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## Dark Consciousness: Theory of Mind and Henry James's The Golden Bowl

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Dark Consciousness: Theory of Mind and Henry James's *The Golden Bowl*

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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in  
English  
American Literature

by

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## Abstract

Using the psychological concepts of Theory of Mind and embodied cognition, the author explores and questions the traditional readings of Henry James's novel, *The Golden Bowl*, and its protagonist, Maggie Verver. Although the majority of critics view her as a positive character, James takes great effort to subvert her thoughts and mislead the reader. Despite lacking a modern technical vocabulary, James remains acutely aware of how human cognitive structures both process a text and function within a social setting.

Theory of Mind, embodied cognition, Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*, psychology, modernism, American Literature

## 1. Introduction

*The Golden Bowl* is a novel about the mind. In form, it consists of impressions of thoughts on the characters' minds; the action is psychological and often proves surprising and subversive. James artistically delays insight into the characters' minds, and this functions as the primary means of narrative within the novel. Action happens when characters attempt to guess the state of another mind. A modern psychological concept, Theory of Mind, perfectly explains why the novel is important and interesting to readers: humans must metarepresent others' thoughts and read body language constantly to function within society, and James explores this phenomenon extensively within the text. Exploring Theory of Mind will show how James is acutely aware of this cognitive structure, despite lacking the technical vocabulary to describe it. James constructs his novel as a radical binary, and the limited views provided in each volume exemplify how James manipulates the reader's textual processing by exploiting Theory of Mind. James works to build sympathy for the Prince in Volume 1 and sympathy for the Princess in Volume 2, and this sympathy significantly informs the reader's interpretation of the text. I will focus on the discrepancy between characters' thoughts, other characters' metarepresentations of those thoughts, and the reader's metarepresentation of the entire social situation.

Because the mode of the novel consists almost entirely of impressions of thoughts that pass through the finely wrought minds of the characters, cognitive psychology proves an indispensable tool for analyzing the text. The novel highlights the difference between a mind and others' perception of it. For example, the reader's perception of both Amerigo and Charlotte differs greatly from one volume to the next. By successively allowing the reader access into each character's mind, James draws the reader off track by exploiting the human tendency to sympathize and identify with the primary point of view within any given text. The effects of this

phenomenon are observable within *The Golden Bowl's* existing criticism. There is a disturbing tendency in the criticism to over-sympathize with Maggie and to read her as noble and enlightening. For example, Daniel Brudney comments on the final morality of the text (and the scene in which Adam and Maggie say “goodbye”): “James's achievement is to have created a thing of moral beauty and power out of the deft dance of father and daughter across an abyss of unspoken dangers, where the fact itself, the fact of the abyss, the meaning of their dance, must never obtrude” (419). But Maggie's morals are questionable at best. Brudney and others incorrectly view her resignation as a sign of maturity (Brudney 437, Hoopoe 223, Krooke 392).

In her book chapter “*The Golden Bowl* and Feminine Revisions,” Priscilla L. Walton summarizes the major critical debate over the proper interpretation of Maggie:

The novel divides its Realist/Humanist critics into two camps. There is the camp which hails *The Golden Bowl* as James's masterpiece and praises its heroine, Maggie Verver [...]. But the other camp condemns both the novel and its heroine, and the reasons for the condemnation are interesting, since these scholars comment upon the textual subversion of what they perceive to be James's intent.

(141)

Walton characterizes the debate, but unfortunately she falls victim to the very problem she identifies within the current criticism: namely, that both camps exist within a false binary. Walton absolutely praises Maggie and the novel, stating: “I am in agreement with the idea that Maggie is a reviser, I do not feel that hers is a destructive and negative process” (143). Instead, I argue, the novel purposely subverts Maggie to seek ambiguity and to complicate. Unfortunately, critics often want a heroine who just is not present in the text. Viewing Maggie as “good” and Charlotte as “bad” is a reductive formula that does not agree with obvious moral ambiguities and contrasting perspectives that characterize the text. Charlotte, logically, is also sacrificed in such a

reading: “Both Charlotte and Maggie create fictions which are deceptions. The difference between the two lies in Charlotte's attempt to usurp a Masculine role, in that she is willing to prey on Maggie's passivity to effect her own ends [...]. Maggie discovers and rewrites meaning” by fixing her marriage and coming to terms with her limited access into other minds (Walton 156). Walton and others see Maggie as a model, but what meaning does Maggie really re-write? There is no triumph, but there does not have to be. These critics, and Walton, betray their preconceptions of what the novel should be. They expect a moral model, but James insists he wanted to render the human mind fully in literature—these are two vastly different texts.

In his essay “Martha Nussbaum and *The Golden Bowl*,” W.A. Hart attacks the position that Maggie provides a potential role model for the reader. He asks:

Does *The Gold Bowl*, in showing us Maggie turning to duplicity and subterfuge in order to dispose of the threat to her marriage, also present this to us as the better choice, a finer morality, as the acquisition by Maggie of a mature moral vision?

On the contrary, the ending of the novel seems to me sombre and disturbing precisely because there is no such reassurance on offer. (207)

Hart correctly identifies the tone of this novel, which ends in “pity and dread” (595). Maggie dominates the second half, and, consequently this has created an alarming trend in the criticism: to view Maggie as a moral, sympathetic, or admirable character. All of the misreadings in the criticism demand an accurate revision, a modern re-reading, and a clear understanding of how one should fundamentally approach the text and the characters.

## 2. Theory of Mind

The concept of “Theory of Mind” makes this unification and understanding possible. Theory of Mind is the human cognitive structure that allows an individual to attribute the actions and body language of others to a mind and to discern another's mind and thoughts. Theory of Mind (sometimes referred to as “mind-reading”) “describe[s] our ability to explain people's behavior in terms of their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires” (Zunshine 6). It is a basic human cognitive structure, although some people (with autism, for example) do lack the ability to form flexible metarepresentations of other minds. Typically, the human mind has a natural ability for predicting others' thoughts and keeping track of reputation, and, consequently, this process can and does function very effectively on an unconscious level. We do not have to think to know that the man running at us with a bloody knife is a threat; we know that the vacuum cleaner is not a threat despite its intimidating noises because we know it does not have agency; we can remember that an acquaintance is irrational and predict that he or she will act in an irrational manner in the future. Ideally, we “tag” the source of all ideas and information because knowing the source of information inevitably changes the meaning (Zunshine 50). If our acquaintance acts differently, we perhaps revise our metarepresentation of who he or she is “as a person.” If many sources tell us a fact, we forget the tag and accept it as a general truth. Many readers function effectively without thinking about how they are forming metarepresentations of the characters, but great authors are masters of understanding Theory of Mind, predicting what readers will think, and then subverting those expectations.

But Theory of Mind alone does not fully explain why modern readers still find *The Golden Bowl* engaging, nor does it alone entirely explain the method by which James accomplishes artistic effect. In her book, *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?*, Blakey



Vermeule addresses this issue generally: “Our mind-reading capacity is a highly evolved and complex cognitive system for understanding the beliefs, intentions, and desires of other people. Innovations in narrative technique are driven by the need to ratchet up pressure on our mind-reading capacities” (98). Certainly, *The Golden Bowl* puts pressure on both the characters and the reader's mind-reading abilities. Theory of Mind explains the basic cognitive structure associated with social interactions, and it helps describe how humans read, but it should also be understood in terms of embodied cognition. As active as the reader is in constructing a text, he or she still has little control over the plot and actions of the characters; therefore, in order to navigate a text, readers typically identify with a character. According to cognitive theorists Vermeule and Nancy Easterlin, the perspective is roughly adopted as the reader's own; this strategy is biologically based and almost universal among readers (Vermeule 134, Easterlin 94). This could be the protagonist, the narrator, the author, an insect, or anything the author/reader chooses. Readers need to be “inside” a character's head to create much of a narrative's meaning because narrative hinges on social interaction, and social interaction is dominated by Theory of Mind. For example, when Claudius asks for “Light!” following Hamlet's play *The Mousetrap*, the audience is interested because they know Hamlet knows Claudius killed King Hamlet and Claudius knows that Hamlet knows. Claudius's body language gives away his state of mind; but without imagining, or “stepping-into,” the minds of Claudius and Hamlet, the reader cannot process the scene—this is true for all narrative processing. This is known as “embodied cognition,” simply imagining someone else's perspective for an arbitrary amount of time. One slips into embodied cognition rather easily, often for several hours, and of course the degree of intensity depends upon the reader, text, and environment. Often this perspective shifts within a text (novels or films with over 20 such perspectives are not uncommon), but readers still seek out a single identifying perspective whenever possible (Easterlin 94).

According to Easterlin's theory, this singularity of perspective is based on “the basic characteristics of the way-finding mind: a self to serve as the point of orientation and reference; a propensity to infer causal relations and to make other associative connections; an environment rich in potential affordances; and a close-knit social group that provides the secure basis for way-finding activity” (90). These instincts “still serve to orient us in human life, even though the epistemic and geographical range of human life has expanded enormously with the rapid development of culture in the past 10,000 years. These cognitive features inform our mode of entry into works of imaginative literature.” Without such a perspective, the reader feels trapped or disoriented, and will actively seek out a perspective with which to orient one's self. Readers expect a lot from this perspective, and will switch focus if another character dominates the action. Because readers like to identify with a single perspective, complex narrative will often intentionally disrupt the reader's desire for a single unifying perspective. In film, this disruption can easily be done with camera positioning. In novels like *The Golden Bowl*, this is accomplished through shifting the narrative through the minds of the characters sequentially.

Narratives typically present points of view serially. Rarely is the reader exposed to multiple versions of the same events. When multiple interpretations of an event are presented, the differences between the accounts are most important. *The Sound and the Fury* (and plenty of television crime dramas) uses multiple perspectives to demonstrate the flexible nature of truth and the profound differences in individual perception. Most narratives, like *The Golden Bowl*, however, only present one view point at a time. It remains the reader's responsibility to construct the thoughts of the other characters based upon those characters' body language and dialogue. The narration in *The Golden Bowl* focuses on each character's theory of the other characters' minds. By withholding direct access to characters' thoughts, James forces the reader to guess at the cognitive processes of the characters. James's artistic skill derives from his ability to

consistently subvert the reader's understanding of the characters. This subversion undermines the concept of monolithic truth and enters into the realm of subjectivity and shifting perspectives. Readers must constantly re-appraise their estimation of the novel. One must consider every perspective: the author's, the narrator's, one's own, the characters', and even other readers'. Truly, life is complicated; many perspectives abound; and James demonstrates the scope of that complexity through fiction. The human mind evolved to handle complicated social situations quickly—survival sometimes depends on processing a situation as fast as possible—an unfortunate result is that, sometimes, clarity is sacrificed for speed. By reading too quickly, the mind will incorrectly tag opinion as fact. Even longer, dense works are subject to this sort of processing (may, in fact, be more susceptible) because the desire for closure of a narrative creates anxiety in the reader and drives him or her to finish the novel (Easterlin 90). By consciously considering the state of every character's mind at any given time, readers can more objectively process information. Many major critical questions hinge on Maggie: what has she learned? Is she a moral individual? Is her decision to remain silent admirable or pathetic? Theory of Mind is essential because it not only answers all of these questions convincingly, but explains how James tricks the reader into adopting an incorrect reading. This, however, only suggests another, more important, critical question: what literary effect is thus produced?

Cognitive psychology provides the best context/framework for understanding this phenomenon. Strangely though, few critics attempt to integrate a discussion of cognitive psychology into *The Golden Bowl* criticism. One critic, for example, misapplies the concept of “mind-reading” (often used interchangeably with “Theory of Mind”). In “Legible Reticence: Unspoken Dialogues in Henry James,” Karen Leibowitz concludes that “the characters literally read one another's minds, bypassing the reticence that they nevertheless appreciate, creating a strangely utopian vision of perfect communication” (31). Clearly this cannot be the case. The

novel is interesting precisely because the characters do not communicate effectively. They read body language, interpret signs, make educated guesses, and form metarepresentations of the other characters' minds. James presents normal communication in full complexity, and he does it more accurately than the typical artist.

Communication forms the basis for interaction, and humans navigate social situations using the techniques of tagging and metarepresentation, and readers of *The Golden Bowl* proceed identically. If the reader can understand each character, each character's metarepresentation of the other minds, then he or she will create an extremely robust and nearly complete understanding of the text. This is important because if the reader confuses what a character says or thinks with authorial intent, an obvious misreading will occur. James thrives on this discrepancy, exploits human sympathy, and attempts to confuse the reader into adopting a moral position similar to one of the characters, most often Maggie. *The Golden Bowl* provides the perfect opportunity for critics to explore the concept of Theory of Mind because forming metarepresentations of other minds drives both the characters within the novel and the reader. Even in the final pages, Maggie and Amerigo have a lengthy conversation about who knows what, so clearly this issue is of primary importance to a final understanding of the text. This paper seeks to describe an accurate metarepresentation of each of the character's minds, because James does not include this within the novel; he does not force-feed the reader a single interpretation of any the characters. One might be tempted to view Maggie's thoughts and emotions as aligned with James, but, although she appears reliable, she proves to be an insufficient commentator.

Much of the story is told through impressions; rather than an artistic process, impressionism functions primarily as a cognitive device in the novel. James drifts from one thought to the next through association, similarly to how the Prince, at the start of the novel “had been pursuing for six months [...] the sense of how he had been justified” (James 28). The Prince

examines his memory, and James's method of demonstrating that in text reflects contemporaneous psychology explicitly. In 1890, James read the first finished draft of his brother William's highly influential text *The Principles of Psychology*, calling it “mighty & magnificent” (Novick 156). In the text, William James offers the following standard observations of memory:

In every sphere of sense, an intermittent stimulus, often enough repeated, produces a continuous sensation. This is because the after-image of the *impression* just gone by blends with the new *impression* coming in. The effects of stimuli may thus be superposed upon each other many stages deep, the total result in *consciousness* being an increase in the feeling's intensity, and in all probability, as we saw in the last chapter, an elementary sense of the lapse of *time*. (emphases added) (Chapter XVI: “Memory”)

This is exactly how James views consciousness in *The Golden Bowl*, fourteen years after reading *The Principles*. Through their texts, William and Henry demonstrate their modern understanding of sensory input. Human minds receive blurry/incomplete impressions and may re-assemble and juxtapose these memories at will, in time, as a result of consciousness. Henry James simply dramatizes this process of reflection. Accessing memory in this way is similar to how readers process texts, and reading is of course a form of sensory input. Zunshine echoes these sentiments as well, stating that while reading “the brain that responds to the text changes ever so slightly with every thought and impression passing through it” (75). So James's exposition of Amerigo's thoughts functions impressionistically, as well as reader processing of any text. In the early pages of the novel, Amerigo is recalling his past interactions with his soon-to-be family. Implicitly, he is reevaluating his metarepresentations of these people. Additionally, the reader must form metarepresentations for the first time, and James makes the reader use Amerigo as their point of reference.

### 3. Verver and the Prince

The novel takes as a major theme the inevitable difference between the perception of the self and perception of the self by others. The events of the novel force the characters to confront their ignorance; but throughout the pages characters attempt to manipulate others' metarepresentation of their mind and exploit the lack of human, as opposed to "perfect," communication. They practice (and in the case of Maggie, learn to practice) deceit by attempting to appear as if they possessed entirely different minds than their own. Like Mme. Merle and Osmand in *A Portrait of a Lady*, Amerigo and Charlotte are dedicated to living long-term lies. However, James increases the complexity and maturity of his art comparable to *Portrait*; the new adulterous lovers are flawed but likeable.

James will test the limits of the reader's ability to process situations filled with contradictions. Verver appears in Amerigo's section, and still the text remains orbiting around Amerigo. When Amerigo is physically present, James adopts him as the primary refractor, even in the first chapter of Book Second. It is as if the gravity of his perception draws the narration in, but, actually, this is misdirection from James designed to increase the reader's opinion of the Prince and therefore cause the information passing through his mind to be tagged "fact." James provides a weak picture of Verver initially; he hides from Mrs. Rance in his own house. He believes that his accomplishments "argued a special genius; he was clearly a case of that. The spark of fire, the point of light, sat somewhere in his inward vagueness as a lamp before a shrine twinkles in the dark perspective of a church" (118). Note that the tone mocks Adam while it refracts the text through him. James uses inward vagueness to indicate a lack; after all, James takes interest in rendering the mind clearly (if impressionistically), and there exists a disdain for those who do not possess self-awareness. The passage reflects a mystical quality, hinting that

Verver's genius is a smoke-and-mirrors act. Verver does not realize that others, including Amerigo and the reader, see him as foolish. During the next conversation with Amerigo, Adam stumbles over his words and appears to confirm his slightly deluded and Polonius-like status as the nice, quirky old man at whom everyone smiles and nods. Amerigo does exactly this and “unconfusedly smiled—though indeed as if assenting from principle and habit, to more than he understood. He liked all signs that things were well, but he cared rather less *why* they were” (127). Instantly the reader is confused. Adam Verver appears to be a bumbling fool, yet his assessment of the Prince is direct and accurate. The Prince, who draws the scene in with his personal gravity and who the reader assumes to be the most accurate refractor in the novel, possesses the disturbing quality of willful ignorance. James maintains the contradictions within his characters to force the reader to search for new perspectives without being fed meaning directly from a narrator. This increases the cognitive load required to process the text, and may in part explain why so many critics find this novel stimulating. The more difficult the puzzle, the greater the sense of accomplishment the solver feels upon completion.

In the final pages of his first chapter, Adam reasons that because Cortez did not keep the company of “real” ladies, neither should he (130). James packs an impressive amount of information into passages like these; the reader knows that Verver possesses shoddy logic, misogynistic tendencies (especially because of the strength of James's female characters this clearly indicates a narrow perspective), and a *very* high opinion of himself. Ironically, of course, he will not marry a “real” lady (neither in the sense that Verver means subservient nor the *double entendre* implying virginal). Verver *is* like Cortez: the novel implies that Verver gained his fortune through black market tomb-raiding to supply his collections; both men just take what they want. His mind remains closed for the remainder of the novel, and the next real insight into his thoughts won't appear until the end when Maggie will form what she believes to be an

accurate metarepresentation of her father's mind. Until then, however, Verver does little to nothing in the novel. This brief slice of his perspective functions primarily to allow the reader the ability to form a metarepresentation of Verver independently of the Prince. Verver, although somewhat aloof, remains an interiorly articulate and intelligent individual who believes that “the aspirant to his daughter's hand showed somehow the great marks and signs, stood before him with the high authenticities, he had learned to look for pieces of the first order” (128). Adam's impression of Amerigo is unsettlingly mercantile, but if the reader is convinced of anything about Verver, it is his collector's sense. He considers Amerigo a “pure and perfect crystal” (126). Thus James accomplishes much with very few words: the reader is informed by an expert of Amerigo's quality while simultaneously getting to know the man Adam Verver. Verver, however, comes off as a slave owner—a purchaser of people. He clearly thinks and evaluates Amerigo as an *objet d'art*. He acquires the brilliant Charlotte in much the same manner. James enlists the reader's sympathy toward Amerigo and Charlotte in two ways. First, because of his obsessive dedication to collecting, Amerigo and Charlotte's credibility rises nonetheless. Second, simply, the reader *feels bad* for the pair because they are bought like cattle, even if they are worth millions to the Ververs.

The reader, however, will be more inclined to find the pair likeable in the first half and flawed in the second. Access to the entire world of the novel is limited because James constructs the novel as a binary—half from the Prince's perspective, and half from the Princess's. Neither view is complete because both are too extreme. He purposefully leads the reader off track to demonstrate how easily readers can be manipulated by exposure to a character's inner thoughts. In the first half, James wants the reader to sympathize with Charlotte and Amerigo; in the second, with Maggie and her father. Part of his overall purpose is, not unlike Faulkner's *The*



*Sound and the Fury*, to demonstrate the limitations of perspective and knowledge, especially knowledge of other minds.

James demonstrates the Prince's likability through Amerigo's interactions with Charlotte. In their first conversation to each other, James will also begin patronizing Maggie. Charlotte asks Amerigo: "How is dear Maggie?"; and, later, she remarks: "she's the dearest of the dear" (59, 63). This characterizes Maggie as too innocent to be of much interest. Fanny confirms Charlotte's sentiments by telling her husband, "She wasn't born to know evil. She must never know it" (82). James understands that his audience is educated, and any student of literature knows evil—one reads it in any text. While, here, retrospectively in criticism these statements about Maggie demonstrate the petty nature of Fanny and Charlotte, to the first-time reader they have quite the opposite effect. The reader's metarepresentation of Maggie is likely: "dull." Contrarily, Charlotte and Amerigo are juggling an affair, marriage, and millions; they appear active and interesting. Maggie does nothing noteworthy, so when they criticize her, the reader has no need to disprove, contradict, or even wonder what Maggie is "really" like—to the reader it appears that he or she already knows Maggie.

James focuses the rest of Volume One toward building suspense about Amerigo and Charlotte's affair. Relatively early, Charlotte openly confronts Amerigo with what genuinely appears to be true human emotion:

"Well, now I must tell you, for I want to be absolutely honest." So Charlotte spoke, a little ominously, after they had got into the Park. "I don't want to pretend, and I can't pretend a moment longer. You may think of me what you will, but I don't care. I know I shouldn't and I find now how little. I came back for this. Not really anything else. For this," she repeated as under the influence of her tone the Prince had already come to a pause.

“For 'this'?” He spoke as if the particular thing she indicated were vague to him—or were, rather, a quantity that couldn't at the most be much.

It would be as much however as she should be able to make it. “To have one hour alone with you” (90).

The reader has already been aligned with Amerigo at this point, and one cannot help but feel some sympathy for these characters who have the potential to form a relationship, but are still floundering through life. However, when considered, clearly Charlotte does not just want “one hour alone” with Amerigo. Using Theory of Mind, the reader knows that Amerigo is “playing dumb” when he begs the question “For this?” Charlotte replies with an equally guarded comment, and the reader instantly recognizes the meaning of this awkward and melodramatic conversation: the two people are in love. In the reader's mind, this originally takes the form of wishing that the Amerigo/Maggie marriage does not happen. Eventually, however, James pushes the reader to desire the affair between Amerigo and Charlotte.

If Amerigo were less likable or intelligent, the reader would tag the information differently. It would be easier to see his faults, easier to predict his actions, and easier to question his assumptions. Initially, Amerigo's only fatal flaw presented to the reader is his love of money. James avoids discussing money for most of the novel because the characters all inherently believe that money is a virtue; this is never questioned. Even though Amerigo intends to marry Maggie for money, James humanizes him when the Prince thinks: “A handsome clever odd girl staying with one *was* a complication,” about Charlotte (57). At this point in the novel, the reader has only experienced the world of *The Golden Bowl* as Amerigo. He might not be a moral individual, but the reader's metarepresentation of Amerigo definitely attributes to him perception and reliability. The reader has access to his uncensored thoughts, and all information gets tagged

as “generally reliable” unless the reader evaluates every sentence of the novel in context of the entire work—clearly impossible for the first-time reader.

Charlotte lives up to his characterization throughout the first half of the novel (this will become especially important in the second half, when descriptions of Charlotte become skewed by Maggie's perspective). James exploits the reader's sentimentality, overtly; Charlotte expends her resources to go after the man she loves, before his wedding, under the pretext of spending one platonic afternoon shopping for his future wife and with the real intention of complicating his marriage. But when Amerigo expresses his hesitation about purchasing the golden bowl “For [his] safety,” he opens himself to Charlotte and expresses real human doubt about his future and feelings for her (112). The tone becomes more melancholy and touched with forced laughter, but Amerigo encourages Charlotte to marry for her own happiness—a seemingly selfless gesture, which Charlotte is quick to point out, “To make you feel better” (113). Amerigo, like a true Emersonian moralist, admits that it *will* make him feel better, but asserts that his motives remain pure nonetheless. These are tropes adapted from the sentimental novel: star-crossed lovers giving each other away and stealing one final moment of true love before an ill-fated marriage. They function efficiently at eliciting emotions in any text: normal humans sympathize with others. Amerigo and Charlotte perceive their situation as hopeless and ill-fated, so the reader feels the same way. James stacks the deck here: the reader has been conditioned to accept Amerigo's perspective—at this point in the novel no other alternative is feasible. This response is triggered on an involuntary emotional level but, of course, can be held in check with reason. However, the extent to which the reader sympathizes with Charlotte and Amerigo is not important because an ideal reader holds conflicting views of all the characters and every situation and is capable of sympathy and skepticism. First-time readers may as well invest in hoping that somehow

Charlotte and Amerigo work things out and learn to live a modest, regular lifestyle. Veteran James readers, however, will probably expect a more complicated resolution.

James exploits the sentimental tropes to subvert the reader's expectations. In the sentimental novel, someone would stop the marriage. Instead, James skips the wedding entirely and jumps a few years into the future in Book Second. Stylistically, this allows James to tell the story as a series of “impressions and generalizations gathered” by the Prince (145). Again, this places the reader in Amerigo's perspective. A common Jamesian device, Amerigo recollects the past few years and meditates on the “new and pleasant order” created between the two couples “that might become—why shouldn't it?—one of the comforts of the future” (180). The memories will be impressionistic and bias towards Amerigo's perspective. This passage encapsulates the next major section of the novel: Amerigo and Charlotte will finally explore the possibility of an affair. The subversive, tongue-in-cheek tone can be observed. “Comforts” connotes an excess for these characters. If phrases like “why shouldn't it?” are tagged as coming from James, then the reader understands the double-message: there exists a list of reasons why Charlotte should not become Amerigo's comfort. But, if the reader only tags the information as Amerigo's (without James's sarcasm), then it is unconsciously tagged as “reasonable” or at least “somewhat reasonable.”

By allowing the reader to sympathize with Amerigo and Charlotte, James has already accomplished a significant artistic achievement. The morals behind both marriages should be clear to the reader, yet James insists on providing a counter-perspective. Fanny cautions Charlotte not to give into temptation and “think too much of [her] freedom” and succumb to the temptation of an affair with Amerigo. She cautions Amerigo as well, stating: “You've ornaments enough [...] without her” (220). The effect on the reader, however, consists of a reminder that the premise of both weddings remain forever deeply flawed. Amerigo has enough ornaments, but not

the Ververs? It is the main idea, which never really troubles the characters, but continues to disturb the reader: the purchasing of people. Verver's collector status and his attitude reinforce this fact: he and his daughter treat other people like objects, and nobody really minds because they are rich. This illuminates the entire cast as morally flawed, but must be held in its proper perspective: Amerigo and Charlotte actively seek their own objectification because of monetary greed. Adam and Maggie similarly seek social status. These ideas don't necessarily ever leave the reader's mind—the back of the Penguin edition will inform first-time readers of the immorality of these marriages; as James pulls the reader into the narrative and the reader slips into Amerigo's mind, the reader becomes more willing to consider other views than those expressed by the Penguin copywriters. Around 200 pages of exposure to Amerigo's mind is sufficient length for readers to consider and even outright sympathize with him—and by extension—with Charlotte.

James places the capstone on his first movement by allowing the reader to see Amerigo's self-awareness and emotions. During the dinner conversations which constitute the main thrust of Amerigo's life, “something of him, he often felt at these times, was left out; it was much more when he was alone or when he was with his own people—or when he was, say, with Mrs. Verver and nobody else—that he moved, that he talked, that he listened, that he felt, as a congruous whole” (267). The reader is meant to identify with Amerigo's loneliness and depression. This is a no-win situation, however, for the reader—and a mark of James's genius. One cannot ignore Amerigo's humanity without harming one's thoughts towards Maggie, and one cannot hope for success in Maggie's marriage without ignoring Amerigo's feelings for Charlotte. Complex moral dilemmas like this should remind the reader to avoid searching for a nice, neat conclusion at the end of the text.

#### 4. The Princess

In *The Golden Bowl*, James uses refractors more subtly than most texts by creating complex, attractive characters with major, but human, flaws. Each character describes Maggie, however, as dull. Because of the numerous sources (Adam, Fanny, Amerigo, Charlotte), it does not matter that Adam does not understand people very well, that Fanny is a flighty gossip subject—like readers—to the other characters' passing emotions, and that Charlotte is jealous of Maggie's marriage because if everyone thinks something, then the reader will forget the source and simply remember that “Maggie is dull.” Amerigo, as a seemingly reliable refractor, confirms the other three's opinion of the Princess, and this creates doubt in the reader's mind about Maggie's prospects as an interesting refractor in the second half.

But all of the metarepresentations formed in the first half of the novel are subverted immediately in Volume 2. Soon, the lovers are revealed to be rather incompetent. They conduct their affair in an outrageous fashion, probably gleaned from fiction. Yet James constricts the reader with their perspective primarily throughout the first half of the novel. The shift in Book II is abrupt. James opens with his analysis of Maggie's developing consciousness, or, more accurately, her first confrontation with tragedy and her first experience with considering deception. This is Maggie's first struggle with the difference between others' exterior and interior. However, even with her sheltered experience, she suspects an affair three months prior to the assumed consummation. The reader must modify his or her metarepresentation of Maggie's mind. Maggie sees the affair coming, can read the body language between the two, and, once James provides the reader with access to her mind, becomes highly intelligent and rational. The narrator tells the reader:

It was not till many days had passed that the Princess began to accept the idea of having done, a little, something she was not always doing, or indeed that of having listened to any inward voice that spoke in a new tone. Yet these instinctive postponements of reflection were the fruit, positively, of recognitions and perceptions already active; of the sense, above all, that she had made, at a particular hour, made by the mere touch of her hand, a difference in the situation so long present to her as practically unattackable. This situation had been occupying for months and months the very centre of the garden of her life, but it had reared itself there like some strange tall tower of ivory, or perhaps rather some wonderful beautiful but outlandish pagoda, a structure plated with hard bright porcelain, coloured and figured and adorned at the overhanging eaves with silver bells that tinkled ever so charmingly when stirred by chance airs. She had walked round and round it—that was what she felt; she had carried on her existence in the space left her for circulation, a space that sometimes seemed ample and sometimes narrow: looking up, all the while, at the fair structure that spread itself so amply and rose so high, but never quite making out, as yet, where she might have entered had she wished. She had not wished till now—such was the odd case; and what was doubtless equally odd, besides, was that, though her raised eyes seemed to distinguish places that must serve, from within, and especially far aloft, as apertures and outlooks, no door appeared to give access from her convenient garden level. (327)

The change in tone is quite noticeable, and it should be clear that the text slips, to a certain extent, into the mind of Maggie as she becomes the primary refractor for the remaining half. The pagoda is an impressionistic metaphor for how she views the situation in her head. It proves her

similarity to her father (who thought of Amerigo as a giant church in his courtyard of life) and the presence of her imagination, agitation, jealousy, and all around human despair at the situation (124-6). It also serves as a metaphor for the reader's realization of Maggie's cognitive power: both dominate their landscapes like exotic structures. As Maggie begins to understand her social circle, the reader will begin to understand more about Maggie. James makes it clear that Maggie has a dramatic epiphany in which she starts to understand that a subtext exists to life of which she is not privileged. However, her mind has been "already active," so the reader knows that his or her metarepresentation of Maggie needs to be revised. However, like Maggie, the reader is paralyzed and can do nothing save continue reading. Maggie does not know how to approach this strange idea (that something with her marriage is not right), and James crafts her problems to mimic the reader's struggle to understand that something has been wrong with the way in which he or she has been approaching the text thus far. If Maggie is interesting, then Amerigo has failed to see her value, and if he fails at that, he perhaps fails in his other perceptions. Naturally, the reader sympathizes with Maggie because she is the victim of the adultery. This begins an identical process as the one witnessed in the first half, except this time James is not burdened by exposition and he never deviates in purpose. He builds credibility for Maggie and refracts the text through her.

All the characters find Maggie a little dull, so it is curious how readily the reader is willing to adopt her perspective so readily in the second half. The combination of emotional sympathy, lengthy embodied cognition, and the vivid power of Maggie's imagination make her extremely likeable, and being thus exposed to Maggie's mind almost guarantees that some information gets incorrectly tagged. In her article "First Shock of Complete Perception': The Opening Episode of *The Golden Bowl*, Volume 2," Dorrit Cohn accurately describes the effect on a reader upon realizing the cognitive potential inside Maggie evidenced on the first page of



Volume 2 (1). James shocks the reader, who understands that he or she, like the Prince, has held an incomplete theory of Maggie's mind. However, this is also a ruse. The reader may hastily conclude that "The Prince" half was false, and, therefore, "The Princess" will redeem the novel. The reader understands the misdirection of which James is capable after the first half, yet the misdirection in the second half is so well executed that it has confused many literary critics for years.

Her intricate impressions, like the pagoda, make her interesting to the reader. James plans on using the same technique of forcing the reader to align with a character's perspective in the second half. Here he will expose the flaws of absolutism: just because the Prince was wrong about some things does not mean that Maggie will be right about everything. However, the reader sinks into her mind and begins to accept Maggie's perspective as the one with which he or she should identify. Maggie feels, with conviction, that she acts out of goodness. It becomes easy to tag her opinions as "fact" because James never lets the reader out of Maggie's mind. The reader imagines life as Maggie imagines life, and, disturbingly, adopts her perspective against rational judgment.

After disrupting the reader's metarepresentation of Maggie's mind, James is free to set the first scene like a play. Amerigo shows up at home, suspiciously late. There is a sense of impending triumph because the reader knows that Maggie is eventually going to uncover the affair and expose the adulterers who have wronged her. Husband and wife stare at each other; each character knows the other's mind, yet external circumstances force each to continue upon a plan of action, which demonstrates an alternate, false state of mind. Maggie must pretend as though she knows nothing, and Amerigo must pretend as though he did not just spend the day in a sleazy hotel with Charlotte. Yet both characters must acknowledge a certain air of strangeness in the situation—why is Maggie just sitting alone in the dark waiting for Amerigo? The sunset

adds dramatic tension by coloring the scene orange, red, and shades of black. Amerigo calms his wife's suspicions for a while, and the reader understands the “sense of possession” Maggie feels exists mutually between her and Amerigo (339). The reader already knows she is headed for heartbreak, and James continuously builds sympathy for Maggie.

Maggie judges her success at the end of the novel by her perceived ability to deftly handle the complexities of saving her marriage. The reader, because of embodied cognition, naturally wants to believe that Maggie achieves some moral victory in the end. However, as the following key passages demonstrate, Maggie's ability both to form metarepresentation and to act quickly in social situations ultimately remains lacking. Fanny asks, “if [Amerigo] neither denies nor confesses—?” to which Maggie replies, “He does what's a thousand times better—he lets it alone. He does,' Maggie went on,'"as he *would* do; as I see now I was quite sure he would. He lets *me* alone” (483). This statement clearly solidifies Maggie and the Prince's mutual knowledge of the affair. If Maggie knows that there is something to leave alone, then Maggie really does know about the affair. The smashing of the golden bowl confirms this reading. Maggie simply cannot cope with a face-to-face conversation, so she rambles contradictions to Fanny. She passively confronts Amerigo with the bowl rather than accusing him outright. After everyone sees her on the balcony with Charlotte:

Maggie was to feel after this passage how they had both been helped through it by the influence of that accident of her having been caught a few nights before in the familiar embrace of her father's wife. His return to the saloon had chanced to coincide exactly with this demonstration, missed moreover neither by her husband nor by the Assinghams, who, their card-party suspended, had quitted the billiard-room with him. She had been conscious enough at the time of what such an impression, received by the others, might in that extended state do for her case;

and none the less that, as no one had appeared to wish to be the first to make a remark about it, it had taken on perceptibly the special shade of consecration conferred by unanimities of silence. The effect, she might have considered, had been almost awkward—the promptitude of her separation from Charlotte, as if they had been discovered in some absurdity, on her becoming aware of spectators. The spectators on the other hand—that was the appearance—mightn't have supposed them, in the existing relation, addicted to mutual endearments; and yet, hesitating with a fine scruple between sympathy and hilarity, must have felt that almost any spoken or laughed comment could be kept from sounding vulgar only by sounding beyond any permitted measure intelligent. (527)

Here James shows how Maggie experiences social anxiety when faced with direct interaction. She remains incapable of this when her emotions are active. Soon after, James continues by giving the reader Maggie's mental processing of Charlotte's body language:

Maggie's own measure had remained all the same full of the reflexion caught from the total inference; which had acted virtually by enabling every one present—and oh Charlotte not least!—to draw a long breath. The message of the little scene had been different for each, but it had been this, markedly, all round, that it re-enforced—re-enforced even immensely—the general effort, carried on from week to week and of late distinctly more successful, to look and talk and move as if nothing in life were the matter. (527)

She can barely speak around Amerigo or Charlotte. Instead of confronting Charlotte, Maggie does nothing because she can physically do nothing. These characters are dedicated to a lie, and Maggie understands this, but beyond the affair, nothing else seems to trouble her.

At this point, however, the novel begins a shift: Maggie's thoughts will degenerate and test the reader's ability to separate the bias created by embodied cognition. Consider Maggie's observation of Charlotte at the end of the novel:

Charlotte hung behind with emphasised attention; she stopped when her husband stopped, but at the distance of a case or two, or of whatever other succession of objects; and the likeness of their connexion wouldn't have been wrongly figured if he had been thought of as holding in one of his pocketed hands the end of a long silken halter looped round her beautiful neck. He didn't twitch it, yet it was there; he didn't drag her, but she came; and those betrayals that I have described the Princess as finding irresistible in him were two or three mute facial intimations which his wife's presence didn't prevent his addressing his daughter—nor prevent his daughter, as she passed, it was doubtless to be added, from flushing a little at the receipt of. They amounted perhaps only to a wordless, 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. (535)

Here, the reader experiences Maggie's surprise and pleasure at Charlotte's defeat. Neither her reaction, nor Adam's, provides a mature model of how to act. Maggie has grown as a person, but morally, neither she nor Adam learn compassion or empathy. Verver makes fun of Charlotte using covert facial expressions, and the two *bond* over this. If anything, Verver especially seems to regress as the novel progresses. At the end, he both enjoys his wife's unhappiness and looks forward to exercising his dominance over her in America. Make no mistake: this is vengeance, and it destroys one's humanity. His smile signifies his pleasure, and Maggie treasures and nurtures this hate. She indulges these emotions behind closed doors.

Passages like this reveal the true complexity of Maggie's character. Despite an active and powerful intellect, she remains socially and emotionally stunted. Maggie avoids confrontation during the card game, but Book 5 ends with a relatively open showing of both women's hands, which subsequently allows the reader to better understand both women. Charlotte goes into the garden with the incorrect volume of a novel. Maggie rushes out with the correct version, and the narrator informs the reader that "it was a repetition more than ever of the evening on the terrace" (551). Like the terrace scene, the conversation is loaded with double meanings as the characters' speech orbits around the real topic of discussion. The pretext revolves around Charlotte blaming Maggie for spending too much time with Adam; however, the reader understands Charlotte's state of mind. Her admissions of love to Amerigo and her entire character testify that she would prefer to be around Amerigo first, but if she cannot be with him, then she wants money. Several possible states of mind exist, to be sure, for Charlotte. If she wants to leave Europe, it is not to bond with Adam, but to get away from Maggie. The following passage demonstrates the women's mutual animosity:

[Charlotte], leaving her, had reached one of the archways, but on this turned round with a flare. "You haven't worked against me?"

Maggie took it and for a moment kept it; held it, with closed eyes, as if it had been some captured fluttering bird pressed by both hands to her breast. Then she opened her eyes to speak. "What does it matter—if I've failed?"

"You recognize then that you've failed?" asked Charlotte from the threshold. (557)

Charlotte, in the lines preceding the selection, continues to press Maggie by insisting that she's moving to Europe because she wants to. Readers should recognize this as a basic childhood taunting technique. Charlotte, knowing that Maggie is childish and emotional, successfully uses

this trick on Maggie. Maggie accuses Charlotte of sleeping with Amerigo. Charlotte arrogantly confirms. James reverses the metaphor, and instead of “getting things off her chest,” Maggie clutches the accusation like a treasure. Maggie's failure is in this game of wits and in her marriage to Amerigo. Charlotte wins this particular encounter and Amerigo. Maggie perceives her own success as Charlotte's exile; the reader perceives no success, only petty squabbles.

James's choice of novel volumes proves interesting; it symbolizes the reader's struggle to “find the correct volume” in *The Golden Bowl*. The novel in the text, however, is broken up into three volumes, not two—a subtle reminder to the reader that the binary structure of *The Golden Bowl* is incomplete. Maggie's volume is like the Prince's: it is incomplete. The Ververs treat people like objects without a second thought, *explicitly* thinking of others as objects. They treat Charlotte like a dog, and no one cares. They laugh and joke. In the end, the moral that Maggie learns is:

Whoever knew, or whoever didn't, whether or to what extent Charlotte, with natural business in Eaton Square, had shuffled other opportunities under that cloak, it was all matter for the kind of quiet ponderation the little man who so kept his wandering way had made his own. It was part of the very inveteracy of his straw hat and his white waistcoat, of the trick of his hands in his pockets, of the detachment of the attention he fixed on his slow steps from behind his secure pince-nez. The thing that never failed now as an item in the picture was that gleam of the silken noose, his wife's immaterial tether, so marked to Maggie's sense during her last month in the country. Mrs. Verver's straight neck had certainly not slipped it; nor had the other end of the long cord—oh quite conveniently long!—disengaged its smaller loop from the hooked thumb that, with his fingers closed upon it, her husband kept out of sight. To have recognised,

for all its tenuity, the play of this gathered lasso might inevitably be to wonder with what magic it was twisted, to what tension subjected, but could never be to doubt either of its adequacy to its office or of its perfect durability. These reminded states for the Princess were in fact states of renewed gaping. So many things her father knew that she even yet didn't! (568)

The first pitfall James places in the path of readers is the tendency to view Verver as some sort of brilliant zen master who flows with the world rather than attempting to bend it to his will.

Readers should instantly recognize that this viewpoint does not agree with a rational theory of Adam Verver's mind. The text is refracted through Maggie, and the views in the passage are solely hers. Adam amazes Maggie, but the reader should see things more clearly than the characters. Remembering Volume One, the reader understands that Verver collects people, and his treatment of Charlotte does little to modify this metarepresentation. He still holds the silken noose, and the description is again extended and perverse. The attention to Charlotte's neck and the noose emphasizes her upcoming "punishment" in American City. Maggie, in her imagination, places Charlotte in bondage. James emphasizes her perversity by having her father dominate the other woman. This is Maggie's imagination, and James intends to invoke discomfort in the reader.

James couples this discomfort, like so much of the text, in yet another misdirection. The tone of Maggie's consciousness becomes undeniably triumphant, but it is a hollow victory filled with empty rhetoric. The characters, however, are impressed by this victory, and Fanny explains:

"You think, both of you, so abysmally and yet so quietly. But it's what will have saved you."

“Oh,” Maggie returned, “it's what—from the moment they discovered we could think at all—will have saved *them*. For they're the ones who are saved,' she went on. 'We're the ones who are lost.’”

“Lost—?”

“Lost to each other—father and I.” And then as her friend appeared to demur, “Oh yes,” Maggie quite lucidly declared, “lost to each other really much more than Amerigo and Charlotte are; since for them it's just, it's right, it's deserved, while for us it's only sad and strange and not caused by our fault. But I don't know,” she went on, “why I talk about myself, for it's on father it really comes. I let him go,” said Maggie. (570)

Maggie thinks she possesses an accurate truth, but the reader possesses more truth. Is Maggie, as she would have Fanny believe, totally blameless? Maggie selectively forgets the inappropriate amount of time she and her father spend together. Even in her own speech, she is not entirely self-aware that *she* did not *let* anyone go: an affair forced her actions and she blundered through it. Every truth has been subverted thus far: the first half is proved incomplete and a careful examination exemplifies how much of the second half is as well. However, the logical extension of this idea demands that the reader not only avoids accepting Maggie's thoughts uncritically, but that he or she avoids criticizing her too severely because, despite her flaws, Maggie does possess some positive qualities. Consider the following construction of Charlotte's state of mind, imagined by Maggie, at the beginning of Book Sixth:

You don't know what it is to have been loved and broken with. You haven't been broken with, because in *your* relation what can there have been worth speaking of to break? Ours was everything a relation could be, filled to the brim with the wine of consciousness; and if it was to have no meaning, no better meaning than that



such a creature as you could breathe upon it, at your hour, for blight, why was I myself dealt with all for deception? (567)

There is a profound sense of self-awareness here, but James blends part truth and ignorance. This is not Charlotte's state of mind; it is a metarepresentation. The text, thus far, has been trying to demonstrate how wrong these metarepresentations are; they fill the text with ambiguity.

Admittedly, Maggie has been hurt, and readers can sympathize with her plight and upbringing, but James does not intend for the reader to identify completely with her perspective:

Our young woman so yielded at moments to what was insidious in these foredoomed ingenuities of her pity that for minutes together sometimes the weight of a new duty seemed to rest upon her—the duty of speaking before separation should constitute its chasm, of pleading for some benefit that might be carried away into exile like the last saved object of price of the *émigré*, the jewel wrapped in a piece of old silk and negotiable some day in the market of misery. (567)

This passage is meant ironically to highlight Maggie's depravity, not her noble morality. She wants to hurt Charlotte more; she wants to “tell her off” (but decides to keep quiet). Maggie is a woman of contradictions. The ideas in the above passages are refracted through her mind, and James adds the sarcasm (which can be confused with sincerity). A jewel in a market of misery can, of course, only purchase more misery.

The reader's ultimate goal is neither moral condemnation nor self-righteousness, but understanding. Maggie and others might think of America as exile, but nothing will save Charlotte like escaping the mold, mildew, and amorality of Europe. Readers are forced to identify with Amerigo, then Maggie, but James treats Charlotte at a distance. The novel's greatest challenge is perhaps to sympathize with the one character truly sacrificed by the others,

to see the perspective not presented in the text—not just the perspective presented at the end of the text.

In her book *The Turn of the Mind*, Adré Marshall sympathizes with Maggie and praises her ability to predict other states of mind: “This activity is exemplified in Maggie; acting in fidelity to her belief that ‘One must always, whether or no, have some imagination of the states of others,’ Maggie projects herself into the state of mind of others so that she can adopt their perspective” (200). Several problems exist with this assessment: primarily, the implication that this process is unique to Maggie; on the contrary, it is automatic and present in every typical human mind (authors, however, will rarely evenly distribute the true states of characters' minds to the reader). Secondly, that Maggie successfully predicts other minds with exceptional skill within the text. Marshall misses the irony in James's text completely: Maggie's projections into others' thoughts are flawed, and flawed metarepresentations are not useful, may, in fact, be detrimental to the individual. Additionally, Maggie's “whether or no” betrays her tendency to accept surface appearances and jump to hasty conclusions. She concludes at the end of the novel that she knows everything; Amerigo knows she knows everything; Adam suspects; and Charlotte has no idea what is happening. With the exception of Amerigo, the other assumptions are likely false. (Verver *certainly* knows what happened, Charlotte, likewise, could not help but intuit the contours of the situation.) Maggie's hope for the future with Amerigo remains equally dim: he loves the money and shows no signs of changing. Readers could admire a character who abandoned a fortune for love despite the consequences. Amerigo's decisions reflect a more materialistic character. Maggie still lacks access to her husband thoughts and never sees Amerigo as the selfish individual who he truly is.

James presents the converse as the better alternative: instead of simply having any idea, having a flexible idea of the state of others' minds will allow for adaptability and welcome

ambiguity. Maggie does not achieve victory over humanity, she joins the ranks. When reading *The Golden Bowl*, the reader must form metarepresentations of the characters' minds similarly to how he or she would form metarepresentations of real people. Zunshine observes that “Theory of Mind makes reading fiction possible, but reading fiction does not make us into better mind-readers, at least not in the way that I can theorize confidently at this early stage of our knowledge about cognitive information processing” (Zunshine 35). However, should not neural pathways be built the more we read fiction? Certainly there is a correlation between the generally accepted complexity of a text and the amount of previous reading performed by an eager reader in the past. I would argue that if one reads deliberately and diversely, then one noticeably becomes a better reader quite quickly. Anyone affiliated with a university English department will have personally witnessed people getting better at reading by reading. Readers understand Maggie better than she understands herself. One reads her thoughts, and one can watch her objectively (something an individual cannot do to one's self). Maggie is sensitive and inexperienced, and her thoughts and words are often jumbled or incorrect. She is spoiled; I argue that James's perspective lies far outside of Maggie's and the narrator's, where he intends the reader to sit and observe as well.

Understanding Theory of Mind and embodied cognition are of central importance to understanding *The Golden Bowl*. Because the process of forming metarepresentations, like breathing, can be a conscious or subconscious activity, by consciously examining how one views the characters, how James might wish the reader to view his characters, and how the characters view each other, the reader becomes aware of the various tricks that James uses to encourage a misreading of his text. Ultimately, James wants to demonstrate the complexity of social knowledge; if he can convince the reader to adopt one perspective, then later subvert those

expectations, then James succeeds as a writer. This basic formula applies to all narratives: surprise, subverted expectations, and ambiguity can be found in any good story.

Humans will seek out a primary perspective in a narrative. By strategically denying the reader access to characters' minds, James forces the reader to confront an impossible moral dilemma by exploiting the human capacity to feel empathy when generating metarepresentations of states of minds. When one thinks of Charlotte as lonely, one *feels* loneliness, and most good-natured readers want these people, somehow, to be happy. James will not allow happiness because it plays into the reader's expectations—instead he will further complicate the narrative, which requires the reader to deeply question, evaluate, and re-evaluate his or her understanding of each of the characters. The binary vision present remains flawed in the end: the novel functions as a call to seek out ambiguity and value flexible assumptions, both in the text and in life.

Maggie's confusion and difficulty mimic the reader's own difficulty in processing the text. This layered structure has proven interesting to readers, and understanding cognitive functions explains why. James couples this with an understanding that binary views are unacceptable. Perfection in art implies sterility, and James successfully uses a flawed structure to demonstrate the underlying problems with binary views. James's final novel is an ultimate attempt to explore narrative and human nature; it is an instructive text. These concepts are simple to understand, but because they normally function on an unconscious level, a tutor text, like *The Golden Bowl*, can be instrumental in expanding the reader's mind by making him or her acutely aware of the processes of forming metarepresentations, tagging, and embodied cognition.

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## Vita

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