" that might be redeemed by a "socialised" and "generalized" idealism (NSB, 301-2). Henry Jr. here refers to his father's belief that spiritual creation and redemption require a vacant base receptive to a substantial infusion of love from Being in general. Prior to the period during which Henry Senior began characterizing that vacuity with a consistently phenomenalist rhetoric, he, following Swedenborg, equated mere forms or semblances of identity with "*waste*"—that is, with those hellish "excrementations" that need to be "defecated" as a prelude to "uni[ty] . . . with God."⁸

As remembered by Henry Jr., his father's ideas about waste, vacuity, and reverent solidity encouraged his own propensity to apprehend (and then artistically to depict) matters and states of mind otherwise inconsequential. Indeed, the father's redemptive outlook on waste and failure allowed Henry Jr. to profit "greatly for animation and curiosity by the interest he shed for us on the whole side of the human scene usually held least interesting." Thus, whereas Henry Senior saw in the phenomenism of nature and human consciousness the potential for divine growth entailed in socialistic Being, Henry Jr. discerned—in seemingly insignificant scenes,

persons, or events—the material for an “enlarged. . . field . . . of appreciation and perception” (*NSB*, 302).⁹ Or, stated in a manner that grafts his father’s vision to novel ends, “Phenomena may be interesting . . . without being phenomena of elegant expression or of any other form of restless smartness” (*MY*, 557).

Henry Jr.’s inclination to transform the perception of phenomena into literary production was also the outcome of an enriched “sensibility” indebted to his father’s being “contemptuous of . . . facts” and to the reluctance of the elder James to expose his children to “the she-wolf of competition and discipline” (*SBO*, 126–27). While *The Princess Casamassima* is highly critical of the socialistic intolerance of the arts, Henry Jr. nonetheless implies that his father’s creative spirit and “fine breadth of . . . expression” (*NSB*, 385) inspired his own artistic impulse. Whatever the criticism of radical ideas about the family unit in *The Bostonians* and *What Maisie Knew*, Henry Jr. recognized the advantage, for a person of imagination, of having lived in a home in which “things of the spirit” and “genialities of faith” stood apart from banal and sometimes invidious “social organisation” (*NSB*, 337). The family’s being “afloat and disconnected” from social expectation, prescription, and precedents stood opposed—good news for the artistic mind—to “close localisation” (*NSB*, 305). Thus, the disinterested—arguably Edwardsian—play of ideas in the James household provided the most general *perspective* necessary for artistic apprehension and utterance.

So did the “almost sore experience of multiplicity and vivacity of contact” that Henry Jr. and William experienced when their father enrolled them, in the autumn of 1856 (*HJ*, 1:130), in the Fezandié Institute in Paris. The school’s educational orientation was greatly influenced by Fourieristic socialism. While skeptical about the “general fine fallacy” that supported that institute and its “bold idealism,” Henry Jr. acknowledged the advantage for his creative impulse of the “impressions and quickened sensibilities” and the “harvests of apparitions” the experience made available (*SBO*, 211, 206, 210). At stake for the adolescent consciousness was the variety of life’s experiences rather than the political soundness of those phenomena at the moment of apprehension.

The nonconformity of Henry Senior likewise inspired his children’s “liv[ing] as much as we might in some such light of our own” (*NSB*, 331). Drawing, therefore, upon rhetoric that resonates with his father’s theory of spiritual creation—and specifically as we have observed, as that pertained to a divine “communication” of Being to phenomenalist forms—Henry Jr. refers to the quality of his father’s “intellectual passion” as something “communicated *as life*” and as conducive to the “cogitation and aspiration” of a youngster who discerned that he had an “absolutely equal share” (*NSB*, 336) of mental vitality. With respect, moreover, to Henry Jr.’s liter-

ary career, even the absolutism of the father seems to have had a positive influence, for the artist, according to Henry Jr., must believe that "one inveterately *ha[s]* hold of the truth" (*NSB*, 295).

Still, what so startles, by way of contrast to positive paternal influence, is the novelist's belief that this artistic passion, by virtue of its consummately personal, possessive, private, and individualistic nature, constitutes a form of "spiritual capital" that is "armour-proof . . . against the appeal of sacrifice" (*NSB*, 295). Although Henry Jr. was quite aware that his father's philosophy of "'human fellowship'" disparaged "acquisition, material vindication, what is called success generally" (*NSB*, 336), the son nonetheless spoke of taking "possession" of artistic freedom—and in such a manner as to "purse the prize" (*PP*, 407-08). For Henry Jr., therefore, artistic capital is intellectual "property" (*SBO*, 158, 159).¹⁰

The affront posed by such nuanced phrasing to the socialism of Henry Senior is traceable, in part, to an "implied snub" to the "significance" of a career as a writer (*NSB*, 339) that Henry Jr. recognized in his father's program of theoretical activism.¹¹ Henry Jr.'s sense of the conflict between literary artistry and socialism happens to coincide with John Humphrey Noyes's belief that the Brook Farm experiment failed because of the predominance of literati in the community: "The tendency to literature . . . is the farthest opposite of Communism, finding its *summum bonum* in individualism and incoherent instead of organic inspiration" (*HAS*, 562). The depictions of Olive Chancellor, in *The Bostonians*, and of Hyacinth Robinson, in *The Princess Casamassima*, indicate that cultural revolutions preclude the individualism inherent in aestheticism and that Henry Senior's regard for the "artist" as the Divine-Natural Man was finally inconsistent with socialistic intolerance for disinterested nonactivism. Thus, while Henry Jr. claimed that he and his siblings, as children, "wholesomely breathed inconsistency and ate and drank contradictions"—wholesome by virtue of the taste for "paradox" thereby encouraged (*SBO*, 124)—he would later have the nerve, as he did not in childhood, to deem his father "'wrong,' wrong as a thinker-out" (*NSB*, 373).

In that more critical spirit, Henry Jr. describes his father as somewhat oxymoronic in at once reverencing the "human" while having an aversion to the "literal" in life, inveighing against "moralism" in the "very interest of character and conduct." If, therefore, the senior Henry provided his children with an appreciation for paradox, he often did so to their "amusement" (*SBO*, 123-24). What, for instance, were William and Henry Jr. to make of a father who extolled "'human fellowship'" (*NSB*, 336) but who exercised such "unsurpassable . . . independence" (*NSB*, 330) and "fresh individual utterance" (*NSB*, 270) in the "solitary singleness" (*NSB*, 275) of composing publicly-spurned discourses that boasted an "unfailingly personal . . . style" (*NSB*, 334)? These phrases—their theme emerging through

the benefit of Henry Jr.'s retrospective observation and narration—imply that Henry Senior typified the spirit of individualism he claimed to disown.

As remembered by Henry Jr., the father also belied his own theoretical homage to general fellowship through an "eccentrically home-loving habit" and an inability to venture forth amidst humanity without retreating to his own fireside with tales of "horrid inhuman inns . . . amid the hard alien races which had stayed his advance" (*SBO*, 43). Whatever the political possibilities of the socialism envisioned by Henry Senior, the James family "collectively"—and that choice of words is not casual, given the socialism of the elder James—was "genially interested in almost nothing but each other" (*SBO*, 36). In fact, that strong "domestic" (*NSB*, 270)—as opposed to disinterestedly social—impulse was so strong in the elder James as to form a "paternal prejudice" contradicting the praise for an enlarged human family that runs through his published discourses. Indeed, as reported by Henry Jr., the elder James told James T. Fields, then editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, "'the parental sentiment is so fiendish a thing with me that if anyone attempt to slay my young . . . , I can't help devoting him bag and baggage to the infernal gods'" (*NSB*, 269).

Add to this familial charm the wealth of private attention with which Mary James supported her spouse during his career of public obscurity. Her efforts occasioned jest among the children: they knew that domestic stability energized their father, who extolled the transcendence of personal and familial relations in order, through spiritual creation, to evolve socialistically toward true Being and consummate "Virtue" (*SBO*, 123). Less than reverently, therefore, Henry Jr. remembers his father incessantly reading revisions of treatises to Mary in order to "show her how he had this time at last done it." She, in turn, would listen to the "full music" of his "papers" in the course of displaying "sovereign care" for her spouse. In violation of the emphasis in those papers on selfless abandonment of "the personal claim," she would express boundless "acclamation" and "pride" in her husband, who thrived upon her bottomless well of love and encouragement. Her precocious children—novelists and psychologists in the making—would find their "happiest play of filial humour" in being "delightedly derisive" by reminding their mother of the contradiction between the socialistic philosophy she praised in their father's papers and her special charm in keeping his spirit afloat through personal attentiveness and unabashedly familial expressions of love (*NSB*, 342-43).¹²

From that indulgently humorous perspective emerges a more critical outlook on the philosophy of Henry Senior. Of concern to the novelist was the *spontaneity* (*NSB*, 342) that his father associated with the artist who, through Swedenborgian and Edwardsian disinterestedness, would embody the Divine-Natural Humanity. According to Henry Jr., the inspiration for that or for related forms of creative impulsiveness grew from the sense of

security and love generated by a wife and mother whose omnipresence served as a safety net for intellectual questing. Her care was the "lap of all his liberties and all our securities," to the point that "we simply lived by her, in proportion as we lived *spontaneously*, with an equanimity of confidence, an independence . . . which left us free for detachments of thought and flights of mind, experiments, so to speak, on the assumption of our genius and our intrinsic interest" (NSB, 342; emphasis added). Henry Jr. here reveals that domestic love and fireside security fanned the flames of spontaneity that his father's "'papers'" otherwise attributed to disinterested, impersonal associationism.¹³

In *Notes of a Son and Brother*, Henry Jr. explores a related and equally telling inconsistency in his father's advocacy of spiritual creation. Henry Jr. politely shows the notion to be crass pragmatism masquerading as spiritualism. Such, the novelist suggests, was the outcome of his father's investing faith *a priori* (though, if truth be known, a tad after the fact) in the value of phenomenalistic impressions that stand to be made spiritual or, as Henry Jr. more reductively explains, practical and successful:

His indifference *at the first blush* to the manifestation of special and marketable talents and faculties, restlessly outward purposes of whatever would-be "successful" sort, was apt to be surpassable only by his delight subsequently taken in our attested and visible results, the very fruits of application; as to which the possibility, perhaps even the virtual guarantee, hadn't so much left him cold in advance as made him adversely and "spiritually" hot. The sense of that word was the most living thing in the world for him—to the point that *the spiritual simply meant to him the practical and the successful*, so far as he could get into touch with such denominations, or . . . face them or care for them *a priori*. (NSB, 267–68; emphasis added)

Just as Henry Jr. here intimates that his father's profession of spiritual creation was more pragmatic than devout, so he elsewhere implies that Henry Senior's belief in the divine communication of virtuous Being to life's vacant forms was moralism *en masque*. Indeed, in conveying ideas to his children about "justice and generosity," the elder Henry encouraged "the liveliest, and certainly the most amusing and civilising, *moral*, or *as he would have insisted, spiritual* recreation by the way" (NSB, 267–68; emphasis added). This momentary, pragmatic identification of spiritual creation with mundane moralism would have appalled the senior James, whose writings detail the dissonance between defecation moralism and regenerative socialistic spiritualism.

Foolish inconsistencies may have been the hobgoblins of small minds, but what were the cerebral James children—or more precisely, the adult novelist engaged in retrospective narration—to make of serious ones? Among the more conspicuous foibles of the elder Henry was his advocacy

of socialism while he lived off of stock-market income generated from inherited wealth obtained through an aggressive lawsuit. Then there was his ownership of, and occasional speculation in, private property that, over time, evaded his "personal cognisance," or visitation.¹⁴ Out of sight, out of mind—but money in the bank. Understandably awkward, therefore, is a passage in *The Secret of Swedenborg* in which Henry Senior seeks, "when the great mass of my fellow-men are sunken in poverty," to exonerate his own state of privileged existence. Somewhat lamely—at least in the context of his otherwise indulgent socialistic theorizing—he says that "these enjoyments on my part imply no straitening of any other man's social resources, and are indeed a necessary condition of my own social worth" (SS, 173). Rationales of this sort would probably not have assuaged Henry Jr., who seems to have regarded his father in a light similar to that cast by Emerson upon the high-society reformers writing for *The Dial*, or living at Brook Farm or at Fruitlands. As summarized approvingly by Henry Jr., Emerson noted that their armchair socialism "produced no fruit" and was merely the "innocent recreation" one might have expected from "the amusement of the leisure-class" (AE, 71).

This is certainly the suggestion behind the remarks of Henry Jr. concerning the way the father's "love of his kind" fed upon highly individualistic, social "discriminations": "It was as if he might have liked to see his fellow-humans, fellow-diners, fellow-celebrities or whatever, in that acuity of individual salience, in order to proceed thence to some enormous final doubt or renouncement" (NSB, 362-63; cf. *HJ*, 1:103). Add to this ambivalent elitism the senior James's propensity to excuse all suffering and evil as so many manifestations of vacuity awaiting spiritual creation. That may well have inspired the novelist's poignant utterance about a father who wrote about socialism in front of a closed window, "separated but by a pane of glass . . . from the general human condition he was so devoutly concerned with" (NSB, 372). Evident here is a criticism of his father's Casamassima-like distance from the hardships of the lower classes.¹⁵ Although susceptible, as an adolescent, to his father's philosophical musings—to the point, in fact, of believing "in the virtue of his consequent and ultimate synthesis" of ideas—Henry Jr. appears to have surmised later that the utopia of Henry Senior was indeed "a fool's paradise" (NSB, 373).¹⁶

Nowhere was that foolishness more problematic for Henry Jr. than in the quasi-revolutionary posturing of his father. Henry Jr. has difficulty narrating this concern since he, himself, had mixed feelings about revolution. On the one hand, in a letter of 6 December 1886 to Charles Eliot Norton, he berates the "damaged prestige of the English upper class," which displays "the same rotten and collapsible" nature "as that of the French aristocracy before the revolution"; he even proclaims that "English life is grossly materialistic and wants blood letting." On the other hand, in *A Little Tour in*

France, he refers to the French Revolution as “hateful” and as having been especially merciless in its pervasive destruction of “beautiful and precious” works of art. Henry Jr. therefore admits that, when perusing radical French newspapers, “I wondered . . . whether I was losing all my radicalism; and then I wondered whether, after all, I had any to lose.”¹⁷ Indeed, the novelist elsewhere adopts a noticeably Burkean, counter-revolutionary “gentlemanly prejudice” to praise “the good conservative tradition that walks apart from the extravagant use of money” and that perpetuates moments of high culture: “It takes an endless amount of history to make even a little tradition, and an endless amount of tradition to make even a little taste, and an endless amount of taste, by the same token, to make even a little tranquility” (AS, 164).¹⁸ It is hardly surprising, therefore, that a related conservatism emerges in Henry Jr.’s response to Hawthorne’s socialistic, though not quite revolutionary, Blithedale: Hawthorne “lets them off easily” in a rather “mild satire” that “fails to grind in its mill” (AE, 19).

Conflicted about revolution, Henry Jr. is less than accurate and objective in presenting his father’s socialistic fervor. He avoids referring to his father as a socialist or as a thinker whose philosophy was, in any *real* sense, revolutionary. For example, Henry Jr. exploits the rhetoric of spiritual creation—itself a euphemism for violent destruction—by speaking of his father as a mere “idealist” who believed in the immanence of “the state of man transfigured” by some force that might make “things as they were or are . . . almost at any moment . . . totally and splendidly different” (NSB, 370). Entirely consistent with this mild rendering of his father’s socialism is the “elation” Henry Jr. experiences in recounting

how little, practically, of the idea of . . . Revolution in *vulgar or violent sense* was involved in [Henry Sr.’s] seeing so many things, in the whole social order about him, and in the interest of their being more or less immediately altered, as lamentably, and yet at the same time and under such a coloured light, as amusingly and illustratively, wrong—wrong, that is, with a blundering helpless human salience that kept criticism humorous, kept it, so to speak, *sociable* and almost “sympathetic” even when readiest. (NSB, 371; emphasis added)

Such a charitable account of Henry Sr.’s revolutionary utterances misleads. Henry Jr.’s habit of distancing the “spiritually” efficacious “transformation-scene” envisioned by his father from the “gross or vulgar visibility, or . . . violence” entailed in revolution (NSB, 362) testifies to his skill as a writer of fiction.

Granted, the elder Henry’s published works often address, in ostensibly benign rhetoric, the “intellectually revolutionary” nature of spiritual creation, and usually speak peacefully about the need to “revolutionize the existing relations of creature to creator” (SS, 40, 134) as a way of stoking

"the most revolutionary hopes and aspirations with respect to our existing moralistic regimen" (*SC*, 201). Still, alongside those "marvellous vicissitudes and revolutions" that seemed preludes to "the coming splendors of the mystical city of God" (*SRFM*, 145) was the harsher record of God's dealing with man through a process of "gradually disabusing him of all confidence in . . . political stability" (*SSh*, 153). Not surprisingly, therefore, Henry Senior elsewhere (with rhetoric that contradicts his son's pacifistic summary) refers to "some sharp revolutionary jolt" that will "ere long prostrate the crazy scaffolding" of "ecclesiastical and political routine" (*CLC*, iv). Militant, as well, is the senior Henry's utterance that the "unhallowed tyranny" of misguided family and social structure might well cause the "divine in man" to rise "in revolt, and unless wiser counsels speedily prevail, revolt grows into revolution, and the existing bonds of intercourse among men become violently ruptured." Indeed, the writings of Henry Senior are quite in accord with ideas about "the gradual destruction of every institution . . . which organizes human equality" (*SS*, 72).

In precisely that spirit, Henry Senior proclaimed that the social end justifies the means, no matter how brutal. Although in 1857 he claimed to feel "no positive admiration for the revolutionary forces which are now effectually enthroned in France, and only waiting to be enthroned over the rest of the European continent," he conceded that the self-indulgence of the "upper classes" and their "flippant contempt of every force but brute force" make

Louis Napoleon, Mazzini, and all the rest, become irresistibly precious and sweet to my heart, even as terriers and weasels are precious to the agriculturist long vexed by predatory and fugacious vermin, even as the advent of death's angel is sweet to the soul long imprisoned in a diseased and suffering body.

This passage clearly belies Henry Jr.'s assessment of his father's lack of vulgar revolutionary sentiment. Indeed, Henry Senior surmised that revolution "constitutes the only door which our double-dyed stupidity and unbelief will ever leave open to the entrance of the Divine Kingdom on earth" (*CLC*, 181–82n).¹⁹ Utterances such as these, with their hazardous implications for the artistic sentiment, will serve (in a later chapter) as the basis for my associating the frivolous socialism of Olive Chancellor and the Princess Casamassima with Henry Jr.'s ambivalent, shameful feelings about the revolutionary sentiment of his father. What Henry Jr. subdues in his autobiography—doubtless from filial respect in that literary venue—he explores with ruthless efficiency in his "political" novels.

He anticipates that rather severe treatment of socialism in his portrait of socialistic dilettantism displayed by Lord Warburton, the "unreformed re-

former” in *The Portrait of a Lady* (256). In the first edition of that novel, Ralph Touchett jokingly calls Warburton “the head of the Communists” (PL, 323 n. 2). Like Henry Senior, Olive Chancellor, and the Princess Casamassima, Lord Warburton is, as the elder Touchett points out, one of “the radicals of the upper class” who engages in “inconsistent” reform: “He seems to want to do away with a good many things, but he seems to want to remain himself.” What’s more, the “radical views” espoused by Warburton and his associates comprise “a kind of amusement” fed by the same indulgence that Henry Jr. appears to have linked to the theoretical communism of Henry Senior: “They’ve got to have some amusement. . . . You see they’re very luxurious, and these progressive ideas are about their biggest luxury. They make them feel moral and yet don’t damage their position” (PL, 71-72).

The novelist seems to have been at odds, as well, with certain dimensions of his father’s thinking about most forms of art that fell short of the universality described in *Lectures and Miscellanies*. The father would have disavowed any connection between spiritual creation and most artistic productions, since he believed that the phenomenalistic—because spiritually unredeemed—identity of the artist cannot impart substance to a creative work, any more than solidity can emerge from a shadow (SC, 343). Moreover, according to Henry Sr., “the joy of the creator is never artistic joy,” since “the delight of the artist is to impress his own distinctive genius on his work, to reproduce himself in it as much as may be, to stamp it with the lustre of his own commanding individuality.” The Creator, on the other hand, is preoccupied with submitting Himself to the world’s “evils” and to vanquishing His own personal identity by finally having humanity assume it *en masse* (SC, 338-39). Still, significant similarities characterize the creative worlds of mortal father and mortal son, even when their emphases most diverge.

Whereas Henry Senior saw humanity emerging from its “quasi or phenomenal existence” into a “real or redeemed one”—lest creation be a “verbal fiction” (CLC, 74) and humanity remain trapped in a state of “factitious seeming” (SRFM, 177)—Henry Jr. forged *his* verbal fictions from impressions refined within the sublunary compartment of the “duplex consciousness” (CLC, 74) that his father had relegated to spectral insignificance. Salvaging the artistic potential inherent in Henry Sr.’s wasteful regard for phenomena, the novelist creates characters who are “phenomenal to a particular imagination” and then makes “that imagination, with all its contents, phenomenal to the reader” (HJL, 4:111). Whereas the father decried the dissonance between “the ‘real’ thing” and “fairy forms of our sensibility and intelligence,” lamenting the mere “apparitions of real things” (SSH, 96-97), the son could forge a story about “The Real Thing” (1890) that transformed such reflections into the substance of high art.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Henry Jr.'s aesthetic calling fought against still other assumptions of Henry Senior that were worthy of artistic transformation and appropriation, especially those concerning "reverberation." The elder James deemed human identity a pitiful "appearance," though "the only logical reverberation" of divine Being. He similarly inferred from the writings of Swedenborg that the objects of nature were "a mere phenomenal manifestation, or reverberation to sense"—the mere prelude, as it were, to spiritual creation (*SS*, 28, 123). For the father, the concept of "reverberation" connotes a bastardized (but inevitable) empiricism: "I call the scientific intelligence in men *reflective*, that is, reverberatory, because it systematically discards the witness of man's inward or living consciousness in formulating its inductions, and depends altogether upon outward or sensible observation" (*SC*, 330). With respect to the reverberations of consciousness in written art, the case was otherwise for Henry Jr. An attraction to artistic impressionism and the "intense vibrations" of Pater liberated Henry Jr. from the assault upon sensorialism that had led the elder James to deem "*reverberatory intelligence*" as "*not a direct or living one*" (*SC*, 330).²⁰

Indebted to—but ultimately disenchanted with—the phenomenalist epistemology of his father, Henry Jr. accepted as inevitable the multiple and often misleading "impressions and appearances" of the "apprehended world" and its "particular vibration" (*SBO*, 13, 40, 5). He also praised the "intensities of suggestion" and "numberless reverberations" (*MY*, 554) of life's phenomena when, for artistic ends, he appropriated and revitalized his father's rhetoric of cognition. The sensorialism of that rhetoric, which anticipated Pater's emphasis upon heightened "impressions" and the "passion" of "quickened, multiplied consciousness" (*WP*, 1:235, 238), would appear to have disposed Henry Jr. towards an aesthetic movement that gave credence to the validity and value of intense moments of consciousness. Thus, Henry Jr. celebrates the degree to which the writer's enterprise hinges upon "felt" impressions and the "process of vision" peculiar to different characters (*AN*, 307–8).

This janusian relation to his father's phenomenism is evident, as well, in the novelist's debt to the senior Henry's view of unregenerate consciousness as unreflective and undifferentiated from other natural phenomena prior to the communication to consciousness of vivified "spiritual existence" (*CLC*, 180; cf. 92, 146). The younger Henry similarly rebukes less-than-passionate pilgrims who trek through life oblivious to those very impressions, sensations, and reverberations that the novelist regards as ends in themselves and the substance of a life worth perceiving. Thus, whereas Henry Senior urges man to evolve out of the mire of phenomena toward "spiritual consciousness" in "the starry splendors . . . of human society or fellowship" (*CLC*, 187, 97), Henry Jr. proffers the more terrestrial, but still taxing, Paterian mandate that people exercise a consciousness that genu-

inely *makes* something, however approximate, of what they apprehend.

Henry Jr., moreover, shamelessly benefited from His father's ideas about spiritualized consciousness harboring a "stupendous epic of *passion*, intellect, and action, which constitutes [man's] present history, and which is based exclusively upon his finite natural experience" (*CLC*, 248; emphasis added). For Henry Jr., the phenomena registered by perception—as "spiritually unquickened" (*CLC*, 252) as they may have seemed to his father, viewing them in isolation from "passionate social relations" (*CLC*, p. 220)—constitute what the novelist (perhaps recalling Pater's celebration of "a quickened . . . consciousness") called the "personal 'adventure'" of "a quickened sense of life" (*AN*, 286) and the basis for "intense and interesting" (*NSB*, 255), if still sometimes errant, perception. To the extent that a state of nonredemption exists for the novelist, it resides, as Henry Jr. aptly says in his preface to *The Reverberator*, in "irremediable unawareness" (*AN*, 191) of life's phenomena. To this degree, Henry Jr. imaginatively channels his father's categories of spiritual creation toward artistic inspiration consonant with the tamer side of British aestheticism. Able to lose himself in "the vision of a hundred bright phenomena," the younger Henry lauds the encounter with life "by persons qualified to feel it" (*AN*, 108, 102).

This homage for life's "appearances," "impressions," "perceptions," and "prized phenomena" (*NSB*, 272; *SBO*, 162, 197, 234) culminates in the life of a novelist. Directing his father's preoccupation with phenomenalism toward creative writing, Henry Jr. cherished

the life of letters and of (oh the great thing!) impressions "gone in for." To feel a unity, a character and a tone in one's impressions, to feel them related and all harmoniously coloured, that was positively to face the aesthetic, the creative, even, quite wondrously, the critical life and almost on the spot to commence author. (*NSB*, 253)

That relation between "impression" and the life of "author" is a concern in *The Sacred Fount*, which dramatizes the mind of the novelist at work (*HJ*, 4:343). Beset by "impressions" (*SF*, 13; cf. 91, 156), "phenomena" (*SF*, 23; cf. 173), a misguided "sense" of things (*SF*, 49; cf. 97, 128; 136, 137), and "appearance[s]" (*SF*, 79; cf. 109), the narrator becomes a phenomenon as puzzling as those phenomena upon which he ruminates—and in some measure creates—in seeking to establish who is enamored of whom, or who is growing younger, older, smarter, or duller: "my cognitions—for I must have bristled with them—would have made me as stiff a puzzle to interpretative minds as I had suffered other phenomena to become to my own" (*SF*, 92).

As Edel remarks, *The Sacred Fount* is ultimately about "appearance and reality" as well as about "shadow and substance." What he might have

added is that this play of ideas is quite arguably indebted to the epistemology of Henry Senior, whose *Substance and Shadow* already had explored the world of phenomenalism in terms adaptable to the *belles lettres* of a gifted son. With that vital qualification of family heritage, I concur with Hocks that Henry Jr. takes a pragmatic approach to phenomena otherwise relegated to the category of waste: for the son, life's appearances "were charged somehow with a useability the most immediate, the most urgent, and which, I seemed to see, would keep me restless till I should have done something of my very own with them" (*MY*, 571).²¹

The novelist, however, does not simply render phenomena as those occur to *him*; he has—as the narrator of *The Sacred Fount* would learn—to recreate felt experience through the "sensibility of some more or less detached, . . . though thoroughly interested and intelligent, witness or reporter" (*AN*, 327).²² In the creation of these various "reflectors" of phenomena, Henry Jr. appears to have been oddly indebted to his father's belief in the phenomenalistic self-abasement that characterizes spiritual creation. The son engages in a related, aestheticized process of self-denial through a gesture of "negative capability" that renders his own personhood moot by surrendering the act of perception to the autonomous intellects of his literary characters. For example, the concluding chapter of *The Sacred Fount* allows Mrs. Briss to contradict the speculations of the Jamesian narrator, who has all along imbued her and others with qualities derived from his own inductions about them. Acknowledging the autonomy of sentiment featured in literary personae, the narrator/author finally concedes, "What I too fatally lacked was her tone" (*SF*, 319). Although, for Henry Jr., the "impression" (*AN*, 327) of this (or of any other) recording consciousness may be ambiguous or inaccurate, it nonetheless offers the literary artist a highly interesting (*AN*, 214, 144)—and therefore self-justifying—subject matter.

Although the senior James lamented the "merely seeming and dramatic existence" (*CLC*, 253) of unredeemed man—the "drama of human nature" confined to "fallacious subjectivity" is a "meaningless farce" in isolation from spiritual creation and redemption (*SRFM*, 275)—Henry Jr., perhaps influenced by Pater's celebration of the "pulses . . . of a variegated, dramatic life" (*WP*, 1:236), realized that one cannot get beyond the dramatic and should, in fact, "go in for" it (*NSB*, 253) with passion. The idea, with respect to an interesting "perception," is to "'Dramatise it, dramatise it'" (*AN*, 251; cf. 260, 265, 267) by transforming intensely felt impressions—whether in autobiographical utterance or in the creation of third-party observers—into something of a literary "situation" (*SBO*, 232). For Henry Jr., the "triumphs of produced illusions" (*SBO*, 202), rendered dramatically, finally comprised an innovative form of spiritual creation that, from a strictly artistic perspective, illustrates the indirect but significant impact of Henry Senior upon his son's aestheticist formulation of the art of the novel.

The creativity of Henry Jr. therefore ends up responding to his father's belief that "Shakespeare, Dante, and the rest" are at best capable of endowing their products with "a purely lifeless or imaginative existence; for with all their genius they can never bestow upon its offspring natural subjectivity or mother-substance" (*SRFM*, 248-49). That mother-substance of true Being was less of an issue for Henry Jr. than was the self-supportive intensity of impressions conveyed through the high drama of literary art. That, in turn, had less to do with self-centered personal renown, which his father classified as an artist's "little bow-wow to future ages" (*SC*, 339), than with the creation of works of art having reverberations for indefinite generations of readers. As demonstrated by Henry Jr.'s response to George Eliot, such reverberations comprised the "intrinsic substance" (*MY*, 578) of great novels, including those inspired by the "spontaneity of imagination" that Henry Jr. elsewhere associates with "creative fancy" (*Haw*, 155). In this respect, Henry Jr. appears to have transformed his father's spiritual emphasis on "intellectual passion"—as something "communicated as life" (*NSB*, 336)—into the spiritual creation associated with the effort to "communicate a consciousness" (*SF*, 274) in the art of fiction, and then occasionally to be surprised by the virtual reality of what that consciousness perceives or finally utters.

The comparison of the "creative" thinking of father and son finds support in the metaphor for phenomenalism used by William James in his introduction to *The Literary Remains of the Late Henry James*. The passage captures the elder James's regard for selfhood and consciousness as the provisional, illusory, and phenomenalistic foundations for the real substance of spiritual creation: "Being, as it is, a mere magic-lantern-phantom cast by the divine love upon essential nothingness, it must reveal the void on which it is based . . ." (*LR*, 47). In his preface to *The Ambassadors*, Henry Sr. exploits an identical metaphor, along with the same rhetoric of spiritual creation, to imply that the artist's accomplishment resides in imposing the appearance of "concrete existence" (that which "then *is*, essentially—it begins to be") upon something like "the white sheet suspended for the figures of a child's magic-lantern" (*AN*, 311-12). Here and elsewhere in the writings of Henry Jr., the spiritual creation of the father becomes artistic creation for the son: "If I made my appearances live, what was this but the utmost one could do with them" (*AN*, 77). In imagination, therefore, the literary artist first experiences the contingency of felt perception—"I saw, on the spot, little Morgan Moreen, I saw all the rest of the Moreens; I felt, to the last delicacy, the nature of my young friend's relation with them"—and then creates, through "the suddenly-determined *absolute* of perception," a "vivifying ray" that imparts literary life to an otherwise "dormant impression" (*AN*, 151). Whereas Henry Senior would have discounted the magic-lantern show as mere waste, Henry Jr. luxuri-

ates in the production: "The enjoyment of the work of art, the acceptance of an *irresistible illusion*, constitut[es], to my sense, our highest experience of 'luxury'" (AN, 304; emphasis added).

From this perspective, chapter 4 of book 5 of *The Golden Bowl* arguably amounts to the most intense expression of Henry Jr.'s redemptive channeling of phenomenalism toward the high artistry of dramatic illusion. In that extraordinary chapter, Adam Verver and his daughter, Maggie, appear to communicate unmentionable truths about the infidelity of their respective spouses, about one another's painful knowledge of that fact, and about Charlotte's anguished dilemma in suspecting that she has been caught at her salacious intrigue with the Prince and that she will therefore have to remove to America with Adam. Conveying the impression of several vivid displays of consciousness, the chapter is a dramatic monologue articulated by a narrator who speculates what various impressions, appearances, sensibilities, and aftersenses might mean to Adam, Maggie, and Charlotte. They, in turn, are said to "feel" what other characters *may* be feeling.²³

The artistic achievement of dramatizing the speculatively felt mind-sets of the different characters evolves from the narrator's musings about Maggie's exquisitely refined apprehension of phenomena. Consider, for example, Maggie's "translation" of her father's smile, which purports to reflect Adam's thoughts, which end up encompassing Charlotte's thoughts as Maggie imagines Adam to surmise those. The impression—that is, the phenomenon—conveyed between father and daughter is that of a wordless smile, but

the smile was the soft shake of the twisted silken rope, and Maggie's translation of it, held in her breast till she got well away, came out only, as if it might have been overheard, when some door was closed behind her. 'Yes, you see—I lead her now by the neck, I lead her to her doom, and she doesn't so much as know what it is, though she has a fear in her heart which, if you had the chances to apply your ear there that I, as a husband, have, you would hear thump and thump and thump. She thinks it *may* be, her doom, the awful place over there—awful for *her*; but she's afraid to ask, don't you see?' (GB, 524)

The illusion is irresistible, and phenomenally so with respect to the legacy of Henry Senior; for whatever his regard for the waste represented by mere phenomena in the process of spiritual creation, Henry Jr. luxuriated in the use of those phenomena for consummately exquisite representations of human perception and sensibility. For the son, moreover, art *exists* and characters *are* to the degree that the illusory form *made* by the artist results in personae who eventually assume a life of their own.

Adapting Henry Senior's distinction between God's "making" and "creating"—that is, God *makes* phenomenalistic forms in order to imbue them

with the solidity of spiritual creation—Henry Jr. ends up defining the intense psychological drama of a text as its potential reality and solidity, even though the outcome of this “creation” often surprises the author by differing from the provisional, indeed illusory, scaffolding of the artist:

He places. . . the piers of his bridge—he has at least sounded deep enough, heaven knows, for their brave position; yet the bridge spans the stream, after the fact, in apparently complete independence of these properties, the principal grace of the original design. *They* were an illusion for their necessary hour; but the span itself . . . seems by the oddest chance in the world to be a reality; since, actually, the rueful builder, passing under it, sees figures and hears sounds above: he makes out, with his heart in his throat, that it bears and is positively being “used.” (AN, 297)

The novelist, moreover, has only to *revise* to vivify further.

Indeed, when viewed from the lens through which Henry Senior contemplated spiritual creation, even Henry Jr.’s revisions to the New York Edition assume new creative significance. Rather than reflecting mere stylistic consistency, those revisions represent, if not quite the substance of “Twice-Told Tales,” then twice-experienced reverberations for a creative “consciousness highly susceptible of registration” (AN, 329). Corresponding, in some degree, to William James’s discussion of memory as “the successive *editions* of a feeling” that comprise “so many independent events” (WJW, 1:272; emphasis added), the act of revision, a literal “seeing it again” (AN, 339) in the New York Edition, becomes an event of further registration for a consciousness already vibrating intensely in response to a phenomenon—in this case, the published work—that stands to evolve into further creative substance.

If, as Henry Jr. says, “nine-tenths of the artist’s interest” in facts “is that of what he shall add to them and how he shall turn them” (AN, 163), then revision—even of a published work—becomes an extension of that creative process: “The ‘old’ matter,” now the new “phenomenon,” is “there, reaccepted, re-tasted, exquisitely re-assimilated, and re-enjoyed.” This re-tracing of “the whole growth of one’s ‘taste,’ as our fathers used to say,” comprises the “active sense of life” for the literary artist, whose consciousness vibrates or “bristle[s] with the notes . . . of consenting re-perusal” (AN, 339–40).²⁴

With respect to what Henry Senior “used to say” about phenomenalism and the virtuous solidity of spiritual creation, Henry Jr.’s belief that “the air of reality (solidity and specification) seems . . . the supreme virtue of the novel” assumes added significance, as does the novelist’s contention that “the only classification of the novel that I can understand is into that which has life and that which has it not” (PP, 390, 393). Indeed, the intensity of the literary artist—whether he experiences an initial impression or revises

The Revised American. James's 1906 revisions for the New York Edition of a page from the 1883 version, MS Am 1237. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and Bay James Baker.

artistic works having a “hard” latent value—becomes part of the “*living affair*” (AN, 148, 342) of writing and a constant reminder of the father’s Edwardsian, Swedenborgian, and utopian admonition to *be*.

8

“The Appearance of Virtue”:
Early Novels, *What Maisie Knew*, and
The Wings of the Dove

WATCH AND WARD, *RODERICK HUDSON*, *CONFIDENCE*, *THE EUROPEANS*, *WHAT Maisie Knew*, and *The Wings of the Dove* dramatize the relationship between phenomenalism and virtue. All of these works ponder “The Nature of True Virtue” in terms that evoke the intellectual preoccupation of Henry Senior with the writings of Edwards and Swedenborg. Thoroughly familiar with the elder James’s speculations about “Jonathan Edwards redivivus” (*NSB*, 347), Henry Jr. aptly chose Northampton, Massachusetts, as the initial setting of *Roderick Hudson*. Just as Winterbourne associates Geneva, “the little metropolis of Calvinism,” with Mrs. Walker’s uncompromising propriety in *Daisy Miller* (*DM*, 9, 59), so, in *Roderick Hudson*, Roderick’s friends and relatives deem Northampton a vital “center of Christendom” (*RH*, 43). They presumably think that way because of the town’s Protestant heritage, which brings to mind the tumultuous eighteenth-century ministry there of Jonathan Edwards.

As “the daughter of a minister, the granddaughter of a minister, [and] the sister of a minister” (*RH*, 57), Mary Garland, Roderick’s intended, doubtless knows the Edwardsian significance of Northampton, as would Roderick’s mother, who thinks Rome a “heathenish” place and who is appalled by Roderick’s remarks about “the duty of sitting in a whitewashed meeting-house and listening to a nasal Puritan” (*RH*, 337). While “Northampton Mass seen from [Rome]” strikes Roderick as “somehow . . . so funny” (*RH*, 173), rampant antinomianism and moral dissolution result when Roderick journeys from Puritan Northampton to the aestheticist dandyism of Europe. There, Roderick and Rowland succumb to the pitfalls of life and the ambiguities of motive addressed by Jonathan Edwards and, later, by Henry Senior.¹

In this respect, Henry Jr. dramatizes the belief—articulated in Edwards’s *The Nature of True Virtue* and reiterated in the elder Henry’s Swedenborgian

attacks upon moralism—that apparent virtue or benevolence is traceable either to natural instinct or to self-interest. Although Cecilia links Rowland's apparent "benevolence" to his personification of "Virtue," the novel shows Rowland to be "an idle useless creature" who is susceptible to "egotism" and who is finally guilty of abetting "cruel havoc" by removing Roderick from "dear old Northampton" to the splendors and license of Europe (*RH*, 4–6, 440, 120). Particularly susceptible to Edwardsian scrutiny is Rowland's ostensibly "disinterested" (*RH*, 80)—that is, virtuous—regard for Mary Garland and Roderick. Whatever pretensions Rowland has to disinterestedness as he walks beneath the "great Northampton elms" (*RH*, 66), he self-seekingly cultivates an attachment to Roderick that, however benevolent in appearance, permits virility-by-association. Indeed, as somebody who has "no practical occupation," Rowland keeps from growing "absolutely limp" (*RH*, 351) through a seemingly generous relationship with Roderick that the lawyer, Mr. Striker, recognizes as self-aggrandizing (*RH*, 63).² Indeed, Rowland eventually hopes to see Roderick perish, so as to liberate Mary Garland for himself. The nature of Rowland's apparent virtue is conspicuous in his "reversionary interest in something the victim was to leave behind" (*RH*, 315). That self-interest allows readers to apprehend why Rowland speaks more truthfully than he knows when, early on, he discourages Mary from calling him "generous" because, as he says, "Roderick will repay me" (*RH*, 76–77). While Rowland most obviously refers, at this juncture, to Roderick's promising future as a creative sculptor, the utterance also reveals Rowland's subliminal tendency to seek personal and "interested" benefit under the guise of disinterested benevolence. Given the Edwardsian "nature" of Rowland's "virtue," Northampton is an entirely appropriate locale for the opening chapters of *Roderick Hudson*.

False virtue likewise pervades Henry Jr.'s first novel, *Watch and Ward*. There, Roger Lawrence adopts the orphaned Nora "in the name of human charity" (*WW*, 22) and with a self-satisfied sense of indulging in "the virtue of unselfish use" (*WW*, 27). Yet, despite this pretense to true virtue, Roger has a selfish motive: he monopolizes the affections of this young virgin in order one day to marry her. In terms that evoke the Edwardsianism of the elder Henry, the narrative pivots around "the constant strife between [Roger's] egotistical purpose and his generous temper" (*WW*, 54) and around Nora's need to weigh Roger's ulterior "interest" (*WW*, 172) against "the slim, erect, inflexible *Ego*" (*WW*, 88) of men like Hubert, who, while claiming to have her well-being in mind, stand to exploit her further. In the imperfect world of *Watch and Ward*, Roger, alone among Nora's suitors, comes to display the quality of feeling "morally responsible" (*WW*, 190) for her, thereby winning Nora's hand in marriage.

But the ambiguous relation between moral deed and true virtue becomes

the subject of *Confidence*, which unjustly has been said to glisten "on the surface with all the most important Jamesian themes," but to do "nothing very comprehensible with any of them."³ The really vital theme of that novel deals with the equation of "confidence" and virtue as part of the trust imparted to a person who is asked to weigh the relative merits of his best friend's intended wife. Having failed to act disinterestedly in this assignment, Bernard Longueville feels guilt toward Gordon Wright for apparently subverting Gordon's plan to marry Angela Vivian because he, Bernard, was in love with her. Bernard remains haunted with the suspicion that his original motive in alienating Gordon from Angela had less to do with Gordon's happiness—as Bernard would like to believe—than with his own. Early in the text, Bernard is inclined to think that "'virtue is a beautiful thing'" and that "'there is no charm without it,'" and he initially seems puzzled at Angela's "sneering at virtue." While he fancies himself incapable of a "'poor virtue,'" and while Miss Vivian chides him for thinking "'any virtue poor!'" (C, 62–63), Bernard neglects to realize that his own behavior, when judged by standards of disinterested benevolence, illustrates that very impoverishment.

For instance, while claiming to be facetious, Bernard reveals his self-interested motives at the prospect of being left "alone," for a prolonged period, with Miss Vivian. He warns Gordon, "'you may have reason to be jealous'" (C, 104). Wishing, moreover, to find enough fault with Miss Vivian to dissuade Gordon from marrying this alluring woman, Bernard credits Captain Lovelock's claim—with regard to Angela's mother—that "the form of depravity into which the New England conscience had lapsed on Mrs. Vivian's part was an undue appreciation of a possible son-in-law's income!" (C, 94; cf. 99, 126). Though determined that "between him and the woman to whom his friend had proposed there should be nothing in the way of a vulgar flirtation" (C, 124), Bernard also uses the assumption of Mrs. Vivian's and Angela's "'mercenary marriage'" to fancy himself "a grizzled old book-keeper, of incorruptible probity" when he misrepresents Angela to Gordon as "an extremely clever coquette" (C, 128). Misconceiving his own flirtatiousness toward Angela Vivian as a virtue, Bernard lamely tells Gordon, "I tried to make love to her" to "test her fidelity to you" (C, 138–39). Bernard thereby misrepresents himself as "'a very faithful friend'" (C, 142) who has simply "warned Gordon against an incongruous union" (C, 149). While later faulting Gordon for being less than "disinterested" (C, 179) in precipitously marrying Blanche Evers—a pair that prove ill-matched—Bernard has, all along, fallen wide of the disinterestedness that he fancies to be his own standard of virtue.

With respect to authentic benevolence, it little matters that Angela finally reveals that her relationship with Gordon terminated on grounds unrelated to Bernard's calumny. Although Bernard would relieve himself of

responsibility—"then I did n't injure you—I did n't deprive you of a chance?"—Angela rightly rebukes Bernard for his less-than-virtuous motives three years earlier: "The intention on your part was the same!" (C, 284). While Gordon and Blanche ultimately make the best of their marriage, and even though Bernard finally weds Angela, the novel's title foreshadows the association of "confidence" with the "unsolicited and unrecompensed" appearance of "disinterestedness" (GB, 55) explored in Henry Jr.'s later writings.⁴ The title and substance of the novel are, therefore, neither "ineffectual" nor regressive (HJ, 2:385). Anticipating vital emphases in Henry Jr.'s later works, *Confidence* has as its main theme the odyssey of a self-righteous person who, while questioning the depravity of others, befriends the aptly named Captain Lovelock and consistently evades the questionable nature of his own virtue.

A quite similar emphasis on true virtue, though having a more specific relation to a New England temperament, is evident in the exploitative designs of Eugenia, the Baroness Münster, and her brother Felix in *The Europeans*. On the verge of divorce in Europe, she has arrived in Boston with Felix "to seek her fortune" (E, 19) through marriage to one of her American relatives. The "little Puritan metropolis" (E, 20) in which they find themselves is hardly to her liking, since she suspects that her kin "must be Puritans to their fingertips; anything but gay!" (E, 48). As in *Roderick Hudson*, that emphasis on Puritanism—tempered in *The Europeans* by the Unitarianism of Mr. Brand and the general secularism of the Wentworth family—pertains to the novel's subtle recourse to ideas about "true virtue." Those concepts gloss the scheme of the Baroness, who, while still married, seeks to court either Clifford Wentworth or Robert Acton and thereby to disinherit Lizzie Acton, Robert's sister and Clifford's intended.

Edwardsian categories call into question the claim that the Baroness is the "kind of character . . . who is meant to escape our customary moral evaluations and to claim our admiration for her mode of being, her style."⁵ We may certainly fault the Baroness for seeking simultaneously to receive a proposal of marriage from Robert Acton and, in the event that her efforts in that vineyard prove fruitless, to alienate Clifford Wentworth (the heir to the Wentworth fortune) from Lizzie Acton. Although the Baroness Münster offers to take Clifford to Europe and educate him out of his mannerless state, she actually hopes to remove him and his affections from Lizzie Acton and, following a divorce, to wed Clifford and his fortune. Local notions of propriety and decorum are jarred by the seductive wiles of an exotic, married foreigner who presents herself as available for American male companionship, and the elder Mr. Wentworth does well to advise, "If we have ever had any virtue among us, we had better keep hold of it now" (E, 188).

The relevance of Edwards to the nature of "virtue" in *The Europeans* goes beyond the Baroness Münster's casual disingenuousness—"nothing

that she said was wholly true" (*E*, 78)—and even her deception in having Robert believe that she has formally terminated her marriage (*E*, 279). Though the Baroness merits chastisement on general grounds, her specifically "Edwardian" flaw resides in her cultivation of prospects of marriage and inheritance through a false pretense to disinterested benevolence. Beyond her designs on Robert Acton, the scheme involves Clifford Wentworth, who "thought of himself in the future as the well-known and much-liked Mr. Wentworth, of Boston, who should, in the natural course of prosperity, have married his pretty cousin, Lizzie Acton" (*E*, 171). The charade of virtue performed for Clifford is evident from the Baroness's having "come four thousand miles to seek her fortune"; from her willingness to resort to "any apparent aid to advancement"; and from her cunning when she reasons, amidst her seductive wiles with Clifford Wentworth, that "a prudent archer has always a second bowstring" (*E*, 173). Fearing, therefore, that Robert Acton may not propose marriage, the Baroness takes her brother Felix's advice to stimulate Clifford's "aesthetic consciousness" in a sort of "civilizing process" that they have the nerve to portray as a virtuous "work of redemption" (*E*, 149, 150).

All the while, though, the Baroness seeks to disabuse Clifford of his affections for Lizzie—"Are you seriously making love to your little cousin?" (*E*, 178)—and to intoxicate him with the thought that, in Europe, he will find her company provocatively educational: "'You will be talked about, of course, with me; it will be said you are my lover. I will show you how little one may mind that—how little I shall mind it'" (*E*, 179). While the pretense of the Baroness is to raise Clifford's moral tone, she subliminally appeals to his sense of the erotic: "'There is no agreeable man who has not . . . been to school to a clever woman—probably a little older than himself. And you must be thankful when you get your instruction gratis. With me you would *get it gratis*'" (*E*, 181; emphasis added). He would doubtless "get it," but not gratis: once ensnared by the Baroness, he would pay with his handsome inheritance.

Highly skeptical of Eugenia's motives and pretensions to virtue in her proposal to Clifford, the narrator notes that the Baroness, a woman of "finely-mingled motive," perceives her own intentions as being "never sensibly gross." Phrased otherwise, she cloaks her nefariously acquisitive scheme as a venture into the realm of true virtue:

She had a sort of aesthetic ideal for Clifford which seemed to her a *disinterested* reason for taking him in hand. It was very well for a fresh-colored young gentleman to be ingenuous; but Clifford, really, was crude. With such a pretty face he ought to have prettier manners. She would teach him that, with a beautiful name, the expectation of a large property, and, as they said in Europe, a social position, an only son should know how to carry himself. (*E*, 173–74; emphasis added)

This charade of virtue practiced by the self-serving Baroness helps to explain the tension between her and Lizzie and to illuminate the "dangerous energy" that Eugenia associates with "diminutive virgins" (*E*, 132) in competition with her for a financial inheritance and new husband.

The motives of Felix are just as subject to Edwardsian scrutiny, even though he ends up with an apparently happy marriage to Gertrude Wentworth. Felix early recognizes that "'wealth'" enough exists among the Wentworths for "'portioning daughters'" (*E*, 47) and, even after he secures "Gertrude's affection," he admits to his sister that "'I am by no means sure that I have secured her fortune. That may come—or it may not.'" Nor does he discount his sister's crass remark, "'Ah, well it *may*! That's the great point'" (*E*, 211). Believing that "the disinterestedness of women had been overrated," Felix deceives himself into thinking that his deportment with Gertrude "seemed . . . suffused with the beauty of virtue" (*E*, 141). Failing to grasp how he overrates his own virtue, Felix not surprisingly masks selfishness as benevolence when he elsewhere advises the Baroness to civilize Clifford under the pretense of disinterested goodwill: "'We ought to do something *to help them*, after all of their kindness to us. . . . Encourage Clifford to come and see you, and inspire him with a taste for conversation.'" With this sham benevolence, Felix helps to shape his sister's designs upon "'a rich young man of ancient stock.'" Sensing the benefit to himself of this pantomime of virtue, Felix becomes "haunted with visions of more personal profit" when he reflects "that the work of redemption had fairly begun" (*E*, 149–50; emphasis added).

Given their "virtuous" masquerade, Felix and Eugenia subvert redemptive ends by reenacting Satan's seduction of Adam and Eve. When first spying out the Wentworths and their possessions, Felix encounters Gertrude in a "spacious garden" (*E*, 23), elsewhere referred to by Felix as "'a paradise'" (*E*, 104). Although Eugenia was schooled in her youth at a convent (*E*, 9), she has fallen from pious company,⁶ and ends up in a New World garden, where only a "distant church-bell" is heard; in that same garden, Gertrude, "an innocent Sabbath-breaker" (*E*, 23–24), no longer pays homage to Edwardsian ideas about depravity and perdition that might lead her and her relatives to guard against the likes of their gold-digging European cousins. It is not a time of Puritan churchgoing, but rather of Unitarian lay preachers, such as Mr. Brand, who are inclined to think the best, not the worst, of human nature, or who—like the "Unitarian minister," Babcock, in *The American*—"really knew as little about the bad, in any quarter of the world, as a nursing infant" (*Am*, 68, 69).⁷

The problem, then, is hardly that the American relatives of the Baroness are "'Puritans to their finger-tips'" (*E*, 48); to the contrary, they are no longer Puritan enough to understand why the rightly named Baroness Münster brings to mind the "sculptured monsters" in Acton's ornately deco-

rated home, "grinning and leering on chimney-pieces, in front of beautifully figured hand-screens" (*E*, 131).⁸ Like Lambert Strether in *The Ambassadors*, most of the Wentworths are so dazzled by aristocratic appearances as to be incapable of recognizing, as the elder Wentworth does, the impropriety of courting "a married woman" (*E*, 148).

Although Robert Acton is initially seduced by the charms of the Baroness Münster, he eventually comes to realize that "she is not honest, she is not honest. . . . She is a woman who will lie" (*E*, 239). Indeed, she lies when she claims to be enamored of him ("Well," she admits to Felix, "I don't particularly like him" [*E*, 215]); she lies when she tells him that she has signed a letter renouncing her current marriage (*E*, 240); she lies when she tells Felix that she has "refused" Acton's offer of marriage (*E*, 278); and she lies when, after trying to derail the marriage plans of Lizzie and Clifford, she feigns disgust with Clifford for having behaved romantically toward herself (*E*, 198).

Only after Clifford tells Acton that "Eugenia does n't care for anything!" does Acton finally understand the game of disinheritance that the Baroness has been playing with Clifford and, by implication, with Lizzie Acton. Satisfied that Clifford is no longer "in love with the Baroness" (*E*, 203-4), Acton reconciles himself to Clifford (the Baroness is baffled to hear that Clifford and Acton have "made up!" [*E*, 242]) and apparently encourages the formal engagement of Clifford and Lizzie, the announcement of which proves quite a "sharp knock" to the Baroness because she expects—right up to the last moment—that Robert Acton is about to announce "his own engagement" (*E*, 276) to her.

Acton takes immense satisfaction in turning the tables on the Baroness. Recall Acton's "smiling" demeanor when, continuing to *act*, he playfully tells her that "We are to have another marriage"; note, too, his "loud laugh" when, failing to imagine that the additional engagement will be that of Lizzie and Clifford, the Baroness disingenuously says, "I never guess my own lovers; so I can't guess other people's" (*E*, 275). Thus, in a series of dramatic "experiment[s]," Acton exacts revenge on the Baroness by reminding her that Clifford will be a "rich man." At that juncture, she "turn[s] away" and tells her brother, Felix, that she will not remain in America to witness his wedding; for her, as Clifford remarks, "the play" is "over" (*E*, 277-78) and "she had not found the fortune she had come to seek" (*E*, 279). When the narrator, articulating the Baroness's mind-set, asks, "Was she to have gained nothing—was she to have gained nothing?" (*E*, 244), Henry Jr. foreshadows the torment of Madame Merle, whose charade of virtue, in *The Portrait of a Lady*, likewise closes with the question, "Have I been so vile all for nothing?" (*PL*, 437).⁹

Acton eventually extends his triumph over the Baroness by marrying a "particularly nice young girl" (*E*, 281) and by taking consolation in having

gained “an immense amount of wisdom” (*E*, 274). He has learned, as the senior Wentworth put it, that it is more important to “keep hold” of “virtue” than to retain “a Baroness” (*E*, 188); he seems to know a bit more about true virtue, if only from his encounter with the disappointing semblance of it.

What Maisie Knew presents a related theme, but the novel is considerably more complex than either *Roderick Hudson* or *The Europeans* because of the way Maisie’s consciousness selectively filters reality. Whereas Henry Senior had relegated human perception to the realm of phenomenalism, Henry Jr. transformed the mind’s often limited apprehension of sensory data into the high art that defines the question of what Maisie *knew*. For instance, she frequently tries to make sense of “the particular phenomenon that, had she felt the need of words for it, she might have called her personal relation to her knowledge” (*WMK*, 204). Adopting the same metaphor that William James had used in 1884 to encapsulate the phenomenalistic epistemology of Henry Sr.—the notion of “a mere magic-lantern phantom cast . . . upon essential nothingness” (*LR*, 47)—the narrator describes Maisie’s magic lantern consciousness: “Her little world was phantasmagoric—strange shadows dancing on a sheet” (*WMK*, 39). Not surprisingly, therefore, Maisie’s world is one of misleading “impressions” (*WMK*, 57) that “appeared” (*WMK*, 89), leaving her less with emphatic knowledge than with a capacity to “vibrate” cognitive data. Among other examples, her “sense” (*WMK*, 145) misleads her to perceive generous motives in the behavior of Mrs. Beale and Sir Claude. Though Henry Senior had insisted upon the phenomenalistic status of human freedom, Henry Jr. transforms that assumption into Maisie’s misguided “perceptions, of her sense of freedom to make out things for herself” (*WMK*, 96). And whereas the elder Henry invoked the phenomenalistic “base” of human cognition and identity as a precursor of socialistic Being destined to impart true substance to otherwise shadowy existence, Henry Jr. creatively channels phenomenalism into the substance of art—in this case, the consciousness of an innocent girl beset by the illicit motives of deceitful adults who disguise lust and “selfishness” (*WMK*, 39) as true virtue.

Their masquerade inspires the book’s criticism of the so-called “decency” and “conscience” (*WMK*, 115, 136) of manipulative adults. Among those adults is Beale Farange, who cloaks parental negligence under the guise of a virtuous concern. He would have Maisie believe that generosity impels him to leave her “wholly at liberty to arrange for herself,” and he tries to have her “let him off with all the honours—with all the *appearance of virtue and sacrifice on his side*” (*WMK*, 152–53; emphasis added).¹⁰ In thus seeking to disguise negligence as generosity, Beale is an appropriate bedfellow for Miss Overmore, Maisie’s governess, whose name is indicative of her pre- and postmarital fascinations with Beale as well as with Sir

Claude. She similarly disguises selfishness and lust in the garb of "disinterested affection" (*WMK*, 59) toward Maisie. Mrs. Beale, in turn, mimics the charade of virtue practiced by Ida Farange, Maisie's biological mother, who, seeking to pry information about Mrs. Beale from Maisie, leads the young girl to think that "it was her [Maisie's] affections" that led Ida "to break out into questions as to what had passed at the other house between the horrible woman and Sir Claude" (*WMK*, 77). In all of these cases, selfishness parades as disinterested affection and recalls the preoccupation of Henry Senior with Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue*.

Although indebted to ideas valued by the elder Henry—especially those about a self-deceiving conscience—*What Maisie Knew* still questions the belief that "spontaneity" and the dissolution of family "interest"—that is, of personal or particular interest in one's children, as opposed to a general interest in society at large—would liberate the heart from the bosom-serpent of selfishness and guard against moral dissolution. Indeed, whereas the senior James spoke of spiritual creation as the infusion of "life or being" (*SSH*, 265) into phenomenalistic forms, Sir Claude describes Maisie as a "lovely work of art" (*WMK*, 262) in a debate with Mrs. Wix over Maisie's vanishing moral sense and emerging ethical relativism. Similarly, when defending the product of their social engineering, Sir Claude exonerates his perfidy with rhetoric that echoes the vocabulary of spiritual creation used by Henry Senior: "I've not killed anything. . . ; I've produced life. . . . [I]t's the most beautiful thing I've ever met—it's exquisite, it's sacred" (*WMK*, 260). While Henry Jr. realized that his father's vision of spiritual creation—when most illustrious—was tantamount to exalted moralism (*NSB*, 268), *What Maisie Knew* suggests that human spontaneity and relinquished family affection can fall far short of the disinterested benevolence envisioned by Henry Senior. Thus, when Sir Claude praises spontaneity by telling Maisie, "your mother lets me do what I want so long as I let her do what *she* wants," Maisie innocently asks, "'So you *are* doing what you want? . . . And she's doing the same?'"—to which Sir Claude responds, with phallic significance that presumably evades Maisie's consciousness, "'Up to the hilt!'" (*WMK*, 105).

A prurient type of spontaneity likewise mars Ida Farange's lack of familial—that is, of natural—interest in Maisie. Although Henry Senior—following Malebranche, Edwards, and Swedenborg—had celebrated a dearth of personal interest in one's offspring as socially regenerative in tendency, the relinquishment of natural affection in *What Maisie Knew* simply corrupts. Ida, who has no instinctive affection for Maisie, tends to go "days together" (*WMK*, 78) without seeing her daughter. Hardly benevolent, she acts quite selfishly in keeping up what Sir Claude calls the "'look of the thing, . . . the proper line about her child'" (*WMK*, 73). Far from resulting in the euphoric state of virtue predicted by Edwards (and later by

various nineteenth-century socialisms) the absence of inherent familial affection in *What Maisie Knew* time and again issues in, rather than guards against, unbridled self-interest. Edwards, Swedenborg, and Henry Sr. notwithstanding, the only "true virtue" in *What Maisie Knew* emerges from the natural affection felt for Maisie by her austere governess, Mrs. Wix.

Granted, Mrs. Wix admits to having degrees of self-interest in her association with Maisie: Mrs. Wix is enamored of Sir Claude (*WMK*, 218) and knows that her employment is tied to the "advantage" she enjoys as a result of the "vileness" of Maisie's life (*WMK*, 214). While on these grounds her association with Maisie is less than virtuous by Edwardsian standards, Mrs. Wix is nonetheless—mainly because of natural affection for Maisie, who reminds her of "a little girl quite of her own, [who] . . . had been killed" [*WMK*, 48])—the only adult who seeks to protect Maisie from corruption: "When they've made you as horrid as they can—as horrid as themselves—they'll just simply chuck you" (*WMK*, 154).

Thus, in *What Maisie Knew*, the natural affection of Mrs. Wix and her insistence on the supremacy of a moral sense (*WMK*, 211, 222) become the only discernible indices of true virtue. Henry Sr. believed that "neither the physical nor the moral world constitutes the true sphere of our life or being, but only of our factitious seeming or appearance" (*SRFM*, 177), but *What Maisie knew* illustrates the consummate selfishness practiced by persons who have the audacity to regard themselves as truly virtuous while treating the moral sense as a phenomenalist impediment to a quite agreeable licentiousness.

An even more egregious distortion of true virtue characterizes the exploitative self-deception of Kate Croy and Merton Densher in *The Wings of the Dove*, a novel that is likewise inseparable from the artistic use to which Henry Jr. put his father's career-long interest in phenomenism and Edwardsianism. Indeed, given Milly's effort to achieve "the sense of having lived," and of having experienced "as many of the finer vibrations as possible" before her "extinction" (*AN*, 288), it is hardly surprising that Kate exploits Milly's credulity through a strategy of making Milly "provisionally take everything as natural" (*WD*, 243) that ought to arouse suspicion. Again channeling the phenomenalist musings of Henry Senior into narrative art, Henry Jr. describes Milly's drama of "appearances insisted and phenomena multiplied" (*WD*, 157). Fancying herself "really conscious" (*WD*, 193) of generosity from the likes of Aunt Maud, Kate, and others, Milly wrongly judges that "[Kate] was real . . . and everything and everybody were real" (*WDI*, 99).¹¹ Failing to apprehend the fraud practiced upon her for a variety of selfish motives, Milly credits false appearances with "the dignity of truth" (*WD*, 162) and with the substance of virtue.

Those who would profit from Milly's naïveté—Kate, Densher, and Aunt Maud—fancy that they have acted with "virtue, a good conscience, [and] . . .

credibility" (WD, 340). While that reflection belongs to Kate, her comrades in sin are equally deluded about pretensions to virtue. In this charade of the disinterested, selfishness prevails: Maud wishes to have Milly marry Densher in order to separate him from Kate and thereby to position Kate for a better match; Kate, wanting Densher to wed Milly in order to inherit a fortune following Milly's death, hopes to secure a financial basis for her own and Densher's subsequent wedded bliss. Thus, something like Edwardsonian skepticism about motives and virtue pervades Henry Jr.'s panorama of deception and self-seeking in *The Wings of the Dove*.

While Kate and Densher are motivated by a "selfish gladness of their young immunities" (WD, 285), they disguise their "interests and advantages" (AN, 291) through misplaced appeals to true virtue. For instance, Kate has Milly believe that their relationship is inspired by "'the height of the disinterested'" (WD, 160) and by "motives of the highest benevolence" (WD, 218); moreover, Kate hypocritically "disavow[s] every personal bias" (WD, 233) when she takes advantage of her friend under the guise of a wish to "'help'" (WD, 221). Although Milly credits Kate with something like true virtue—to Milly, after all, Kate "appeared benevolently both to speak and to interpret for her" (WD, 273)—Kate confesses selfishness to Densher: "'I shouldn't care for her if she hadn't so much'" (WD, 283). Kate's generous overtures to Milly therefore comprise the mere appearances of benevolence—"Ah leave appearances to me!" (WD, 281)—that unite the book's emphases on phenomenalism and "the nature of true virtue."

As in *What Maisie Knew*, the only responsible likeness of "virtue," aside from the consummate benevolence of Milly herself, is a "'narrow little family feeling'"—what Kate, reverberating the Edwardsonian thoughts of John Walker and Henry Senior, calls "'a small stupid piety'" (WD, 101) for her father and sister. But rather than accept Kate on these terms, both relatives, intent upon the gain they might accrue from her optimal marriage, push her away from the shelter of family affection toward Densher's subsequent career of dishonesty and exploitation. The philosophy of Henry Sr. notwithstanding, true family affection appears to have struck Henry Jr. as the sacred fount of virtue.¹²

Densher, on the other hand, perpetuates and complicates the charade of benevolence scripted by Kate. In a shoddy effort to disguise self-interest as disinterested benevolence, he tries to convince himself that, by bowing to Kate's wish that he feign affection for a dying woman who loves him, he and Kate are "'doing our best for her'" (WD, 390). While plotting to inherit Milly's fortune, Densher manages to believe that his overtures to Milly are "generally merciful" and that, given her affection for him, a refusal to woo a love-stricken dying woman would approach "barbarity" (WD, 296). Mistaking this deceit for a moral "good" (WD, 299), Densher inflates his sham virtue by thinking that his own self-acclaimed benevolence must encom-

pass the partly selfish function of having Milly—in her gestures of “wasted charity” and consummate “benevolence” (*WD*, 298-99)—feel sorry for his supposedly unrequited love for Kate. Himself the “hypocrite of virtue” (*WD*, 76) that Kate wrongly fancies she is not, Densher selfishly imposes upon Milly.

Hence the double entendre when Densher discusses Sir Luke with Susie Stringham: after Stringham says “He’s a great beneficent being,” Densher remarks, “Ah then he can do without me,” a remark that simultaneously intimates Densher’s own lack of beneficence and anticipates Densher’s more conscious and less indictable belief that “I’ve no call, as an outsider, to meddle” (*WD*, 385). These passages reveal two levels of consciousness in Densher, one of which discloses basic selfishness; the other, falsifying his purported indifference surrounding Milly’s fate, impairs Densher’s ability to apprehend his venal self-interest.

Densher compounds his culpability by mistaking indifference for disinterestedness. What to many people might seem a simple error in word choice becomes the grounds for moral exploitation and self-deception in Densher. For instance, in his day-to-day nonchalance over Milly’s impending death, Densher evades a sense of “duplicity” on the grounds that his true feelings are “all for Kate,” and “not, by the deviation of an inch, for her friend.” From that reflection he assures himself that he is “accordingly not interested” in Milly, “for had he been interested he would have cared, and had he cared he would have wanted to know. Had he wanted to know he wouldn’t have been purely passive, and it was his pure passivity that had to represent his dignity and his honour” (*WD*, 380). Densher here mistakes the passivity of selfish indifference for what he fancies is an honorable disinterestedness characterizing his larger, virtuous dealings with Milly.

The narrator, though, is less inclined to grant anything like true virtue to Densher, for we learn that “Densher’s more *private* and *particular* shabby realities turned, without comfort . . . in the artificial repose he had in his anxiety about them but half-managed to induce” (*WD*, 382; emphasis added). Readers, therefore, are at less of a disadvantage than is Densher in distinguishing between indifference, self-interest, and disinterestedness—and in such a manner as further to condemn Densher for his insidious behavior and undeserved moments of mental ease.

This harsh judgment seems merited from a further subversion of true virtue: Densher’s ploy to secure Kate’s sexual favors as a condition for his continuing, on a benevolent pretext, to court Milly. Densher envisions, “all erect before him” (*WD*, 399), the successful outcome of his insistence that Kate satisfy his sexual yearnings in return for his promise to stay in Venice and woo Milly during her final months of illness: “I’ll stay, on my honour, if you’ll come to me. On *your* honour” (*WD*, 397). Given the repetitive and suggestive nature of the request that Kate “come” to Densher, the

text highlights the oxymoronic linkage of "honour" with a plan in which Densher prostitutes Kate and pimps himself as prerequisites for his continued charade of virtue in dealing with Milly and Mrs. Stringham.¹³

In an unusual turn of the screw of Edwardian virtue, the narrative suggests that the most virtuous act Densher might perform would be to have "recovered his old rooms" for the purpose of being "fully hardened" (*WD*, 365) toward Milly rather than Kate. Granted, in his notebooks, Henry Jr. toyed with—but finally rejected as ugly, incongruous, and nasty—the prospect of Densher's "'having' a sick girl" (*N*, 103). But in the completed novel, the physician, Sir Luke Strett, prescribes happiness for Milly—including what Mrs. Stringham takes to be a prescription for either sexual dalliance or for the ritual of courtship surrounding it: "'Oh, you know!'" she says to Mrs. Lowder, with a "strange light humor" (*WD*, 321–22).

That same sense of what best stands to complete Milly's all too elliptical life appears to inspire Mrs. Stringham's wish, for reasons entirely more beneficent than those harbored by Kate, that Densher make love to Milly: "She wanted . . . the same thing Kate wanted, only wanted it . . . in so different a way and from a motive so different" (*WD*, 383). Sexual innuendo therefore dominates Mrs. Stringham's telling Densher that he has it in his capacity to "'do everything, you know'"—advice that Densher "'modestly let . . . alone'" (*WD*, 385). Whereas, Milly's prototype, Minny Temple, was instructed by her doctors "'no[t] to do anything in short that the unregenerate nature longs for'" (*NSB*, 513) while she succumbed to consumption, *The Wings of the Dove* transcends the vulgar implication that "'oh, she's dying without having had it'" (*N*, 103) by suggesting that a genuinely romantic attraction on Densher's part for Milly would be a consummate virtue.

On far less exalted grounds, Densher perceives a "double virtue" (*WD*, 368) in strengthening his ties to Milly under the pretense of generosity. Even following Lord Mark's revelation to Milly of Densher's attraction to Kate—"the stupid shocks he himself had so decently sought to spare her"—Densher persists in regarding his own duplicity as decency: he fancies himself as "delicate and honourable" and confirms his sense of "virtue beyond any mistake" by staying in Venice when Milly no longer appears to love him, or to hold out to him a prospect of inheritance. Far from being virtuous, however, or from illustrating regeneration achieved through "the education of his conscience,"¹⁴ Densher merely eases a guilty conscience when he assigns virtue to his "not having stayed for the thing—the agreeable, as it were" (*WD*, 419–20). Like Vanderbank—who in *The Awkward Age* amorously dallies with the affection of Nanda and her mother and ultimately abandons the thought of marriage to Nanda—Densher ought to come right out and confess, "'I've been a brute, and I didn't mean it, and I couldn't help it. But there it is'" (*AA*, 360).

Because Densher time and again acts selfishly but exonerates himself with pretensions to benevolence, he further misconstrues selfishness as benevolence by reasoning that Milly's generosity in leaving him a fortune ought to meet with the corresponding generosity entailed by his acceptance of the gift: "Not to profit by it, so far as profit could be reckoned, would have been to go directly against it; and the spirit of generosity at present engendered in Densher could have felt no greater pang than by his having to go directly against Milly" (*WD*, 402). Having insisted on sexual gratification from Kate as a condition for courting Milly under the benevolent guise of helping an invalid, Densher now suggests that personal profit is perfectly compatible with true virtue. His career of deception and self-deception exhibits equal shares of the self-interest and natural instinct that Jonathan Edwards—and later, Henry Senior—thought were characteristic of the mere "nature" of pretended virtue.¹⁵

Given this unrelenting selfishness, Densher hardly seems to achieve anything like moral conversion at the novel's end—especially when he offers to wed Kate only if she will agree to accept him without an inheritance from Milly. Densher's claim that marriage to Kate will "tak[e] off the weight," make things "right," and transform their perfidy into a mere "bad dream" (*WD*, 472) simply teeters upon the antinomian outlook decried by William James when he insisted upon the recognition of "goodness and evil in their intrinsic natures" (*WJW*, 581). Indeed, one critic cogently argues that "Densher's sudden access to piety is accomplished with too much ease; he does not suffer enough in the sense that he escapes the self-confrontation that would be the symbolic recognition of and penance for some of the pangs Milly has endured at his hands." Still, readers inclined to entertain this condemnation of Densher need not believe that his culpability—whether through sins of omission or commission—renders the novel's "ending . . . unpersuasive, even unreal"; nor must we conclude that Densher's unconvincing conversion costs the novel "its integrity of effect and full realization of its own order of spiritual reality."¹⁶ To the contrary, Henry Jr.'s craft in representing Densher's hypocrisy so accurately is one of the major achievements of a novel that boasts astounding psychological precision when gauged by readers attentive to "the nature of true virtue."

By proposing a moneyless marriage, Densher makes Kate an offer she can't accept; Kate, incapable of precluding Milly's fortune from her vision of marriage with Densher, assures herself of the inheritance (recall Densher's "'I make over to you every penny'" [*WD*, 508]), albeit without Densher's companionship, by imposing an equally impossible condition—that he not be in love with Milly's memory—for her to marry him without the inheritance.¹⁷ Better able than Densher to grasp the self-interest of his own motives in proposing a fortuneless marriage to her, Kate probably realizes that

Densher will be unwilling to meet her demand because that would threaten his claim to virtue in fancying himself to be in love with the memory of the woman he exploited. Kate, I propose, understands that Densher's delusion has more to do with guilt than with generosity. Having already surrendered her lover to another woman, Kate is more than willing, despite the sentimental tone of her concluding discussion with Densher, to take the money alone and to leave Densher with his false memories and false sense of virtue.¹⁸

Of course, in the notebooks the outcome is different. There, Densher offers the money to Kate, who "takes it," but then "vindictively, in spite, with the money and with her father's restored countenance, . . . marries Lord X., while [Densher] lives poor and single and faithful—faithful to the image of the dead." But the outcome of the novel is more psychologically astute with respect to Densher's ruthlessness and hypocrisy. By the end of *The Wings of the Dove*, Densher has sated his lust for Kate, and, I suggest, no longer wishes to maintain a relationship with her because—and here the novel remains faithful to the notebooks—"something in all this revolts him and puts him off. In the light of how exquisite the dead girl was he sees how little exquisite is the living" (N, 106).¹⁹ His proposal to marry Kate if she will surrender Milly's money leaves him with a convenient "out" and with an undeserved and complex vision of his own benevolence toward both Kate and Milly.²⁰

Henry Jr. had composed a more benign but still telling example of such an offer of marriage in *The Tragic Muse*. There, Peter Sherringham wishes for Miriam Rooth to surrender her career as an actress in order to become his bride—and thus the wife of a diplomat. She, in turn, insists that, to secure her hand, Peter must engage in a disinterested act by relinquishing his career for the benefit of hers: "I mean that if it were to occur to you to offer me a little sacrifice on your own side, it might place the matter in a slightly more attractive light." Just as Densher demands that Kate accept him in marriage only if she agrees to allow him to sacrifice his inheritance from Milly, so Peter contemplates Miriam's ultimatum that, for them to wed, he must abandon *his* career in order to support *hers*: "Continue to let you act—as my wife?" . . . "Is it a real condition? Am I to understand that those are your terms?" Foreshadowing Densher's formulation of a marriage proposal that Kate cannot accept, Miriam responds, "I may say so without fear, because you'll never accept them" (TM, 467). While possessing none of the self-righteous moral evasiveness of Densher's proposal to Kate, Miriam's response to Sherringham illustrates how accessible this scenario may have been to the imaginative repertoire of Henry Jr. Indeed, I read Densher's proposition as an effort to deceive himself one last time by consoling himself with a false sense of disinterestedness while he manages to liberate himself from the perpetual reminder of guilt and shame that lifelong companionship with Kate would entail.

Pertinent to this assault upon Densher's pretensions to virtue is Miriam's somewhat Edwardsonian response to Sherringham when he clumsily represents himself "as acting for her highest good." In answer to the demand that she relinquish her career on stage to become a respectable wife, Miriam accuses Sherringham of simply wishing to enhance his "personal situation." Speaking of herself in the third person, she adds, with Edwardian flourish, "Don't lock her up for life under the pretence of doing her good. What does one most good is to see a little honesty." When it comes to disinterestedness, only Nick Dormer, Miriam's fellow artist, can make "sacrifices" (*TM*, 471–72). Like Sherringham, therefore, Densher fancies himself benevolent, but does not have anybody as frank as Miriam to expose his self-interested motives.

That, of course, is to be expected, since, long after Milly's death, Kate self-righteously exercised her own "compassionate imagination" by believing that, in Venice, she showed "sincerity" toward Milly. Creative recollections of that sort "gave her [Kate] a virtue, a good conscience, a credibility for herself, so to speak, that were later to be precious to her" (*WD*, 340).²¹ Among the most telling lines of the novel, this revelation of Kate's enduring illusion of her own virtue is quite realistic (if unconsoling) and suggests the lack of accountability often featured in the consciousness of moral transgressors. They simply end up—to borrow a phrase from William James—on moral holiday.²²

Kate, after all, tosses Milly's final, still unopened letter to Densher into the fire, for neither she nor Densher wishes to encounter Milly's consciousness; they are mindful only of the fortune that they rightly expect to inherit (*WD*, 497). Not surprisingly, therefore, Aunt Maud and Densher further evade Milly's consciousness by treating her phenomenally: awaiting word of Milly's demise, they "pretended together that they had seen their tragedy out. They spoke of the girl in the past tense." While Maud is finally honest enough to lament the loss of "'the mere money of her'" and Milly's "'social use'" (*WD*, 467–68), Densher, like Kate, indulges in an "after-sense, day by day," that becomes "his greatest reality" (*WD*, 465).²³ We may likewise surmise that, long after the conclusion of the events of the narrative, Densher's after-sense includes an unwarrantable impression of his own virtue.

Accountability resides exclusively with readers who—familiar with similar concerns in *Watch and Ward*, *Confidence*, *Roderick Hudson*, *The Europeans*, and *What Maisie Knew*—are willing to ponder the nature of true virtue as it pertains to the silence and complacency of Kate and Densher, relative to Milly's fate and fortune. Far from signifying "the homology between the positions of the author and character" advanced by critics willing to concede Densher's dodging of responsibility,²⁴ the text's concluding silence reveals the aesthetic triumph and subtlety of an author whose nar-

rative employs elliptical utterance to dramatize the psychological evasiveness of hypocrites who confuse true virtue for its shameless, self-serving semblance. Their silence is an insidious instance of what Henry Jr. elsewhere, though in a far more benign context, refers to as the tendency to surround a topic "with a silence" in order to "preserve a semblance of reciprocal frankness" (*PL*, 327). Were the silence broken, however, it would most likely be with words like those that pass between Mr. Longdon and Mitchy in *The Awkward Age*: "'We can at least respect ourselves.' 'Can we?' Mitchy smiled." Unlike Kate and Densher, Mitchy realizes that there is such a creature as "'a kind of monster of benevolence'" (*AA*, 344–45).

9

“Invraisemblance” and True Virtue in
The Ambassadors and *The Portrait of a Lady*

IN *THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY* AND IN *THE AMBASSADORS*, TRUE VIRTUE PROVES PHENOMENALISTIC. It does so, first, in the mere *appearance* of virtue contrived by Madame Merle and Gilbert Osmond to deceive Isabel Archer and, second, in the pantomime of virtue contrived by Chad Newsome and Madame de Vionnet to dupe Lewis Lambert Strether. Strether erroneously believes in the “virtuous” (A, 165) nature of Chad’s and Vionnet’s relationship—indeed, in “this phenomenon” of the “established recognition of the rare intimacy of Chad’s association with her” (A, 288). On the basis of that misinformed impression of virtue, Strether comes to insist that Chad remain with Vionnet rather than abandon her for some other woman or return home to marry Mamie Pocock, the sister of Chad’s brother-in-law, Jim, with whom Chad would direct a burgeoning family business. Beyond misconceiving the “nature” of Chad’s and Vionnet’s ostensible virtue, Strether succumbs to the manipulation of Chad and Vionnet. They cleverly exploit Strether’s presumptuous claim to virtue when he fancies that he is disinterestedly sacrificing his own future prospects at Woollett to “save” Vionnet. James scholars who commend Strether in effect simply perpetuate his delusions about his benevolence toward Chad and Vionnet.¹ By contrast, I argue that Chad and his lover exploit Strether’s self-flattering views about disinterestedness, and that they do so in such a manner as to dispatch him back to America without his even suspecting this further and final act of deception practiced upon him.

Just as Strether persistently displays a misplaced belief in his own righteous benevolence, so too, in *The Portrait of a Lady*, does Isabel Archer succumb to the wiles of Gilbert Osmond. He takes advantage of her wish to appear benevolent, and he flatters her into believing that she will act virtuously by endowing him, a supposedly disinterested aesthete, with her hand and fortune. Isabel eventually comes to understand her folly and returns to Osmond to live a sadder, wiser, and more dignified life than that offered her by the equally domineering Caspar Goodwood.² Strether, on the other

hand, remains a "fool of virtue," never realizing that he has been "had" by Chad and Vionnet. Both *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Ambassadors* therefore feature a play of ideas that illustrates the ability of Henry Jr. to convert his father's Edwardian skepticism about virtue into exquisite representations of what, in a notebook reference to Strether, the novelist calls "pious misrepresentation" (N, 573).³

At the outset of *The Ambassadors*, pretensions to virtue manifest themselves both in Vionnet and in the sanctimoniousness of Chad's mother and sister, who contemptuously regard Vionnet as a "ravening adventuress of the basest stamp" (N, 548)—that is, as a "wicked woman" who has got hold of "a young man" (A, 44).⁴ Yet they deal in this way with Vionnet at their peril, since her pantomime of virtue is partly inspired by the hypocrisy of the Newsomes and the Pococks, who deem her prurient while they refuse to mention the morally questionable family business that subsidizes Chad and enriches themselves.

Vionnet's quizzing of Sarah Pocock about that enterprise is therefore amusing. Although Maria Gostrey believes—and the qualification is important—that "to her [Maria's] knowledge" Vionnet has "lived exempt from the information," Vionnet can hardly have failed to learn the nature of the family business from Chad. After all, the novel revolves around the effort of Chad's family to return him to Woollett to assume responsibilities in the advertising division of that enterprise. Thus, when Gostrey says that Vionnet would have taken the information "under stress from Mrs. Pocock," but that "it was a matter about which Mrs. Pocock appeared to have had little to say" (A, 342), we learn less about Vionnet's being in the dark than we do about the teasing way she forces Sarah Pocock to confront the hypocrisy of labeling other women as vulgar while skirting the then-unsavory topic of what has so inflated the Newsome fortune.

As scholars suggest, the name *Pocock* is one of several hints that the ample Newsome fortune relates to the manufacture of prophylactics.⁵ Henry Jr. did, after all, initially conceive of the product as being a "small, convenient, homely, in fact distinctly vulgar article of domestic use." Moreover, he envisioned how the late Mr. Newsome, through testamentary means, "laid" on Chad the injunction that "the working of the thing [be] thoroughly kept up" (N, 547). With respect to the organic composition of the item, I read a less-than-sheepish pun on "Woollett" as the site of the "big brave bouncing business" that manufactures the "vulgar" (A, 47–48) object about which "Lambert" Strether is reluctant to talk when questioned by Maria Gostrey at the theatre.⁶ He instead ponders, with ironically phrased deflection, how "the picture of the stage was now overlaid with another image" (A, 48; emphasis added). That suggestive locution may bring to mind the assessment of Waymarsh, who elsewhere tells Strether, "'the business can be made to boom on certain lines that you've laid down'" (A, 75).

And lest the adjective "domestic" impede our capacity to regard the vulgar object as a birth-control device, recall that Strether and the Newsomes would, for purposes of decorum, have termed it "domestic" in much the same manner as television commercials for home pregnancy-testing kits coyly feature a woman wearing a wedding ring.

The Pococks and Strether are hypocritical, therefore (by the code of their times), in regarding themselves as morally superior to Vionnet—"Doesn't he know what *she* is?"—that "awful," "bad woman in Paris" (A, 74, 232, 45). Jim Pocock proves promiscuous,⁷ while Strether can be thought of as somewhat prurient. Strether, after all, is attracted to Gostrey—recall his awareness of how her "dress was 'cut down' . . . in respect to shoulders and bosom, in a manner quite other than Mrs. Newsome's" (A, 42)—as well as to Madame de Vionnet, from whom he desires sexual recompense for his acts of ostensible beneficence.⁸ Because Strether travels to France with preconceptions about his and Woollett's moral superiority to Vionnet, he condescendingly tells her, "I consider you worth saving" (A, 178). Although Strether will pay dearly for his arrogance by being "had," he will console himself with the highly questionable belief that he has conducted himself virtuously by having gained nothing for himself in his supposedly disinterested comportment on behalf of Vionnet and Chad. While most critics of the novel share Strether's outlook, the "nature" of Vionnet's, Chad's, and Strether's virtue is sorrowfully conspicuous when judged against Edwardian ideas about true virtue that pervaded the household of Henry Senior (and seem, through artistic transformation, to have framed several vital concerns of his son's novels).

The mere "appearance" of virtue in *The Ambassadors* goes hand in hand with readings that romantically infer Chad's and Strether's virtue on the basis of expanded consciousness, acquired cosmopolitanism, self-transcendence, Arnoldian disinterestedness, or hermeneutical experience.⁹ Psychologically and financially insecure, hoping to gain the hand of Mrs. Newsome by bringing Chad back to Woollett, and feeling guilty because his neglect, years earlier, contributed to the death of his diphtheria-stricken son, Strether is particularly susceptible to false impressions that make him believe that he can "save" both Chad and Vionnet, and all the while encourage others (such as Little Bilham) to seize the day.¹⁰ Chad—whose name echoes the cad that he is¹¹—creates the illusion of a virtuous relationship with his adulterous cohort in order to con Strether into becoming *their* ambassador. If Henry Jr. initially conceived of Vionnet as "magnificent" and "wonderful . . . throughout" (N, 565), she ends up being so less on moral grounds than on her merits as the lead actress in Strether's psychological drama.

The narrative's high regard for a duplicitous *femme du monde* is, after all, conveyed to readers, as Henry Jr. remarked of Strether, through "his eyes" and "in my hero's spirit" (N, 560). Strether, however, is manipulated

from the start by Chad and Vionnet, whose deceit is consistently expressed in ways that play rather literally upon the concept of "*invraissement*" (A, 309)—that is, *unlikelihood*. Still, the idea of "untrue semblance" recalls the concern with phenomenalism that Henry Jr. would have inherited from his father and channelled toward the art of the novel. For instance, when Vionnet, knowing that Strether has been lulled into a false sense of her (and Chad's) virtue, says, "'You're perfectly capable of seeing that what you came out for wasn't really at all to do what you'd now have to do'" (A, 180), she, like Henry Senior, knows that the senses can, and do, deceive. Although Strether reasons that "the very conditions of perception" are "the terms of thought" (A, 196), he fails to comprehend the charade that is being performed so phenomenally for the benefit of those whose self-interest has already scripted his failure as an ambassador.

When Vionnet tells Strether that Chad is "capable of anything," and when—in response to the "phenomenon" of Chad that Strether and Vionnet envision—Strether responds, "'Oh he's excellent'" (A, 231), she likely thinks of Chad's capacity for deception and sexual adventure, while Strether muses upon Chad's panache and apparent virtue.¹² A similarly confused encounter with phenomena grows out of a "Project of Novel" entry in which Strether infers from bewildering impressions conveyed by Little Bilham (there called Burbage) that Chad is sexually involved with Vionnet: "Chad must be 'in' pretty deep—in below all possible immediate sounding" (N, 553). In the novel, Little Bilham clumsily drops such a hint, but then retracts it in such a manner as to cover up for Chad. Probably referring to Chad's loathing of monetary sacrifice, Bilham remarks, "'Oh he's not keen for sacrifices; or thinks, that is, possibly, that he had made enough.'" Strether, however, interpreting the remark as confirmation of Chad's and Vionnet's celibate relationship, responds, "'Well, it is virtuous.'" Bilham, in turn, pauses long enough to ponder Strether's misguided remark and then backtracks, so as not to disabuse Strether of the misnomer: "'That's exactly,' the young man dropped after a moment, 'what I mean'" (A, 165–66). But that was certainly *not* what he meant.

These instances of erroneous inference illustrate both the phenomenalism of Strether's environment and the modes of "apperception"—to draw upon a concept discussed by William James in *Principles of Psychology*—with which people make sense of new data by drawing upon their own preconceptions.¹³ Henry Jr. dramatizes this cognitive phenomenon by allowing readers to hear less of Chad's mind than of "Chad's mind, by Strether's interpretation" (N, 568). Strether apperceives Chad's and Bilham's utterances as denoting Chad's virtue. Later, though, Strether more accurately infers the sordid relationship between Chad and Vionnet when, without initially realizing that he has encountered that pair, he spies two lovers in a distant rowboat who have sojourned to a country setting "where people

come out from Paris to boat, to dine, to dance, to make love." Liberated from virtuous suppositions about Chad and Vionnet, Strether thinks less about the as-yet-unknown lovers' nautical skills than he does about their intimate rendezvous at this place where people "do anything they like" (*N*, 571): "they were expert," he muses, "familiar, frequent—. . . this wouldn't . . . be the first time. They knew how to *do it*, he vaguely felt" (*A*, 307; emphasis added).¹⁴

That, of course, quite accurately describes the relationship between Chad and the woman who, in "Project of Novel," Strether naïvely believes—on the basis of a titillating Freudian slip proffered to him by Miss Gostrey—to be "nursing your young friend" (*N*, 558) in preparation for marriage to Vionnet's virginal daughter, Jeanne. Neither can Strether consciously articulate the phallic connotations of his own description of Chad's and Vionnet's seemingly virtuous, yet trying, relationship: "'They've accepted their situation—*hard* as it is. . . . They're straight, they feel; and they keep each other up. It's doubtless she, however, who . . . *feels it most*'" (emphasis added). More is at stake here than the double entendres implied by Strether's belief that, in the apparently self-sacrificing relationship between Chad and Vionnet, "she keeps *him* up—she keeps the whole thing up" (*A*, 168).¹⁵ The daring wordplay intimates the "nature" of the passion and instinct behind Chad's and Vionnet's apparently Platonic relationship. More significantly, the rhetorical gaming exposes Strether's voyeuristic interest in the adulterous behavior that he ends up condoning with appeals both to cosmopolitanism and to his own disinterestedness.¹⁶

As for the deluded geography of "phantasmagoric" (*A*, 331) experience, Strether elsewhere wonders (though only for a moment), whether he is living in "a false world" menaced by the "touch of the real" (*A*, 212). The *real* is the consensus about Vionnet's turpitude harbored by Mrs. Newsome, by the Pococks, and—in more guarded form—by Maria Gostrey. Not surprisingly, Chad's liberation from his past "identity" strikes Strether as a remarkable "phenomenon" (*A*, 90; cf. *N*, 555)—in fact as one of those "frequent phenomena of mental reference with which all judgment . . . was actually beset" (*A*, 92). Unable to discern the difference between appearance and reality, or to infer the existence of a flawed character within Vionnet's palatial residence, Strether luxuriates in the "uncontrolled perceptions" (*A*, 42)—of "sensations, impressions, a whole inert or dormant world of feeling" (*N*, 556)—that Henry Senior would have regarded as the inevitably phenomenalistic basis of unredeemed existence.

Strether is therefore just as inept at mapping the deceptive landscape implied by the marvellous "impression" (*A*, 133) that Vionnet's lovely daughter, Jeanne, makes upon him when she celebrates the "'good results'" that have occurred from her mother's indulgence in "'freedom'" (*A*, 154). Vionnet has likely arranged the encounter between her daughter and Strether

so that the "virtuous attachment" (A, 133) to Chad that Strether imputes to the girl will resound to the credit of her mother, whom Strether believes has been grooming Chad for marriage to the young beauty. Just as, in *The Awkward Age*, Mrs. Brook pronounces young Aggie "'the Duchess's morality, her virtue; which, by having it, that way, outside of you, . . . you can make a much better thing of'" (AA, 228), so, for related—and equally misguided—reasons, Strether cannot help but "feel" (A, 155) that young Jeanne comes from an excellent family.¹⁷

Once that impression of virtue infiltrates Strether's consciousness, he maintains his respect for Vionnet even when she reveals marriage plans for her daughter to Monsieur de Montbron rather than to Chad. Indeed, the apparent arbitrariness of that and other Old World arranged marriages may well be calculated by Vionnet to fuel Strether's sense of democratic outrage at sovereign dictates and thereby make him all the more willing to relinquish his charge from Mrs. Newsome to return Chad to Woollett.¹⁸ By the time Strether discovers that Vionnet is "living apart from her husband," she has made such a positive "impression . . . upon [Strether]" (N, 557) as to strip him of much-needed skepticism about her character and virtue. Although Strether "felt he really did see" (A, 239), in point of fact he does not at all comprehend what he sees.

Lacking insight, Strether succumbs to the phenomenalist "sense, constantly renewed, that Chad *was* . . . as good as he thought" (A, 108), Wandering in a phenomenalist world of lies and deceit, "baffled" by "impressions" (A, 228) and moving in "a maze of mystic closed allusions" (A, 165), Strether is unable to distinguish between appearance and "the real thing" (A, 141) or to see the sexuality behind loveliness. He is, rather, dazzled by the social ease with which Chad makes a late, probably staged, entrance into a theatre box. Moreover, Strether is overly impressed by the silver streaks that run through the hair of this happy and healthy young man. Still, that "form" (A, 184)—and I here interpret the word in the phenomenalist sense used by Henry Senior—remains void of true substance, with respect to either a "virtuous relationship" between Chad and Vionnet or to honesty in their dealings with Strether.

Perceiving as virtuous the shadows cast upon questionable sheets by the magic lanterns of Vionnet and Chad, Strether is so gullible as to believe that Chad will stand by him in the future—and simply because "Chad, as they went downstairs, clapped a firm hand, in *the manner* of a pledge, upon his shoulder" (A, 189; emphasis added). The misconceived camaraderie is also evident when Strether wrongly infers from an empty gesture—a mere pause in conversation—that Chad will financially subsidize him following Strether's possible break with Mrs. Newsome:

"Oh you mustn't starve!" Chad pacifically emphasized; and so, in the pleasant conditions, they continued to talk; though there was, for that matter, a pause in which the younger companion *might have been taken* as weighing again the delicacy of his then and there promising the elder some provision against the possibility just mentioned. (A, 287; emphasis added)

By foolishly placing trust in Chad's silence, Strether projects significance onto the phenomenon of vacuity itself. Like the narrator of *The Sacred Fount*, Strether might well proclaim of his encounters, "If it was vacancy it was eloquent" (SF, 152).¹⁹

Thus, while Miss Barrace assures Strether that everybody in Paris knows him to be "the hero of the drama" (A, 265), they do not, as one critic claims, celebrate his "'pragmatic cordiality'"²⁰; rather, they take Strether for the fool of their masterfully contrived play. It is hardly a surprise that Vionnet, as a schoolgirl, "made a clean sweep . . . of every 'part,' whether memorised or improvised, in the curtained costumed school repertory"—or that she employed histrionics to excel among her classmates in "all swagger about 'home.'" The fact that the clever little actress—and part-time liar—did not make a similar sweep of academic "prizes and parchments" (A, 138) suggests that this *femme du monde* has long excelled in valuing (to draw upon the title of one of Henry Sr.'s major treatises) shadow over substance.²¹

Because Vionnet is "dazzling clever (which is the cleverest thing in her!)" (N, 557), the acts and scenes of her play involving Strether are not left to chance. As Henry Senior might have advised, the "consciousness of personal freedom" (A, 17) experienced by Strether at the outset of the novel is as phenomenalistic as any other impression experienced by this errant ambassador. Indeed, after Strether tells Chad about Sarah Pocock's fury, Chad, secretly delighted—because his sister's disfavor redounds to Strether rather than to himself—remarks, "as if consolingly: 'It was never of course really the least on the cards that they would be "delighted"'" (A, 286). Strether fails to appreciate either the disingenuous tone of this consolation or its accurate revelation that the deck has been stacked against him from the start. Chad and his comrades in deceit effectively have set up a "sting" to make Mrs. Newsome and Sarah Pocock blame Strether for encouraging Chad to remain abroad in the company of Vionnet.

That scenario, as revealed in "Project of Novel," "is a special and superior stroke of Chad's." In "Project," moreover, Mrs. Pocock even cautions Strether to "make out that the game played by Chad is, after all, in essence, but a game calculated to produce such an embroilment, and thereby such a consequent rupture (rupture between their mother and [Strether]) . . . as [Chad] himself may pecuniarily profit by" (N, 566–67). In the published novel, that warning seems everywhere relevant but—for reasons of dra-

matic subtlety—is never advanced with a directness sufficient to offset for Strether the redemptive impressions he retains of Chad's and Vionnet's relationship, even following his discovery of their sexual intimacy.

Incapable of acknowledging the depth of the deception practiced by Vionnet—the alluring “impression” (A, 185) that Chad all along knew would deflect attention from his and his lover's carnal relationship—Strether believes that “he could trust her to make deception right,” for “as she presented things the ugliness—goodness knew why—went out of them” (A, 318). That effort to make a virtue of deception is related to the theory of spiritual creation with which the elder James argued that true virtue could redeem the illusory “base” (*SRFM*, 162, 180, 267) of existence through an infusion of love of Being in general. As applied to the events of *The Ambassadors*, assumptions corresponding to the Edwardsonianism of Henry Senior allow Strether to ascribe redemptive value to Vionnet's base deception, to his own gullibility, and, finally, to a grammar of assent that Henry Jr. had anticipated in the Edwardsonian subtext of *The Portrait of a Lady*.

The tie between phenomenalism and false virtue is suggested by the union of those concepts in Strether's mind. He is lulled into complacency, for example, by Little Bilham, who, answering Strether's query about whether Vionnet and Chad have a “virtuous attachment,” says, “It's what they pass for.” To this, Bilham adds the epistemologically suggestive, “What more than a vain appearance does the wisest of us know? . . . I commend you . . . the vain appearance” (A, 124). By the novel's end, Strether similarly loses his sense of moralism, willing as he is to concede the oxymoronic proposition that Little Bilham “lied” like a “gentleman” in classifying the “attachment as virtuous” (A, 330). Even after the disclosure of Chad's and Vionnet's affair, Strether recalls the idea of a virtuous attachment as “a view for which there was much to be said—and the virtue came out for me hugely” (A, 330).²² Thus, if Strether's notion of “virtuous attachment” evolves to the point of including “the idea of sexual relations,” that leap is not, as one critic contends, something to be dignified through reference to the doctrine of “ambulation” advanced by William James.²³ Rather, Strether's rationalization is simple knavery: sexual relations are sexual relations. Strether loses his moral sense while claiming to champion something like an Edwardsonian state of true virtue.

Similarly, Strether's sense of the “corruption . . . of Europe” (A, 83) diverts attention from his own lack of true virtue in his dealings with Chad, Vionnet, and Miss Gostrey. For instance, Strether is reluctant to acknowledge the degree to which selfishness inspires his mission to “save” Chad. Strether thereby plans to gain the companionship, through marriage, of Mrs. Newsome, and the financial security (that *new sum*) she is able to offer him. Of course, Strether wants to believe that he is not in Paris for his “own profit” (A, 67) but is there “for Chad” (A, 64)—as a way of atoning,

in part, for the "unwittingly selfish" (A, 61) behavior that Strether believes to have contributed to the death of his own son. But Waymarsh, Gostrey, and Chad know better. Waymarsh understands that Strether's ostensibly benevolent mission of saving Chad involves Strether's wish to gain the hand and purse strings of Mrs. Newsome (A, 74-75). Gostrey, in turn, seeks to disabuse Strether of a feigned benevolence by pointing out what he stands to "lose" (A, 56) should he fail in his mission of returning Chad to Woollett.

They are correct: Strether's self-interest is everywhere evident, especially when Vionnet, in a reference to herself and little Jeanne, asks him to tell Mrs. Newsome how much "you like us." To this, Strether clumsily (but tellingly) responds, "And what good will that do me? Or rather—he caught himself up—'what good will it do *you*'?" (A, 151). The slip is crucial. And Chad's and Vionnet's insight into Strether's erroneous perception of himself as disinterested allows them insidiously to manipulate the ambassador with appeals to true virtue. This new reading of *The Ambassadors* brings to mind the way Henry Jr. had already scripted a related scenario concerning the misconceptions about "virtue" harbored by Isabel Archer, at the urging of Gilbert Osmond, in *The Portrait of a Lady*.

The nature of that deception surfaces when Madame Merle urges Osmond to pursue Isabel Archer as a mate. He, in response, asks Madame Merle to respect his "'indolence,'" by which he means his disinterested detachment from such ventures. To that, she responds that he ought to forego his indolence long enough to accrue "'both the virtue and the reward'" of a marital pursuit that, not taking "'a great labour,'" may "'prove a real interest'" (PL, 205). The interest is, of course, self-interest; the reward is a wealthy wife; the "virtue"—far from being true virtue—is the mere semblance of indifference that Osmond may flatter himself as continuing to possess throughout the courtship. The passage is vital for the manner in which it defines the transformation of a disinterested outlook into the cavalier posturing of an aesthete. That frame of mind, in turn, has everything to do with the self-deceiving—indeed, self-congratulatory—way in which Isabel rationalizes her attraction to Osmond. Indeed, her act of succumbing to Osmond's cultivation of her own pretensions to virtue anticipates the psychological seduction of Strether by Madame de Vionnet and lends credence to a new, necessarily sorrowful, reading of the conclusion of *The Ambassadors*.

The "Edwardian" continuity between the two novels has much to do with Mrs. Touchett's remark to Ralph that Isabel's flaw is her wish to "'be disinterested'" in her choice of a husband, and that Isabel wrongly believes that by marrying someone poor for the mere "'beauty of his opinions'" she can lay claim to a state of benevolence—one that Osmond will never reciprocate: "'Will *he* be so disinterested when he has the spending of her money?'" (PL, 235). Mrs. Touchett is correct: Isabel wrongly comes to regard the "'indifference'" of aestheticism and *taste* as tantamount to true

virtue, especially when she defends Osmond to Ralph by proclaiming that Osmond "has borne his poverty with such dignity, with such indifference. Mr. Osmond has never scrambled or struggled—he has cared for no worldly prize" (*PL*, 293). Just as, in *The Awkward Age*, Mitchy is described as "the most generous man in the world" because he fancies himself "indifferent and splendid" (*AA*, 172), so Isabel associates Osmond's indifference with a benevolence that puts her inherited wealth to shame. She longs for such virtue herself.

In what comprises an effort to "lighten her own conscience" because of the supposed "grossness attaching to . . . an unexpected inheritance," Isabel transforms "the man with the best taste in the world" into a mirror that reflects back to her a self-congratulatory sense of virtue: "Unless she should have given [her fortune] to a hospital there would have been nothing better she could do with it; and there was no charitable institution in which she had been as much interested as in Gilbert Osmond." Nor is the use of the word "interested" (*PL*, 358) in this passage casual: readers attuned to the Edwardsian sense of "interest" passed down from Henry Senior to his son may speculate that the passage ultimately subverts Isabel's claim to true virtue by suggesting that her own "interest" in acting disinterestedly belies her pretensions to benevolence.²⁴ The only genuinely "virtuous women" (*PL*, 442) in the novel are the nuns who care for Pansy.

In a related—but of course more aggressive and reprehensible—way, Osmond falls short of the "virtue" ascribed to him by Isabel. Ralph Touchett—using rhetoric that we have seen featured in the Edwardsian discourses of the elder Henry—correctly labels Osmond as "narrow, selfish" (*PL*, 291, 293). Far from exercising the sort of disinterested spontaneity (existing in isolation from social contingency) that Henry Senior thought characteristic of the artist, Osmond disappoints Isabel's expectations about his "grand indifference" and "exquisite independence" (*PL*, 360). Osmond ultimately reveals himself to be a slave to society—"There were certain things they must do, . . . certain people they must know and not know"—rather than a guardian of the asocial instinctiveness that Henry Senior associated with virtuous spontaneity. For that reason, Osmond ultimately fails to fulfill Isabel's hopes that their marriage will abet "the cause of freedom, of doing as they chose, of not caring for the aspect and denomination of their life—the cause of other instincts and longings, of quite another ideal" (*PL*, 361). The hypocrisy shown by Osmond in purporting to "car[e] only for intrinsic values" and "impulse" when, in fact, he "lived exclusively for the world" in "the land of consideration" (that is to say, social contingency) and for a self-interested "purpose" (*PL*, 331), renders his disinterestedness a sham.

Perhaps because Osmond is such an unabashed hypocrite he is able to exploit Isabel's pretensions to disinterestedness in a way that anticipates

the wiles of Madame de Vionnet and Chad in their manipulation of Strether. Rather than hide his fortuneless state from Isabel, Osmond readily concedes that her friends and family object to “the difference in our fortune”; he admits they also accuse him of being “in love with your money.” Pre-empting such charges, he concedes that “I won’t pretend I’m sorry you’re rich,” since he will “delight in everything that’s yours—whether it be *money or virtue*” (PL, 296; emphasis added). A brilliant psychologist of the selfish temperament, Osmond here acknowledges his delight in Isabel’s wealth but simultaneously appeals to her sense of “virtue” or disinterestedness in having it potentially directed toward such a worthy charity as *he*.

Osmond knows that while he piques Isabel’s craving for an appearance of benevolence, he actually strikes the chord of Isabel’s self-interested pride, an act that will lead her to dedicate herself and her fortune solely to him. Indeed—and here the narrator enters into Isabel’s deluded mind-set—“She could surrender to him with a kind of humility, she could marry him with a kind of pride; she was not only taking, she was giving” (PL, 297). By tricking Isabel into thinking that his “intentions were as generous as her own” (PL, 386)—all the time realizing that something other than generosity functions in Isabel’s act of surrender—Osmond consummates an act of deception akin to that practiced by Chad and Madame de Vionnet upon Strether.

Like Isabel, Strether consistently mistakes his own self-interest for benevolence. Although Gostrey rightly infers that Strether is falling in love with Vionnet (A, 291) and plants the idea that she’s “good for *you*,” Strether—who is said to be “benevolently going on”—wishes to believe that self-interest plays no role in the abdication of duty entailed in his refusing to order Chad back to Woollett: “What I claim is that she’s good for Chad” (A, 299). Because Strether does not heed the implications of Gostrey’s words concerning his own self-interest, he is susceptible to the wiles of Vionnet, who knows that Strether wavers between his conviction that “there was nothing in it for himself” and his fear—with respect to her apparent attraction to him—that “he was acting in an interested way” (A, 201). The interest is predominantly self-interest.

Vionnet, in turn, sees (as the ambassador does not) the tightrope Strether walks when balancing his own self-interest concerning Mrs. Newsome—“suspense about my own case, too!” (A, 229)—with “the effect of his being there with [Vionnet] . . . on the basis of saving her” (A, 230). Indeed, Vionnet takes advantage of Strether’s pretensions to disinterestedness by suggesting that, in doing a benevolent service for Chad, Strether implicitly shuns any self-interest: “‘You’re not saving me . . . for your interest in myself, but for your interest in our friend. The one’s at any rate wholly dependent on the other. You can’t in honour not see me through,’ she wound up, ‘because you can’t in honour not see *him* [through]’” (A, 181). By manipulating categories that chance to echo Henry Senior’s preoccupation

with Edwardsonian true virtue, Vionnet tries to convince Strether—as Osmond convinces Isabel, and as we have seen Merton Densher convince himself, with respect to his monstrous treatment of Milly—that Strether can be entirely virtuous in advancing his own self-interest.

He takes the bait. When Strether imaginatively romances Vionnet, he edits Chad out of the picture and wishes that Vionnet would show as virtuous an attraction toward him as he has supposedly shown toward her. This, he suggests, will ensure that her high regard for him cannot be predicated on any benefit to her that might be involved in his assistance to Chad:

He had wanted her to feel that, *as he was disinterested now, so she herself should be*, and she had showed she felt it, and he had showed he was grateful . . . [I]t had served all the purpose of his appearing to have said to her: "Don't like me, if it's a question of liking me, for anything obvious and clumsy that I've, as they call it, 'done' for you: well, like me—like me, hang it, for anything else you choose. So, by the same propriety, don't be for me simply the person I've come to know through my awkward connexion with Chad" (A, 304; emphasis added)

A woman as sophisticated as Vionnet would scarcely fail to see through the veneer of benevolence implied by such clumsy musings. In her much-acclaimed emotional outpouring to Strether, the theatrical nature of which is intimated by a subtle qualification—"as a maidservant crying for her young man" (A, 323; emphasis added)²⁵—she manipulates his sense of his own benevolence by reminding him that "'it's not, that it's never, a happiness, any happiness at all, to *take*. The only safe thing is to give. It's what plays you least false'" (A, 321). Like Isabel Archer, Strether fails to realize that disingenuous appeals to true virtue play a person most false.

This Edwardsonian analysis of Vionnet's emotional outpouring to Strether is at odds with the inclination to read into Vionnet's emotionalism "the final proof of her humanity." To the contrary, Vionnet brings to mind the duplicity of Hortense Bernier, the adulteress in Henry Jr.'s first published story, "A Tragedy of Error." "I am told," the narrator says in his own footnote to the story, "that there was no resisting her smile; and that she had at her command, in moments of grief, a certain look of despair which filled even the roughest hearts with sympathy, and won over the kindest to the cruel cause."²⁶ So too with Vionnet, whose insidious despair-filled appeal to Strether needn't be contingent upon an intrusive note penned by an untried author apprehensive of the attentiveness of his audience.

Rather, in this most accomplished of Henry Jr.'s novels, Vionnet's emotional release may be judged in the context of her lifelong devotion to histrionics. Indeed, her dramatic appeal to Strether may well be the consummate act staged by Chad and Vionnet to evoke Strether's sympathy and fancied benevolence after she and her lover have been "found out." What better

way for Vionnet to con Strether into insisting that Chad not abandon her than for her and Chad to act as if Chad is about to do so? Because—with the complicity of Little Bilham in circulating this ruse—the ploy works, Strether's final words (in response to Vionnet's profession of friendship, "I've wanted you too") assume added irony: "Ah but you've *had* me!" (A, 324). *Had*, indeed!

Obviously in league with Vionnet in plotting strategy against "the ambassador," Chad similarly exploits Strether's pretensions to disinterestedness through a disingenuous appeal to the ambassador's self-interest. Chad urges Strether to command him to return to Woollett so as not to foil Strether's marriage prospects with Mrs. Newsome; her disenchantment, says Chad, would cause Strether to lose "a good deal of money" (A, 287). Chad's utterance is morally insidious, because he knows that an appeal to Strether's self-interest will elicit Strether's self-flattering, ostensibly benevolent admonition—whatever the consequences for Strether—that Chad should remain in France with Vionnet rather than pursue a career in advertising, or abandon Vionnet for some other woman. Because Chad evokes for Strether the son whom Strether lost years earlier, Chad understands just how to exploit Strether's insecurity about indulging in self-interest at the expense of others.

Following the path pioneered by Gilbert Osmond—who, in wooing Isabel, anticipates, verbalizes, and thereby diffuses accusations that he is a mere gold digger—Chad capitalizes upon Strether's pretensions to disinterested benevolence when Strether voices a wish to see Sarah Pocock one last time to make an appeal that Chad be allowed to remain in France. Chad *appears* to act perplexed at the prospect of Strether's selfless act of "going to the wall" for Chad in a meeting with Sarah, who is intent upon Strether's ruination at Woollett. Chad here uses reverse psychology: by cautioning Strether about a nonsensical surrender of self-interest, Chad actually spurs him on to engage in an act of perceived benevolence by championing the integrity of Chad to Sarah: "And what I don't for the life of me make out," Chad pursued with resigned perplexity, "is what you *gain* by it." Although Chad's tone is one of "resigned perplexity" (A, 290), his utterance is calculated to urge Strether onward so that Sarah will have further opportunity to regard Strether, rather than Chad, as an object of scorn. Indeed, Madame de Vionnet—apparently advised by Chad of Strether's plans to converse with the irate Sarah Pocock—turns up at that meeting, feigns intimate friendship with Strether, and even exposes Strether's attraction to Maria Gostrey. In doing so, Vionnet ensures that Sarah will treat Strether severely, send damning reports about him to Mrs. Newsome, and convey the impression that Chad's decision to remain in France is attributable to Strether's idiocy. All this because Strether, like Isabel Archer, succumbs to a manipulative appeal to disinterested benevolence.

The gain, of course, accrues to Chad, who not surprisingly expresses "interest" (A, 290) in Strether's idea of approaching Sarah. As a result of Strether's misadventurous meeting with Sarah, Chad stands to receive larger portions of Woollett money than would have come his way were Strether to marry Mrs. Newsome and begin sharing the profits of the family business. Recall Waymarsh's remark to Strether that "'the business can be made to boom on certain lines that you've laid down'" (A, 75). Indeed, the suggestion of Chad's benefiting through Strether's demise finds support in "Project of Novel," in which Sarah Pocock tells Strether that were Chad "acting precisely from a masked hostility" to a second marriage for his mother—that is, to the "admission of an outsider to the privilege of 'pickings,'—he [Chad] couldn't have acted—well, a bit differently" (N, 567) than by inciting Strether to move against the wishes of the Pococks and Mrs. Newsome. Thus, in a battle for limited resources, Chad willingly exploits Strether's idealized notions of true virtue. When Strether leaves for America in order to avoid any tangible benefit "'for myself'" (A, 344)—including the friendship of Vionnet or the companionship of Gostrey—he is less a moral hero than a failed statesman whose bosom-serpent of egotism has led him *vainly* to confirm his own virtue through a delusive sense of self-sacrifice.

That failed responsibility of statesmanship pertains to the title of the novel, which is misconceived by readers who romanticize Strether's ostensibly generous "delegation" of responsibility by suggesting that Strether must finally "become fifty ambassadors" by lending his sympathy to multiple points of view and thereby divide his mission among a host of ambassadors as legitimate as he.²⁷ Hardly. As Henry Jr. makes clear in *The American Scene*, foreign representatives abdicate their "enjoined duties" by intimating a "stake in the game" of helping their host countries intellectually find themselves; rather, "it is no part of the office of such personages to assist the societies to which they are accredited to find themselves—it is much more their mission to leave all such vaguely and, so far as may be, grotesquely groping" (AS, 331).²⁸ Indeed, Henry Jr. elsewhere illustrated how an ambassador must be single-minded in exploiting the weakness of the opposition. That is why, when negotiating with Christopher Newman, the aptly named Marquis de Bellegarde in *The American* is said to have "the air of the ambassador of a great power meeting the delegate of a barbarous tribe whom an absurd accident had enabled for the moment to be abominably annoying" (Am, 285). That ambassador is able to deduce that Newman's "'remarkable good nature'" (Am, 309) renders the American benign. By extension, Strether's liberal Americanism and American good nature—far from being entirely laudatory²⁹—become equally susceptible to the wiles of Madame de Vionnet, who assimilates the dispositions of Marquis de Bellegarde and Gilbert Osmond in their manipulative *détente* with overly generous Americans.

Whereas "Project of Novel" suggests that Strether triumphs through the antinomian rejection of self-interest implied by his prospects at Woollett (*N*, 566–67, 570, 573), the finished novel leaves open the possibility that Strether, like Isabel Archer, becomes "The Fool of Virtue." Still, while Isabel's consciousness ultimately apprehends and finally transcends her early naïveté in the game of virtue scripted by Osmond, Strether is time and again "had" because of his inability to distinguish between true virtue—whether his own or that of others—and the self-interested semblance of it. What Strether fails to realize as he departs Europe, with his sense of self-flattering virtue intact, is that Chad and Vionnet have appealed to just that sentiment of disinterestedness to "cut him" out of their lives. They have done so with as little suspicion on his part as he would earlier have possessed of their charade of virtue, had he failed to recognize them as the occupants of a drifting rowboat. There, Strether celebrated "violence averted—the violence of their having 'cut' him, out there in the eye of nature, on the assumption that he wouldn't know it" (*A*, 309). By the novel's end, they have—if we may pun upon the Edwardsian theology of Henry Senior—virtually done so.³⁰

10

The Nature of Radical Virtue: *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima*

ATTENTIVE TO THE ATTRACTION HARBORED BY THE ELDER JAMES FOR JONATHAN Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue*, preceding chapters have shown how several of Henry Jr.'s most culturally refined and economically ambitious characters refuse to concede the base "nature" of their claims to virtue. They instead disguise self-interest as disinterested benevolence. Still, selfishness spans political inclination and class stratification. Aunt Maud, in *The Wings of the Dove*, "'fairly terrorises'" with her own self-seeking "'idea'" (WD, 370); so do the radical idealists of *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima*. Published consecutively in 1886, these novels illustrate the paucity of virtue among social reformers, whose utopianism masks reckless self-indulgence and whose intolerance of aesthetic endeavor proves antagonistic to the very existence of the artistic impulse that the senior James naïvely associated with the life of the soul under socialism. In several vital respects, therefore, these political novels are indebted to—and respond to—"the father."

While *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima* most conspicuously resonate with the feminist and anarchist movements of nineteenth-century America and Europe, these novels likewise allude to the "armchair" socialism of the elder Henry and anticipate the subtle criticism of the father's radicalism found in *A Small Boy and Others* and *Notes of a Son and Brother*. Moreover, just as William James challenged Edwardsian premises about disinterestedness—including the place of "true virtue" in the political theology of his father—so *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima* dramatize how the radical virtue of Olive Chancellor, the Princess Casamassima, and Paul Muniment is undermined, despite their disinterested political rhetoric, by passion, envy, and self-serving amusement of a kind that Hawthorne had depicted in the social reformers of *The Blithedale Romance*.¹ Still, Henry Jr. believed that Hawthorne's novel lets the author's radical companions "off easily" after they advance "a hundred interested

impulses and personal motives" beneath their appeals to the "common good" (AE, 19). Similarly Edwardsonian in judgment, *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima* are far more severe in faulting the nature of radical virtue, especially as its pretensions to disinterested benevolence recall the theoretical socialism of the elder James.

The pantomimes of true virtue that pervade *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima* challenge the assumption that Henry Jr. generally "idealizes his father," refusing either "to scrutinize his father" or "consider in detail the implications of his father's career."² Also suspect is the view that *The Bostonians* demonstrates a "nervous refusal" on the part of Henry Jr. "to know his father's real character and history or to express fully his own private mind."³ That claim is grounded in the limited compatibility of Henry Senior's writings with the antifeminist inclinations of Basil Ransom and in the fact that Henry Jr. found much to praise in his father's published, sometimes conservative, views on marriage. Granted, Henry Jr. was partly disenchanted with radicalism because he shared his father's humiliation over an 1874 issue of *Woodhull & Claflin's*. In an effort to link the senior James to radical views of marriage and sex, that paper published his privately recorded sentiments about sexual longings for women other than his spouse.⁴ But the shared outrage of father and son over that incident hardly justifies enlarging the coincidence of their outlooks. Nor is their general political compatibility suggested by what Habegger reads as Henry Jr.'s empathy with Basil Ransom. Although Ransom echoes the elder Henry's views on feminism, Henry Jr. paints a morally questionable portrait of the southern archconservative for whom, as Edel advises, the novelist has "little respect."⁵ Ransom is "very provincial" (B, 11); in his initial visit to Olive, something of a gold digger (B, 17); despite a veneer of courtesy, vengeful (B, 210); and as capable as Olive of exploiting Verena, since Verena "could expose herself, give herself away, turn herself inside out, for the satisfaction of a person who made demands of her" (B, 392). Basing a broad alignment of the views of the novelist and his father around the identity of Basil Ransom therefore seems dubious.⁶

More logical, I propose, is an association of the elder James with the selfish radicalism of Olive Chancellor and with the "esoteric socialism" (PC, 150) of the Princess Casamassima. Indeed, we shall observe that the novelist faults his father's socialism through the creation of various personae whose stations in life may differ from that of the elder Henry, but whose outlooks, falling far short of self-proclaimed true virtue, embody the most pernicious tendencies of the father's too easy (and, to the mind of the son, ultimately irresponsible) lifelong commitment to socialism.⁷

If, as Trilling suggests, the Princess Casamassima mistakes the meaning of reality when she construes "'revolutionary passion'" as "'real'" because "'it is solid'" (87; PC, 290), then we may discern in her some resonance of

the revolutionary perspective on "substance and shadow" entertained by the senior Henry. For him, solidity (that is, "reality," or "substance") connotes virtue that results from the infusion of socialistic divine Being—or disinterested benevolence—into the insubstantial forms of capitalism (*SSH*, 263, 434-35). He therefore associates solidity with a socialistic Divine-Natural Humanity, as typified by the noncontingent enterprise of the artist, whose disinterestedness was thought to foreshadow the absence of selfhood or *proprium* under angelic "communism." There is a significant correspondence between the socialistic physics of the elder Henry (recall the reference to the "physics of creation" in the full title of *Substance and Shadow*) and the political rhetoric of the Princess Casamassima.

Nor do differences in gender among the senior Henry, Olive Chancellor, and the Princess Casamassima pose an obstacle to our speculating that the political views of the elder Henry contributed to his son's negative characterization of these female radicals. Indeed, existing scholarship notes that Henry Jr. imbues some of his female characters with features of male personalities—occasionally of known persons, including himself.⁸ Then there is the novelist's own account of the inspiration for the Gilbert Osmonds in friends of the family, the Frank Bootts. Their metamorphosis into the fictional characters of *The Portrait of a Lady* entailed a dispossession of "the sense of my old inspirers. The form had to be disembarrassed of that sense and to take in a thoroughly other" (*NSB*, 522). I see such a transformation occurring, too, with the persons of Olive Chancellor and the Princess Casamassima, "relative" to the elder Henry.

The process of disembarrassment in *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima* makes the actual "person" of the novelist's father subordinate to the larger criticism of radicalism implied by the politics of Olive and the Princess. Though the elder Henry's luxurious socialism anticipates the frivolity of these radical women, the variance of gender between him and them allows the novelist to reflect upon his family while, to all appearances, remaining consistent in his resolve (as summarized by one scholar) to "keep autobiographical content out of the novels he wrote" because it "detracts from . . . dramatic vividness."⁹ Henry Jr. was better able to dramatize the hypocrisy of feminism and socialism, as practiced by Olive and the Princess, because their too easy radicalism rehashed older, genuinely "familiar" inconsistencies.

Crucial to these concerns in *The Bostonians* is the tie between nineteenth-century feminism and socialism. Inasmuch as American socialistic communities supported reform in the areas of slavery and women's rights,¹⁰ it is hardly surprising that, in *The Bostonians*, Olive regards her feminist crusade as part of a larger, "just revolution" on behalf of "the great life of humanity" that "must sweep everything before it" and "exact from the other, the brutal, blood-stained ravening race, the last particle of expiation!" (*B*,

37–38). To the extent that Olive euphemistically perceives this program of revenge as a “vivifying, redemptory idea” (*B*, 393), her rhetoric is in line with the notion of spiritual creation—encompassing an Edwardsian love of Being in general—advanced by the elder James. He, too, believed man to be “divinely vivified . . . by what unites him with other men”—by which he meant a “unitary or race-consciousness” which is “one and universal,—that is, *social*” in the achievement of “a perfect fellowship or society of each man . . . with all other men.”¹¹ Indeed, far from being completely at odds with the views of the senior Henry, Olive appreciates the denunciation of male dominance offered by Verena, whose speeches about feminism are consistent with his use of Edwardsian true virtue to champion socialistic inclusiveness.

For instance, Verena evokes the notion of disinterested benevolence when she juxtaposes ideal “‘public life’”—a love to “‘all’”—with narrow self-interest of the moment. Decrying the “‘egotism, cruelty, ferocity, jealousy, greed, of blind striving to do things only for *some*,’” Verena—picking up where the senior Henry left off in channeling an Edwardsian love of Being in general toward the communism of Swedenborg’s angels—protests the forms of “‘selfishness’” and “‘[self-]interest’” that impede the progress of men in acting on behalf of “‘all’” (*B*, 273). From Verena’s perspective, antisuffragists exist in a state akin to that denounced by the elder James, in *Society the Redeemed Form of Man*, as “the impassioned foe and rival of universal man” (318). Thus, Verena and Olive unwittingly transform the senior Henry’s Edwardsian disdain for personal aggrandizement at the expense of broader communities into something that might be called “Feminism the Redeemed Form of Humanity”: the world would be “‘redeemed, transfigured, by a new moral tone. There would be generosity, tenderness, sympathy, where there is now only brute force and sordid rivalry’” (*B*, 274).

Basil Ransom, though, refuses either to indulge the “new moral tone” or to deem it disinterested; instead, he rebuts Verena and Olive by drawing upon categories that recall the Edwardsian aversion of the elder James to the contingent, self-centered, and therefore phenomenalistic nature of moralism. Exposing the “‘nature’” of Verena’s and Olive’s claims to virtue, Basil accuses Verena of pandering to “‘unreal’” and “‘illusory’” notions that have been imposed upon her by unfortunate “‘circumstances’” and “‘associations.’” He most conspicuously uncovers the sweet “‘nature’” that has always led her self-interestedly to “‘please someone’”—whether her parents or Olive. To Basil’s mind, therefore, the feminism of Verena is itself a form of servitude that has left her devoid of the “‘freedom’” she ostensibly champions (*B*, 346).

Still, while retaining the elder Henry’s regard for moralistic contingency as phenomenalistic, Basil reverses the father’s argument against the “reality” of social upheaval by regarding Verena’s feminism as a merely relative

expression of moralism, which is phantasmagoric because it falls short of self-inspired, or spontaneous, virtue. Basil is not alone in this deduction. Even Olive, following Basil's abduction of her protégée, discerns that her own encounter with Verena had been "an illusion. . . . The reality was simply that . . . the girl had cared for their cause only because, for the time, no interest, no fascination, was greater" (*B*, 422; emphasis added). At this juncture, even Olive recognizes that Verena's feminist zeal, far from being virtuous, is a form of self-interest.

Of course, Olive fails to infer her own self-interest or to admit how her privileged station in life belies pretensions to social praxis. Her hypocrisy anticipates the conflicted portrait of the elder Henry in *A Small Boy and Others* and in *Notes of a Son and Brother*. For all of her egalitarian rhetoric, Olive can't stomach the prospect of taking public transportation (*B*, 23); she resembles the socialistic father who often returned from trips beyond his domicile with tales of "horrid inhuman inns . . . amid the hard alien races which had stayed his advance" (*SBO*, 43). Like Henry Senior, moreover, Olive lives in an "'elegant home'" that features "organized privacy. . . [and] so many objects that spoke of habits and tastes." She, too, dislikes being reminded of the inconsistencies between her lavish personal abode and the more mundane "lot" of those she claims to champion (*B*, 24, 16, 24).

And just as Henry Jr. criticized his father for a "love of his kind which fed on discriminations" (*NSB*, 362)—that is, for mistaking his enjoyment of the company of eminent people for a love of humanity in general—so, despite her populist rhetoric, Olive has "a preference for what she called *real* people," by which she means "ladies who trotted about, early and late, with books from the Athenaeum nursed behind their muff, or little nosegays of exquisite flowers that they were carrying as presents to each other" (*B*, 180). Like the elder Henry, whose euphemistic sense of the "enjoyed concussion" of revolution is targeted in *Notes of a Son and Brother* (371), "Miss Chancellor would have been much happier if the movements she was interested in could have been carried on only by the people she liked, and if revolutions, somehow, didn't always have to begin with one's self—with internal convulsions, sacrifices, executions" (*B*, 113). Not surprisingly, Olive miscasts her own family background as *bourgeois* and—unappreciative of any irony, because she wishes to identify simultaneously with two different classes—erroneously, indeed pathetically, regards *bourgeois* as signifying "the oldest and best" (*B*, 34).¹²

Olive again undercuts her own allegiance to lower-class welfare when she disdains Basil for being "shabby and poor" as he contends for Verena's hand against "people with every advantage, of fortune and position" (*B*, 322). Hypocritical, too, is Olive's regarding as vulgar the esteem nursed by Verena for "'free unions'"—that is, for real socialism with respect to sexual

arrangement (*B*, 124). And like the elder James, who, while conscious that "the great mass of my fellow-men are sunken in poverty," justified his own state of privileged existence with an appeal to luxury's being "a necessary condition of my own social worth" (*SS*, 172-73), so, too, "Olive deemed that, being what she was, she had a right to immense compensations," indeed an obligation to "cultivate the best material conditions" (*B*, 177). Little wonder, then, that Olive's feminist colleagues regard her less as a committed comrade than as a vital asset (*B*, 37, 68).¹³ Like the senior Henry, Olive can even interrupt a campaign of social activism to enjoy a sojourn abroad: Verena "quite agreed with her companion that after so many ages of wrong (it would also be after the European journey) men must take *their* turn, men must pay!" (*B*, 186). Here and elsewhere, inconsistencies in the socialistic life of the leisured Henry Senior contribute to the highly questionable character of Olive Chancellor in *The Bostonians*.

But whereas the elder Henry appropriated *The Nature of True Virtue* to question the status quo of capitalism, *The Bostonians* dissects Olive's radicalism by similarly exposing self-interest beneath the rhetoric of beneficence. Granted, in her attraction to Verena, Olive feels herself superior to the Tarrants, who wrongly think themselves "impersonal" (*B*, 56) and "disinterested" (*B*, 77) in having raised Verena for "the service she might render to humanity." Still, "disinterestedness . . . was incompatible with receipts, and receipts were what Selah Tarrant was . . . after" (*B*, 102, 104). Verena, on the other hand, seems devoid of her father's selfishness and strikes Olive as acting with true "generosity," never demanding recognition for any display of "virtue she showed in this way" (*B*, 291). Fancying Verena "free from private self-reference" (*B*, 176), Olive deludes herself into believing that she shares Verena's capacity to be "disinterestedly attached to the precious things they were to do together" (*B*, 171). The case, though, is far different for Olive; the "nature" of her radicalism is everywhere exposed as self-interested and subversive of true virtue.

Olive falls short of true virtue by selfishly monopolizing Verena—to the point of ownership. Matthias Pardon, an ambitious journalist, astutely asks, "'Do you consider that she belongs to you, or that she belongs to the people?'" (*B*, 143). While believing the latter, Olive treats Verena as personal property. Indeed, Olive's sister, Mrs. Luna, is entirely correct in deducing that Olive seeks to destroy any prospects of marriage for Verena, so as to "'keep her, above all, for herself'" (*B*, 265). Self-interest of that order renders sanctimonious Olive's quasi-socialistic admonitions to Verena that "'Your mission is not to exhibit yourself as a pastime for individuals, but to touch the heart of communities, of nations'" (*B*, 133).

Add to that hypocrisy the selfishness entailed in Olive's "purchase" of Verena from the Tarrants: that act turns Olive into something of the slave driver she ostensibly loathes in the person of Basil Ransom.¹⁴ Moreover,

just as the “peculiar institution” could entail sexual abuse of slaves, so, too, in the nineteenth-century values reflected in *The Bostonians*, Olive’s unconscious lesbian longing for Verena does more than become “the cause and emblem of her social incapacity”¹⁵; Olive’s passion belies radical claims to virtue, as the motives for her apparent benevolence toward Verena lie in a combination of forces that recalls the factors of self-interest and natural instinct decried in Jonathan Edwards’s *The Nature of True Virtue*. Far from embodying the instinctive life of social regeneracy and virtue championed by the elder Henry, Olive’s spontaneous passion for her ward confirms the view of Mrs. Luna, that her sister, Olive, is “‘given up to a merely personal, egotistical, instinctive life’” (B, 162).

Predictably, fetishism and social reform merge in *The Bostonians*. Verena—inattentive to the complexity of Olive’s overtures—naïvely praises her mentor’s concerns about the elevation of their “sex”: “‘She doesn’t care for anything but the elevation of our sex. . . . She’s going to have a tree in, next week; she says she wants to see me sitting under a tree’” (B, 101). That tendency of Olive’s to view Verena sexually while extolling the virtues of feminism is consistent with the numerous references in *The Bostonians* to Olive’s wish to lay hands on Verena (B, 87), to kiss her (B, 86, 309), to urge Verena, somewhat passionately, to live with her (B, 135, 83), and to fill Verena with misconceptions about “Miss Chancellor’s interior, and the reception the girl had found there” (B, 99).¹⁶ Moreover, references to Verena’s being “‘much like a child’” (B, 81), a “spotless, consecrated maiden” (B, 309), and like “‘a little girl of ten’” (B, 332) turn Olive into something of a pedophile. Like Roger Lawrence, in *Watch and Ward*, she masks predatory urges under beneficent rhetoric: “‘Will you be my friend, my friend of friends, beyond every one, everything, forever and forever?’” (B, 81). Whereas Basil Ransom is unable to “penetrate” (B, 395) the residence in which Olive sequesters Verena, Olive has “the penetration to discover in a moment that [Verena] was a creature of unlimited generosity” (B, 81). Olive’s personal and general patterns of exploitation comprise the outer limits of her pretensions to true virtue.

This Edwardsian analysis of Olive extends to her campaign to prevent Verena’s marriage to either Basil Ransom or Mr. Henry Burrage, a young suitor from Harvard. Selfishness prevails when, with respect to Verena’s future, Olive experiences a sentiment of “jealousy” (B, 317), contradicting her claim that Verena belongs to “the ‘people’” (B, 80). Whereas Olive initially imagines herself rescuing the girl from “the danger of vulgar exploitation” (B, 84) and cautions Verena against the “‘selfishness’” and “‘vested interests’” (B, 139) of men, Mrs. Burrage exposes the true nature of Olive’s virtue. She challenges Olive’s objections to Verena’s “‘marrying at all’” because—and here Mrs. Burrage is both polite and telling in a choice of words hinting at Olive’s lesbian yearnings—that would “‘break up a

friendship . . . so full of interest . . . for you" (B, 312). Indeed, while exposing the "vested interests" of men, Olive ignores the bosom-serpent within herself.

Far from shielding Verena from the impulses of male dominance embodied in Basil Ransom, Olive's charade of virtue—artfully captured in the novel's pun on the word "male"—masks a kindred urge to dominate: "The final web of authority, of dependence" that Olive weaves around Verena was "as dense as a suit of golden mail" (B, 170). That "suit," in turn, serves less to deter Basil Ransom than to subvert the ideology of radicalism that, as articulated in *The Princess Casamassima*, values "'an equality in human conditions'" destined to "'abolish the immemorial inequality'" (PC, 398). As envisioned by socialists like the elder James, true democracy serves the interest of the "the unclassed or oppressed, in defence of the victim of established civic and religious privilege" (SC, 197). In *The Bostonians*, however, Olive's brand of feminism perpetuates, rather than obliterates, the class consciousness that she associates with oppression.

Olive's classism is first evident when, rather than hating the Tarrants as "individuals," she regards them "as a type, a deplorable one, a class" (B, 111). Similarly, when confronted by Mrs. Burrage, a woman who stands to expose Olive's self-interest, Olive wishes that it were easier to "classify" (B, 155) and thereby discredit her. Nor does Olive "care to allow for accidental exceptions in the great masculine conspiracy" (B, 173). She simply regards as disingenuous any man who appears respectful of equal rights: "'Oh yes, I know there are men who pretend to care for [reform]; but they are not really men'" (B, 139). Here and elsewhere, Olive ignores the egalitarian ideal advocated, among others, by Margaret Fuller as the optimal destiny for *both* man and woman in the nineteenth century: "By Man I mean both man and woman; these are the two halves of one thought."¹⁷ Unable to acknowledge men of quality who respect women's equality, Olive less democratically and quite stereotypically reads away individual differences, finding it "a comfort to her, on occasions of acute feeling, that she hated men, as a class, anyway" (B, 22).

By urging Verena to "'dislike men as a class,'" Olive indulges in a sentiment that foreshadows the neo-Marxist enlargement of the proletariat base to include women as a class of oppressed citizenry. In response to Verena's objection, "'Well, no, I don't dislike [men] when they are pleasant!'" Olive retorts, "'As if organized atrociousness could ever be pleasant!'" (B, 294). By here refusing to acknowledge individual merit among men, and by regarding the very fact of manhood as an organized conspiracy, Olive indulges in an outlook that, by filtering human diversity through the lens of class warfare, discredits the self-reliant premise of equity feminism and belies what *The Princess Casamassima* refers to, in broader revolutionary terms, as the goal of "'help[ing] the democracy to get possession'" (a eu-

phemism for the dictatorship of the proletariat), and in such a manner as to combat “the classes that keep them down” (PC, 397).¹⁸ Olive’s relegation of all men to the phenomenalist status of dispensable oppressors is subject to the critique of socialism offered by Mr. Vetch to the Princess Casamassima: “The way certain classes arrogate to themselves the title of the people has never pleased me. Why are some human beings the people, the people only, and others not?” (PC, 414).

By extension, Olive’s oxymoronic sense of evolutionary ethics—her fanatical belief in a “moral resource” that will usher true virtue into a world where “evil” has yet to be “swept away” (B, 22, 160)—further subverts genuine equity by precluding the need for individual justice: “It was nothing new to Verena that if the great striving of Olive’s life was for justice she yet sometimes failed to arrive at it in particular cases” (B, 302). Selectivity of that political order anticipates the travesties of justice and decency that, in the socialistic and anarchistic world of *The Princess Casamassima*, lead to the tragic death of Hyacinth Robinson (who, unable to reconcile the individualistic sensitivities of the artist with the lockstep allegiance of socialism, commits suicide). Moreover, Henry Jr. was not as inexperienced in “the root of the matter” as he retrospectively makes himself out to be in the introduction to the novel. Far from writing about “mysteries abysmal” (AN, 69) in *The Princess Casamassima*, he was, because of his father, more than “familiar” with the theoretical socialism that inspires exploitative radicalism.

Insofar as *The Princess Casamassima* criticizes socialism through an association of the elder Henry’s frivolous radicalism with that of the Princess, we may address the lingering question of why Henry Jr. assigned the title of the work to a character who is not the novel’s center of consciousness.¹⁹ While the introduction to *The Princess Casamassima* links the identity of Henry Jr. to young Hyacinth—“I had only to conceive his watching the same public show, the same innumerable appearances, I had watched myself, and of his watching very much as I had watched”—the experiences of the novelist and Hyacinth alike pertain to the less-than-solid pretensions to socialism proffered by upper-class individuals who, like the elder Henry, play at being revolutionary. While appreciative of opportunities made available to him in his youth by parental wealth, the novelist discerned the hypocrisy of a socialistic father whose monetary advantages provided the “one little difference” between himself and Hyacinth: “This difference would be that so far as all the swarming facts should speak of freedom and ease, knowledge and power, money, opportunity and satiety, he should be able to revolve round them but at the most respectful of distances and with every door of approach shut in his face” (AN, 60–61).

Through an exercise of the novelist’s chameleon capability, the Princess Casamassima becomes a begrudging stand-in for the elder Henry, facilitat-

ing the career of a less fortunate incarnation of the novelist in the person of a young bookbinder who possesses exquisite talent for his art but little prospect for social ascent. Since Trilling, like Edelman, cogently links Hyacinth's fate to the several different parental figures in the novel—Lord Frederick, Miss Pynsent, Mr. Vetch, Eustache Poupin, Madame Poupin, and Hoffendahl—we may go a step further by associating the Princess's blithe radicalism with the socialistic theorizing of the elder James.²⁰

The Princess personifies a tradition of pretentious radicalism that the novelist connects to his father. She becomes the title character of a work that shows the elder James's aesthetic vision of socialism to be impractical and illustrates how selfishness disguises itself as generosity among radical thinkers. The elder James drew upon Edwardsian notions of virtue to protest pedestrian acts of charity that issue in mere "self-complacency" rather than in "benevolence" supportive of "the interests of humanity" (*NSB*, 378). *The Princess Casamassima* appropriates similar logic to delineate, more harshly, the "nature" of radical virtue.

Although he does not explore the Edwardsianism of the senior Henry, Trilling anticipates the centrality of true virtue for the concerns of *The Princess Casamassima*. The Princess, he says, is "the very embodiment of the modern will which masks itself in virtue, making itself appear harmless, the will that . . . is able to exist only if it operates in the name of virtue, that despises the variety and modulations of the human story and longs for an absolute humanity." Unaware of the pertinence of this remark for the Edwardsian outlook on true virtue subscribed to by the senior Henry, Trilling equates the radicalism of the Princess with that of Alice James.²¹ Still, *The Diary of Alice James* everywhere suggests that Alice, despite her much-cited fantasy about "knocking off the head of the benignant pater as he sat with his silver locks, writing at his table," was, among her siblings, the most ardent expounder of her father's theoretical politics.²² I would advance, therefore, with respect to the first appearance of the Princess Casamassima in *Roderick Hudson*, that the capricious Christina Light—who marries Prince Casamassima in that earlier novel—becomes transformed, in *The Princess Casamassima*, into a pathetic figure whose self-indulgent socialism dramatizes the insincerity of both late-nineteenth-century radicalism and its mid-century precursor in the writings of the elder James. Whereas in *Lectures and Miscellanies* the elder Henry celebrated socialism under the clever title of "Democracy and Its Issues," so *The Princess Casamassima* links Christina's politics to a whimsical wish to "try everything; at present she's trying democracy, she's going all lengths in radicalism" (*PC*, 221).

The unflattering portrait of radicalism in *The Princess Casamassima* picks up where *The Bostonians* leaves off in exposing the self-centered exploitation practiced by ostensible reformers whose behavior recalls the

elder Henry's pantomime of revolution. For example, Lady Aurora Langrish—whose stellar name may evoke the Aurora communistic experiment²³—is “ashamed of being rich” and regards herself as a “tremendous socialist” (*PC*, 106). Also among the novel's political charlatans is Eustache Poupin, a “theorist and an optimist and a collectivist and a perfectionist and a visionary,” who (in Swedenborgian form reminiscent of the spiritualism of the senior James) believes that the “human family” will one day sit together sipping coffee and “listening to the music of the spheres” (*PC*, 85). The Princess, in turn, moves from Medley—a name that recalls the satire of radicalism in Tennyson's “The Princess; A Medley”—to Madeira Crescent, where Hyacinth finds her reading “a heavy volume on Labour and Capital” (*PC*, 401)—most likely *Das Kapital*, which had been translated into English while the novelist composed *The Princess Casamassima*.²⁴ Like the elder Henry, the Princess expresses “her disgust with a thousand social arrangements,” and with “the corruption, the iniquity, the cruelty, the imbecility of the people who all over Europe had the upper hand” (*PC*, 213). For all that, the Princess (again like Henry Senior) remains a political dilettante: while dispensing with china and tapestry, “she couldn't dispense with a pair of immaculate gloves which fitted her to a charm” (*PC*, 368).

The Princess, then, wishes not to get her hands dirty while playing at revolution. She typifies the inconsistencies displayed by so-called socialists who live comfortable, risk-free lives, inconsistencies that Henry Jr. had already experienced in his own home and would eventually detail in *A Small Boy and Others* and *Notes of a Son and Brother*. She, like the elder James, retires “to a private paradise to think out the problem of the slums” (*PC*, 270). Indeed, the novelist need have looked scarcely beyond his father's household to find precedent for a socialist having “housemaids . . . on their knees before fireplaces” (*PC*, 262; cf. 376); a “cook,” whom the Princess Casamassima addresses “in the second person singular, as if he had been a feudal retainer” (*PC*, 269); the ministrations of various other “menials” (*PC*, 369); and a standing order for the grocer “to supply her, for her *private* consumption, with any delicacy she might desire” (*PC*, 379; emphasis added).²⁵

Incapable of facing “the loss of luxury” (*PC*, 378), the Princess, resembling the elder James, is “‘inconsistent with her theories’” (*PC*, 324). Just as the senior Henry crossed and recrossed the Atlantic rather than confront the future and resolve the issue of a professional calling, so the Princess “fidgeted from one selfish sensation to another and couldn't even live in the same place for three months together” (*PC*, 321).²⁶ Moreover, the Princess takes comfort in investigating the ills of society in what—evoking the socialistic rhetoric of the elder Henry concerning social “science” and “philosophy” (*L&M*, 441; *SSH*, 318–19)—she characterizes as a “scientific spirit,” and in her self-designated status as a “social philosopher” (*PC*, 373).

Her career amounts to a burlesque of radicalism practiced by Henry James Sr., among other social scientists, in the nineteenth century.²⁷

Between the first appearance of the Princess, in *Roderick Hudson* (in which Christina Light breaks the heart and obliterates the life of an artist) and her reemergence in *The Princess Casamassima*, the novelist imbues her with socialistic attributes of "the father" that task the integrity of radicalism in the later novel. Christina Light was poised to undergo that evolution. In *Roderick Hudson*, Christina's mother is apprehensive of the "dreadful radical talk that's going on all over the world" and wrongly assumes that her daughter "would make no concessions to the popular fury" (*RH*, 253). The fact that Christina ends up so nominally radical in *The Princess Casamassima* is consistent with her earlier wish to "do something romantic, poetic" and, in the process, to "get out of myself" and to "forget my detestable self" (*RH*, 238, 208). Bored with herself and her world, Christina—who cultivates "an exaggerated fear of the commonplace" in her later incarnation (*PC*, 158)—has "theories and views and inspirations, each of which is the best in the world until another is better. She's perfectly sure about each, but they are fortunately so many that she can't be sure of any one very long" (*RH*, 248).

This consistency between the Christinas of both novels extends to Madame Grandoni's sense that "you may enlist her imagination in a good cause as well as in a bad" and that "she's more dangerous in her virtuous moods than in her vicious." In the earlier novel, Christina is a coquette who, subject to Edwardsian scrutiny, does "something disinterested . . . , something for somebody else than herself," but only because "she needs to think well of herself." Not surprisingly, therefore, her efforts to transform others occur "at somebody's expense—not one of her friends but must sooner or later pay." Hyacinth, too, will come to learn that "we have most to pray to be guarded from her sincerities" (*RH*, 297, 369).

Nor does Hyacinth realize the degree to which his own sense of socialistic virtue and mission is based—beyond a sense of moral outrage for his deceased mother and beyond the political indoctrination he receives at the hands of Mr. Vetch and the Poupins—in his gradual sexual infatuation with the Princess. Flirting with Hyacinth, she guides still one more artisan, beyond Roderick Hudson, to ruin. The difference, though, lies in the way the political concerns of *The Princess Casamassima* (inspired by socialistic philosophies that harken back to the politics of Henry Senior) demonstrate how radical virtue is subversive of disinterestedness and destructive of the "taste" and "art" that occupy the sculptor, Roderick, and his artisan heir, a young bookbinder who is finally incapable of reconciling aesthetics and politics.

As to the virtue of the socialist enterprise, Hyacinth's infatuation with the Princess Casamassima compromises his capacity to have her treat him

“disinterestedly” in their campaign against oppressive social “conventions” (*PC*, 281). In the novel, commitment to revolutionary causes is championed by characters who use socialistic rhetoric as a means for sexual ingratiation—Captain Sholto, for example, is infatuated with the Princess (*PC*, 306), and Lady Aurora caters to the invalid Rosy because Aurora is in love with Rosy’s radical brother, Paul (*PC*, 441–42). But Hyacinth fails to realize the extent to which he has become a mere toy of the Princess. She initially “dazzle[s]” (*PC*, 155) him and leads him on merely to satisfy her curiosity about people who are closer to the masses than she. Her “romantic fancies to vagabonds of either sex” (*PC*, 427) enmesh Hyacinth in an unwarrantable belief that she has sexual designs upon him; that, in turn, further erodes his revolutionary priorities.

For instance, after she lies about having “sold everything to give to the poor,” the Princess suggestively adds, “I’ve kept *you*!” From her overtures, Hyacinth wrongly infers “so many delightful things” that seem to promise “a refinement of intimacy” (*PC*, 371, 374–75). Little wonder that Prince Casamassima suspects Hyacinth as being “one of her lovers” (*PC*, 221), a prospect Hyacinth himself indulges when he “carrie[s] to his lips” the knot of ribbon suspended from her dressing gown (*PC*, 284). Deluded with the vision of bolder intimacy, Hyacinth even resolves, with regard to Captain Sholto’s pursuit of Millicent Henning, that “he was in no position, sitting at the feet of the Princess, to sound the note of jealousy in relation to another woman” (*PC*, 303). As Madame Grandoni asks, “Pray what do you call it when a lady sends for a bookbinder to come and live with her?” (*PC*, 309).²⁸

If not by the fact of sexual intimacy, then at least through its imagined prospect, the virtue of Hyacinth’s radicalism dissipates, just as his resolve to carry out an assassination for “the cause” owes less to well-reasoned politics than to a nearly instinctive, egotistical ejaculation to impress fellow comrades: “I’m not afraid; . . . I’m ready to do anything that will do any good; . . . I don’t consider my bones precious in the least, compared with some other things” (*PC*, 257). This display, which has such tragic consequences, serves momentarily to make Hyacinth the center of interest for amused comrades at the Sun and Moon. As one critic claims, “Hyacinth’s brash commitment to the anarchist movement is a kind of involuntary reflex that betrays his desperate need to establish a fixed social identity.”²⁹ That instinctiveness is akin to Hyacinth’s impulsive attraction to the Princess, an attraction that simultaneously violates the disinterested standard of true virtue and renders defunct the non-contingent spontaneity that Henry Senior associated with socialistic upheaval.

Even more egregious in belying the socialistic pretense to benevolence is Paul Muniment, the “nature” of whose radical virtue is far more reprehensible because of his quests for various remunerations. Aware that the

Princess entertains socialism for self-indulgent amusement (*PC*, 427), he cultivates her company for selfish reasons masked beneath revolutionary fervor. When informed by Rosy that the Princess wants to “throw herself into it—to work with you”—a “helpless blundering bachelor” (*PC*, 443), Paul determines to pursue that relationship to acquire money for his invalid sister and to gain sexual favors in the process.³⁰ He even encourages Hyacinth’s ultimately suicidal mission of assassination in order to remove him from the Princess’s attention.

In doing so, Paul insidiously aims to become the “successor” of “the little bookbinder” while appearing to be Hyacinth’s “greatest friend” (*PC*, 410). Everywhere negating the principles of generosity championed by socialists, Paul is the master of self-interest who “present[s] himself as a harmless and self-abnegating man” in a world where “natural passion for power must never become explicit,” since power is thought to invalidate “moral purpose.”³¹ Mindful of Paul’s hypocrisy, readers may also apprehend how the “nature” of his radical virtue merges with the book’s previously overlooked debt—in making him complicit in Hyacinth’s death—to the biblical story of David and Uriah.

Covetous of Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah, King David sends that loyal, consummately devoted soldier into a battle from which Uriah is destined never to return: “Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die” (2 Samuel 11:15). In the James family, that episode of the Bible had varied resonances. For instance, despite her general admiration for King David, Henry Jr.’s cousin Minny Temple spoke of David’s “attendant imperfections” and claimed that “I don’t think I should have cared to be *Queen* David exactly” (*NSB*, 513). Moreover, the moral shortcomings of King David explain the pregnant pause of Roderick Hudson, who fancies creating one further Old Testament sculpture: “David, the boy David” (*RH*, 114). The errancy of the elder David also informs the plot of Henry Jr.’s “Poor Richard,” a Civil War story that, as aptly summarized by William Dean Howells, “dealt with the conscience of a man very much in love with a woman who loved his rival. He told the rival a lie, which sent him away to his death on the field.”³² *The Princess Casamassima* appropriates the biblical identities of David and Uriah—this time to gloss the selfishness of socialists and anarchists whose greed and envy masquerade as self-deprecation and virtue. On his mission of assassination, Hyacinth thinks of himself as “young David,” with “sling and pebble,” facing the institutionalized Goliath of London’s “social order” (*PC*, 530), but he neither recalls who David grew up to be nor perceives how Paul—who both woos the Princess and emboldens Hyacinth to carry out Hoffendahl’s anarchist project—appropriates the identity of the morally flawed King David.

The resemblance between Hyacinth and Uriah finds support in the fact

that, as the guest of the Princess, Hyacinth fantasizes about himself as her spouse; he "felt at times almost as if he were married to his hostess," with whom he enjoys verbal "intercourse" (*PC*, 432). Paul, in turn, evoking the identity of David, finds himself so enchanted by the Princess's voice and glance (*PC*, 369) and so struck by "the most beautiful person he had ever seen" (*PC*, 384) that he eventually envisions himself as a more aggressive and fitting mate than Prince Casamassima: "If I was your husband I'd come and take you away" (*PC*, 449). Separated from her husband but solicitous of the young bookbinder, the Princess encourages Paul's advances by becoming dismissive of Hyacinth: "Oh Hyacinth!" she sighed impatiently. There was another silence for some minutes, not disconnected apparently from this reference to the little bookbinder" (*PC*, 449). That silence, which ostensibly connotes the Princess's concern for Hyacinth, signals to Paul that "the little bookbinder" is no obstacle to her cultivating new companionship.

When, therefore, the Princess asks Paul to find somebody other than Hyacinth to be an assassin for Hoffendahl, her several references to "betrayal" evoke the identities of David and Uriah. Although the Princess tells Paul not to "betray" any confidence with regard to Hyacinth's utterances, her words—"Don't betray him"—assume added significance in the biblical context, as does Paul's response, "There's nothing to betray. . . . Besides, I don't betray." He most certainly does. In his failure to locate somebody other than Hyacinth for Hoffendahl's mission ("Wouldn't someone else do his work quite as well?"), and in his "losing himself in . . . her beauty, for instance, her grace, her fragrance," Paul reenacts King David's insidious betrayal of Uriah. Hence, the phallicism of Paul's remark to the Princess: "A fine stiff conservative's a thing I perfectly understand. . . . If I were on top, I'd stick." (Not to belabor the point: Paul's follow-up, when charged by the Princess with being narrow in his views, is that "One must be narrow to penetrate.") Little wonder that Paul and the Princess seem to forget about Hyacinth's safety as they "exchanged a long deep glance of mutual scrutiny. Each seemed to drop a plummet into the other's mind." Here, then—despite her nominal, at best halfhearted offer to stand in for Hyacinth ("I should like to do it in his place")—the Princess becomes a willing Bath-sheba in her dealings with her latter-day David (*PC*, 405–8).

While Hyacinth foolishly wonders, of Paul, whether "his friend had been writing to [Hoffendahl] to intercede for *him*, to beg that he might be let off" (*PC*, 378), the young bookbinder is unaware that the "affection" between him and Paul "was preponderantly on his own side" (*PC*, 400). By the time he realizes that Paul is in "danger of falling in love," or of going in for "a more intimate acquaintance" with the Princess, Hyacinth has a despondent attitude that makes him a reconciled Uriah: "Why the devil should I care now?" Although Paul misconstrues that question as having reference

to the job for Hoffendahl, Hyacinth's query pertains to an awareness of Paul's and the Princess's betrayal. To that degree, Hyacinth's eventual suicide reflects—aside from his inability to reconcile art and politics—a disenchantment with the lack of true virtue entailed in a “comrade” (PC, 394-95) whom he earlier thought able to “sink personal sentiment where a great public good was to be attempted and yet to keep up the form of caring for that minor interest” (PC, 347). Like Captain Sholto, who is “purely selfish for all his devoted disinterested airs” (PC, 312), Paul is little better.

Despite his nearly Edwardsian rhetoric in advising the Princess that their revolutionary enterprise requires the sacrifice of “‘our affections, our natural ties,’” Paul luxuriates in “the Princess’s deep and lovely eyes, attaching themselves to his face.” Relishing his apparent power over her, Paul continues his charade of disinterested benevolence: “‘All those things are nothing, they must never weigh a feather, beside our service’” (PC, 452). Guided by natural instinct and selfishness, Paul illustrates the hypocrisy of radicalism. As Prince Casamassima remarks, when seeing Paul and the Princess at a rendezvous suggestive of intimacy, “‘Is *that* for the revolution?’” (PC, 469).

Obviously not. Although Henry Sr. envisioned socialism in terms of an Edwardsian conversion that would enable “the creature to slough off . . . the selfish and monstrous growths which have signalized his natural immaturity” (SRFM, 347), *The Princess Casamassima*, through its biblical rendering of the exploitation practiced by Paul Muniment, anticipates the view—articulated most forcefully in W. E. H. Lecky’s *Democracy and Liberty* (1896)—that socialistic fervor, with its loftiest professions of “virtue and philanthropy,” masks programs of “plunder” based in “cupidity,” in “class jealousies,” and in “envy, covetousness, [and] prejudice.”³³ *The Princess Casamassima* approaches that insight when Mr. Vetch, coming to realize the dire consequences for Hyacinth of socialistic ideology, reasons that “the figures on the chessboard were still the passions and jealousies . . . of man” (PC, 326). Hyacinth, too, eventually speculates that “social jealousy” inspires the so-called “fresh deal” of socialists, since “everywhere he saw the ulcer of envy—the greed of a party hanging together only that it might despoil another to its advantage” (PC, 360-61). Fearing, toward the end of the novel, that he “‘may in the past have been actuated by such motives,’” Hyacinth is able to lament the “‘invidious jealousy which is at the bottom of the idea of [socialistic] redistribution’” (PC, 353). What Hyacinth initially fails to comprehend is the manner in which Paul Muniment’s glance around the Princess’s quarters (“lovingly, almost covetously” [PC, 449]) evokes a form of Old Testament covetousness that ultimately illustrates how, whatever the nature of politics or the claims to virtue, there really is nothing new under the Sun and Moon.³⁴

The modern instance of deceit dramatized in *The Princess Casamassima* also illustrates the unique problems entailed in utopian socialistic “ethics”

and accountability. Whereas the autobiographies of Henry Jr. disdain the dismissal of private pain in the elder Henry's philosophy of social upheaval,³⁵ Hyacinth retains something of the elder James's vision of revolutionary spiritual creation. When wandering the streets of France and pondering the "sea of blood" occasioned by the guillotine, Hyacinth thinks less of the "turpitude and horror" and more of the "magnificent energy, the spirit of creation" (*PC*, 349) of the French Revolution. He finds that vivifying impulse compatible with still another category championed by the elder James—that is, with the "pulsation of the general life . . . that . . . would sweep away all the traditions of the past before it." Still, what Hyacinth fails to comprehend is that by ignoring moral turpitude because of a broader Utopian end, he luxuriates in a mind-set supportive of the belief that the end justifies the means, at whatever cost to the individual or to individualism: "There was joy and exultation in the thought of surrendering one's self to the wash of the wave, of being carried higher . . . than one could ever be by a dry lonely effort of one's own" (*PC*, 428). If only from his own experience at the hands of Paul Muniment, Hyacinth should be apprehensive of so-called evolutionary ethics that render the value of the individual subordinate to that of the general "cause."

Paul, for instance, celebrates the harsh imprisonment of Hoffendahl: since Hoffendahl did not, even under torture, divulge the names of fellow anarchists, Hoffendahl's being the "only one" that had been "seized and suffered" made the activity a "rare success" because of "the economy of material" (*PC*, 251). Hoffendahl's well-being is less an issue for Paul than is the numerical, materialistic consideration of acceptable losses. By extension, the obedience that Hyacinth must exercise in carrying out an assassination discredits "individual" claims to life in the context of the "generally" utopian end that rejects personal responsibility:

But whether the individual should deserve it or shouldn't deserve it was not to be one's affair. If he recognized generally Hoffendahl's wisdom—and the other night it had seemed to shine like a great cold splendid northern aurora—it was not in order that he might challenge it in the particular case. . . . The thing was to be part of a very large plan, of which he couldn't measure the scope. (*PC*, 294)

Picking up where Olive Chancellor leaves off in classifying people and events along party lines, Hoffendahl's scheme is "classified and subdivided . . . altogether . . . from the point of view of the revolution—as it might forward or obstruct that cause." As a correlate, individualism and individual justice perish in the enjoyed concussion of Hoffendahl's own extravagant medley: "He treated all things, persons, institutions, ideas, as so many notes in his great symphonic massacre" (*PC*, 295). Little wonder that, when the Princess Casamassima petitions Paul to find a replacement for Hyacinth

because Hoffendahl's mission is not "good" for the little bookbinder, Paul responds, with complete disregard for Hyacinth's individual integrity, "I wasn't thinking so much about what would be good for him as about what would be bad for some others" (PC, 452). The revolution can hardly look after its own when it's one for all and none for one.

That same socialistic disregard for personal identity informs Eustache Poupin's farcical invocation of individualism in response to Hyacinth's reservations about continuing to support the revolutionary cause: "'*Enfin* it's between you and your conscience. . . . [T]he conscience of the individual is absolute, except of course in those classes in which, from the very nature of the infamies on which they're founded, no conscience can exist.'" Like Olive, Hoffendahl, and Paul, Poupin here reads out of existence a vast portion of "humanity" (PC, 360) that he assumes to have no conscience by virtue of their indifference to his revolutionary fervor.

If they're not with us, they're against us; if they're against us, they're phenomenalistic forms awaiting spiritual creation through enjoyed concussion. Such is the reasoning decried by William James in his quarrel with philosophical monism that results in a "moral holiday." Such is life in *The Princess Casamassima*: the well-being of individuals is seen as a mere "detail in a scheme of which the general effect will be decidedly useful" (PC, 397). Here, then, Henry Jr. captures the dictatorial misuse of pragmatism by those who ignore its underlying tenet of a pluralistic universe emerging from individual fields of consciousness. (That is precisely what came to pass when Mussolini, inspired by the philosophy of Nietzsche and Sorel, perversely championed fascism under the banner of a Jamesian kind of pragmatism.³⁶)

In the socialistic world of *The Princess Casamassima*, an ostensible love of Being in general—the "general life" that Hyacinth associates with the "flood of democracy" (PC, 428)—gives rise to a related contempt for the value of personal life. Accompanying Paul on his moral holiday is comrade Schinkel, who argues that neither he, the Poupins, nor Paul, despite their urging Hyacinth to risk his life for the general cause, share any responsibility for his safety: "'It's none of [Paul's] business any more than ours; it's none of anyone's business!' Schinkel earnestly opined" (PC, 498). The Princess, in turn, shares this inclination to gloss over personal accountability when she lies to Mr. Vetch about Paul's role in Hyacinth's contract with death. Wishing to save Paul from "the imputation of an ugly responsibility" (PC, 422), she finds it far easier to believe that "'the old ferocious selfishness'" must be "'smashed'"³⁷ and to assign responsibility for spilt blood to others: "'On *their* head be the responsibility, on *their* head be the blood!'" (PC, 520). As William James argued, all monists and absolutists "drop the worry of our finite responsibility" and assume "a right ever and anon to take a moral holiday, to let the world wag in its own way, feeling that its issues are in better hands than ours and are none of our business" (PMT, 41).

The Princess Casamassima addresses related philosophies that affect Hyacinth, and dramatizes the catch-22 in socialistic "ethics." In the world of the novel, "whoever was not of them [is] against them" (PC, 93), and no accountability exists for murder; and far worse, then, for one's comrades—who, devoid of personal worth, are looked upon as sacrificial means to a general, redemptive, vivifying end. As Poupin remarks to Hyacinth when the youngster temporarily—and at obvious risk—resolves to serve as Hoffendahl's assassin, "'Ah well, if you *are* with us that's all I want to know!'" (PC, 499). Pitiful friendship, *that*.³⁸

Faced with the absence of genuine camaraderie among—all people—socialists, Hyacinth at one point intuitively grasps that genuine concern for him resides exclusively in Millicent Henning, who has considerable affection for Hyacinth, but who flirtatiously concedes only to having a "disinterested affection for a snippet of a bookbinder" (PC, 128). Despite her tryst with Captain Sholto when Hyacinth becomes enamored of the Princess, Millicent possesses an enduring "faculty of affection" (PC, 479) that proves a refuge of friendship for Hyacinth, in contrast to socialistic pretensions to fellow feeling that lack personal regard.³⁹ Hyacinth's tragic end implies that the *personal* element of emotion comprising affection does not figure in *general* outlooks, especially those in which the end justifies the means. Mr. Vetch comes to this realization when he criticizes the Poupins, who fancy themselves the bookbinder's family, especially following the death of Pinnie. Although Vetch claims that "'they've assured me every hair of his head is as precious to them as if he were their own child,'" Vetch finds no comfort there because that "'old woman (whose grandmother, in Paris, in the Revolution, must certainly have carried bloody heads on a pike) would be quite capable of chopping up her own child if it would do any harm to proprietors'" (PC, 420). Although the utterance appears exaggerated, the Poupins, as representative socialists in a novel devoid of a Kantian moral imperative, effectively join Paul in sacrificing Hyacinth.

An Edwardsian glance at these pretensions to general love in *The Princess Casamassima* shows Paul and his comrades to be more usurious than the capitalists they deplore. As the Princess says to Paul, "'How can I help its coming over me . . . that you've incalculable ulterior views and are but consummately using me—but consummately using us all?'" In response, Paul denudes the Princess of individual worth while discounting the value of either her fancied radicalism or her sexual intimacy: "'I *do* consider that in giving your money—or rather your husband's—to our business you gave the most valuable thing you had to contribute'" (PC, 525). Even among socialists, whose lack of personal affection leads them to claim that Hyacinth's destiny is "'none of anyone's business'" (PC, 498), "business" is still "business." Despite Paul's wish, as a socialist, to attribute human "asininity" to "bad" social "conditions" (PC, 398), the novel validates Mr. Vetch's

assessment that hearts change not with a change of political affiliation.

Beyond undermining real community by failing to respect "the people" as individuals, the socialism dramatized in *The Princess Casamassima* subverts the aesthetic endeavor that the elder Henry, attentive to Edwardian disinterestedness, associated with "society the redeemed form of man." Insofar as Henry Jr. identifies with Hyacinth, who is caught between the politics of socialism and the disinterested art of exquisite bookbinding, the novelist apprehends the implicit conflict between art and politics that had escaped the cognizance of Henry Senior. The elder Henry posited an opposition between moralism and art—or, by extension, between any contingent obligation and a disinterested communitarian life. Henry Jr. illustrates in Olive Chancellor, Hyacinth Robinson, and the Princess Casamassima the obstacle between radical politics and disinterested artistic endeavor.

Henry Jr. therefore differs from the elder Henry, as suggested by *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima*, through the realization that socialism must eventually discount "the gospel of esthetics" and the virtue of the "generously wasteful passion" of art (*NSB*, 290–91). The artist flourishes when "left wholly alone, amid a chattering unperceiving world," taking disinterested "reward" exclusively in a "glimpse" of "the design more or less realised" (*AN*, 228–29), but socialism abides neither individualism nor the luxury of detachment. Because disinterested aestheticism is subversive of militant commitment to utopian ends, Henry Jr.'s identification with the protagonist of his novel calls into question the practical and moral tendencies of the elder Henry's socialistic philosophy.

With respect to that familial context, it is not the connections among bookbinders, printers, and trade unionism that best account for Hyacinth's choice of profession,⁴⁰ but rather his possessing "the conscience of an artist" and his being sometimes "bored" by "the social question" (*PC*, 196, 91–92). His "happiest moments" are "at the British Museum and the National Gallery" (*PC*, 209). With an "intense admiration" for "high civilization" (*PC*, 133–34), Hyacinth vaguely discerns that the socialism of Eustache Poupin destroys their shared artistic endeavor. Hyacinth proves unable to negotiate Poupin's "terrible" impassioned swings between "the religion of conscientious craftsmanship" and the "socialistic passion, a redhot impatience for the great rectification" (*PC*, 93–94). Hyacinth, with a far different expression of "passion" and "religion," produces "a masterpiece of firmness and finish" in binding a copy of Tennyson's poems for the Princess (*PC*, 217). At issue in this similarity of rhetoric is what constitutes a "'sacred cause'" (*PC*, 352). Can the state of socialism even abide—let alone model itself upon (as the elder Henry had theorized in *Lectures and Miscellanies*) the disinterestedness of Art?

Phrased otherwise, can political activism tolerate the individualistic, aesthetic element of "'taste or spontaneous attraction'"⁴¹ that the elder Henry

supposed characteristic of socialism? Would, for instance, the political radicals of either *The Bostonians* or *The Princess Casamassima* have appreciated the following reflection of Henry Jr. as he voices his admiration for the canvasses of William Hunt?

I believed them great productions—thought in especial endless good of the large canvas of the girl with her back presented while she fills her bucket at the spout in the wall, against which she leans with a tension of young muscle, a general expression of back, beneath her dress, and with the pressure of her raised and extended bare arm and flattened hand: this, to my imagination, could only become the prize of some famous collection. . . . Frankly, intensely—that was the great thing—these were hours of Art, art definitely named, looking me full in the face and accepting my stare in return. (NSB, 285)

Clearly, Henry Jr. knew that this reflection invites the contempt of socialists. For instance, in his review of Nordhoff's *The Communistic Societies of the United States*, the novelist highlights the following incident, the response of one of the "communists," a Shaker, to the inquiry of Nordhoff about things "beautiful": "'The beautiful, as you call it . . . is absurd and abnormal. It has no business with us.' And he proceeded to relate how he had once been in a rich man's house in New York, where he had seen heavy picture-frames hung against the walls as 'receptacles of dust'" ("NCS," 28). In several respects, the attitude of this North American communist opposed what the novelist—thinking of Henry Irving's Shakespearean splendors, of the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan, and of the damask-hung temple of the Grosvenor Gallery—celebrated as "triumphs of taste" (MY, 568; cf. 586).

Lack of taste informs the conflict between political militancy and aesthetic refinement in *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima*. Anticipating the dilemma of Hyacinth—who is afraid that "the democracy wouldn't care for perfect bindings" (PC, 428)—Olive Chancellor fancies herself "making every sacrifice of taste for the sake of . . . conforming herself to a great popular system" (B, 444). Embarrassed and inconsistent, she enjoys a household modeled on "organized privacy" and well-selected "objects that spoke of habits and tastes" (B, 16). Still, she consistently tries to "kill that nerve, to persuade herself that taste was only frivolity in the disguise of knowledge" (B, 29-30). Because she regards taste and aesthetics as counter revolutionary, Olive abstains from enjoying the works of Schubert and Mendelssohn as played by Mr. Burrage "with exquisite taste." Sadly, Olive classifies the enjoyment of art as nothing more than a dishonorable "truce" with an oppressive world, a retreat from the requisite "battle." For Olive, the prospect of diversion at a musical event is akin to being "quite demoralized" through "giving up everything, all principles, all projects" (B, 156-57).

The same abhorrence of art leads the Princess Casamassima to disparage the splendidly bound volume of Tennyson prepared for her by Hyacinth: "It's beautiful, I'm sure, but I've lost my sense for such things." . . . Her thoughts were fixed on far other things than the delight of dainty covers, and she evidently considered that in caring so much for them Hyacinth resembled the mad emperor who fiddled in the flames of Rome" (*PC*, 425–26). Aptly, therefore, one critic compares the Princess to Lenin, who rejected the pleasure of listening to Beethoven because

"it affects your nerves, makes you want to say stupid, nice things, and stroke the heads of people who could create such beauty while living in this vile hell." . . . [T]he Princess of James's novel feels that her taste is but the evidence of her immoral aristocratic existence and that art is a frivolous distraction from revolution.⁴²

Little remains of the aesthetic base of socialism conceived by the elder James. To the extent that art figures at all in the designs of Olive and her comrades, it is subservient to a larger cultural revolution—at the Boston Music Hall, for instance. There we find young women for whom Bach and Beethoven "only stimulated their convictions, excited their revolutionary passion, led their imagination further in the direction in which it was always pressing" (*B*, 181). Thus, in both *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima* "revolutionary passion" renders art didactic and displaces the disinterestedness that the elder Henry, in his chapter on "The Principle of Universality in Art" (*L&M*, 101–36), had named as the spiritual precursor of socialism. Hyacinth comes to value the "precious things" (*PC*, 339) entailed in Western culture and its art. Despite his recognition of "the despotisms, the cruelties, the exclusions, the monopolies, and the rapacities of the past," he believes that art makes the world "less of a 'bloody sell' and life more of a lark" (*PC*, 352). Ultimately he is incapable of carrying out an assassination. A form of socialistic philistinism is in conflict here with the aestheticism of the elder James;⁴³ by turning the pistol upon himself, Hyacinth resolves his dilemma between theory and practice. Had he lived beyond this crisis, Hyacinth would, we are told, have gone on "to write something"—something having an aesthetic nature quite divorced from the "fresh deal of the social pack." His novels might have included *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Awkward Age*, or *The Ambassadors*. A work divorced from politics was to have been "his transition—into literature: to bind the book, charming as the process might be, was after all much less fundamental than to write it" (*PC*, 359). But to write such books finally entailed the resolve of an author who, respecting the disinterested Edwardian premise of his father's outlook on art, realized—as his father did not—the practical irreconcilability of aesthetic and socialistic temperaments.

Conclusion

William James, Henry Jr., and the Life of the Soul Under Socialism

Writing to William James in 1901, G. H. Howison pondered the contribution of his own work, *Limits of Evolution and Other Essays*. "The question," said Howison, "is not whether I have answered every possible dark question, but whether I have not gone some distance in advance, upon a new and significant path, in answering such questions, or making their answer possible" (*TWJ*, 2:220–21). The same might be asked about the foregoing revelations of the persistence of Edwardsian theology in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century high culture, as reflected in the writings of the James family. New possibilities for scholarly dialogue and conjecture emerge from the elder Henry's channeling of true virtue toward socialism, from Henry Jr.'s literary use of his father's beliefs about phenomenalism and disinterested benevolence, and from William's "interest" in the Edwardsianism of the elder James. Underlying these issues is the father's socialistic enterprise, which has further significance for the empiricism of William and the artistry of Henry Jr.

In the year of his death, the senior James ratified his socialistic convictions through an Edwardsian disclaimer of natural affection. He excused his reluctance to write to immediate family members by evoking a "public" consciousness and "larger sympathy," which left him at liberty to ignore "private ties," including "the demand of my children and friends."¹ That exaltation of disinterestedness was consistent with the senior Henry's secular view of heaven as a "state of culture in man in which charity or regard for others claims the first place, and prudence or regard for self takes the second place." To the degree that the elder Henry sometimes advanced this theoretical socialism with Darwinian rhetoric, he could define "the evolution of man's true destiny" as a need to "revolutionize" the "existing relations of creature to creator, or convert them from a polemic to a pacific character, and so bring about the complete eventual redemption of the race" (*SS*, 97, 134).² Henry James Sr. never speculated, as did two of his sons, that a utopian dream could become a totalitarian nightmare.

The elder James quasi-dictatorially regarded “the public or associated consciousness” as the only real consciousness and as the “exact meaning of history”—indeed, as “the very last result of human history” (*CLC*, 227, 153). That premise renders history a predetermined program of groupthink in which “the experience of the individual bosom” is a phenomenalist event leading to “the common or associated mind of the race,” or to what the senior Henry regarded as *real* “self-consciousness” (*SSH*, 461). He considered mundane personal consciousness to be the first act of “a *divine drama*” (*LR*, 446). Individualism, one of many “illusory forms,” stood to be converted into “reality” through the “transforming virtue” of a socialistic love of Being in general. For that reason, the senior James, following Edwards and Swedenborg, spoke of “God’s love, which is infinite and has nothing in common with self-love.” Individualism (by contrast) was “fallacious consciousness,” whether regarded as a “phenomenal subjectivity,” as “fallacious private personalit[y],” or as “mere personal or unreal history”—all of which had only a “dramatic” or “seeming truth.”³ Because Henry Senior thought individualism a provisional scaffolding for the divine Being of socialism, his relegation of personal selfhood to a subservient and negligible phenomenon was incipiently fascistic in tendency.

That is so despite the aversion he sometimes voiced to the “discipline and correction” of “the State” (*SSH*, 462), which imposes “an *instituted* order and decency . . . guaranteed in the last resort not by the inward consent of the subject, but by the outward force of the community” (*SRFM*, 404). He differed, then, from twentieth-century practitioners of rigid socialism—most notably Stalin and Lenin. The elder Henry also would have rejected the historical materialism of European socialists like Marx and Engels. Henry Senior believed in “the growth of our earthly life out of the absolute bondage to the material elements of nature into a condition of free citizenship” (*SRFM*, 466). Still, the abstract perfection of this outlook concealed its practical defect.

What this idealism overlooked was the Old Adam, that other relative whom the elder Henry disowned in order to celebrate the potential of human nature liberated from inequality and coercive moralism. Such socialistic faith proved transient, however, for the elder Henry ended up supporting the “stable dictatorship” of Louis-Napoleon, who militantly imposed order on factionalized socialists.⁴ Spiritual evolution toward socialism appeared to need a material push, one that would become increasingly vigorous in the next century.

William James, on the other hand, knew that socialism was *not* a preexistent state of true Being toward which phenomenalist forms of history evolve. The possible benefits of socialism, like those of other reform endeavors, could not be judged “*à priori*.” Social reform had to be gauged

through experience—"by actual finding, after the fact of [its] making, how much more outcry or how much appeasement comes about" (*WJW*, 612). Twentieth-century socialism proved dictatorial and bent upon extermination for reasons anticipated in William's criticism of his father's absolutist philosophy, the sole function of which was to usher in socialistic society under the Swedenborgian banner of a Divine-Natural Humanity. William, on the other hand, recognized that his father's a priori thinking was monistic—in its explanation of parts by wholes (*TWJ*, 1:730)—and rationalistic, by which William meant "the tendency to emphasize the universal, and to make the whole prior to the part, in the order both of logic and of being." Because rationalism is prescriptive of *truth* in isolation from the diverse data of experience, William warned that the "temper of rationalism is dogmatic" (*TWJ*, 2:380). Indeed, "the rationalist mind, radically taken, is of a doctrinaire and authoritative complexion: the phrase '*must be*' is ever on its lips" (*PMT*, 124).⁵

According to Perry, William "expounded pluralism and healthy-mindedness in his own behalf, and the monism of the sick soul in behalf of his father." For William, the father was "an oracle to be interpreted and judged." That is evident from the spirit of debate in the home of the elder James and from the alienation voiced by William toward his father's philosophy.⁶ Later in life, William penned an emphatic repudiation of monism; its phrasing has relevance for a father who thought that the mere appearances of nature were awaiting true substance through an infusion of preexisting, socialistic—and therefore virtuous—Being. Whereas William believed that the world existed "in one edition, and then just as it seems," others beheld "two editions, an eternal edition, complete from the start, in which there is no growth or novelty; and an inferior, side-show, temporal edition, in which things seem illusorily to be achieving and growing into that perfection which really preexists." William felt that this variorum edition of reality was redundant and "absolutely irrational" (*TWJ*, 2:384).

That rejection of a phenomenalist world awaiting creation from some absolute Being is traceable to William's disenchantment with the philosophy of the elder James and, by extension, with the father's socialistic teleology. In 1868 William wrote that his "Dad" early led him to regard "the affairs of human life to be only a phantasmagory, wh[ich] had to be *interpreted* elsewhere in the Kosmos into a real significance" (*CWJ*, 4:308). For Henry Sr., that *real* significance was socialism. William, though, came to reject the phenomenism supportive of his father's outlook. Consider, for instance, the exchange of letters with his father in September 1867 through October of that same year, in which William quite "*practically*" proposes an alternative method of "Philanthropy" after challenging the phenomenistic premise behind his father's view of "the highest form of social love" (*CWJ*, 4:221, 220).

William James, aged 19 or 20. pf MS Am 1092. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and Bay James Baker.

William James
Note Book
Cambridge
October 1, 1862

To any one into whose hands this book may fall—

If I am alive, do not read it
If I am dead, burn it

Oblige

Wm. James

I glanced thro' this and found that
Dad had torn out a lot of pages & used
the book for notes made in pencil at a
much later date than '62. He had left
nothing in it - as appears from further examination -
except reading notes. So I've kept this.

H. J. Jr.

Inscription by Henry James Jr. on flyleaf of William James's 1862 reading notebook. "I glanced thro' this and found that Dad had torn out a lot of pages & used the book for notes made in pencil at a much later date than '62. He had left nothing in it—as appears from further examination—except reading notes. So I've kept this. H. J. Jr." BMS Am 1092.9 (4497). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and Bay James Baker.

In this politely muted response to the philosophical basis of his father's socialism, William took issue with the senior Henry's claim that "'God can create only what is devoid of being in itself. . . . And yet what is void of being in itself can at best only appear to be. It can be no real but only a phenomenal existence.'" William proposed an alternate formulation that at once shows mastery of the father's philosophy while altering it to suggest the *reality* of that which the father judged as spectral: "To make sense to my mind the whole sh[ould] read: 'God can create only what is devoid of being, except as created. And what is thus void of uncreated being, can at best only *appear* to be uncreated. Its *uncreatedness* cannot be real but only phenomenal.'" William thus renders his father's phenomenalism phenomenalist, in defense of that which is "real *and* created" (CWI, 4:219).

Although Henry Senior's epistolary responses to William are genial, students of the James family may still wonder whether, in a different venue, the son's possible criticisms of the father (or of ideas cherished by the father) proved rather frustrating for the elder James. In what would be a highly unusual act for *any* parent, Henry Senior purposely damaged one of William's 1862 reading notebooks. Indeed, on the front flyleaf of the volume exists an undated entry by Henry the novelist, indicating that the senior James tore pages from William's notebook and then used other pages, "at a much later date than '62," to enter his own notes. That family artifact is a most revealing—if understated, on the part of the novelist—commentary on the intellectual tension between the senior James and his eldest son.⁷

Regardless of the interpretation of the damaged notebook, a much later response of William to his father's phenomenalism is quite telling: "To anyone who has ever looked on the face of a dead child or parent, the mere fact that matter *could* have taken for a time that precious form, ought to make matter sacred ever after." At issue for a pragmatist and radical empiricist was not metaphysics, but the integrity of *matter* itself: "It makes no difference what the *principle* of life may be, material or immaterial, matter at any rate co-operates, lends itself to all life's purposes" (PMT, 50).⁸ For William, therefore, "reality" pertains to a person as "he 'truly is'"; one does not attain reality by evolving toward some truer state of "absolute being." That scenario, which William would have known to be compatible with the elder Henry's evolutionary view of socialistic Being, entailed "transcending the limits of . . . creatureship" (TWJ, 2:712).

William took reality to be the here and now of experience; his father's socialism notwithstanding, "experience" has a tangible "cash-value" that "pays" (PMT, 46, 110). In 1860 William told his father, "My experience amounts to very little, but it is all I have to go upon" (TWJ, 1:199). By 1904 William defined experience as reality because "everything real must be experienceable somewhere, and every kind of thing experienced must some-

where be real." Rather than awaiting the spiritual—that is to say, socialistic—creation of true Being advocated by his father, William believed that "*experience as a whole is self-containing and leans on nothing*" (*ERE*, 160, 193).

This disavowal of any need for finite experience to be supported metaphysically by an absolute state of Being was a central tenet of William's "humanism," which he described as "ambulatory."⁹ Given the father's one-leggedness, the suggestion of the continued rebellion from parental philosophy functions subliminally in William's call for a "bipedal" approach to "abstract concepts" and "perceptual particulars": "We throw our concept forward, get a foothold on the consequence, hitch our line to this, and draw our percept up, traveling thus with a hop, skip and jump over the surface of life" (*PMT*, 300). For philosophical as well as physiological reasons, that is precisely what the elder Henry never did. In response to the monism of his father—and, later, in reaction to the absolutism, monism, and idealism of Bradley, Royce, Russell, Lotze, and others¹⁰—William became a pragmatist and radical empiricist, continuing to complain about the "maimed and amputated power" of rationalists (*ERE*, 119).¹¹

The works of Goethe, Dewey, Renouvier, Peirce, Hodgson, and F. C. S. Schiller allowed William to ambulate away from the philosophy of the elder Henry. About the momentous influence of Renouvier, whose writings emphasize empiricism and free will, William remarked, "but for the decisive impression made on me in the seventies by his masterly advocacy of pluralism, I might never have got free from the monistic superstition under which I had grown up" (*TWJ*, 1:655). As William continued to distance himself from that paternal superstition, he rejected ideas about the vacuity of experience and championed the reality of consciousness. His socialistic father considered individual consciousness illusory, but William affirmed the existence of fields of consciousness as they interact with "the immediate flux of life" (*ERE*, 93). For William, there was no fallacious consciousness, only the fallacy that the phenomenon of consciousness is unreal: "I have tried to keep the reader in contact . . . with the *actual conscious unity* which each of us at all times *feels* himself to be" (*TWJ*, 2:54; emphasis added). This phrasing is significant. With respect to cognition, William, unlike his father, perceives phenomenalism to be part of the "actual." The elder Henry's spiritual creation, supportive of socialism, gives way for William to the reality of perceptual creation, protective of individualism (as defined by the experienced fact of the consciousness of sensations).

Whereas the elder James had advised his son about a transcendent "unitary Form" (*TWJ*, 2:711), William reconceived the "transcendent principle of Unity" as consecutive moments in "a stream of consciousness" (*WJW*, 1:199). Each successive part of that stream, sustained by "conjunctive relations" (*ERE*, 107; *PMT*, 230), comprises reality for individuals. Respectful

of the consciousness of each member of society, pragmatism and radical empiricism are, then, pluralistic and humanistic in tendency. Whether in response to his father, or to Herbert Spencer, William championed empiricist respect for the "most personal experiences" (*PMT*, 44). Unlike the socialistic metaphysics of his father, William's epistemology reconciled privacy and the public life. William deemed the world "a sort of republican banquet . . . where all the qualities of being respect one another's personal sacredness, yet sit at the common table of space and time" (*TWJ*, 2:212).

That pluralism is entirely consistent with William's notion of "interest" as the moving force of psychology; as Perry remarks, William's scheme of value "derives ultimately from the interests of the individual; and the social whole is justified by the inclusion and reconciliation of its individual parts."¹² That assumption informs William's inclination to champion heroism and individual genius as the "fermentative influence" of "social evolution" (*WJW*, 627) and to reject "the evolutionary view of history, when it denies the vital importance of individual initiative" (*WJW*, 1:639). William therefore differed from his father by regarding "Being" as that which "grows under all sorts of resistances in this world of the many." To his mind, this respect for individualism issues in "a social scheme of co-operative work" emerging from a state of Being that evolves from "compromise to compromise" (*PMT*, 139) in a world featuring sundry authentic relations.

Cognitive events—made up, in part, of conjunctive relations among individual fields of consciousness—are part and parcel of reality for William. His radical empiricism therefore implies a further challenge to his father's Edwardsian, monistic vision of socialism. As Perry says, real community, for William, exists in a "'conterminousness' of minds," or "their convergence in or towards the same experiences." That entails a "community of objects between two or more minds" and results in a unity of shared experience that dispenses with "a preexisting and 'absolute' unity of the monistic sort."¹³ Hollow, indeed, was the senior Henry's belief in "the highest form of social love" and a "humaner fellowship of men" (*TWJ*, 2:713; 1:86). For the elder James, such a fellowship was somehow to emerge from an epistemology that, by rejecting the existence of individual fields of consciousness, actually disavowed the cognitive bases—or reality—of shared experience. Thus, the lack of "*intellectual* sympathies of any sort" (*TWJ*, 1:151) that William lamented in his father finds redress in the son's empiricist belief in the integrity of distinct "minds sharing the same object" and in the "possibility of things being in conjunctive relation with other things" (*ERE*, 81–82).

Perhaps in response to the socialism of his father, William refers to the shared experience of different minds as "a piece of common property, in which, through which, and over which they join" (*ERE*, 85). *There exists*

the foundation of *real* community. At the site of genuinely shared experience, people truly "commune," or enjoy an "environment of social communication" and fellow feeling (*PMT*, 195–97, 311). That is why William felt, in a reference to race relations, that "the . . . 'souls of black folk' . . . must be proved . . . by some *traceable process*, connecting my mind, through my body, with their bodies, and thence with their feelings. Otherwise the 'reference' has no foundation in experience" (*TWJ*, 2:544). By contrast, the elder Henry's ostensible fellow feeling, based in a phenomenalist vision of human identity and cognition, seemed a sham. It violated the tangible foundations of community, as well as the perpetuity granted society by "morals, obligation respondent to demand" (*TWJ*, 2:383).

That emphasis on moralism is finally what most separates William's pragmatism from the phenomenalist and antimoralistic philosophy of the elder Henry. William maintained that the words "'good,' 'bad,' and 'obligation'" pertain to "the existence of actually living minds" (*WJW*, 1:604). He believed that rules of "conduct" have, quite practically, to be based on respect for experienced "sensations" (*PMT*, 29). Quite in contrast to the antimoralism of his father, William's sense of morality is anchored in "the solid meaning of life" as that pertains to the union of ideas with "some man's or woman's pains" (*TWJ*, 2:289).¹⁴ That assumption also fuels William's outrage over the Spanish-American War, specifically the failure of the McKinley administration to see the Filipinos "face to face as a concrete reality." William was as capable of criticizing republicanism as he was of undermining the metaphysical assumptions supportive of his father's socialism.¹⁵ He denounced the former for betraying its own principles, as it regarded individuals as phenomenalist: "It is obvious that for our rulers at Washington the Filipinos have not existed as psychological quantities at all" (*TWJ*, 2:311).¹⁶ Far worse, though, was socialism, the informing premise of which held individualism to be phenomenalist—that is, a form of false consciousness.

The prospect for a totalitarian moral holiday was compounded by socialistic disregard for evil and for personal responsibility. As Thoreau remarked of the elder Henry, "He charges society with all the crime committed, and praises the criminal for committing it" (*TWJ*, 1:149). The senior James denied the existence of personal evil. He thought of theft, adultery, and murder related to man "not as he stands inwardly affected to the interests of Divine justice in the earth, or the evolution of human society"—by which he meant socialism—"but as he stands *outwardly related to a strictly factitious or conventional order of life which is called the State*" (*SRFM*, 399). For him, the State was a phenomenalist event to which spontaneous human nature should pay no heed. The monistic vision of the elder Henry therefore recognized nothing resembling pure evil, accountability, or remorse. Evil was simply a product of inequitable social structure. Indeed,

evil was as spectral as the moralistic codes that stood in need of spiritual creation through an infusion of the spontaneous love that he attributed to socialism.

That marginalizing of evil, as articulated in the elder Henry's *The Nature of Evil*, is perhaps what William had in mind when he told his father, "No one has a right to write about the 'nature of evil' or to have any opinion about evil, who has not been at sea. The awful slough of despond into which you are there plunged furnishes too profound an experience not to be a fruitful one" (CWJ, 4:100). "Experience" is the key word in this challenge to both his father's view of evil and, by extension, to the outlooks of other monists who, advocating "absolute teleological unity," hold that "all the evil in the universe is but instrumental to its greater perfection" (PMT, 70). The outcome of such thinking emerges in the anarchism of Hoffendahl in *The Princess Casamassima*. Treating "all things, persons, institutions, ideas, as so many notes in his great symphonic massacre" (PC, 295), Hoffendahl's (and Paul's) no-regrets outlook anticipates the symphonic view of evil against which William complained in 1906: "Evil is seen along with what overrules it, monistically. . . . What can such peace come from . . . but from the abstract reflexion that in the whole every part is needed and symphonic? No perception of particular atonements is needed for this" (TWJ, 2:473).

With respect to those various symphonies, we may only guess about the emotional chord plucked in William's bosom when, in an exchange of views about evil with C. S. Peirce (who regarded hate as a necessary aspect of love), Peirce evoked the writings of "your papa." In Henry Senior's *Substance and Shadow*, said Peirce, the "'problem of evil'" had received "the most beautiful and satisfactory solution" (TWJ, 2:415, 434). There, the elder Henry had argued that "philosophy . . . resolve[s] the personally good and personally evil man quite equally into a higher aesthetic unity," and that, because of phenomenalism, "the personally evil man [is] only apparently and not really evil of himself" (SSH, 454-55).¹⁷ Thus, whatever the monism of his several opponents in philosophy at the turn of the century, William would have been poised—by virtue of an earlier aversion to his father's metaphysics—to confront empirically the notion that "the evil facts" of life are mere "seeming." Advocates of that belief may have felt that "the devil must be white-washed" (WJW, 582), but William was unwilling to lend a hand.

For that reason, the place of Puritan thinking in the writings of William has special significance, because it penetrates the elder James's meliorist encounter with *The Nature of True Virtue* and acknowledges the human corruption presupposed by that treatise. Although William, as a champion of free will, sympathized with the liberal Christian revolt against Calvinist predestination (WJW, 551), he recognized—in suggestively paternal rhetori-

ric—"how inevitably the question of determinism and indeterminism slides us into the question of optimism and pessimism, or, as our fathers called it, 'the question of evil.'" Whereas, in *The Nature of Evil*, the elder Henry had argued the phenomenality of evil, the pragmatistic son regarded Puritan "remorse and regret" as recognizing—and the phrasing is vital here—"existing facts of the world" (*WJW*, 580). Henry Sr. disavowed the "objective realities" of good and evil, claiming that "they are purely subjective appearances, vitalized exclusively by the creative imperfection" in advance of a substantial "race-manhood" (*SREFM*, 251–52). William, on the other hand, stressed "what goodness and evil in their intrinsic natures are," without regard to any mechanism "whose final purpose is the making real of any outward good" (*WJW*, 580–81). On the essence of evil, then, father and son were completely at odds.

At issue was the conflict between "puritanism," on the one hand, and "the don't care temper" of monists (*WJW*, 616) on the other. At stake, for the elder Henry and William, was "the element of 'seriousness'" implied by the recognition of evil (*PMT*, 142). What mattered, for William, in admitting the existence of "real good things and real bad things in the universe," were the attendant restraints of moralism and conscience loathed by his father. Once acknowledged, evil must be offset by human "obligations, claims, and expectations." Those, in turn, lead to "inward peace of conscience." There is, "in short, . . . a moral life" (*WJW*, 605).

William would have rebelled against his father's assumptions about the phenomenistic nature of moralism because, much to William's psychological detriment (he thought), he had shared those opinions in his youth. As he explained to Thomas W. Ward in 1868,

I have grown up, partly fm. education & the example of my Dad, partly, I think, from a natural tendency in a very non-optimistic view of Nature, going so far as to have some years ago a perfectly passionate aversion to all moral praise &c &c—an anti-nomian tendency in short. I have regarded the affairs of human life to be only a phantasmagoria, wh. had to be *interpreted* elsewhere in the kosmos into a real significance. But of late the sturdy realism of G[oe]the & the obdurate beauty and charm of the Greeks have shaken my complexion more than anything else. (*CWJ* 4:308–9)

In a similar vein, William later complained to Renouvier about the "anti-nomianism" attendant upon "fatalistic optimism" and the illicit tendencies of monism: "some sink of corruption always lies practically at the end" (*TWJ*, 1:683).

Such thinking challenges the antimoralistic monism of the father, as expressed, for instance, in *Moralism and Christianity* (1850) and in the letters penned by the elder Henry for the *New York Christian Inquirer*. William's radical empiricism therefore comes full circle to the excoriating

review of his father's work offered by that newspaper in 1851, with respect to the practical consequences of socialist metaphysics. "All through history," claims William, "we find how subjectivism, as soon as it has a free career, exhausts itself in every sort of spiritual, moral, and practical license. Its optimism turns to ethical indifference" (*WJW*, 585). Perhaps through distant recollection, William's interest in his father's monism became a career-long elaboration of the insightful columns in the New York *Christian Inquirer* that had so shaken the elder Henry with charges of "A New Antinomianism."

Henry James Jr., on the other hand, had a more ambivalent response to his father's views, including those about moralism. The novelist acknowledged the antinomian nature of art. In fact, Henry Jr. insisted that the novel should contain no "conscious moral purpose." He thought that "questions of art are questions . . . of execution; questions of morality are quite another affair" (*PP*, 404-5).¹⁸ While that belief is consistent with his father's non-contingent outlook on art, Henry Jr. also viewed his father's socialism as inimical to the private life that inspires the artist. The senior Henry believed that the "divine-natural or aesthetic way" entailed the abdication of all "personal aims" and "inherited proclivities to self-love" (*SC*, 380); the novelist disagreed.

For Henry Jr., art reflected both his own personal interests and the private interests of his characters that he defines, with reference to *The Awkward Age*, as the "crisis, and the sense for it in those whom it most concerns" (*AN*, 100). Such interests, in turn, had to correspond to the "interests" of readers and thereby fan the *sale* of artistry.¹⁹ To that degree, the son implicitly challenged his father's socialistic view that the creative writer who prospered by depicting private lives might never accomplish anything valid, or "largely figurative" (*NSB*, 344). Respectful of individualism as the artistic fount, Henry Jr. viewed the private life of the artist as existing on a par with the most cataclysmic of world events.²⁰ Because he thought that "the imagination . . . absolutely enjoys and insists on and incurably leads a life of its own, for which just this vivacity itself is its warrant" (*HJL*, 4:512), he respected the elder James's disinterested regard for art, but recognized that his father's plea for disinterested aesthetics was at odds with the effacement of privacy, individualism, and taste under socialism, old or new.

Indeed, the preceding quotation about the tendencies of the imagination derives from Henry Jr.'s strongly worded response to Bernard Shaw's socialistic attack on the ending of Henry Jr.'s play, *The Saloon*. Distraught over the death of the pacifistic protagonist of *The Saloon*, Shaw emphasized his own "Socialist" credentials when instructing Henry Jr. that art is legitimately subservient to politics: "People don't want works of art from you: they want help." Apparently familiar with the socialism of the elder Henry, Shaw even remarked, "What that play wants is a third act by your

father."²¹ Henry Jr. advised his correspondent, in turn, "You take the little play 'socialistically' . . . all too hard." Aside from emphasizing the autonomy of the imagination, Henry Jr. refused to "'preach' anything to anyone" and reminded Shaw about the delight that resides in the disinterested "play" of ideas. Then, echoing Hyacinth Robinson, the novelist continues: "Half the beautiful things that the benefactors of the human species have produced would surely be wiped out if you don't allow this adventurous and speculative imagination its rights" (*HJL*, 4:511–12). Although written in 1909, Henry Jr.'s letter recalls the negative assessment of socialism expressed much earlier in *The Princess Casamassima* and, behind that—perhaps because of the paternal association of ideas introduced by Shaw himself—the misguided political optimism of the elder James.²²

For similar reasons, Henry Jr. would have regarded certain related claims, such as those of Oscar Wilde about the life of the soul under socialism, as paradoxical. Although Wilde saw "individualism as a subset of socialism, or socialism as a component of individualism," Henry Jr. would have been prone, by virtue of his upbringing by the senior Henry, to recognize the irreconcilability of disinterested art and prescriptive socialism.²³ Indeed, the son's high regard for individual sensibility (as dramatized in the story "The Private Life," for instance) may be read along a continuum of imaginative responses by Henry Jr. to the father's socialistic disdain for the "obscene, unwholesome, and abominable *private* life or consciousness" (*SC*, 312). So may Henry Jr.'s dismissive attitude, in a letter to William, about public indifference to the exploration of the aesthetic temperament in *The Tragic Muse*. Maintaining that "one has always a 'public' enough" if one is artistically and intellectually in touch with "one's self," the novelist spurned the "gutter" mentality of the populace. He proclaimed that he would stick to "a general plan and a private religion" (*HJL*, 3:300).

In this suggestive formulation of artistic self-reliance, William might have discerned a lingering rebellion against their father's socialistic aversion to private—as opposed to general—religion. Then there is Henry Jr.'s review of Nordhoff's *The Communistic Societies of the United States*. The novelist there criticizes "the detestable tendency toward the complete effacement of privacy in life and thought everywhere so rampant with us nowadays" ("NCS," 28).²⁴ The junior Henry would have been ready, by virtue of his father's Edwardsian and Swedenborgian disdain for "the vicious and thoroughly damnable element of privacy or *proprium*" (*SRFM*, 203), to reject the assumptions of latter-day socialists.

Moreover, Henry Jr.'s attraction to the consummate impressionism and sensorialism of Paterian aesthetics and consciousness²⁵ was conditioned by the novelist's earlier quarrel with his father's phenomenism, which dismissed as illusory the data of private perception. When, for example, the novelist reverses the moral of Maupassant's tale "The Pearls" by writ-

ing a story of "real treasure supposed to be false and hollow" (*AN*, 238), he perhaps inadvertently glosses the convoluted career of Henry Sr., whose teleology of socialism left him phenomenally habituated to such oversight. Though the father regarded mundane consciousness as possessing "merely seeming and dramatic existence" (*CLC*, 253), Henry Jr. resolved to capture the intensity of the "acute impressions" of personal perception and "dramatise it, dramatise it!" (*AN*, 249).

Where individual "taste" becomes tantamount to "freedom" (*PP*, 399), the private life and its perceptions are invaluable possessions. Appropriate what you can, passionately savor those qualities, yet be cautious of phenomena connoting supposed true virtue. And whatever the flaws of individuals pursuing their particular interests, don't bet your inheritance or hard-earned royalties on society's providing the redeemed form of man. Such, in sum, seems to be the essential rebuke of the sons to the phenomenalism and socialism of the father.

Abbreviations

- A:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Ambassadors* (1903), edited by S. P. Rosenbaum. New York: W. W. Norton, 1964. The text is a corrected reprint of the New York Edition.
- AA:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Awkward Age*. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1983. The text is that of the New York Edition.
- AC:** Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Arcana Coelestia. The Heavenly Arcana which are Contained in the Holy Scriptures or Word of the Lord, Unfolded, Beginning with the Book of Genesis*. 12 vols. London: James S. Hodson, 1837–40. Housed in the library of the Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Mass. The volumes from which I quote were owned and annotated by Henry Sr.
- AE:** James, Henry, Jr. *Henry James: The American Essays*. Edited by Leon Edel. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Am:** James, Henry, Jr. *The American*. Edited by James W. Tuttleton. New York: W. W. Norton, 1978. The text is that of the London Macmillan edition of 1879, emended and corrected.
- AN:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by Henry James*. Edited by R. P. Blackmur. New York: Scribner's, 1934.
- AS:** James, Henry, Jr. *The American Scene*. New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1907.
- Auto.:** James, Henry, Jr. *Henry James: Autobiography*. Edited by Frederick W. Dupee. New York: Criterion Books, 1956; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- AW:** Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Angelic Wisdom Concerning the Divine Providence*. London: William Newbery, 1844. Housed in the library of Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Mass. The volume from which I quote was owned and annotated by Henry Sr.
- AWD:** Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Angelic Wisdom Concerning the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom*. London: William Newbery, 1843.

Housed in library of the Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Mass. The volume from which I quote is that which was owned and annotated by Henry Sr.

- B:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Bostonians*. Edited by Irving Howe. New York: Random House, 1956.
- BP:** Henry Whitney Bellows Papers. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
- C:** James, Henry, Jr. *Confidence*. Boston: Houghton, Osgood, and Co., 1880.
- CA:** Beecher, Edward. *The Conflict of Ages*. Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Co., 1853.
- CCNE:** James, Henry, Sr. *The Church of Christ Not an Ecclesiasticism. A Letter to a Sectarian*. New York: Redfield, 1854.
- CLC:** James, Henry, Sr. *Christianity the Logic of Creation*. New York: D. Appleton, 1857.
- CWJ:** James, William. *The Correspondence of William James, 1856–1877*. Volume 4. Edited by Ignas K. Skrupskelis and Elizabeth M. Berkeley. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995.
- DM:** James, Henry, Jr. *Daisy Miller*. London: Penguin, 1995.
- E:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Europeans. A Sketch*. Boston: Houghton, Osgood and Co., 1879.
- E & C:** Walker, John. *Essays and Correspondence, Chiefly on Scriptural Subjects*. Edited by William Burton. 2 vols. 1838. Reprint, London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Longman's, 1846.
- ECW:** Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Emerson's Complete Works*. Edited by J. E. Cabot. 12 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1883.
- "Em":** James, Henry Sr. "Emerson." Edited by William James. *Atlantic Monthly* 94 (1904), 740–45.
- ERE:** James, William. *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. Edited by Ellen Kappy Suckiel. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.
- GB:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Golden Bowl*. Edited by Gore Vidal. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1985. The text is that of the New York Edition.
- GFG:** James, William. *Grace for Grace: Letters of Rev. William James*. New York: Dodd & Mead, 1874. The author is the half brother of Henry Sr.
- HAS:** Noyes, John Humphrey. *History of American Socialisms*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1870.

- Haw:** James, Henry, Jr. *Hawthorne*. Edited by Quentin Anderson. New York: Collier, 1966.
- HJ:** Edel, Leon. *Henry James*. 5 vols. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1953–72. Volume 1: *The Untried Years (1843–1870)*; Volume 2: *The Conquest of London (1870–1881)*; Volume 3: *The Middle Years (1882–1895)*; Volume 4: *The Treacherous Years (1895–1901)*; Volume 5: *The Master (1901–1916)*.
- HJL:** James, Henry, Jr. *Henry James Letters*. Edited by Leon Edel. 4 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974–84.
- “IMH”:** James, Henry, Sr. “Is Marriage Holy?” *Atlantic Monthly*, 25 (1870): 360–68.
- JC:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Jolly Corner and Other Tales*. Edited by Roger Gard. London: Penguin, 1990.
- LHJ:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Letters of Henry James*. Edited by Percy Lubbock. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920.
- L&M:** James, Henry, Sr. *Lectures and Miscellanies*. New York: Redfield, 1852.
- LL:** James, Henry, Jr. *A London Life*. See *SP*.
- LP:** James, Henry, Jr. *A Landscape Painter*. Edited by Albert Mordell. New York: Scott and Seltzer, 1919.
- LR:** James, Henry, Sr. *Literary Remains of the Late Henry James*. Edited by William James. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1884.
- LS:** James, Henry, Sr. *Letter to a Swedenborgian*. New York: John Allen, 1847.
- M&C:** James, Henry, Sr. *Moralism and Christianity; or Man’s Experience and Destiny*. New York: Redfield, 1850.
- MY:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Middle Years*. See *Auto*.
- N:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Complete Notebooks of Henry James*. Edited by Leon Edel and Lyall H. Powers. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- “NCS”:** James, Henry Jr. Review of *The Communistic Societies of the United States: From Personal Visit and Observation*, by Charles Nordhoff. *The Nation* 20 (1875): 26–28.
- NE:** James, Henry, Sr. *The Nature of Evil, Considered in a Letter to the Rev. Edward Beecher, D.D., Author of “The Conflict of Ages.”* New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1855.
- NJM:** *New Jerusalem Magazine*. Boston: General Convention of the New Jerusalem Church in the United States, 1827–93.

- NSB:** James, Henry, Jr. *Notes of a Son and Brother*. See *Auto*.
- ONJ:** Swedenborg, Emanuel. *On the New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine, as Revealed from Heaven*. London: James S. Hodson, 1841. Housed in the library of the Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Mass. The volume from which I quote was owned and annotated by Henry Sr.
- PC:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Princess Casamassima*. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1982. The text is that of the New York Edition.
- PCI:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Princess Casamassima*. Edited by Derek Brewer. London: Penguin, 1987. The text is that of the first edition.
- PL:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Portrait of a Lady*. Edited by Robert D. Bamberg. New York: Norton, 1975. The text is that of the New York Edition.
- PMT:** James, William. *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking; The Meaning of Truth: A Sequel to "Pragmatism."* Edited by A.J. Ayer. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- PN:** Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Philosopher's Note Book: Excerpts from Philosophical Writers and from the Sacred Scriptures on a Variety of Philosophical Subjects; together with Some Reflections, and Sundry Notes and Memoranda*. Edited and translated by Alfred Acton. Philadelphia: Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1931.
- PP:** James, Henry, Jr. *Partial Portraits*. London: Macmillan, 1911.
- RBL:** Greeley, Horace. *Recollections of a Busy Life*. New York: J. B. Ford & Co., 1869.
- RH:** James, Henry, Jr. *Roderick Hudson*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1917. The text is that of the New York Edition.
- SBO:** James, Henry, Jr. *A Small Boy and Others*. See *Auto*.
- SC:** James, Henry, Sr. *Spiritual Creation* (1882 MS). See *LR*.
- SF:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Sacred Fount*. New York: Grove, 1979.
- "SH":** James, Henry, Sr. "Stirling's Secret of Hegel." *North American Review* 102 (1866): 264-75.
- SoF:** Bellows, Henry Whitney. *The Suspense of Faith: An Address to the Alumni of the Divinity School at Harvard University*. New York: C. S. Francis & Co., 1859.
- SP:** James, Henry. *The Spoils of Poynton, A London Life, The Chaperon*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908.

- "SPRC":** James, Henry, Sr. "Some Personal Recollections of Carlyle." *Atlantic Monthly*, 47 (1881): 593–609.
- SRFM:** James, Henry, Sr. *Society the Redeemed Form of Man, and the Earnest of God's Omnipotence in Human Nature*. Boston: Houghton, Osgood, and Co., 1879.
- SS:** James, Henry, Sr. *The Secret of Swedenborg: Being and Elucidation of His Doctrine of the Divine Natural Humanity*. Boston: Fields, Osgood, 1869.
- SSh:** James, Henry, Sr. *Substance and Shadow: or Morality and Religion in their Relation to Life: An Essay upon the Physics of Creation*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863.
- SSHJ:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Short Stories of Henry James*. Edited by Clifton Fadiman. New York: Random House, 1945.
- TCR:** Swedenborg, Emanuel. *The True Christian Religion; Containing the Universal Theology of the New Church*. London: James S. Hodson, 1837. Housed in the library of the Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Mass. The volume from which I quote was owned and annotated by Henry Sr.
- THJ:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Tales of Henry James, Volume 1: 1864–1869*. Edited by Maqbool Azia. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.
- TM:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Tragic Muse*. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1982. The text is that of the first edition.
- TWJ:** Perry, Ralph Barton. *The Thought and Character of William James*. 2 vols. 1935. Reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1974.
- UMF:** James, Henry, Sr. Unidentified Manuscripts and Fragments. 51 folders. Houghton Library bMS Am 1094.8 [77] *67M–170 (1947). Citations to folder (and to page number, when available). Quoted by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and Bay James Baker.
- VRE:** James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Edited with an Introduction by Martin E. Marty. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1982.
- WCS:** James, Henry, Sr. *What Constitutes the State? A Lecture Delivered Before the Young Men's Association of the City of Albany*. New York: John Allen, 1846.
- WD:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Wings of the Dove*. Edited with an Introduction by John Bayley. London: Penguin, 1986. The text is that of the New York Edition.
- WD1:** James, Henry, Jr. *The Wings of the Dove*. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1972. The text is that of the first edition.

- WJE:** Edwards, Jonathan. *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. Volume 1: Paul Ramsey, ed., *Freedom of the Will* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957). Volume 2: John E. Smith, ed., *Religious Affections* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959). Volume 6: Wallace E. Anderson, ed., *Scientific and Philosophical Writings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980). Volume 7: Norman Pettit, ed., *The Life of David Brainerd* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). Volume 8: Paul Ramsey, ed., *Ethical Writings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).
- WJW:** James, William. *William James: Writings, 1878–1899*. New York: Library of America, 1992.
- WMK:** James, Henry, Jr. *What Maisie Knew*. Edited by Paul Theroux. London: Penguin, 1985. The text is that of the New York edition.
- WP:** Pater, Walter. *The Works of Walter Pater*. 10 vols. 1910. Reprint, London: Macmillan 1922–28.
- WS:** James, Henry, Jr. *Washington Square*. Edited by Brian Lee. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1984.
- “WSWH”:** James, Henry, Sr. “Works of Sir William Hamilton.” *Putnam’s Monthly Magazine* 2 (1853): 470–81.
- WW:** James, Henry, Jr. *Watch and Ward*. Boston: Houghton, Osgood, and Co., 1879.
- “WWM”:** James, Henry, Sr. “Woman and the ‘Woman’s Movement.’” *Putnam’s Monthly Magazine* 1 (1853): 279–88.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. For historical and contextual approaches to virtue, benevolence, and self-interest that clarify concerns ranging from the novels of Jane Austen to the moral defects of Marxism, see Ruderman, MacIntyre.

2. Henry James, Sr., to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 11 May 1843. The transcription of this utterance in *Notes of a Son and Brother* differs slightly from the manuscript, which places no comma after "would" and which refers to "critic of philosophy" rather than, as signified by the ellipsis above, "critic of this philosophy." See Houghton Library Manuscript bMS Am 102.9, folder 1 of 7. Quoted by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and Bay James Baker.

3. See (for scholars), Young; Warren; Perry, *Thought*; Lewis; Feinstein, *Becoming*; Matthiessen, *James Family*; Grattan; Quentin Anderson, *American*; Holly; Strouse; Weissbourd; Moseley; Habegger, *Father*; and Nadelman. My discussion of the communitarian tendencies of Edwards's ideas takes into account the Hopkinsian disposition to channel a love for Being in general toward social reform. See Conforti, 580–83; Haroutunian, 82–87.

4. Tuttleton, 68; Robinson, 119.

5. See Fussell (17), who quotes Henry Jr.'s 1865 notice of Elizabeth Rundle Charles's *Hearthstone Series*. Fussell's invaluable enumeration of religious utterance and references in the works of Henry Jr. suggests not so much a dogmatic Catholicism of the novelist than a persistent juxtaposition of Catholic and Protestant concerns, settings, and personae (18, 21, 31, 42, 69–70, 80–81, 84, 88–90, 97, 110, 113, 115, 119, 138–45, 149, 151–52). The current study obviously differs from that of Fussell, who limits James's "religious . . . side" to his "Catholic side" (153). Still, I join Fussell in seeking to remedy the fact that "James criticism has shown little or no interest in his religious content" (126).

6. Freedman, 186; cf. 148. Also see Ellmann; Stambaugh; Tintner, 143–64; and Beltinger, 31–34, 118, 123.

7. See, among others, Krook, *Ambassadors*; Hocks, *Ambassadors*; and Hoople. Hoople does, in fact, briefly evoke Edwards's *True Virtue*, but toward a defense of Strether that I challenge in chapter 9.

8. Cameron, 22, 26–27. Also see Williams's momentary reservations about applying the ideas of Merleau-Ponty to works of Henry Jr. that preceded "the formal establishment of the Phenomenological Movement as a clearly identifiable philosophical school" (56). My study provides an alternative, as well, to Pippin, whose account of "Henry James's treatment of moral life in its uniquely modern dimensions" (23) appeared while my manuscript was in press but still open to notational comment here and below. I agree that the novelist's view of morality entails the juxtaposition of self-interest, self-sacrifice, and the interest of others (24, 30). Pippin, however, examines these issues solely in modern terms;

I, within historical contexts suggesting the persistence of Edwardsian theology in James-family discourse. While attentive to Pippin's quasi-deconstructionist view of ethics, I argue that Edwards's ideas about true virtue—as understood by the elder James and as transformed into the material of art by Henry Jr.—restore to the novelist an authoritative locus of ethical assessment.

Our critical outlooks intersect somewhat at still other junctures. For instance, my study gravitates toward the disfavor voiced by the senior James about moralism (and toward the novelist's claim that his father's spiritualism was actually disguised moralism). Albeit with different conclusions, I join Diamond in thinking that we are obliged to ponder the implications of those moralistic emphases for the novelist. Moreover, Pippin's views about the dependence of moral categories upon social recognition and reciprocity (4, 9–11, 16, 28, 76, 92, 99, 149) find an analogue in this book in the elder James's objections to the capitalistic, socially based contingency of mundane moralism and his attempts to remedy the problem through recourse to an aesthetic spontaneity grounded in Edwardsian disinterestedness. That idea, I suggest, affects not only Henry Jr.'s conception of art but also his critical judgment concerning the morality or immorality of his literary personae. And whereas Pippin offers a modernist outlook on morality as a social construct, I explore the implications, for Henry Jr. and William James, of the way the Unitarian detractors of the father insisted upon moralism as its own religious end rather than as a consensual construct.

Also fascinating is Pippin's suggestion that morality resides, for James's characters, in retrospective, post facto understanding (7, 9, 65, 73). Still, the Puritan perspective that informs the philosophy of Henry Senior strikes me as complicating that process—to the point, I argue, that Kate Croy's unethical mental ease, in *The Wings of the Dove*, becomes post facto rationalization of villainy disguised as charity. My research into familial and historical contexts familiar to the novelist also leads me to wonder whether fixed—indeed, even biblical—points of moral reference permeate *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima*, novels that go unexplored in Pippin's study, notwithstanding their exposure of the sorry nature of modernist appeals to morality in James's own times. Finally, departing still further from Pippin's skepticism about the existence of moral certitude in the modern world of Henry Jr., my methodology leads inevitably to William James. For all his disagreements with Calvinistic severity, William praised the Puritan foundations of "a moral life" (*WJW* 605) and insisted on "morals," by which he meant "obligation respondent to demand" (*TWJ* 2:383). (Cf., in this regard, Hocks, *Pragmatistic*, 88–89, 98; Perry, "Religion," 301–3.)

9. See Duban, *Melville's Major Fiction*, "Robins," and "Conscience."

10. Though from a more theological perspective, I join Lewis ("Prefatory Word" to *The Jameses*) who says that "to an exceptional degree the Jameses were family-minded, family-conscious."

11. Bellringer, 38.

12. For Henry Senior's quasi-autobiographical sketch of Stephen Dewhurst (*LR*, 121–91) and the spiritual assumptions it shares with the elder James's manuscript of "Seminary Days," see Nadelman. Compare *TWJ*, 2: 706–16, and William's inference that the senior Henry's view of spiritual redemption was actually anti-Christian and even atheistic (see introduction to *LR*, 107, 14).

13. *HAS*, 30, 74, 156, 164, 284. The senior Henry is mentioned in a flattering way by Noyes (*HAS*, 546 n), who makes use of profuse newspaper clippings gathered by A. J. Macdonald to describe early- to mid-nineteenth-century communal experiments and the prominent leaders of either those communities or the "movement" at large (which itself was indebted to the writings of Fourier, Krause, St. Simon, and Comte).

14. See Holly.

15. Anesko, 30.

16. Holly, 76, 174, 33, 175. For similar evasiveness, see Eakin on the father's "idiosyncratic concept of identity" (*Fictions*, 92); Strouse on his "murky" outlook (178); Sayre on his "sometimes strange instruction" (185); and Edel on the "unworldly father" who, because of "idiosyncrasies of style and speech," is thought never to have "conveyed his message in spite of his lively prose," (*HJ*, 4:252, 3:59). By extension, critics who purport to account for Henry Jr.'s "aestheticizing of capitalism" (Cox, 173) or "discomfort with the paternal philosophy of mere being" (Anesko, 28; cf. Posnock, *Trial*, 18–19) overlook the socialistic quality of Henry Senior's views about "being" and the response to that socialism implied by Henry Jr.'s autobiographies and novels.

Inattentiveness to the pertinence of Henry Senior for his son's writings has much to do with the harsh responses to Quentin Anderson's *The American Henry James* in Edel's introduction to *Henry James: A Collection*, 8–9; Beach, cii–cxiii; and Leavis, 222–32. One need not accept all of Anderson's assumptions to explore—as Habegger does in "*Woman Business*"—the influence of Henry Senior upon his son the novelist. Anderson, by equating the values of the two Henrys (34), fails to account for the political novels of the son. Those texts suggest that the socialism of Henry Senior was incompatible with the aestheticism it claimed to celebrate. My book differs, as well, from the conclusions of Moseley, who considers the relation between father and son in isolation from the socialistic "end" of Henry Senior.

17. Posnock, *Trial*, 21–22; cf. 23–24, 63–64. Posnock, in response to the disenchantment with Henry Jr. of Marxist-influenced critics ranging from Matthiessen to Przybylowicz and Jameson (63, 76, 91), tendentiously yokes Henry Jr.'s kinetic imagination (71) to postmodern socialist critique—that is, to so-called de-Stalinized Marxism (61, 69). The "sense of taste" (154) that Posnock ascribes to Henry Jr.'s allegedly activist "curiosity" is, oddly, the aesthetic category that *The Princess Casamassima* and *The Bostonians* show to be devalued by socialism. Similarly, Rowe's post-Marxian readings of those same novels evade the theological socialism of Henry Senior (and Henry Jr.'s critique of that socialism).

CHAPTER 1: JONATHAN EDWARDS AND HENRY JAMES SR.

1. On Glas, Sandeman, and Walker, see Habegger, "Henry James, Sr.," Habegger, *Father*, 157–61. For the Hopkinsian channeling of disinterested benevolence toward neighborly affection and social reform, see Haroutunian, 82–87; Conforti, 566, 580–83.

2. Lewis, 49.

3. Although he did not refer to Edwards's views on true virtue, Quentin Anderson early noted the senior Henry's emphasis on God's "selfless love" in the process of spiritual creation and speculated that Henry Sr.'s mood of passive reliance on an infusion of divine reality brought to mind the outlooks of both Edwards and Emerson (*American*, 68, 96); Cf. Anderson's peripheral attention to Edwards in *Imperial Self*, 230–33.)

4. Duban, "Charles Darwin."

5. For Calvinistic emphases related to the lost leg, see Edel, *Henry James*, 1:25–26; Feinstein, 41; Holly, 20.

6. Habegger, *Father*, 81.

7. Houghton Manuscript BMS Am 102.9, folder 1 of 7.

8. Habegger, "Henry James, Sr.," 46.

9. The volume is derived from the 1817 abridged Ellerby edition. See Smith, *WJE*, 2:77 n. 5, and the verso side of the title page of the Tract Society edition.

10. Cf. Smith, 28, 30.

11. Conforti, 576.

12. Ramsey, *WJE*, 8:5, 7.

13. Colacurcio.

CHAPTER 2: FROM EDWARDS TO SWEDENBORG

1. I quote extensively from these and other volumes owned by Henry Sr., courtesy of the Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Massachusetts. See, in the library of that school, "List of Books Owned by Henry James, Sr. and Donated to the New Church Theological School," and Deck and Taylor's "An Index to the Annotated Swedenborg Collection of Henry James, Sr." Quotations from William James's 1862 Reading Notebook, bMS Am 1092.9 (4497), are by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and Bay James Baker.

2. See Jonsson, 58, 64, 66 (quoted), 72–73, 88, 92–98, 117, 132, 144, 146, 150. For Swedenborg's Grand Man, see *Spiritual Diary*, 3:52, 248, 277–78. On communism and the revolutionary tendencies of Swedenborg's angels, see Carnegie, 6–7.

3. Jonsson, 72.

4. Habegger, *Father*, 227–32, 249; cf. Latham.

5. Cf. SSH, 51; Duban, "Darwin," 59.

6. Wallace E. Anderson, introduction to *WJE*, 6:20–21; Fiering, 44, 159–61. This combination of emphases stands to complicate the view that Swedenborgianism, alone, allowed Henry Sr. to reconceive the God of Calvinism (Nadelman, 259).

7. *The Monthly Religious Magazine and Independent Journal* 15 (1856), 373–99.

8. "Swedenborg's Library," 123.

9. Colacurcio.

10. Worth noting here is William James's extensive summary of Edwards's idealistic outlook on sin, in one of William's 1862 manuscript notebooks, titled (and misdated) *Notebook 3: R 1863. Reading notes and observations; sketches*. William's twelve pages of entries about Edwards span the dates 1 April through 10 April 1862, and include the following summary: "Therefore the existence of created substances in each successive moment, is the result of the ceaseless, immediate upholding Will & power of god, an immediate creation out of nothing, & what we call unity is but the constitution of God, who has made things one in various manners & to various purposes. He can make us, *morally*, one with Adam, tho' the time differs, as he can make us one with ourselves" (33).

11. The annotations are from *AW*, concluding "Advertisement" page; *AC*, 1: following 518, verso side of advertisement.

12. The only known copy of this book, which is inscribed to Henry Senior, is housed at the library of the Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Massachusetts. Beyond sharing Edwards's view on the will, Field elevates the idea of "heroism" to a state of disinterestedness akin to that envisioned by Edwards, Swedenborg, and Henry Senior. Hence, Field decries a "seeming heroism and self-sacrifice" (25–26) and the "enforcing, by means of self-interest, a life outwardly regardful of the neighbour" (39). Courtesy of the Swedenborg School of Religion.

CHAPTER 3: THE BEAUTY, SPONTANEITY,
AND SOCIABILITY OF VIRTUE

1. Habegger, *Father*, 76.

CHAPTER 4: "THE OLD DOGMA OF DISINTERESTEDNESS"

1. Habegger, *Father*, 327, 324.
2. *Ibid.*, 329.
3. *Ibid.*, 328.
4. Kring, 62 (heir); Duban, "From Emerson," 392 n. (chief editor); Habegger, *Father*, 327 (in audience).
5. BP: Bellows to Frothingham, 7 March 1851, 3; Bellows to Bartol, 26 February 1851, 3, 2; Bartol to Bellows, 28 February 1851, 3; Bartol to Bellows, 26 April 1851, 1–2. Here and below, all quotations from the Henry Whitney Bellows papers are courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society. On Bellows's friendship with Bartol, see Kring, 58–61.
6. Duban, "From Emerson," 402–4.
7. Bellows, *Suspense*, 43; Duban, "From Emerson," 398–99.
8. "Letter from France" (23 May 1848), *Christian Inquirer*, 29 July 1848, 166.
9. BP: Bartol to Bellows, 26 April 1851, 2–3. Bartol was responding to Bellows's advocacy of liberal tolerance among "bigoted Unitarianism": "You mistake if you think my sympathies are with any irreligious or unchristian thinkers. I go in for *liberty*—perfect & entire, & will strike as much at the bonds which fetter the honest Infidel, as at those which confine the honest Churchman. I want liberty to be as orthodox or as heterodox as I choose—a thing not granted in our ranks yet" (BP: Bellows to Bartol, 24 April 1851, 2–3).
10. HAS, 532, 615, 103.
11. *Ibid.*, 537, 513, 107, 550, 107.
12. Habegger, *Father*, 445, 387–88.
13. *Ibid.*, 324.
14. Duban, "From Emerson," 399–400.
15. *Christian Inquirer*, 26 April 1851.
16. Quoted in Duban, "From Emerson," 403.
17. *Ibid.*, 399–400.
18. Bellows possibly garnered this information from Henry Senior when chatting with him congenially at the lecture series. See, for Bellows's having "made James" acquaintance," BP: Bellows to Bartol, 26 February 1851, 2.
19. See Conforti, 582, who also shows that Hopkins was far more extreme than Edwards about damnation, since some of Edwards's manuscripts, published posthumously, deny the idea of a person's willingness to be damned.
20. The Henry Whitney Bellows Papers reveal that the move was quite tactical, on the part of Bellows, who gained the advantage of not having to follow so strenuously Henry Senior's lead in the concluding letters of the exchange. Writing to Cyrus Bartol, Bellows said, "Having with James the disadvantage of following *his* lead, I may not have made out as strong a case, as a positive statement of the ground we occupy, would allow. But I hope to do that in the two numbers that remain" (BP: Bellows to Bartol, 4 April 1851, 1. Bellows appears to have misdated this letter, which was more likely penned on 4 May 1851 in response to Bartol's 26 April 1851 correspondence, which is also in BP.). See, too, on Bellows's plan to gain the *lead*, "Yesterday I finished my sixth response to Mr. James, who finishes up in this weeks [*sic*] paper. My two remaining articles appear in *this* & the *next* *Inquirer*. When through, tell me how it looks. . . . If not obliged to *follow* him, I could of course have treated the subject much better and more exhaustively" (BP: Bellows to Bartol, 24 April 1851, 3).
21. Duban, "From Emerson," 396, 406–7.
22. Channing, 462.
23. See BP: Bellows to Bartol, 24 April 1851, 4, regarding the *Christian Inquirer's* response to Henry Senior: "I think it has done decided good here—if no where else." For

eighteenth-century Old Light criticism of Edwards's ideas about selfishness and self-love, and for Edwards's occasional manuscript speculations about the value of self-love, see Conforti, 578, 582.

CHAPTER 5: LECTURES AND MISCELLANIES

1. 3 April 1850: Houghton Manuscript bMS Am 1094.8 [27]. Quoted by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and Bay James Baker. Habegger (*Father*, 593 n.296) clarifies the cataloguing of this manuscript.

2. With a different emphasis, Habegger admirably details the highly ambivalent relationship between Emerson and Henry Senior. (*Father*, 4–5, 193–210)

3. Colacurcio.

4. Duban, "From Emerson."

5. Paginated as "10" by Houghton Library collator.

6. *ECW*, 4:14, 11, 25, 36–37, 38.

7. Briefer, but related, criticism of Emerson appears in Henry Senior's posthumously published essay "Emerson" ("Em," 743). As William remarked in his prefatory note to that essay, "Emerson would listen, I fancy, as if charmed, to James's talk of the 'divine natural Humanity,' but he would never *subscribe*; and this, from one whose native gifts were so suggestive of that same humanity, was disappointing" ("Em," 740).

CHAPTER 6: "A VERY LONG LETTER"

1. Perry and Perry III see "interest" as "the germinal idea of James's psychology, epistemology, and philosophy of religion" ("Bibliography," 817). Cf. Hocks, *Pragmatic*, 65.

2. This Edwardsian discussion of William James's "interest" fills a gap in works by Perry, *Thought*; Allen; Feinstein; Bjork; Barzun; Burgt; Myers; Brennan; Moore; Sprigge; Seigfried; Wild; Murphy and Ballou; Ramsey; Gavin; Simon; Putnam; Hoopes; and Taylor.

3. *WJW*, 457; cf. *VRE*, xviii. Here and below, the pagination of *WJW* corresponds to the following chapters and essays: 152–73, "The Stream of Consciousness," in *Psychology: Briefer Course (PBC)*; 174–209, "The Self," in *PBC*; 210–28, "Attention," in *PBC*; 229–33, "Conception," in *PBC*; 330–46, "Reasoning," in *PBC*; 387–426, "Will," in *PBC*; 457–79, "The Will to Believe," *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy (WB)*; 504–39, "The Sentiment of Rationality," in *WB*; 540–65, "Reflex Action and Theism," in *WB*; 566–94, "The Dilemma of Determinism," in *WB*; 595–617, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," in *WB*; 766–71, "Interest," in *Talks to Teachers and Students (TT)*; 861–80, "What Makes a Life Significant," in *TT*; 893–909, "Remarks of Spencer's Definition of Mind as Correspondence," in *Selected Essays*.

4. When he was a student in Germany, William corresponded at length with Henry Senior about the inadequacies of the latter's philosophy (*TWJ* 2:705–16), but comprehensively summarized his father's outlook more respectfully in *LR* because of the memorial tribute implied by William's introduction to that volume.

5. *HJ*, 5:300. Cf. *HJL*, 4:383–84.

6. *WJW*, 551; *VRE*, 330. Cf. Bjork, 48.

7. Cf. Niebuhr, 219–20.

CHAPTER 7: "YOUR FATHER'S IDEAS, YOU KNOW—!"

1. These emphases serve to supplement the scholarship of Edel, "Autobiography," "Portrait"; Sayre; Cooley; Hoffa; Kirby; Tompkins; Moseley; Blasing; James Anderson; Weissbourd; Eakin, "'Obscure Hurt'"; Goetz; Przybylowicz; Anesko; Habegger, "Woman Business," "Darkest," "Lessons"; Veeder; Eakin, *Touching, Fictions*; Holly; Camron.

2. Edel and Tintner, 41.

3. Quentin Anderson, *American*, 62; cf. 98–102.

4. Henry Jr. more generally evades both the painful facts of his upbringing and the merits of his father's writings. See Tompkins, 686; Holly, 157.

5. William quotes an abridged edition of Edwards's *Life . . . of Mr. David Brainerd* (1749), specifically a passage in which Brainerd disowns "'virtue'" because of the influence of "'self-interest'" (VRE, 213). For Henry Jr.'s intimate knowledge of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, see *HJ*, 5:115, 140.

6. On the religious associations of Minny's name and demeanor, see Quentin Anderson, who, while overlooking Edwardsian resonance, suggestively emphasizes the universal (as opposed to narrow and personal) quality of Minny's love as evidence of the influence of Henry Senior on the fiction of his namesake (*American*, 133–34, 149, 161–62, 167–70, 182). Cf., on Henry Jr. and Minny Temple, *HJ*, 1:234–35; LeClair; Habegger, "Henry James's Rewriting."

7. Although without reference to Edwards or phenomenism, Moseley (16) cites this passage to demonstrate Henry Jr.'s knowledge of the senior James's theory of spiritual creation. Cf. Quentin Anderson, *American*, 101 n.36. By implication, Henry Jr.'s encounter with British aestheticism—and what Freedman details as its admonition "to be"—was conditioned by the disinterested, Edwardsian musings of Henry Sr.

8. *CLC*, 19–20; *NE*, 230. Cf. *SS*, 72.

9. On the relation of "waste" to Henry Jr.'s artistry, see Bell, 154; Quentin Anderson, *American*, 33.

10. See, on Henry Jr., property, and the marketplace, Goetz, 71; Holly, 55–56, 63, 81; Anesko, 20, 26–27, 44, 49, 144; Cox, 169, 172; Eakin, *Fictions*, 71–75, 82. Perplexing, though, is the reluctance of these commentators to link the capitalistic rhetoric of Henry Jr. to its implied criticism of his socialistic father.

11. I here differ from Quentin Anderson (*American*, 57–58, 120), who frames the antagonism and snub in terms of a conflict between "writers." More to the point are Freedman's assertions about Henry Jr.'s wish to meet the demands of a "rapidly professionalizing world by forging a career for himself" (xix).

12. My reading of this passage differs from the more somber perspective of Holly (31, 155). Quentin Anderson approaches the spirit of the passage when, in another context, he points out Henry Jr.'s capacity to criticize Gabriel Nash in *The Tragic Muse* for making a "personal claim" while seeking to disown the "personal" (*American*, 102).

13. Here, too, a tacit criticism of Henry Senior's socialism allows us to appreciate *why* Henry Jr.—despite his mother's more expressed affection for him, relative to William (*HJ*, 1:244; 2:136–37)—may misrepresent the degree of affection harbored for the children by their mother. See, for suggestions of her aloofness, Holly, 30–32, 46, 100, 154–56, 184; Veeder; James Anderson.

14. *HJ*, 3:64; *SBO*, 43; *NSB*, 461. The flawed socialism of Henry Senior might help to explain the novelist's correlative use of the father's amputation to describe Mrs. Gereth's wounded materialism in *The Spoils of Poynton*: "the amputation . . . had been performed. Her leg had come off—she had now begun to stump along with the lovely wooden substitute; she would stump for life" (*SP*, 69; cf. *HJ*, 4:164).

15. Henry Jr. elsewhere refers to windows as separating people from "the disagreeable, . . . the ugly" (*PP*, 398).
16. My sense of retrospective skepticism differs from Eakin's less critical reading of a "'fool's paradise'" (*Fictions*, 95).
17. *HJL*, 3:146. See Tilley, 10, 14–15.
18. See Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) for its defense of an eighteenth-century conception of "prejudice" that connotes historical precedent embodied in customs and institutions (*Works* 2:359; cf. Stanlis, 130–32).
19. For Henry Sr.'s revolutionary, violently temperamental outlook, see Habegger, *Father*, 266–67, 387–88.
20. On impressionism, see Bell, 4–8, 333; for Pater, see Freedman, 218. By extension, Henry Jr.'s attraction to William James's pragmatic respect for "appearances" and "felt experience" (Hocks, *Pragmatic*, 64, 66) may be reassessed as a response, in part, to Henry Senior's aversion to mere phenomena. (Ringuette expands the discussion of the novelist's pragmatism to Charles Sanders Peirce.)
21. Edel, *SF*, xvi, xxxi. See Hocks (*Pragmatic*, 74) on "experience in local situations."
22. On Henry Jr.'s "reflector" narrators, see Segal, Teahan, Marshall.
23. See, as well, Marshall (16, 63–64) on the novelist's "imputed monologue."
24. On Henry Jr. and revision, see Blasing (62–63), Ringuette, and Horne.

CHAPTER 8: "THE APPEARANCE OF VIRTUE"

1. My theological reading of Northampton supplements the generally autobiographical significance that Edel, on the basis of the novelist's visit there in 1864, assigns the locale (*HJ*, 1:206–7). An Edwardian reading emphasizing false virtue similarly stands to go beyond—or rather behind—the novel's Hawthornian encounters with egotism (Teahan, 78, 84, 86, 90). On European aestheticism versus Puritan ethos, see Freedman, 137.
2. On Rowland's selfishness, see Bercovitch, 211, 213, 217; Goetz, 57; Teahan, 73–74; Graham, 106–7, 109.
3. Mull, 27.
4. The language from *The Golden Bowl* deals with the Prince's effort to discern Fanny Assingham's motives in having introduced him to Maggie Verver. "Only, then," the Prince muses, "her disinterestedness was rather awful—it implied, that is, such abysses of confidence. . . . On what did that sentiment, unsolicited and unrecompensed, rest?" (*GB*, 55). As the novel makes clear, the Assinghams, who depend both financially and socially on their capacity to mingle with the upper crust, are hardly disinterested. Tanner (36) relates the key term "confidence," in the novel of that name, to selflessness. The dilemma of *Confidence* also anticipates the breaches of "loyalty" and "confidence" practiced by Fleda Vetch in *The Spoils of Poynton*, because Fleda hopes to win Owen (and the spoils) from Mona (*SP*, 134, 135, 201, 158).
5. Poirier, 186; cf. Tanner, 28.
6. Compare the Countess Gemini's account of convents: "'I'm a convent-flower myself. I don't pretend to be good, but the nuns do'" (*PL*, 220).
7. See, as well, Gilbert Osmond's disdain for traditionless Unitarianism (*PL*, 362, 363).
8. The Baroness Münster projects her own degeneracy onto Clifford when lamenting the advances that she has encouraged: "'The little monster! . . . I will tell him that he ought to be ashamed of himself'" (*E*, 198). The Baroness is the sort of "monster of cleverness" (*SP*, 116) mentioned by Fleda Vetch.
9. James creates a teasing continuity between the careers of the Baroness and Madame Merle in the latter's resolve to depart for America after having made a "convenience" of

both Isabel and Mrs. Touchett. Perhaps recalling the career of the Baroness, Henry Jr. has Isabel muse upon Madame Merle's future exploitation: "'She'll make a convenience of America'" (PL, 475).

10. Compare this to similar pretenses to virtue in *The Awkward Age*. Mrs. Brook, for example, tells Mr. Longdon, "'Edward and I work it out between us to show off as tender parents and yet to get from you everything you'll give. . . . [S]o that we, in one way and another, deck ourselves in the glory of our sacrifice without forfeiting the "keep" of our daughter'" (AA, 300–301). Similarly, Vanderbank exercises a "precautionary benevolence" toward Nanda, the effect of which—when Vanderbank ultimately distances himself from her—is "the appearance of having changed places with him and of their being together precisely in order that he—not she—should be let down easily" (AA, 352–53). Cf. Mizruchi's emphasis on "sacrificial obligation, rather than the transmission of the sacrificial protection" (222) in *The Awkward Age*.

11. I here quote the text of the first edition, since the phrasing of the New York Edition refers less explicitly to the notion of *reality*.

12. Ward notes—completely apart from Edwardian rhetoric about true virtue—that, early on, Kate "esteems family loyalty over private gain, the need for love over the need for profit" (200). Cf. Sears, 69.

13. Ward (194) and Bell (295, 298) cogently argue that Kate prostitutes herself. That indictment seems far more compelling than do the euphemistic justifications of the arrangement between Kate and Densher proffered by Wegelin, 113; Rivkin, 112; Sandeen, 1068; and Pippin, 6, 8, 15, 178.

14. Wegelin, 113. Cf. Matthiessen, *Henry James*, 77; Krook, *Ordeal*, 225, 228. Such readings fall prey to Densher's self-exoneration and thereby serve unwarrantably to perpetuate it.

15. Densher's venal exploitation undermines Freedman's effort (218–23) to achieve momentary victimization status for Densher and Kate by casting Milly as an economic victimizer. Freedman attributes Milly's alleged power as a *belle dame sans merci* to "James's narration" of events (222) rather than to the reflecting—and therefore projecting—consciousness of a narrator who may well represent the outlook of Kate (who, to justify her own behavior, posits Milly in these terms). Cf. Teahan, 109–10.

16. Sears, 97–98.

17. My reading of the testamentary dilemma of Kate and Densher is compatible with that of Rivkin, who claims that Kate and Densher "act as duplicates or copies of one another" (120).

18. Kate, says Bell, "does not believe . . . in spiritual essences of any kind or in the worth of things that are good in themselves instead of having a quantifiable efficacy" (306).

19. Cf. Teahan's belief that Kate becomes, for Densher, "a ghostly unreality displaced by Milly's memory" (122).

20. I here question Krook's contention that Densher, up to "the last moment," desires to wed Kate, and that they maintain an "essential candour with each other through all the subterfuges and evasions" (*Ordeal*, 219, 229; cf. *HJ*, 5:117). Bell more convincingly argues that Densher's final renunciation of the fortune is "futile," since "Milly is dead and cannot appreciate his sacrifice" (305).

21. The psychology of retrospective evasion that I attribute to Kate stands related to the less successful effort of John Marcher to soothe his conscience about May Bartram in "The Beast in the Jungle." There, the novelist subverts his character's post-facto mental ease:

There were moments, as the weeks went by, when he would have liked, by some almost aggressive act, to take his stand on the intimacy of his loss, in order that it *might* be questioned and his retort, to the relief of his spirit, so recorded; but the

moments of an irritation more helpless followed fast on these, the moments during which, turning things over with a good conscience but with a bare horizon, he found himself wondering if he oughtn't to have begun, so to speak, further back. (JC, 99)

Like Kate, Marcher fancies himself "disinterested" and "unselfish" (JC, 75); but unlike her, he retrospectively confronts the horror of having never thought of his friend "(ah, how it hugely glared at him!) but in the chill of his egotism and the light of her use" (JC, 106).

22. Ward provides a related indictment of Kate (195, 196). In contrast, the suggestion that Densher's and Kate's "motives are made understandable and are shown to be not altogether evil" (Sandeem, 1068) merely restates the rationale used by Kate and Densher to help shield themselves from "the horror." Less than cogent, too, is the suggestion that Kate is a victim by virtue of her alleged imprisonment within the dominant economic and sexual mores of capitalism (Graham, 225–26).

23. See Teahan's related thoughts about Densher's "intimacy after the fact" (127). Cf. Rivkin, 120.

24. Freedman, 226.

CHAPTER 9: "INVRAISEMBLANCE" AND TRUE VIRTUE

1. Bellringer, 109, 122, 142. Cf. Hoople, who, while mentioning Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue* as an apt point of reference for *The Ambassadors*, seeks errantly to accommodate Strether's "powerful imaginative exertion" to a positive "vitiated form" of Edwardsian disinterestedness (431, 424).

2. See Bell, 122; Novick, 421; Tanner, 47–48; Ringuette, 126–28.

3. My Edwardsian reading of pious misrepresentation uses as a point of departure the skeptical outlooks on Strether discussed in Quentin Anderson, *American*, 206–31; Quentin Anderson, "Henry James"; Richards, 228, 231, 237–38, 241; Garis; Teahan, 104–7; McWhirter, 52–82.

4. This chapter's intermingling of quotations from James's "Project of Novel" assumes some familiarity with the genesis of the novel. See Bellringer, 54–68.

5. In the context of the pun-filled significance of the name *Pocock*, Putt aptly refers to "James's famous joke about the little 'unmentionable' article," calling it the "innocent if somewhat laboured example of old-fashioned jocosity, which so disconcerts some strait-laced modern readers" (347). Stevens (19) believes that Maria Gostrey intimates that "the vulgar domestic article might have to do with bodily functions best left undiscussed." Readings that identify the article as a clock (Stallman), or as buttonhooks (Forster, 220) seem less compelling.

6. My sense of a pun here does not render the text's primary reference, Balzac's *Louis Lambert* (1832–33), irrelevant. See Quentin Anderson (*American*, 213–14, 216 n); Gargano. Also, see *N* (552) for Worcester, Mass., as Henry Jr.'s original choice for the town in question. That locale, I contend, failed to match the punning significance of a town that evokes a pun on either the name Lambert or Strether. As Krook notes, with a different emphasis, the latter name conjures up the idea of "stretching" (*Ambassadors*, 13).

Worth noting, as well, is the sexual innuendo surrounding the name "Lambert" in Henry Jr.'s first novel, *Watch and Ward*. In that work, Nora Lambert is a twelve-year-old girl whom Roger Lawrence adopts; he harbors a sexual desire that he hopes eventually to consummate in marriage with her. In proximity to Roger's fantasy that Nora "should break out into cries and tears and tell him with a clinging embrace that she loved him," the narrator remarks upon "the sheepish stage of girlhood" associated with Nora's budding physical maturity: "She began gently, or rather ungently, to expand; acquiring well-nurtured sturdiness of contour." As Nora grows older, Roger becomes jealous and resentful when he finds Nora knit-

ting, from "wools," a pair of slippers for George, another suitor (*WW*, 33, 76). "'Prettier than he deserves,'" scoffs Roger, when he finds her preparing these receptacles for another man's body. Cf. Novick (238) for other metaphorical suggestions of "couplings and insertions" in the aptly titled *Watch and Ward*.

7. In a discussion unrelated to Vionnet's designs upon Jim, Bellringer details Jim's "vulgar" propensity towards "patterns of minor infidelity" (111–12).

8. Bellringer, 127; Teahan, 100.

9. Krook, *Ambassadors*, 15, 68; Freedman, 199; Moseley, 89–103; Bellringer, 109, 122, 143; Pippin, 18, 160–62, 175; Meissner, 5, 14, 24, 38, 79, 142, 153–57, 161, 173, 179, 181.

10. Strether's insecurities and paternal guilt are explicitly detailed in Henry Jr.'s "Project" essay (*N*, 543, 549). See, for Strether's susceptibility to memories of his lost son, Hocks, *Ambassadors*, 63.

11. Teahan, 103.

12. See Krook's account of Vionnet's enslavement to Chad's "sexual power" (*Ambassadors*, 37).

13. *WJW*, 307–8. Cf. Meissner, 160–61, who raises more contemporary illustrations of this phenomenon (via the writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer) but whose valorization of Strether seems untenable.

14. Recall, in a related vein, the Freudian slip entailed in Christopher Newman's appeal to Madame de Cintre after he has courted her for six months: "I have been very patient and considerate, and deserve my reward. And then give me your hand. Madame de Cintre, do that. Do it" (*Am*, 163). Cf. Meissner, 162, on Jim Pocock's reference to "it."

15. Cf. Bellringer, 137.

16. For Strether's encounter with his own subliminal urges, see Freedman, 198.

17. Recall, too, Gilbert Osmond's use of his daughter Pansy, "the white flower of cultivated sweetness" (*PL*, 267), to establish an association of ideas in Isabel's mind that masks his own selfishness and sexuality. The point is made, with latent phallic significance, in the first interview between Isabel, Pansy, and Osmond: "He ended by drawing her out of her chair and making her stand between his knees, leaning against him while he passed his arm round her slimness" (*PL*, 220–21).

18. Bellringer, 129–30. Krook suggests that, with regard to Jeanne's marriage, Vionnet might be scheming to remove a daughter from her household who will eventually become the mother's sexual rival (*Ambassadors*, 109). Given the relation between Nanda and her mother in *The Awkward Age*, I concur with Krook, even though she advances the point as a theoretical objection to her own indulgent reading of Vionnet's and Chad's integrity.

19. The narrator of *The Sacred Fount* similarly imposes meaning upon Mrs. Server's silence: He "make[s] her pretty silences pass . . . for pretty speeches" (*SF*, 139).

20. Bellringer, 39; cf. Hocks, *Pragmatic*, 171.

21. See, for Vionnet's flawed character, Richards, 230; Quentin Anderson, *American*, 220. Pertinent to such outlooks is Sir Sydney Waterlow's diary entry concerning Henry Jr.'s thoughts about the vulgarity of modern French literature. That vulgarity consisted "not in the absence, but in the badness of their moral standards. . . . They are blind to all real distinction of good and evil: hence that emptiness and thinness in their work which is what we mean by vulgarity. And it is just as real, he insisted, in France as in England tho' masked in France by perfection of form" (*HJ*, 5:383–84).

22. Recall the contrast between lying and being a gentleman in *The Golden Bowl*. When Fanny's husband quizzes her about the Prince, "'And he doesn't lie?'" she responds, "'No—to do him justice. . . . He's a gentleman—I mean *all* that he ought to be'" (*GB*, 90–91). Cf. Tanner's astute inquiry, relative to Densher, in *The Wings of the Dove*: "Is there such a thing as a 'proper lie'?" (114).

23. Hocks, *Ambassadors*, 84.

24. For Isabel and Osmond's shared egotism, see *HJ*, 2:426. On the selfishness behind claims to disinterested benevolence, see chapter 6 and *WJW*, 189. Pippin (30) recognizes the compatibility of *PL* and *A*. Still, by concentrating on Isabel's perception of Osmond's "disinterestedness," Pippin (133) fails to see that Osmond exploits Isabel's *selfish* yearnings for disinterestedness, and that Osmond's stratagem anticipates Vionnet's psychological seduction of Strether.

25. The histrionics implied by "as a" here merge with Strether's psychological projection and suppressed sexuality. He earlier uses this same metaphor to characterize young Jeanne de Vionnet: "Odious really the question of a young man; one didn't treat such a person as a maid-servant suspected of a 'follower'" (*A*, 154). As for Strether's general pattern of projection, I concur that he rather pathetically "consecrates his romantic sympathy" with new fantasy visions in order to evade "powerful complexities" (*Garis*, 313–14). Cf. Griffin, 50–51.

26. Edel, ed., "Tragedy," 314. The reference to "final proof" is to Crews, 54. I instead associate Vionnet with the adulteress Selina in *A London Life*, as envisioned by her sister, Laura: "[Selina] could make plans and calculate, she could act and do things for a particular effect." She could disingenuously do good things "because that looked innocent and domestic and denoted a mind void of guile" (*LL*, 329).

27. Rivkin, 81; cf. 59, 81.

28. Compare the notion of ambassadorship with regard to Mrs. Gereth and her son, Owen: "She was on too strange a footing—that of having presented an ultimatum and having had it torn up in her face. In such a case as that the envoy always departed; he never sat gaping and dawdling before the city" (*SP*, 139).

29. Bellringer, 138–39.

30. Unlike John Berridge, in Henry Jr.'s Paris-based "The Velvet Glove" (1909), Strether fails to see how self-serving flattery can create the appearance of emotional bonds while actually distancing the subject of flattery from the purveyor of it. Indeed, in a passage that highlights the psychological mechanism that I have argued to characterize Vionnet's duplicity and Strether's obtuseness, the narrator of "The Velvet Glove" says of Berridge's epiphany concerning the Princess (Amy Evans), "Nothing stranger could conceivably have been, it struck him . . . than this exquisite intimacy of her manner of setting him down on the other side of an abyss. It was as if she had lifted him first in her beautiful arms, had raised him up high, high, high, to do it, pressing him to her immortal young breast while he let himself go, and then, by some extraordinary effort of their native force and her alien quality, setting him down exactly where she wanted him to be—which was a thousand miles away from her" (*JC*, 215–16). Unlike Strether, whose final words to Maria Gostrey, "'Then there we are!'" (*A*, 345), perpetuate a self-congratulatory sense of personal renunciation, relative to her own proffered companionship, Berridge, at the threshold of awareness, finally has the sense to ask, "'Where are we, where in the name of all that's damnably, of all that's grotesquely delusive, are we?'" (*JC*, 215). Cf., on Strether's delusive security ("Then there we are!"), Richards, 242–43.

CHAPTER 10: THE NATURE OF RADICAL VIRTUE

1. On feminist, anarchist, and Hawthornian contexts, see Trilling, 64–69; Tilley; Jacobson, 41–61; Davis; Long, 117–57; Brodhead, 140–65.

2. Holly, 172.

3. Habegger, "Woman Business," 228.

4. *Ibid.*, 54–58, 226.

5. *HJ*, 3:141; cf. Tanner, 55.

6. At the basis of the misconception about the political matchup of father and son is the assumption that the issue of women and marriage was "the one department of the father's thought that the son paid close attention to" or "understood" (Habegger, "Woman Business," 29, 201).

7. Despite his occasional quarrels with socialists (Habegger, *Father*, 369–70) and his distancing himself—mainly because of short-lived social embarrassment—from socialistic sex radicals, Henry Senior was, as evidenced by his posthumously published *Spiritual Creation*, a theoretical radical to the end. I differ, therefore, from Habegger, who views the two Henrys as "hopelessly one" and who deduces, largely on the basis of a moment of shame experienced by the elder James, the "father's alienated radicalism" (Habegger, "Woman Business," 225, 227).

8. See, on Henry Jr.'s "androgynous" mind and "spiritual transvestitism," *HJ*, 4:259, 265, cf. 210, 326; Stevens; and Rowe, *Other*. Edel perceives that Henry Jr. identifies himself with Nanda, in *The Awkward Age*; with Angela, in *Confidence*; with Nora, in *Watch and Ward*; and with Maisie, in *What Maisie Knew* (*HJ*, 4:264 [Nanda], 321 [Angela], 261 [Nora], 262 [Maisie]). My identification of Henry Senior with the Princess is compatible with Edel's belief that the novel somehow pertains to the death of the novelist's mother and father in 1882 (3:192).

9. Goetz, 1, 21.

10. *HAS*, 66, 123; Tyler, 442–43.

11. *CLC*, 235; *SC*, 389, 392. Cf. *SRFM*, 347.

12. For the novelist's more customary association of the word *bourgeois* with persons lacking imagination, charm, and brilliance, see *AS*, 97–98, 157; Edel, *HJ*, 3:48.

13. See John Humphrey Noyes's related observation: "Do not understand by this that we reject either men or money, simply because they happen to be united. The more wealth a good member brings, the better. It is, however, the smallest of all qualifications, in and of itself" (*HAS*, 172).

14. Bell, 139; Habegger, "Woman Business," 6, 204. Less than compelling, by contrast, is a recent effort to cast Olive as a victim of prevailing sexual mores (Graham, 167–75).

15. Howe, xxiii. A related theme, involving homoerotic exploitation disguised as virtue, is featured in Henry Jr.'s story "A Light Man." See Novick, 182.

16. Cf. Bell, 144.

17. *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, 13.

18. My use of the term *equity feminism* is indebted to Sommers, 53; cf. 22, 134–35, 230, 274.

19. Bell, 178.

20. By identifying Henry Jr. with Hyacinth, relative to the socialism of Henry Senior, I go beyond the familial speculations of Trilling, 72; Goetz, 89; Cooley, 109; and Edel, *HJ*, 3:190–92.

21. *The Liberal Imagination*, 87–88, 75.

22. On benignant pater, see *Diary*, 149. For the more customary alignment of father and daughter on political and other matters, see Alice's thoughts on Irish Home Rule and British brutality (54–55, 73), her concern for the "working man" (88), her praise for "the solidarity of the race" (113), and her Henry Senior-like disdain for persons who resemble "a moral abscess, festering with vanity" (101) and who possess a "Colossal Vanity" that makes them unaware—and here she echoes the elder James—of the "Unknowable Reality behind Phenomena" (120). Note, too, the legacy of Henry Senior's Edwardianism in Alice's disdain for Britain's "pervasive 'virtuous' pose of rising superior to the normal man with your 'brotherly love,' 'civilizing processes' and the rest" (152), while Britain acts in demonstrably selfish ways. Other intimations of Henry Senior emerge in Alice's aversion to the religion that emphasizes "conformity to an outward standard of respectability, not the spontaneous inspiration of the aspiring soul" (196).

23. For the Aurora commune, see Nordhoff, 305.
24. On *Das Kapital*, see Bell, 171. The novel more generally targets Fabianism, with respect to "the primitive beginnings of British Marxism" (*HJ*, 3:186–87). As for Tennyson's "The Princess," I take issue with Benardete (185), who discounts the poem's satire of liberalism to valorize the Princess of James's novel.
25. See, for Henry Sr.'s "many servants," "elaborate" apartments, and for his aloofness from serious social reform, *HJ*, 1:132, 134, 44, 38.
26. See Edel, who, citing Henry Jr.'s complaint about "'our poor father's impulsive journeyings to and fro and of the impression of aimless vacillation,'" marks "a lack of purpose" in Henry Senior. Edel suggestively links these concerns to the poignant tale "The Pupil" (*HJ*, 1:137–38, 135).
27. See, by extension, the treatment of well-to-do radicalism in Henry Jr.'s commentary about the Amana commune, described in Nordhoff's *Communitistic Societies*. "You must feel yourself to be on the native soil of social experimentalism," says Henry Jr., "and have a sort of sense of living in a scornfully conservative parody or burlesque" ("NCS," 27).
28. Passages like these call into question critical interpretations that see Hyacinth as detached from sexual possibility (Trilling, 71–72; Bell, 163).
29. Anesko, 115–16.
30. Misunderstanding Paul's motives in courting the Princess, his invalid sister sends him on his way with the assurance that "'they'll look after me'"—by which "she meant the populace surging up in his rear." Paul, though, refuses to rest assured in either her "air of agreeable security" or in the prospect of social security: "'I don't think we'll leave it much to 'them'''" (*PC*, 445).
31. Trilling, 86.
32. From Howells's 1882 review of "Henry James, Jr.," in Mordell, 113.
33. *Democracy and Liberty*, 2:235, 325, 399, 268; 1:19. Although this book postdated *The Princess Casamassima*, Lecky and Henry Jr. may have discussed matters of mutual interest as members of London's Athenaeum Club in 1877. See Edel, *HJ*, 2:284. In *A London Life*, Selina has read "Locky" (*LL*, 334).
34. My Edwardian reading takes issue with the claim that Henry Jr. does nothing to criticize his revolutionists (Tilley, 32).
35. When the novelist reflects upon the way his father's phenomenalistic outlook on revolution stood to classify suffering and concussion as forms of bliss, a sardonic verbal trace—i.e., "thank goodness"—intimates the father's naïveté:

That wouldn't be blood and fire and tears, or would be none of these things stupidly precipitated; it would simply have taken place by *enjoyed* communication and contact, enjoyed concussion or convulsion even—since pangs and agitations, the very agitations of perception itself, are of the highest privilege of the soul and there is always, thank goodness, a saving sharpness of play or complexity of consequence in the intelligence completely alive. (*NSB*, 371)

36. On the errant nature of that piracy, see Perry, *TWJ*, 2:574–79. William, it is worth noting, anticipated the co-option of pragmatism by fascists when he complained about the abandonment of scruples and "regret" by monists who "find that a certain amount of evil is a condition by which a higher form of good is bought. There is nothing to prevent anybody from generalizing this view, and trusting that if we could but see things in the largest of all ways, even such matters as . . . murder would appear to be paid for by *the uses* that follow in their train" (*WJW*, 1:579; emphasis added).

37. I quote this word from the passage in the novel's first edition (*PC1*, 574), since the

New York Edition substitutes the word "assisted," which, while being more consonant with the euphemistic nature of radical discourse, is less illustrative of the Princess's complicity in destructiveness.

38. My analysis of socialistic "friendship" is compatible with Seltzer's sense of the way surveillance, policing, and supervision dominate the characters of *The Princess Casamassima*. I depart from his interpretation, though, in seeing the novel as subversive of totalitarianism rather than as evidence of Henry Jr.'s complicity in it. I take issue, by extension, with Rowe, who claims that the novel constitutes Henry Jr.'s own radical critique of modernity through a deconstruction of "the opposition between anarchists and aristocrats" (*Theoretical*, 186). Passing over the socialism of Henry Senior and the sorry implications of that (as dramatized in *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima*) for aesthetic sensibility, Rowe also seeks to reconcile the artistic world of Henry Jr. with Marxist and post-Marxist critical theory (*Other*, esp. 1-37).

39. See George du Maurier on Millicent's "truly loveable" character and real "friendship for Hyacinth" (*HJ*, 3:190).

40. Anesko, 112.

41. Henry Sr. is here quoted, in an informative discussion, by Quentin Anderson, *American*, 99. Although the conflict between social activism and aesthetics is clearly at issue in *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima*, Henry Jr. was, by 1907, as inclined to see the moneymaking propensity of the American scene as a sorrowful end in itself, a surrender of aesthetic valuation and taste. In *The American Scene*, though, the criticism is not of capitalism per se, but of philistinism that fails to see wealth as a means toward satisfying "the general truth of aesthetic need" (*AS*, 440).

42. Trilling, 67.

43. See Arnold Silver's novel resurrection of Hyacinth's dilemma in the temperament of Florio Pajaro, a young Hispanic bookbinder recruited to college, where he immerses himself in the works of William and Henry James. Florio is hounded from campus by student radicals who destroy his copy of *The Princess Casamassima* and who denigrate him for valuing "aestheticism" rather than subscribing to their "militant agenda" (161-62).

CONCLUSION

1. Henry Sr. to Henry Jr., b MS Am1092.9 (4191-206), items 4203-206, folder 4 of 4. Quoted by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and Bay James Baker.

2. Cf. Duban, "Darwin."

3. *SC*, 385, 394, 344, 256, 383, 382.

4. Habegger, *Father*, 387-88.

5. Compare William's pragmatic response to the rationalism of Kant: "What similarity can there possibly be between human laws imposed a priori on all experience as 'legislative,' and human ways of thinking that grow up piecemeal among the details of experience because on the whole they work best?" (*TWJ*, 2:469). Here and elsewhere, William's quarrels with "rationalism" and "theism" stand related (*PMT*, 49). For William's response to monism and rationalism as an elaboration of his quarrel with Henry Senior, see *TWJ*, 1:156, 164-65; Weissbourd, 63-83.

6. *TWJ*, 2:353 ("expounded"); 1:177 (oracle); 1:172 (debate); 1:148, 513 (alienation).

7. See, on the reading notebook, chapter 2, note 10. The novelist's decision to reveal the exact reason for the missing pages indicates his own ambivalence about Henry Senior.

8. William had lost a son to whooping cough (*HJ*, 3:327).

9. *PMT*, 221, 248, 280. William borrowed the terms "ambulatory" and "saltatory" from

the realist philosophers James B. Pratt and Charles A. Strong (*PMT*, 263; *TWJ*, 2:537). See, on "ambulation" and "pluralism," Hocks, *Pragmatistic*, 38–47.

10. See, as well, William's responses to Berkeley, Lovejoy, Hodgson, Haldane, Pratt, Hébert, Plato, Locke, Spinoza, Hawtrey, Hegel, and Moore in *TWJ*, 1:584, 618; 2:372, 485, 493, 643–46, 680; *ERE*, 99, 169, 195; *PMT*, 25, 184, 261, 292, 312, 317. I join Lewis, who, throughout *The Jameses* (192–94, 201, 281, 356), emphasizes the often ambivalent "paternal presence" (513) in William's philosophical speculations.

11. The primary reference is to Bradley. One suspects, however, that William's account of the "diseased" and "pathological" states of repetitive "theoretic grubbing" (*TWJ*, 1:219, 512) was inspired by the monism of Henry Senior. Out of filial respect, in *The Literary Remains of the Late Henry James* (115), William tried to reconcile his father's monism with pluralism. However, as Perry argues, the effort was halfhearted because William realized that the elder James was "monistic to the exclusion of pluralism" (*TWJ*, 1:162 n.). William elsewhere acknowledged the incompatibility and inconsistency of "pluralistic monism" (*PMT*, 14; cf. 141).

12. *TWJ*, 2:265.

13. *TWJ*, 2:373, 382.

14. Cf. Lewis, 253.

15. See, as well, William's criticism of socialists and capitalists for their respective moments of blindness to the reality of one another (*WJW*, 1:877–78).

16. For William's jeremiad-like response to republican inconsistency in the Spanish-American War, see *TWJ*, 2:307–16.

17. Worth noting is the arguable Hegelianism of Henry Senior. See Perry, *TWJ*, 1:725, 730).

18. For a formulation of Henry Jr.'s moralism—as it pertains to the reality and autonomy of human consciousness and to spiritual values in human conduct—see *HJ*, 2:168–69. Also see Edel's reminder that "James denied a *conscious* moral purpose to the novel" (3:123). For the relation between aesthetic interest and moral life in the writings of Henry Jr., see John. Cf. Hocks, *Pragmatistic*, 98.

19. See, for Henry Jr.'s statement about various levels of "interest," *AN*, 9; cf. Schwarz, 45–46.

20. See Holly, 176–77; Goetz, 56.

21. Shaw, *Collected Letters*, 827–28.

22. See Horne's cogent reply (65–66) to the efforts of critics who would read away the significance of this vital utterance by the novelist about the antagonism between socialism and art.

23. I quote Freedman (75), whose alignment of Wilde and Henry Jr. on the basis of homosexuality and professional jealousy (169–72, 182), however, seems reductive in its glossing over of individual differences among persons of the same sexual persuasion. Questionable, too, is the overt or sometimes muted suggestion that the novelist's outlook intimates theoretical radicalism (Freedman, 100–101; Posnock, *Trial*, "Henry James"; Przybylowicz, 311–12; Rowe, *Theoretical, Other*). Whatever the novelist's quarrel with unprincipled capitalism in *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, and *The American Scene*, he equally taxes feminism and socialism in *The Bostonians*, *The Princess Casamassima*, and in his review of Nordhoff's *Communist Societies*. Anesko shows Henry Jr. to have been an unabashed capitalist. For reasons related to capitalist respect for individualism, privacy, and aesthetics, Parrington, in his Marxist commentary on American letters, denigrated Henry Jr. for having fallen "in love with culture" and for having "remained shut up within his own skull pan" (3:240–41). One suspects that the novelist would have acknowledged, with pride, the verity of Parrington's charge, and that he would have been puzzled by contemporary efforts to reconcile his individualistic and aesthetic endeavors with Marxist-influenced alienation and revolutionary impulse.

24. See, for a perspective on the novelist's review of Nordhoff that posits the elder Henry as a "victim" of "radical American democracy," Habegger, "*Woman Business*," 59. The current study regards Henry Jr. as more generally seeing Henry Sr. as a victim of his own folly.

25. Freedman, 35–36, 67.

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