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Henry James and the Well-Made Play

by

Vivian Celia Casper

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INTRODUCTION

Almost every conceivable scholarly approach relating to Henry James' creative process or imaginative rendering of fictional material has been taken in the last few decades of scholarship and criticism, which has steadily grown since the 1930's when critical interest in James was renewed.

In comparison to the studies made concerning his shorter tales and longer novels, however, little has been done on his dramatic canon, which is usually dismissed as occupying a misguided, experimental "middle period" of the author or, more importantly, connected with his dramatic bent as seen in his technique of the novel and short story. For example, of James' effort in dramatizing *Daisy Miller* F. W. Dupee says, "His turning to the theatre for a quick and conspicuous success was now, as later in his life, a distress signal";¹ and Dupee further speaks of the years devoted to playwriting by James as critical and "evil."² In 1949 Leon Edel edited *The Complete Plays of Henry James* in which volume are supplied biographical and circumstantial facts connected with the dramas. In Mr. Edel's work, as in several other studies,³ James' debt to Scribe and his disciples is acknowledged; but there has
not yet been a systematic study of the dramatic technique of the plays of Henry James.

The theatre was an important part of Henry James' life. He was an avid theatregoer from his boyhood, a young boy participating in neighborhood theatricals, a teenager writing his own dramas and illustrating their texts, a drama critic during his early manhood; and in middle life he attempted to realize his lifelong dream of becoming a successful playwright. Born in New York City on April 15, 1843, Henry James spent his early childhood in an intense cultural, theological, and philosophical atmosphere provided in the James household. He was privately tutored both in the United States and abroad where the family lived between 1855 and 1860. Upon his return to the United States he entered the Harvard Law School, but he abandoned his studies after two years in order to devote himself to literary efforts. In the middle 1860's he began contributing to the Nation, the Galaxy, the North American Review, the Atlantic, and the New York Tribune. By 1882 when he adapted Daisy Miller into his first full-length play, he had published the novels Roderick Hudson (1875), The American (1877), Watch and Ward, The Europeans, and Daisy Miller (1878), Confidence (1879-1880) Portrait of a Lady (1880-1881), and Washington Square (1880); the
tales A Passionate Pilgrim and Other Tales (1875), Four Meetings (1877), The Madonna of the Future and Other Tales, and An International Episode (1879), A Bundle of Letters (1880), and The Pension Beaurepas (1881); and the essays and travel pieces Transatlantic Sketches (1875), French Poets and Novelists (1878), and Hawthorne (1879).

After the play Daisy Miller failed to make the boards in 1882 and he published it in 1883, Henry James returned to the writing of fiction. Before he wrote the stage version of The American in 1890 he composed the novels The Bostonians and The Princess Casamassima (1886), The Reverberator and The Aspern Papers (1888), and The Tragic Muse (1890); tales such as The Point of View (1882), The Siege of London (1883), and Tales of Three Cities (1884); and essays and travel pieces such as Foreign Parts and Portraits of Places (1883) and The Art of Fiction (1885). When the novels did not sell, his alleged motive to make money led him apprehensively into his "more characteristic form," the drama; and he devoted five years to writing plays, (1890-1895). The American was written in 1890. Tenants (1890) and Disengaged (1892) appeared in 1894 in the volume Theatricals: Two Comedies. The Album and The Reprobate, both written in 1891, appeared in print in Theatricals: Second Series in
1895. **Guy Domville** was written in 1893.

Although James laid the novel aside during these five dramatic years, tales and articles continued to stream from his prolific pen. Leon Edel sums up his efforts:

> Between the production of *The American* in 1890 and *Guy Domville* in the first days of 1895, he wrote nineteen tales including such masterpieces as *The Real Thing*, *The Altar of the Dead*, *Sir Edmund Orme*, *The Chaperon*, *The Marriages*, *The Death of the Lion*, *The Coxon Fund* and thirteen articles ranging from memorials to his lately dead friends, James Russell Lowell, Fanny Kemble, and Robert Browning, to critical discussions of Ibsen and Flaubert. He saw six volumes of tales and essays through the press during the dramatic years.\(^5\)

Edel further points out the themes of death, artistic frustration, fear, and anxiety which appear in the tales of this period of James' career and relates them autobiographically to James.\(^6\) Dupee says of these writings, "They kept his sensibility alive through the evil days. They were a token of his eventual recovery from crisis."\(^7\) Edel finds autobiography in the writings of the post-dramatic years as well, such work as *The Other House* (1896), *What Maisie Knew* (1897), and *The Turn of the Screw* (1898). "The Henry James who had retreated from his older brother rather than compete with him; the
celibate Henry, whose life would never be shared with his own children (whose author in The Lesson of the Master describes children as contributing to 'damnation, artistically speaking'), dreamed tales of children assaulted by great forces of aggression. And since these dreams sprang full-blown from his mind at this climactic moment in his literary career, we must accept them as evidence of the inner disturbance provoked by his theatrical failures."

Before James was to return to writing for the theatre in 1907 he had also written the novels which are now considered his masterpieces: The Wings of the Dove (1902), The Ambassadors (1903), and The Golden Bowl (1904) and more tales, essays and travel pieces. Upon request he converted Covering End into the play The High Bid in 1907. In 1908 and 1909 he converted The Other House into a play and wrote The Outcry while completing work on the definitive New York edition of his novels and tales. Edel compares this second dramatic period with the first:

What is striking in this second phase is his choice of subject when compared with the themes of the dramatic years. With the exception of The American, which had been a novel, and Guy Domville, which treated a psychological conflict, he had sought largely to be entertaining on a superficial level. The plays of the second phase are impregnated with the spirit of the new drama; they are topical,
touched lightly at moments with what we would now call "social consciousness," as if James were making a bid for the audiences of Shaw, Galsworthy, and Granville-Barker.9

Perhaps if any one play or even all of them together would insure their creator a place in the history of the stage, it would be the history of written drama, not the history of produced plays; for only two of James' dramas achieved even a respectable run.10 However, Henry James entered into the creation of them with great dreams and dedicated energy. As Edel says, "It would be inaccurate to dismiss the plays themselves as having served only as a school of experience for the final works, the so-called 'major phase.'"11 Nor is it fair to study or to judge them apart from any other principles than that which guided their author in writing them. Critics usually seek the reasons for the general failure of the plays without regarding the author's intention. Dupee says that "Shaw was to conclude years later that James failed as a playwright because his language, however distinguished, was too literary for the stage and because his '19th century fatalism and pessimism' were outmoded. Yet Chekhov's 'pessimism' had not prevented him from making a great contribution to the theater; and if James had written his plays with his sensibility he would probably have been closer to Chekhov than to Sardou."12 H. M.
Walbrook says that James failed for two reasons: first because he wrote his novels in one spirit—joy and confidence—and his plays in another—dejection—and secondly that he "absorbed the wholly conventional ideals of drama far too literally." Walbrook here as Dupee with his "if" criticizes James for writing well-made plays. Brander Matthews links James' failure to his detestation of his audience. "And even if he had designed to give them his best, he could not have done it, because a miniaturist cannot make himself over into a scene painter. . . . the super-subtleties in which Henry James excelled were impossible in the theatre." Again the failure is not connected with James' success in writing the type of play which he considered to be the only form, the type of play which his contemporaries were successfully producing. Henry Popkin, who recognizes James' "intention to do what Sardou was doing in Paris," nevertheless says, "In the last analysis Henry James was a novelist who wrote for the theatre—but for an extremely special kind of theatre, the theatre of his reader's imagination. Even his plays require that kind of theatre, which is why they remain something less than satisfying works of dramatic art." Edwin Clark acknowledges James' debt to the Théâtre Français, but he chastises James for accepting the French structure —"What blinded James to
defects of his play [Disengaged] was his unquestioning confidence in the outmoded techniques of the Théâtre Français. How could one so fastidious accept such a static method with its fixed, impotent, artificial conventions as the way to do a light comedy?"—and says that "by the time he began to attack the theatre, this variety of drama was outmoded." 16 It is the purpose of this thesis to consider the plays of Henry James in relation to the dramatic technique which he attempted to use and to judge his success or failure according to his handling of that structure.

Dramatic technique, like all other techniques, has no agreed-upon definition other than the accepted one that it should exist for the artist but remain concealed for all others. Percival Wilde calls the technique of the dramatist "that special equipment by means of which he imparts to his work such clearness, such reasonableness, and such interest that when played before an audience it will produce the effect he desires. It is accumulated common sense, expressed not in 'laws,' but in instinctive recognition of broad principles, variable in their application as the dramatist himself." 17 William Archer makes a statement which may be particularly applicable to Henry James: "One thing is certain, and must be emphasized from the outset: namely, that if any part of
the dramatist's art can be taught, it is only a comparatively mechanical and formal part—the art of structure. One may learn how to tell a story in good dramatic form; how to develop and marshal it in such a way as best to seize and retain the interest of a theatrical audience. But no teaching or study can enable a man to choose or invent a good story, and much less to do that which alone lends dignity to dramatic story-telling—to observe and portray human character. This is the aim and end of all serious drama."18

The latter part of this statement will be referred to later, but first it would be well to establish James' own utterances on dramatic technique and then to relate them to the accepted methods which dominated the stage for which he wrote.

Leon Edel in his introductory section, "Henry James: the Dramatic Years," in The Complete Plays of Henry James quotes from a review of Tennyson's Queen Mary by James published in The Galaxy, September 1875. A part of the quotation will serve to indicate James' high regard for dramatic structure:

The fine thing in a real drama, generally speaking, is that, more than any other work of literary art, it needs a masterly structure. It needs to be shaped and fashioned and laid together, and this process makes a demand upon an artist's
rarest gifts. He must combine and arrange, interpolate and eliminate, play the joiner with the most attentive skill; and yet at the end effectually bury his tools and his sawdust, and invest his elaborate skeleton with the smoothest and most polished integument. The five-act drama—serious or humorous, poetic or prosaic—is like a box of fixed dimensions and inelastic material, into which a mass of precious things are to be packed away. It is a problem in ingenuity and a problem of the most interesting kind. The precious things in question seem out of all proportion to the compass of the receptacle; but the artist has an assurance that with patience and skill a place may be made for each, and that nothing need be clipped or crumpled, squeezed or damaged. The false dramatist either knocks out the sides of his box, or plays the deuce with the contents; the real one gets down on his knees, disposes of his goods tentatively, this, that, and the other way, loses his temper but keeps his ideal, and at last rises in triumph, having packed his coffer in the one way that is mathematically right. It closes perfectly, and the lock turns with a click; between one object and another you cannot insert the point of a penknife.

To work successfully beneath a few grave, rigid laws, is always a strong man's highest ideal of success. . . .

In a letter to Gertrude Elliott, October 22, 1908, James says, "I claim for myself infinite ingenuity in the whole dramatic and theatrical mystery and craft. . . ." To his brother William James, February 2, 1895, he writes, "I have worked like a horse—far harder
than any one will ever know—over the whole stiff mystery of 'technique'—I have run it to earth, and I don't in the least hesitate to say that, for the comparatively poor and meagre, the piteously simplified, purposes of the English stage, I have made it absolutely my own, put it into my pocket."

But James had not sat down by himself and picked his "technique" out of the air. To William he had written from France on July 29, 1876, "I know the Théâtre Français by heart!" and from London on May 1, 1878, "I have thoroughly mastered Dumas, Augier, and Sardou... and I know all they know and a great deal more besides." It remains to be seen whether or not he had "thoroughly mastered Dumas, Augier, and Sardou." But in order to understand this dramatic technique of which Henry James spoke, it is necessary to be familiar with the existence of the well-made play (the pièce bien faite) as practiced by Scribe and his successful disciples, Dumas, Augier, and Sardou.
CHAPTER ONE

THE WELL-MADE PLAY

Adapted from the French theatre, the pièce bien faite, the well-made play, succeeded the popular melodramas to which the English theatre had declined. Although the well-made play was beginning to dominate the English stage soon after the middle of the nineteenth century, its genuine replacement of earlier forms, its serving as drama reform, according to Downer, occurred with the production of Society by T. W. Robertson at the Prince-of-Wales Theatre in 1865 in which contemporary conditions were treated in realistic vein. The form of the well-made play, usually said to be created by Scribe, has been described by various people, ordinarily with accompanying derogatory remarks for its static formula. In his general introduction to The Social Plays of Arthur Wing Pinero, Clayton Hamilton is among the exceptions to the general rule of condemnation when he says:

This formula has been denounced—
in very recent years—by critics
of that same anarchic type as those
who sneer at Tennyson for the reason
that he wrote verse with the uttermost
professional adroitness and with rever¬
cent respect for those technical traditions
which were established by his noblest
predecessors. In the mouths of such
critics, the very phrase—"a well-made play"—is bandied forth as a sort of slogan of reproach. They contend that the drama should be undramatic and that the theatre should be untheatrical. To be consistent, they should amplify their programme and insist that all art should be inartistic.

Downer labels the creator of the well-made play "an industrious hack." Most critics tend to object to the well-made play as an attempt to organize all drama. Fergusson tries to fit the well-made play into its proper perspective: "It is essentially a rationalized art of plotmaking, with a very narrow purpose;" "it does not envisage the art of the drama as the imitation of action at all, but as a means of gripping the audience in abstraction from all content whatever. Its purpose is solely to catch the mind of the audience, and to hold it by alternately satisfying and thwarting the needs of the discursive reason. That is why, like engineering, it is so generally useful." While the preceding statement is not altogether true, Fergusson further remarks that "the principles of the well-made play define, not all drama, but a very limited form of drama." Levy praises this limited dramatic form by saying that it "developed to a point of remarkable finish a drama that was a blend of comedy, melodrama, and intrigue."
Stanton, probably the main authority on the well-made play, pays the form a high compliment in saying that the social play would have been non-existent were it not for the well-made play structure. 8

Invented by Scribe, imported into England, perfected for the English stage by Henry Arthur Jones and Arthur Wing Pinero in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the well-made play monopolized the theatre at this time and all but banished the older forms and classic revivals. 9 Stanton says that it "was serviceable to two kinds of British dramatist: the kind that wanted nothing but to exploit the proved methods of one of the most commercially successful playwrights in history [Scribe], and the kind that saw how a deadly satire of Victorian complacency could be devised from the inversion of these methods." 10

Although the well-made play is discussed per se in books of dramaturgy as though its reality were never to be doubted, its real existence is intangible enough to justify and even to demand the statement that no such dramatic form does exist in clear-cut silhouette. The name "well-made" has been given to a type of play in which dramatic construction tells a story through outward structure more than by means of internal characterization. The structure becomes more than a manner
of arranging and presenting material. It often is the material of the plot itself. By means of analyzing the plays of dramatists known to be committed to such a type of structure, certain characteristics have been pointed out. Once these characteristics are known, or perhaps even before they are overtly recognized, one can almost feel that a play is or is not well-made. With a little experience one can even nearly always predict the outcome of a well-made plot after the first act.\textsuperscript{11} The term "well-made" will be used in this study with the knowledge that it is an arbitrary designation, a label suggesting the presence of certain structural characteristics rather than standing for a definite form.

This whole problem of the reality of the well-made play, a particular form, is connected in a larger sense with the reality of drama itself. Donald Stuart has recognized this when he says, "Drama exists when a human being pretends, for artistic reasons, that he is something or someone else. Drama is more than imitation. A portrait is an imitation, an artistic likeness. Drama is an artistic illusion, although it is not a perfect illusion of reality by which we are entirely deceived."\textsuperscript{12} The well-made play demands from the spectator an acceptance of a special kind of illusion apart from that required by drama as a whole. It requires that he accept as a group
the characteristics, the machinery as it were, of the so-called well-made play. For example, excessively contrived exits and entrances must be accepted in the same way as a reader must accept the literary convention whereby fictional narrators report details of conversation and observation that occurred in their youth, all before the time of tape recorders and home movies; in the same way that acceptance is made for literary convention whereby characters in epistolary novels write excessively long letters when they had neither secretaries nor typewriters. The whole machinery must be received as are the traditional soliloquies and asides, which also are a part of the well-made repertory of devices.

There is no single work devoted to a discussion of the well-made play per se; but there are several drama studies in which there is a lengthy presentation of the characteristics of this form: Dorothy Juanita Kaucher's "Modern Dramatic Structure," The University of Missouri Studies, III, No. 4 (October 1928) devotes the first chapter to the well-made play; likewise Elmer Engstrom devotes a chapter to the well-made play in his unpublished master's thesis, "Shaw and the Well-Made Play" (Columbia University, 1948); Stephen Stanton has an unpublished doctoral dissertation, "English Drama and
the French Well-Made Play, 1815-1915" (Columbia University, 1955); Stanton's lengthy introduction on the well-made play to *Camille and Other Plays* (New York, 1957) is very helpful, as is his section on "prototypal characteristics of a well-made play" in his "Shaw's Debt to Scribe," *PMLA*, LXXVI (1961), 575-585. Before Henry James can be considered in relation to the well-made play, a brief summation of its structural characteristics, as gathered primarily from the above sources, is in order.

Basically the well-made play consists of the author's tying a knot and then skillfully untying it; it is built on a seesaw plot of intrigue at the center of which is a secret. Much of the story already has happened before the play begins. This late point of attack necessitates narration of past action. The play, after exposition, begins both to accelerate in speed of action and to shift one way and then the other as the protagonist's fortunes go up and down. For characters possessing the secret the intrigue involves the attempt to secure desired ends without revealing it and for those uninformed the attempt to secure desired ends in spite of incomplete information which serves to stultify their efforts. The climax is reached with the sudden revelation of the secret in a scène à faire (when the protagonist's fortunes are at their lowest point and a revelation is needed to put him back on top by
vanquishing the enemy), and then there is a brief period for tying up the loose ends of the plot. The overall action pattern of the play is repeated in the individual acts: exposition is followed by action, seesaw and suspense, scène à faire, reversal, and resolution. The conflict is one of circumstances and incident and not one of character and will power. All other characteristics will explain how the dramatist unties his knot smoothly so that all actions in the play seem to follow logically.

Exposition is rapid and economical. Situations are well-prepared for and foreshadowed so that everything falls neatly into place. The revealing of the secret or sin (which often has occurred in the past and involves a sexual indiscretion) usually takes the form of a personal confession made during one tense moment instead of gradually through many conversations occurring in different acts. Although the audience is taken into the confidence of the dramatist, secrets are kept from certain characters until the scène à faire. Due to his lack of information a character has a tendency to ignore obvious facts or not to tell what he would naturally tell at a given moment. Since the plots, monotonously similar to one another, concentrate on the single problem or idea of the intrigue in question, the characters are not
allowed to talk about any subject which is not directly related to the problem being solved. Precise timing facilitated by numerous stage doors is necessary to carry the intrigue smoothly, thus resulting in a highly artificial exit and entrance effect if viewed objectively; but the dramatist is careful to make contrived groups of characters, in which the proper people are placed together at precisely the right time, seem natural. These rapid exits and entrances result in a **ficelle** scene structure in which the exits and entrances are substitutions for otherwise too numerous curtain drops. The soliloquy and aside are used to direct attention to a significant detail of the plot, to show a character's thinking or his awareness of a fact when his action does not show it, to emphasize his actions, and to help the audience follow off-stage action.

The device of **quiproquo** is used whereby two or more characters unknowingly interpret a word or a situation in different ways at the same time. The **quiproquo** remarks, which arouse suspense, signal to the audience what the characters' estimation of facts and situations is; and the device is often essential to the plan of the intrigue. Hand props are often important in the action. For example, a letter containing the secret may pass from one character to another throughout the play or fall into the hands of
the enemy. Besides the common one of the letter, other hand props known to be used with essential importance are a fan (Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*), an overcoat (Shaw's *Arms and the Man*), and a glass of water (Scribe's *Le Verre d'Eau*).

The goal of the plot usually involves getting two lovers married after obstacles are placed in their way and then removed by clever devices. Often there is a romantic triangle. Scribe and Augier made much use of the intrusion plot in their plays whereby the conflict occurs when an outsider enters the midst of an established social group, such as a family. The intruder is resisted by one or more members of the group while at the same time being accepted by one or more others until the revelation of a concealed truth brings about a resolution.¹⁴ Characters of well-made plays are recognizable types and are usually of the upper-middle class. The nature of the well-made play is that events happen to characters through contrived action, not that characters shall develop through being the masters of their own actions. The type-character is closely connected with the type-plot in which only the intrigue and the names of the characters are varied.

The structure of the well-made play as seen from an objective, critical point of view consists of artifici-
ality, of highly contrived, perfectly timed movements which are necessary for the play to build suspense and move from opening to conclusion; hence the term "well-made."

From the preceding discussion it is evident that the seesaw plot of intrigue centering in a secret and climaxing in a scène à faire is basic to the well-made play. Stanton in the introduction to Camille and Other Plays says that a central quiproquo is likewise a determining feature; and I suggest that the hand prop, when used as an essential part of the plot in a contrived manner, is also indispensable in deciding whether or not a play is structurally well-made. The plays of Henry James will be divided into two groups, chapters two and three of this thesis, wherein I will attempt to trace his employment of these elemental features of the well-made play and any technical progression which he made over the years that he wrote plays. Chapter two will deal with those plays which he wrote during his first encounter with the stage (1890-1895) with the exception of Daisy Miller, written in 1882, which also will be included in this section. Those plays which James wrote later (1907-1909), after having returned to the novel form following his unfortunate experience with Guy Domville, will be analyzed in chapter three.
By these critical examinations into his craftsmanship, an insight will be made into the extent of the mastery of the Théâtre Français which James claimed to have acquired.
CHAPTER TWO

EARLY PLAYS

I.

From the novel *Daisy Miller* (1879) Henry James in 1882 wrote a play of the same name, but there the resemblance all but ends. The basic story of the innocent American, Daisy, whose flagrant disregard for European decorum leads to a false maligning of her character is there; but James did not let this story alone. Apparently his "mastery" of Dumas, Augier, and Sardou had taught him that there was only one method of constructing a play, the well-made method; for he takes a straightforward tale and makes of it a play of intrigue.

In the novel the narrator only twice, and vaguely, refers to a foreign woman in whom Winterbourne is interested. At the beginning of the novel it is said:

... he was extremely devoted to a lady who lived there at Geneva—a foreign lady, a person older than himself. Very few Americans—truly I think none—had ever seen this lady, about whom there were some singular stories.

In the very last paragraph she is alluded to once more. It may not even be the same woman, but James says of her:
Nevertheless he [Winterbourne] soon went back to live at Geneva, whence there continue to come the most contradictory accounts of his motives of sojourn: a report that he's "studying hard"—an intimation that he's very much interested in a very clever foreign lady.

However, in the play she is given the name Madame de Katkoff, is identified as a Russian princess, and is at the center of the intrigue. The villain courier, Eugenio, of the play is not an evil character in the novel. James gets the idea for the play intrigue from one sentence in the novel concerning where Daisy met the Italian Giovanelli:

"... It was the courier probably who introduced him, and if he succeeds in marrying the young lady the courier will come in for a magnificent commission."

In the novel, Daisy's story is uppermost, her consideration as the victim of gossip; in the play, the intrigue of Eugenio, Madame de Katkoff, and Giovanelli is most important with the story of Daisy as a victim of it only secondary. In the novel Winterbourne is concerned only with Daisy. He is attracted to her but is unable to reconcile the guilty appearance of her actions with his belief that she is innocent and only careless of impropriety. In the play Winterbourne is the dupe of the
intrigue. Eugenio forces Madame de Katkoff to distract him so that Giovanelli may have a clear field. Madame de Katkoff must feign her old, but now outworn, interest in Winterbourne, whose main purpose then is to obtain the love of Madame de Katkoff; for he does not admit loving Daisy until the end of the last act although the same ambiguous feelings toward Daisy are present as they are in the novel.

In the novel, Eugenio is a minor character, only a courier. In the play, Eugenio is a major figure whose plan is to make his fortune by marrying an impoverished Italian adventurer, Giovanelli, to an American heiress, Daisy, and collecting the marriage broker fee six months later. The secret of the play is the fact that Eugenio, when formerly employed by Madame de Katkoff's late husband to spy on her, has obtained a letter with which he now plans to blackmail her. A weak point of the structure of the play is that even when he tells her in the second act how she can buy back the letter, we are not told what he will do should she refuse. Nor do we learn the contents of the letter and therefore its exact menace. When this latter is first mentioned, we think that it will be revealed when the secret is aired; but when Madame de Katkoff reveals the intrigue to Winterbourne, she is unafraid, knowing that Winterbourne
will then return it to her. Since the contents of the document are never explained, one feels that the whole intrigue does not amount to a great deal and that the dramatist should have devised a better secret for the central intrigue. Although it will be evident from this analysis of *Daisy Miller* that James intended to write a well-made play, the playwright has failed to produce a real obligatory scene, and we are justifiably disappointed in terms of our expectations of that type of play.

Madame de Katkoff tries to keep the fact of the existence of the letter concealed without yielding to Winterbourne. Eugenio and Giovannelli, the other possessors of the secret that an intrigue is going on (although Giovannelli does not know about the letter), seek to marry Daisy to the latter. Daisy tries to secure Winterbourne while he pursues Madame de Katkoff, both pursuers acting in ignorance of the secret which is defeating their efforts. The sudden and final reversal is Winterbourne's understanding his love for Daisy after Madame de Katkoff convinces him of Daisy's real innocence. This last reversal is followed by the assurance of Daisy's recovery from a fever (which is never seriously doubted although melodramatically exploited) and Eugenio's and Giovannelli's setting out to seek another heiress "on the
same terms." In the novel Winterbourne is not assured of Daisy's innocence until after her death from the fever when he is told so by Giovanelli. James changed the tragic novel ending to a happy play conclusion in keeping with the well-made formula. However, the last reversal does not result from a revelation of the secret (which doesn't even occur in this play) in a scène à faire. Nor is Daisy's innocence connected with the letter out of Madame de Katkoff's past. The Russian lady towards the end of the play suddenly becomes one of James' punctiliously moral persons (such as Fleda Vetch in The Spoils of Poynton) by deciding to bring Daisy and Winterbourne together instead of holding them apart in keeping with her bargain with Eugenio. The happy ending of Daisy Miller is poor, then, first because it is unprepared, and secondly because it does not follow naturally the pattern of a well-made play whose resolution occurs logically after the secret has been exposed.

The well-made secret and last reversal are almost satirized by James, although he must have been serious in his use of these essential well-made play elements. Concerning the letter, Winterbourne asks Madame de Katkoff why she did not request him to get it for her from Eugenio. Having at this point dropped her false luring of Winterbourne (the "trick") as part of her promise to
the blackmailing Eugenio, she answers:

Because I didn't want it enough for that; and now I don't want it at all.

Winterbourne: You shall have it—I promise you that.

Mme. de Katkoff: You are very generous, after the trick I have played you.

Winterbourne: The trick? Was it all a trick?

Mme. de Katkoff: An infamous, pitiless trick!

Giovanelli tells Daisy, following her recovery from the fever and after Winterbourne has referred to her as "my wife": "I congratulate you, Mademoiselle, on your taste for the unexpected." Even the long exposition of the past of Madame de Katkoff does not have consequences in future plot action. As with the almost satirical comments previously quoted in relation to the revelation of the secret, Madame de Katkoff shows her contempt for this long exposition in the first scene of the first act: "All this is insupportable. Please to spare me your reminiscences, and come to the point." This first play of James clearly shows that his mastery of the Théâtre Français was not complete. It will be shown in this thesis that he developed dramatically a great deal from
this first feeble effort to deal with the well-made play.

The progress of Winterbourne's fortunes can be shown to follow the essential seesaw pattern: he follows Madame de Katkoff after hearing of her whereabouts (up); after a meeting with her, he is discouraged, and Madame de Katkoff leaves the hotel without telling him (down); he talks to her again at Rome, and she invites him to dinner and a moonlight drive (up); she pays more attention to her guests watching the carnival (an important background event in the play but not present at all in the novel) than to him, and then she reveals the trick she played on him (lowest down); she tells him that Daisy loves him, followed by Daisy's revelation of her love for him (up).

II.

Although James made many important changes in *The American* from the novel form to the play, the basic change is not as great as that which transposed *Daisy Miller* from a novel into a stage piece. Whereas in the play *Daisy Miller* James had to work out an intrigue which does not appear in the novel, and which unfortunately turns out to be based on a fake secret in the play, the novel of *The American* already has a secret.

The seesaw plot of intrigue is again centered around
a secret of the past, a hushed-up affair which is the most gruesome of any of James' well-made secrets. In the first act the fact that something is not quite right in the Faubourg Saint-Germain is first hinted by old Nioche when he tells Newman how Claire was forced into an early marriage by her mother. The old Marquis had objected, but his wife "shut him up . . . in his own private room—in his own curtained bed." Newman foreshadows his actions when he says several speeches later, "I should like to punish her a little more!" In the novel, Newman first hears of the secret from Mrs. Tristram. The Tristrams, who act as confidants to Newman and introduce him to Claire, do not appear in the play. In the second act the opening of the mystery is again mentioned, this time with more certain foreboding of its evil. Valentin speaks to the servant, Mrs. Bread, of Newman's refreshing effect on the Bellegarde household:

Valentin: . . . he laid the irrepressible ghost.

Mrs. Bread: Hush!—don't talk of the ghost!

Valentin: There's nobody to hear.

Valentin foreshadows Mrs. Bread's coming role in exposing the secret by saying to her, "Poor old Catty, you have helped us before, you shall help us again." And Newman, wondering about Claire's timidity, her repressed per-
sonality, says to himself concerning Mrs. Bread, "I won-
der if I could get it out of this deep old lady!" When
Valentin knows that he is dying in the third act after
a duel with another of Claire's suitors, Lord Deepmere,
(in the novel Valentin duels with an admirer of Noemie
and not in Newman's backyard but in another country),
he tries to aid Newman:

Valentin: ... Mrs. Bread can help
you. She knows some-
thing about my mother.

Newman: About your mother?
Valentin: About my father.
Newman: About your father?
Valentin: About my brother.
Newman: About your brother?
Valentin: She has a secret—she knows
what was done when my father
died—when Claire was forced.
There was some foul play—
something took place. Get it
out of Mrs. Bread!

Before the end of the act Mrs. Bread asks Newman to come
to Fleurières to help prevent Claire from entering a
convent. He mentions "the great secret" and she says
that she may tell him. It is not until the fourth act
then that the secret is revealed to the audience, but
unlike the trick in Daisy Miller this one has been worth
waiting for. Unlike the exposure of the secret in *Tenants* which is revealed suddenly in a moment of passion, the method which is supposed to be most characteristic of the well-made play, the revelation of the secret in *The American*, is gradual and planned. Finally Mrs. Bread dramatically tells Newman:

**Mrs. Bread:** They're murderers--they're murderers!

**Newman:** MURDERERS!

**Mrs. Bread:** My lady put an end to her husband. I have the precious proof--his own declaration, on his deathbed, when, the hour before he passed away in misery, he accused and denounced them. He wrote it down--he signed it!

**Newman:** When he was dying?

**Mrs. Bread:** I held him up on the pillow, and the God of justice gave him strength. The Comte de Cintré had loved my lady--he was her lover still. My lady, in her day, went far, and her day was very long. That's how he held her--that's how he made her go! He knew things of her--more even than I know! She had had money from him, and to the best of her ability she had made it up to him in money's worth! But he taught her that her debt would hang over her head till she had given him her helpless child. . . . Her father tried to save her, but he was beaten--he was ill. My lady spent half a night in his room--a bitter winter's night.
Newman: And what did she do there?

Mrs. Bread: She stood over him and mocked and threatened him, while the Marquis, in the passage, kept the door. She calculated exactly what would do for him and never leave a mark. The particular potion that the doctor had left to soothe him, to save him, to stop his suffering, without which it was unbearable: do you know what she did with the blessed beneficient drug? She poured it away before his eyes, into the cold ashes of the hearth, and she told him, cruelly, why she did so!

Newman: It sounds like some creepy legend!

Mrs. Bread: I found the traces when she left him—I found the empty phial. She had done her work well—but I did mine. My pity warmed him into life an instant—he flickered up into a kind of supernatural flame, and in the very arms of death he was capable of the miracle of writing twenty words.

The slip of paper with the twenty words is the hand prop that becomes important at the last of the fourth act. In a letter to George W. Smalley, October 19, 1891, James writes:

I loathed, of course, the "secret," and tout-ce-qui s'en suit, but recognized that my only chance was in having, in a business-like way, the courage of it—in putting it frankly and clearly through,
on a romantic basis, and making it as interesting as I could--not sprawling but condensing it and letting it give my play the romantic and not the comedy-of-manners stamp.

Although the secret is present in the novel, James makes it more dramatic in the play by adding the element of adultery. Madame de Bellegarde's motives for murdering her husband in the novel are more mercenary than anything else. Mrs. Bread does not tell of an affair with M. de Cintre. Willing to give only a small dowry with Claire, Madame de Bellegarde had determined that her daughter should marry M. de Cintre; for all the other suitors wanted a bigger settlement. Claire's father was opposed to the match. This disagreement between the parents of Claire was the climax to a generally unloving relationship; and the Marquise decided to have her own way, even if marrying Claire to M. de Cintre meant doing away with her husband. The only reasons for James' changing this detail of the secret are that either he determined to be as melodramatic as possible or that he believed sexual indiscretions were essential to well-made play secrets.

The seesaw movement of sudden reversals in the fortunes of the hero Newman can be traced. Since his avowed purpose is to find a "first-class woman...perfect: beautiful, amiable, clever, good, the product of a long civilization and a great cultivation," his fortunes
begin their rise when Nioche tells him that Valentin has such a sister and then Valentin invites him to the family mansion. (The introduction is provided through the Tristrams in the novel.) In the second act the good prospects continue to rise when it is announced that his rival, Lord Deepmere, has returned to England; but a sudden reversal occurs when Deepmere appears unexpectedly at the party a few speeches later. His fortunes ascend again when Claire tells Deepmere that there can never be anything between them and when, upon Newman's declaration that he has bought a splendid Parisian house, Valentin says in an aside, "They thought he had only hired it. Oh, he'll do!" But before the end of the second act, Newman's prospects take a sudden turn downwards: the avaricious Bellegardes have discovered that Lord Deepmere has more fortune to offer, besides a noble title, than Newman has. While Deepmere is very much in the foreground of the play, he remains in the background of the novel and never becomes a serious threat to Newman's successful courtship of Claire. James emphasizes a triangle in the play in order to make the plot more well-made. Suspense is generated when there is a possibility of Deepmere's death if he is vanquished in the duel. The Bellegardes never oppose Deepmere in the novel as they do in the play, a fact which leads to Deepmere's challenge to Valentin on
the stage. In fact, in the novel they are more eager to have him win Claire than he is himself. The duel in the novel between Valentin and an unimportant character has no connection with Newman's fortunes except that it removes Valentin from the Paris scene when he might have aided Newman in his struggle with the family. The central role of the duel in the play makes for melodrama and indicates a desire on the part of James to hold an audience by resorting to any suspense-making device.

However the fortunes of Newman are not at their lowest point yet when Deepmere supplants Newman in the preference of the Bellegardes. Claire is in his arms when the curtain falls, and there is still the secret which will aid him. Newman learns of his drop in fortune at the beginning of the third act when the Bellegardes notify him that Claire is withdrawing from her engagement, but by the end of the act he has Valentin's information of the existence of the secret and Mrs. Bread's possible revelation of it to him at Fleurières. In the fourth act the Marquis realizes that Claire could never marry Lord Deepmere, the other member of the Newman-Claire-Deepmere triangle, now that he has killed her brother Valentin in the third act duel. He reminds his mother of Newman's millions, but she is adamant on her former decision that the "base-born vulgar shop-keeper" is not good enough for them. In an aside the
Marquis comments on the sudden reversals:

I see—that's settled! Well, it's a comfort to settle it—it's the shifting that tells on me!

With Mrs. Bread's revelation of the secret to Newman, his fortunes begin to soar. He now has a bargaining tool: either the Bellegardes allow his marriage to the willing Claire or society will see them as they are. The hand prop of the dying man's note is in Newman's hands. Claire, ignorant of the secret, begs him to give it to her in order to save her mother from the shame which she believes is a past illicit relationship between her father and Mrs. Bread. He decides to give it to her but recovers it after the Marquis makes a desperate grab for it. "It is a loaded pistol, Marquis—and dangerous to play with," says Newman. Just when we are sure that Newman will play this ace with skill, he gives it to the Marquis because it is the only thing that Claire has ever asked of him. But suddenly from a seeming loss of his prize he gains his objective: Claire decides to defy her mother and brother and marry him for his magnanimity, for his proven devotion to her. In the novel, Claire knows nothing of the secret, of the existing note written by her dying father, or of Newman's plans to seek vengeance on the old Marquise and the elder son with the aid of the note. She disappears from the world into a convent
and Newman decides not to pursue his plan of persecuting the Bellegardes. Newman's moral decision is foreshadowed by his relation to Tristram early in the novel of a former occasion when he suddenly decided not to take away, in vengeance, an important business transaction from an old enemy.

In contrast to the novel, the happy ending in the play is a blatant concession to the well-made ending. The shuffle for the hand prop, the note, builds suspense and leads to the sudden reversal of Claire's decision to marry, an action which is aesthetically invalid. If Claire were to disobey her mother, if she were to consider Newman's worth above blind disobedience and fear, she would have done so without the melodramatic last scene. But the well-made play is true to intrigue, not to character.

Popkin criticizes the ending in connection with Newman's behavior: "The American [novel] had found its original raison d'être in the American's last moral crisis, in his decision not to take vengeance upon the Bellegardes. In the play he wins his love and there is no need for vengeance." But however wrong the play is aesthetically, it is better than Daisy Miller according to well-made principles of structure. While James fails to provide a genuine secret for revelation in Daisy Miller, in The
American he inverts the usual role of the secret in the well-made play. The secret of the Bellegardes is revealed to the audience, but the fact that it is kept concealed at the critical moment from Claire vanquishes the protagonist's enemies and secures him the reward which would ordinarily have reverted to him as a result of its exposure in the scène à faire.

In 1892 James wrote a new fourth act for the touring play in which he made further concessions to the happy ending. Not only does Newman win Claire, but also Valentin recovers from the wound which he suffers in the duel and is reconciled to Deepmere. The secret is changed further: Claire's mother had carried on her affair with M. de Cintré after Claire's marriage to him. Claire was partially in on the secret. It is suggested that her exposure of the affair to her father (without her knowing that the other woman was her own mother) caused the death of both her husband and father, and that Claire's mother has held this guilt over Claire in order to keep her under firm control. If Claire were to be informed of the rest of the lurid secret, the fact that her mother was the other woman, the hold of Madame de Bellegarde over her daughter would be released. The secret of the second fourth act is the only thing that is better in the revision of the act. The suspense of the scramble for the hand prop is
abandoned. Claire's belief that Newman does not know any of the secret, that he gives up vengeance in giving up a fight to obtain the secret, leads to her decision to marry him. The sentimental recovery of Valentin unfortunately is made the most important event in the new fourth act; and the new version of the act, as a whole, is poorer in the well-made sense than the original version of the last act.

III.

Whereas the secret in *Daisy Miller* results in "an infamous, pitiless trick," and the role of the secret in *The American* is inverted by its concealment rather than made the climax of a *scène à faire* by its revelation, James employs the secret within the seesaw plot of intrigue in *Tenants* in the orthodox tradition of the well-made formula.

The young lovers seeking to marry are Mildred Stanmore and a civil servant, Norman Byng. Before the arrival of the tenants (Mrs. Vibert, her son Claude, and the preceptor, Lurcher), who rent a lodge on the property of Sir Frederick Byng (Mildred's guardian and Norman's father), obstacles are already placed in the way of the young lovers' future: in the first act a letter arrives with orders that Norman's leave of absence is to terminate
in five days (seesaw down for lovers). Sir Frederick is unwilling to allow his minor-aged ward to marry his son for fear of evoking suspicion that he, as guardian, would be bestowing his wealthy ward on his penniless son for a monetary purpose. Therefore Sir Frederick requests the pair to wait four years until she is twenty-two, during which time Norman is to follow a tour of civil-service duty in India. However, Sir Frederick allows Norman to remain on the premises until his leave of absence terminates (seesaw up).

With the arrival of the tenants comes the intrigue which is similar to the plot of Daisy Miller in that there is a villain who is blackmailing a sophisticated, experienced woman and who is trying to make his fortune by marrying an innocent young man to an heiress. The secret of Tenants is the fact that Mrs. Vibert had a son, Claude, twenty years ago by Sir Frederick while her own husband was still alive, a typical well-made, past, sexual indiscretion. As Madame de Katkoff's husband had Eugenio spy on her, so through Mr. Vibert was Captain Lurcher sent to attach himself to Claude as a preceptor with the original purpose of getting vengeance on Mrs. Vibert by harming the child; but the shrewd Lurcher decided to spare "the precious child" and make his fortune on Claude. The latter does not know that Sir Frederick is his father any more than Norman is
aware of his father's past liaison. In the second act Claude is in love with Mildred too, forming the Norman-Mildred-Claude, well-made triangle.

Mrs. Vibert's announced intention to Sir Frederick for wanting to rent the lodge is that she wants to be near him and that she wants him to come to know Claude, but in a soliloquy she reveals a more important purpose for coming and foreshadows the end of the play:

The lodge is mine--and he's mine!
[Sir Frederick] I think it's all mine--the dream come true: peace and security, credit and rest, quiet waters and flowery pastures.
Dear old rural, respectable England, take me again to your bosom!

When she discovers that an eligible heiress is in the house, that Norman is interested in her, and that Sir Frederick is opposed to an immediate union between Mildred and Norman, she contrives to marry her own penniless Claude to Mildred. She takes the first step by removing Norman from the scene immediately by convincing Sir Frederick not only that Norman should be separated from Mildred if a marriage is to be prevented ("Do you remember what five days--when we got them--could be for us?" she reminds him) but that the two half brothers, Norman and Claude, should not meet (seesaw down for lovers).

When Lurcher obtains the promise of Miss Dyer, who
is Mildred's companion, to help him marry Claude to Mildred with the understanding that then Lurcher will marry the husband-hunting Miss Dyer, the seesaw is down farther; but when Mildred announces that she has cabled Norman to return, the lovers' seesaw is up. Lurcher threatens to reveal the secret to Claude if Mrs. Vibert does not successfully put pressure on Mildred to accept Claude's suit, and Sir Frederick attempts to persuade Mildred to such a view (seesaw down). The lovers' fortunes go up when Mildred shows a telegram to Miss Dyer revealing that Norman is to arrive that evening, when Miss Dyer promises not to betray her, when Mildred tells Claude that he must stop his courting of her, when Sir Frederick proposes marriage to Mrs. Vibert as a means of making up the past to Claude while at the same time taking care of Mrs. Vibert and allowing Mildred and Norman to have each other, and when Norman steps into the hall upon his return.

At the end of the second act when all the characters are gathered together for the first time upon the surprise (to all but Mildred and Miss Dyer) return of Norman on Christmas Eve, a shift in the balance of fortunes of most of the characters has occurred. With the return of Norman, his and Mildred's fortunes are rising; but Claude's, having risen by the joint efforts of all to make Mildred
accept him as a suitor, have gone steadily down since Mildred refused him and now are at their lowest point with his rival back on the scene and Lurcher threatening to reveal his illegitimacy. Mrs. Vibert's fortunes are at a high point since Sir Frederick has asked her to marry him, yet her desire for success in helping Claude is in danger by Lurcher's threat to expose the secret which would hurt the sensitive Claude and by Claude's disappointment on being rejected by Mildred. Lurcher's fortunes are drooping, for all have deserted his cause. His knowledge of the secret remains his only weapon. These multiple tensions build up quickly towards the end of the act in keeping with the acceleration of action and suspense that is characteristic of the well-made play.

With the opening of the third act the keeping or disclosing of the secret of Claude's birth has become more important than any other thread of the plot and is approaching a crisis or scène à faire. The first scene of this act between Claude and his preceptor, Lurcher, depends upon Lurcher's acting in knowledge of the secret and Claude's acting in ignorance of it, with suspense based on fear by the audience that Lurcher will reveal the past. Calling Norman Claude's stepbrother in the light of Mrs. Vibert's engagement to Sir Frederick, Claude ironically says, "He's no relation to me!"
Another scene in the third act based on the fact of one character's knowledge of the secret and another's ignorance of it is that of scene five when Norman accuses his father of favoring Claude's love suit instead of that of his own son, unaware that Claude is also Sir Frederick's son. This misunderstanding between Norman and Sir Frederick is basic to their conflict. In the well-made play the conflict is circumstantial, not based on character. When Mrs. Vibert tells Norman that his father and she are "very old friends," Norman also replies ironically, "That, madam, is your own affair."

The plot comes full circle when Lurcher suggests a plan to Mrs. Vibert whereby she should engineer Norman's departure from his own house for the second time. Unwilling for Mrs. Vibert to marry Sir Frederick and thus to secure provision for herself to the exclusion of himself, Lurcher wants Mrs. Vibert to break her engagement after Norman is made to leave. Then she and Lurcher can revert to their original plan of securing Mildred and her fortune for Claude and for themselves. This intrigue is offered with the alternative of breaking the painful secret to Claude. At this point the fortunes of the characters are rapidly approaching the major crisis of the play. But unlike the stock *femme fatale* of well-made plays, Mrs. Vibert undergoes a character
change in the third act. She vacillates on the proposals of Lurcher, whereas in the first act she was actively advancing the prearranged plan of exploiting the Byng household. She is unable to sacrifice Norman, Sir Frederick, and Mildred to mere gain of money, now desiring either complete, unquestioned acceptance into the family or, more expediently, partial withdrawal from it. She tells Norman that she will take Claude away, implying that he may return after her marriage to Sir Frederick. Before the discussion is concluded in which Norman ironically states, "I come to my father's house," and she returns, "He'll come to his mother's," Claude bursts in unexpectedly and the obligatory scene takes place just when Norman's fortunes are about to go down forever.

The great scene when the secret is divulged, the scène à faire or obligatory scene, is brought off according to a well-made play characteristic: at a tense moment, when Claude and Norman are about to resort to blows, Mrs. Vibert shouts, "Don't strike him—he's your brother!" The secret is out. Lurcher, deprived of his hold over Mrs. Vibert, departs.

After her revelation, Mrs. Vibert seeks to withdraw from any more plotting and goes so far as to request Sir Frederick to permit the marriage of Mildred and Norman; and
Mildred's sudden reversal of mind to accept Mrs. Vibert and Claude into the family is in keeping with the typical happy, well-made ending. However, Mildred's abrupt change of mind could easily be resented by an audience. She has been preyed upon by intriguers who have been assisted even by her own guardian. With no preparation, such as the well-made play usually has for happy endings, it is unlikely that Mildred out of the goodness of her heart would welcome into her home a woman from whose intriguing she has just escaped. Lurcher has been the real villain, though. James has shown sympathy in "writing à la Dumas file, of a woman of the demi-monde who is struggling to give her illegitimate son a place in society." As Popkin further says, "In contrast to the two earlier plays, the forces of wickedness are made plausible and even sympathetic. . . . Tenants represents a step forward from the gross simplifications of the two previous plays."4

IV.

Unlike Daisy Miller, The American, or Tenants, the secret in Disengaged is not something suddenly revealed in a scène à faire and is not knowledge out of the past of one of the characters. The intrigue develops from its genesis on the stage; the point of attack is not late. The intrigue first centers about the wish on the part of
almost all the characters to force Captain Prime to marry Blandina by convincing him that he has no other alternative since he has compromised her in two ways: first by appearing intimate in a photograph with her that was purposely posed for such a distorted effect by Trafford, the photographer, and secondly by remaining with her beyond dusk at some neighboring ruins of an old abbey, a motif from *Daisy Miller*. The motivation for this first intrigue is based on a clever circle of sub-intrigues involving pairs or groups of characters: Lady Brisket (wife of Sir Montague) is carrying on a flirtation with Trafford because she thinks her husband is flirting with Mrs. Jasper. Mrs. Wigmore (Sir Montague Brisket's sister and the son-in-law hunting mother of Blandina) does not approve of Lady Brisket's flirtation. Knowing of the disapproval of her sister-in-law, Lady Brisket seeks to distract Mrs. Wigmore by aiding the engagement of Captain Prime and Blandina. Thus Lady Brisket and Trafford plot to get Prime engaged to Blandina in order to please Mrs. Wigmore. Mrs. Jasper, in order to discourage the innocent attentions of Sir Montague, is eager to get Trafford away from Lady Brisket so that man and wife might once more be united. She uses the devotion of Coverley (who loves Mrs. Jasper) to make him promise to take Trafford away. Trafford agrees to go with Coverley if Coverley will aid in convincing Prime that
he must marry Blandina, Trafford's motive being that Mrs. Wigmore, then satisfied, will not interfere with his flirtations with Lady Brisket, thus not requiring his departure after all. Thus all, in fact, except Sir Montague either directly or indirectly bring about Prime's proposal to Blandina, and the motives of each or of each pair are hidden to all the others. James' handling of multiple intrigues in this play shows consummate skill.

But no sooner is Prime engaged then Coverley feels remorse at his share in the intrigue. The conclusion of the play, the final reversal, is foreshadowed as early as act one:

    Coverley: Ah, but it isn't fair!
    Trafford: My dear fellow, she's a charming girl.
    Coverley: Then marry her yourself!

The second intrigue involves getting Captain Prime disengaged from Blandina. It originates with Coverley who urges Mrs. Jasper to do what she can since he, Coverley, dishonorably plotted against Prime in order to secure Trafford's departure which would please Mrs. Jasper. The idea is taken up by the latter when she hears how noble Captain Prime is and considers that he is original in being the only man on the premises who
does not pursue her. So she agrees, saying to Coverley, "If you'll save Amy [Lady Brisket], I'll save the Captain!"; and a new plot is under way.

Captain Prime comes into the secret of what's going on before the end of the second act when he asks Mrs. Jasper to help him and she agrees, realizing that she must get him disengaged, for she wants him for herself. Up to now only Coverley and Mrs. Jasper have agreed to get Prime disengaged.

In the first scene of the third act Captain Prime and Mrs. Jasper discover the means: giving Trafford to Blandina in place of Captain Prime. Coverley is not in on this aspect of the secret, and he is made in his ignorance to aid Mrs. Jasper in securing Prime when he (Coverley) wants Mrs. Jasper for himself. Suspecting something not in his favor, Coverley asks Mrs. Jasper, "Why the deuce is it such a mystery?" She answers, "It's difficult; it's delicate; it's complicated." A few speeches later Coverley is let in on the plan but not the motive for it:

Coverley: Blandina? Will Trafford take her?

Mrs. Jasper: He'll simply have to!

Coverley: Why will he have to?

Mrs. Jasper: That's my secret.
Next Mrs. Jasper talks in such a way that Lady Brisket is desirous that Blandina be found another husband so that Mrs. Jasper can marry Prime, thus ending her flirtation with Lady Brisket's husband, Sir Montague. Now four people, Mrs. Jasper, Coverley, Lady Brisket, and Captain Prime all want to substitute Trafford for Prime. Finally Trafford is made desirous of the plan. The gradual inclusion of all the characters into the secret resembles the plot of Henry Arthur Jones' *The Liars*.

It can be seen that in *Disengaged* the intrigue and the secret are one. However, there is no seesaw motion to the plot. After Prime's lowest point, the forcing of his engagement to Blandina, his fortunes and those of Mrs. Jasper continue to move upward. The intrigue in this play is the factor which shifts. Basically it shifts from one against Prime to one in his favor; specifically it shifts as to who is in on the intrigue (a group which continually grows) and as to what their motivations are for being so, the shift in motivation being closely related to the well-made play sudden reversals and happy ending with all the couples happily paired off. The supreme example of seeming sudden reversal in *Disengaged* is the Wigmores' acceptance of the substitution of Trafford for Prime as Blandina's husband with no more comment than:
Mrs. Wigmore: Blandina! You must take what you can get.

Blandina: Yes, mamma.

However Trafford has remarked earlier that he considers Blandina charming, a fact which Mrs. Wigmore recalls; Coverley, as was noted, has foreshadowed the reversal by telling Trafford, "Marry her yourself!" Also the two speeches quoted above are predicted by the clever Mrs. Jasper who understands that Mrs. Wigmore does not care whom Blandina marries as long as she just marries and that Blandina, always over-eager to obey her mother, will remain true to character in this instance too.

It is characteristic for the well-made play to supply clues for its final outcome, a fact which James has shown he understood well. Furthermore, the audience that is delighted with the complicated, swiftly moving, and highly improbable plot of *Disengaged* (unlike the serious tendency of *Tenants*) will not question a sudden final reversal which is just part of the game. They will accept the final improbability as they accept the total well-made machinery. In the first scene of the third act Mrs. Jasper makes a statement which is true of the tone of the whole play:
Our pace on that wonderful occasion was so rapid; it made the situation so false. It was as if I had dreamed a dream or drunk a potion.

V.

The point of attack is early, and the secret in The Album, like that in Disengaged, has its genesis on the stage. In this play the secret is inseparably linked with a hand prop, a painter's album or sketch-book, an object which James intended to make so important in the play that he named the play after the object as Scribe did with his Le Verre d'Eau and Sardou did with his Les Pattes de Mouche. Mark Bernal enters with the album when he comes into the home of his dying relative, Bedford. Before his arrival the only surviving heir to Bedford's four thousand a year is thought to be Sir Ralph Damant because Mark was presumed dead after participation in a duel in the United States. The coincidence of Mark's unexpected appearance at the critical moment when a last will is to be made must be accepted as part of the machinery of this play.

Taken by Lady Basset from a table, the album is a little later opened casually by her and then is replaced on the table. Sir Ralph soon mistakes it as belonging to Teddy (one of several people on the premises), but the latter soon enlightens him as to the real owner of
the album by pronouncing aloud Mark's name which appears on the flyleaf. Teddy then walks away with the album to copy one of the sketches. Immediately afterwards Sir Ralph tells the Vicar, who is the messenger of the lawyer caring for Bedford's will, that to his knowledge Mark is dead and that he, Sir Ralph, is the only living relative. The secret then is the fact that Sir Ralph deliberately lies and remains the sole heir so that even after Bernal sees Bedford, the latter dies before the will can be changed. Teddy returns with the album; and Grace Jesmond, secretary to Bedford, upon hearing of Mark's existence, reads his name in the sketchbook and then learns from Teddy that Sir Ralph knew of his presence also at the critical moment. She urges Teddy to keep the secret, and strangely enough no one else discovers it for the rest of the play.

Grace asks for and obtains the album from Mark, and the audience is led to believe that Grace will use the secret to blackmail Sir Ralph in the event that a new will cannot be made. Grace is one of James' highly principled characters, and she wants to see Bedford's fortune shared by Mark, a rightful heir. The album again reappears in the second act when Grace produces it from underneath her mantle as she says to Mark, "I thought you might need it." Later in the act she shows it to
Sir Ralph, asks him if he ever saw it, and tells him that she knows the secret: "You deceived a dying man—you robbed a living." This is the last that is seen of the album. Henry James seems to forget the importance of his well-made prop. At least he abandons it in favor of another well-made device, the quioproquo. More will be said later about the album which does not fulfill its destined well-made function in the play.

As early as the fifth scene of the first act Lady Basset and Maud Vanneck mistakenly take Mark to be Sir Ralph while he refrains from correction, believing that they know who he is. Another first act occurrence of quioproquo is seen when Grace vaguely threatens Sir Ralph that she will encourage Mark's vindictiveness should Bedford die before the will can be changed:

Sir Ralph: ... let me know the motive of this extraordinary aggression. What the mischief do you mean by it?

Grace: Can't you guess?

Sir Ralph: ... She wants to make me propose!

But that is not what she wants. Her motive is that she thinks Mark deserves his share of the inheritance and that she knows it was wrongfully taken from him. In the second act this situation occurs again. After Grace tells Sir
Ralph that she knows of his secret, Sir Ralph asks her what she wants:

**Grace:** Want?

**Sir Ralph:** To let me alone. I asked you that, you know, at Courtlands.

**Grace:** Yes, and I told you to guess.

**Sir Ralph:** I couldn't guess so soon.

**Grace:** Can you guess at present?

**Sir Ralph:** Fifty pounds?

**Grace:** Fifty pounds?

**Sir Ralph:** Not enough? A hundred? It's not money? It's the other thing?

**Grace:** It's the other thing!

**Sir Ralph:** Marriage!

Thinking at first that Grace wants to be paid for not revealing the secret, Sir Ralph then goes so far in his second misunderstanding as to tell Mark that Grace wants to marry him (Sir Ralph). She is as unaware of his mistake as he is that her motive is a principle of fairness and her price that Mark be given his due. In the first scene of the third act, Teddy tells Grace of Sir Ralph's supposition that she has proposed to him. Grace then correctly realizes that Sir Ralph mistakenly considers her marrying him to be her acceptable alternative for keeping his secret. However, Sir Ralph then leads her to believe that he does understand the situation, when he really does not, and the _quiproquo_ continues later on in the act in an ex-
tended scene based upon this device. Finally the mistake is unveiled:

Grace: Then what are you talking about?

Sir Ralph: Your horrible ultimatum!

Grace: It's your impression that I've made you an offer?

Sir Ralph: Twice over, in so many words!

Grace: Which you've done me the honor to accept?

Sir Ralph: For the advantage I've named!

Grace: Your view of the "advantage" touches me! I did not make you an offer, Sir Ralph, but it was only the offer of a chance.

Sir Ralph: A chance?

Grace: To make a restitution—to divide your inheritance.

Sir Ralph: Divide it with you?

Grace: With Mr. Bernal. That was my "ultimatum"!

Sir Ralph: That?

The secret is never revealed to Mark. The album is not used to advantage in an eye-opening scene à faire. Instead, James relies on an old Jonsonian humour device to provide for his resolution. Throughout the play Sir Ralph has been presented as both a miser and a woman hater, or at least a shunner of marriage. His covetousness is played
off first in his half-willingness to marry Grace to keep all of the inheritance when he thinks that this is her price and then in his real marriage proposal which Grace declines in disgust. Grace tells him, however, "Your security is your honor." He therefore "succumbs" to the hounding of mercenary Lady Basset; and when, in a sudden and final reversal, he gives Mark not half but all of the four thousand a year, Lady Basset abandons him to serene bachelorhood. It is difficult to believe that Grace would renounce her quixotic quest of seeing that Mark does not lose out on his rightful inheritance, on which the secret and connected album of the play is based, to face storybook happiness and poverty with Mark before Sir Ralph unexpectedly awards him all the money. James abandons his neat well-made plan in favor of a solution based on an exaggerated character trait. The play would not have disintegrated in structure had the secret been revealed to Mark during a climactic scène à faire in which the album would have been the star performer. James needed to make Mark a stronger character, one who would fight for his inheritance instead of being less than passively interested, and Sir Ralph a surer villain instead of a humour character. The two should have been engaged in a moral or legal struggle over the inheritance with fortunes shifting in the well-made seesaw pattern.
Suspense then would have built to a climax when Grace would suddenly produce the album and Teddy as witness in a scène à faire to prove that Sir Ralph really knew of Mark's existence at the critical moment. The album would then have served its important role in the plot instead of being forgotten and failing to live up to the promise of the title. James had a very good well-made scheme, but he failed to follow it through structurally. The play is a bad well-made play. After the brilliant Disengaged, The Album is a disappointment. If James had the gold of the Théâtre Français in his pocket, he kept it there and substituted a poor counterfeit coin.

VI.

The Reprobate demonstrates that James did know how to use what he claimed he had put into his pocket. Again there are many threads to the plot and several couples to be linked together at the end of the play. James particularly makes use in this drama of the seesaw plot revolving about a secret; the quiproquo device; and several hand props: a photograph, a reticule, a packet of love letters, and a document of instructions for handling a reprobate.

One secret is that the woman (Nina) in Paul's, the reprobate's, past life is the same woman of Captain Chanter's
present, concealed love life, the Mrs. Freshville who appears in the drawing room at well-timed entrances in search of Captain Chanter. She will hereafter be referred to as Nina in this discussion. Captain Chanter is frantically trying to avoid her while courting, in the guise of a wholesome, staid suitor, the reprobate's stepmother, Mrs. Doubleday. A secret develops in act three between Paul and Chanter whereby Chanter is to divert Mrs. Doubleday from watching closely over Paul if Paul keeps Nina away from him. Another secret is that though Paul Doubleday now can withstand the temptations of women, liquor, and cards, he must keep this information hidden from the romantic Blanche Amber. The latter, reminiscent of Lydia in Sheridan's *The Rivals*, prefers men who are not exemplary and finds pleasure in thinking that she (Blanche) is going to help Paul resist evil.

Captain Chanter's fortunes follow a seesaw pattern in his trying to avoid Nina while at the same time seeking the hand of Mrs. Doubleday. The suspense involves keeping Nina concealed from Mrs. Doubleday, for the former pays unannounced visits to the house by bribing the butler for admittance.

Paul's fortunes with respect to Blanche Amber also follow a seesaw pattern: up when Blanche sees his photograph, considers him handsome, thinks "Dudley" a romantic
name for him, offers to help him, and romantically thinks he has succumbed to smoking cigars, reading Zola novels, playing cards, and drinking brandy, "vices" which Chanter introduces to him and which she calls "something magnificent;" down when she thinks his escape to London has not been long enough and when he tells her, "I'm all right!" as she disappointedly replies, "Already?" and tells him, "I don't care for saints!"; up when she finds that he is "gloriously in debt"; down when she learns that Paul is not the author of the scorching love letters to Nina; and up when she finds that Paul told "a glorious lie" to protect Chanter, for "I don't want you any worse than that!" she tells Paul in approving of a lie that departs just the right amount from saintliness.

The keeping of the main secret, that Chanter's morals are not irreproachable, accounts for the success of the intrigue. The hand props in The Reprobate are essential to the action. Nina enters in the first scene with a reticule which contains a photograph and which she conveniently leaves on a table when she exits from the scene. Mr. Bonsor sees the servant handling it and soon examines it himself. Hearing about a strange lady who left the purse and finding the photograph of Paul taken during his days of abandoned morals with a superscription "to his Nina," he realizes who the woman is. He tucks
the photograph into his pocket and hides the reticule in a cabinet. The photograph is given to Mrs. Doubleday, who is thus made aware of the situation and who shows it to Captain Chanter, who is horrified at the significance it has for him. He tosses the photograph on the table where Blanche finds it, admires it, thinks the superscription romantic, and slips it into her pocket. Nina, missing her bag upon another bribed entry into the drawing room, instructs Pitt Brunt to find it and at the end of the first act mentions her reticule again—"with the dear old photo." This business keeps these articles uppermost in the mind of the audience.

As the second act opens, Mr. Bonsor is searching for the photograph. Chanter does not know that Blanche has it and is therefore unable to account for it after his laying it on the table. Next Mr. Bonsor, in attempting to hide an inappropriate book for the reprobate to see, plumps it into the reticule which he concealed in the cabinet during act one. The reticule is mentioned again when Nina desires a cigarette, and once more when Captain Chanter fetches it out of its hiding place and gives it to her, although it is unexplained just how he knew where it is. She discovers that the photograph has been removed, and Chanter surmises from the ownership of the book that they find (which Mr. Bonsor put there) that Blanche has sub-
stituted the book for the photograph. Nina takes love letters written to her by Chanter and places them into the reticule which she takes with her this time, Chanter promising to bring the photograph to her inn. She mentions the photograph to Paul in order to convince him of the continuity of her affection. That she always carries his picture is James' logical explanation of why the photograph happened to be in her purse when she had no idea that Paul is a member of the household where she comes to find Chanter. (In the well-made play all coincidences must have a rational basis.) The photograph is again used in the third act when Blanche tells Pitt Brunt that she has it and when Paul tells Chanter that Nina refuses to leave the house without it. In the last scene of the play the photograph is used to bring Blanche and Paul together. The fact that she has had it convinces him of her regard.

Further employment of the love letters is closely connected with the quipproquo device in the third act. Nina and Pitt Brunt have a lengthy conversation in which she thinks that they are discussing Chanter and Mrs. Doubleday, and he thinks that the objects of comment are Paul and Blanche. The scene concludes with Nina giving Pitt the blackmailing love letters to pass on to "her"
(Mrs. Doubleday) whereby she hopes to inform the rich widow that Chanter was engaged to her first. Pitt takes "her" to be Blanche and so gives the letters to the wrong person. Chanter undergoes one reversal in fortune when he believes that Mrs. Doubleday has the letters and another one when he learns that she does not have them. Before he learns the truth another *quiproquo* scene occurs. Mrs. Doubleday and Paul discuss "a precious packet" by which the former means the instructions left by the late Mr. Doubleday concerning the managing of the reprobate. Paul believes the "precious packet" to be the love letters. The misunderstanding is cleared up before the scene is over, but not without Mrs. Doubleday's acquisition of the information that some love letters do exist. Paul lies about their ownership later, an act which pleases the romantic Blanche and saves Chanter.

Still another *quiproquo* scene occurs between Nina and Pitt Brunt that is an extension of the first one which culminated in her giving him the love letters for transference to Mrs. Doubleday. Again Nina takes "she" to represent Mrs. Doubleday while Pitt understands "she" to mean Blanche, a mutual misunderstanding which brings the two together. The adventures of the reticule end when Nina gives it to Pitt to put into his boat. In a sense it is a symbol signifying the transference of her
interest from the household of Chanter and Paul to "the Idol of the North," the political tag of Pitt.

The delicate intrigue involving a secret of the past, the skillful manipulation of hand props in conjunction with the quiproquo device, the perfectly timed exits and entrances which enable Nina to escape detection by the wrong people, and a happy pairing off of couples at the end of The Reprobate prove James' ability to handle a well-made play with professional adroitness. The skill which James demonstrates in this play makes the structural blunders of The Album seem like crude apprentice work.

VII.

Guy Domville represents a clash between a desire on the part of Henry James to write a play of sincere conflict and a dependence on the idea that the old well-made intrigue was the only foundation on which to build a play. Although the familiar love and marriage themes are there, the basic conflict in the mind of Guy Domville is whether he should give himself to the Roman Catholic Church, for which his life has been a preparation, or whether he should marry and provide heirs in order to extend the name of Domville, of which he is the last bearer, to posterity.

The play is a failure because when Guy renounces the Church and goes out into the world, instead of encountering
a sincere conflict of worldly and spiritual interests which sends him back to the cloister, he meets a common well-made intrigue which unfairly sours his view of the world.

The first act is not well-made and neither is the unhappy ending when Guy bitterly disappoints the heroine, Mrs. Peverel, by not marrying her. There are no quiproquo scenes, no hand props essential to the action as in The Reprobate, and no hint of intrigue in the first act (except for the fact that Lord Devenish is said to be the lover of Guy's aunt, Maria Domville); but other well-made elements definitely show that James was making use of what he learned at the Théâtre Français: ficelle scene structure, contrived exits and entrances, an intrigue based on a secret of past sexual indiscretion, sudden reversals, and romantic triangles.

If judged as a play of character conflict, Guy Domville is a failure because of its adulteration by a well-made intrigue; if it is judged as a well-made play, it fails because the play is not well-made. The disparity is great to a fatal extent between James' serious idea behind the play on the one hand and the incomplete well-made structure on the other hand.

The secret, exposed in the second act, is the fact that Lord Devenish, the messenger who in the first act
persuades Guy to give up the Church for the name of Domville, is the father of Mary Brazier, born when her mother was married to another man. Lord Devenish, now in great debt, seeks to wed Mary's mother who could alleviate his financial insolvency with her fortune. If he succeeds in bringing about the union of Mary and Guy, the last of the Domvilles, Mary's mother, Mrs. Domville will marry him. Mrs. Domville's interest in her daughter's marrying Guy stems from the fact that she brought her fortune to her second marriage with a Domville and now wants the name for her daughter Mary.

The secret of Mary's illegitimacy is revealed to her by George Round, the man she loves and rival in the well-made triangle to Guy who has consented to wed Mary through the intrigue of Mary's mother and Lord Devenish. Mary in turn reveals it to Guy who then aids in the elopement of the other two. The play here becomes one of external circumstance and intrigue rather than one of internal character conflict which the first act promises. As Leon Edel says in the foreword to *Guy Domville* in *The Complete Plays of Henry James*:

In forsaking the simplicity of his first act Henry James had yielded to the clap-trap of artificial drama, to the *ficelle* structure of Sardou and the other dramatists he had studied with such assiduity
at the Théâtre Français. He had discarded for the entire act two of his best personages, Frank Humber and Mrs. Peveral. And this after arousing such acute interest in his love story. His hero had been brought face to face with a series of ill-motivated and quite irrelevant situations. The mood created by the first act had been utterly destroyed.  

What Edel means is that if Guy Domville has to be brought in contact with the world in such a way as to make him desire to turn around and go back to the Church, he should have been provided with a more meaningful situation with which to test his character than a typical well-made intrigue.

The play shifts drastically from a beautiful, but non-well-made, first act, at the end of which Guy goes out into the world, to the second act where the curtain rises on a lurid intrigue. The well-made intrigue of the second act, Lord Devenish's trying to marry Guy to Mary, does not work out in the approved well-made fashion. The intriguers do not win their desired ends and neither does Guy who wanted to wed Mary. If a well-made intrigue is well-made, it does not fail for both the mastermind and the person or persons against whom he plots. So James tries again with another intrigue and so does Lord Devenish. "Our contract stands," he tells Mrs. Domville.
Mrs. Domville: How does it stand, when you've not performed your task?

Lord Devenish: My task, Madam, was not to hold Mary—it was to hold Guy! We do hold him 'faith—through the blessed lady of Porches.

The intrigue now is to insure that Guy marries the willing Mrs. Peverel. Devenish goes to Porches first to prepare her for the meaning of Guy's return; when he talks to her, he finds it necessary but futile, as it turns out later, to draw off Frank Humber, a member of the Mrs. Peverel-Guy-Frank triangle.

There are several reversals for Guy following the original one which begins the action, his decision to renounce the priesthood for the world and the name of Domville at the end of the first act. Each act brings a major reversal: the sudden revelation of the secret in the second act changes his plans to marry Miss Brazier; the realization that he will be hurting Frank Humber if he fights for Mrs. Peverel makes him return to his original plan of entering the Church at the end of the third act. The movement of Guy's fortunes essentially is one of extension and then a progressive return rather than a continuous seesaw pattern, characteristic of well-made structure as seen in *The Reprobate*, for example. Guy's
one step forward into the world at the end of act one is followed by two steps backward, away from Mary at the end of act two and away from Mrs. Peverel and back to the Church at the end of act three. However, a single seesaw down when Mary elopes with Round is followed by a single seesaw up when Guy thinks that he can find happiness with Mrs. Peverel.

The plot is unnatural since it takes Guy away, in the first act, from Mrs. Peverel, who loves him, submits him to a well-made intrigue, and then provides him with a well-made rival after he escapes from the first intrigue. Guy's refusal to compete with Frank Humber is an act of character which does not combine well dramatically with the externally contrived intriguing that sends Guy back to Mrs. Peverel in the first place and then provides a rival for him in the last moments of the play. The second feeble intrigue of Lord Devenish fails, and with it fails any success of making Guy Domville well-made. The ending is not happy in the well-made sense wherein couples in love are paired off at the end. Rather, the ending of Guy Domville is a compromise for both Guy and Mrs. Peverel. The ending that is unhappy in a sense both for Mrs. Peverel, who does not get Guy whom she loves, and for Guy, who returns to enter the priesthood less from devotion to the Church than from disappointment with the world, is unhappy
for the wrong reasons. Both well-made intrigues against Guy have failed, but he does not win a clear victory either. Furthermore Guy has not met with a genuine test of character which makes him shun the world, a struggle of which he as a character and the serious idea behind the play are worthy. But it not altogether accurate to say as Popkin does:

The chief weakness, however, lies in the relationship between form and content. The Jamesian drama of the growing, awakening consciousness, done to perfection in such novels as The Ambassadors and The Portrait of a Lady, can never be adequately conveyed in any form less ample than the novel. Guy Domville is no more than a commendable effort to interpret some part of that drama for the stage.

Well-made elements can be used in plays with serious purposes. Stanton demonstrates well that in Candida "Shaw elevated the well-made secret, based upon mere incident or situation, to the plane of ideas." James' failure with Guy Domville, then, is due to his inability to fit serious ideas into a well-made structure. His views of the well-made play were too narrow if he considered a melodramatic intrigue to be all that is necessary in order to have a sound play. Finally progressing to the point where he could handle light, comic themes in an astute, well-made manner as in The Reprobate, he was unable to
adapt what he learned at the Théâtre Français to his more serious themes.
CHAPTER THREE

LATER PLAYS

After the painful experience associated with the production of *Guy Domville* when James was cruelly hissed off the stage on opening night, he retreated back into the more placid world of letters. In the long critical and biographical introduction to *The Complete Plays of Henry James*, Edel points out the subtle autobiographical strains which appear in the fiction of James following, and undoubtedly caused by, his nearly traumatic years in the theatre during the first half of the decade of the 1890's: fear, insecurity, preoccupation with the supernatural, unhappy childhood, and visions of evil and death.

James learned a valuable lesson, though, from the first experience of writing plays professionally, a method of planning his fiction by full outline which he called "the divine principle of the Scenario." Edel further describes the influence of these early dramatic years on the novels immediately following:

His first novel after the dramatic years was *The Spoils of Poynton*, his second the adaptation into fiction of his scenario of *The Other House*. . . . He went on to write *What Maisie Knew*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *In the Cage* with an ever more rigorous application of the scenario principle and the scenic structure resulting therefrom, until
in *The Awkward Age* (1899) he set down an entire novel in dialogue. . . . Readers of Henry James's prefaces will recall how often he describes the manner in which a subject appealed to him, and how in each case he heard the inner voice say, "Dramatize, dramatize!" It is true that he had "dramatized" long before the dramatic years. But it was only after these years that he applied the scenic method with complete and conscious consistency.²

The motivation for James' second attempt at a career as playwright resembled the first—as his early novels failed to sell heavily and prompted him to try financial and popular success in the theatre, so when his definitive New York edition of the novels and tales found only limited demand, he was receptive to invitations that he again write plays. Edel also remarks that "in the second dramatic phase James approached the theatre with a larger sense of its realities and with a genuine desire to treat material he deemed pertinent to the times."³ Since this thesis is concerned with tracing James' use of well-made play construction, I will point out in this chapter another change in his approach to the theatre: a wider conception of the well-made play.

I.

Although *The High Bid* contains an intrigue, the play is the least dependent upon coincidence of all the dramas
discussed chronologically thus far. Cora's father, Mr. Prodmore, holds the mortgage to the insolvent, politically reforming Captain Yule's ancestral showplace. The main secret is that if Yule marries Cora, who is in love with someone else unbeknown to her father, the latter will destroy the mortgage and give Yule clear possession of his property. Yule is neither interested in retaining the place nor in marrying a girl he has never seen; and since Cora's interests are elsewhere, James puts into the plot Mrs. Gracedew, a youngish American widow who adores and has expert knowledge of the old world antiques. Cora and Captain Yule each have been told the secret by Prodmore who has also lied to each one, telling Cora that Yule does not know of the plan and telling Yule that Cora is uninformed. But Mrs. Gracedew, the outsider, does not know of the secret at all. By the end of the first act Prodmore has capitalized on Mrs. Gracedew's near-worship of the house to get Yule to see its worth and has elicited from the American lady the promise to "bring him" around. A first act foreshadowing of the play's conclusion is seen not only in Mrs. Gracedew's enthusiasm for Covering but also in her remark to the old servant, "I should like it still better if it were my very own!"

Thinking only that Prodmore's terms are that Yule should reverse his radical opinions, Mrs. Gracedew in the
second act persuades Yule to accept the terms and thus keep the property; but when Cora confides the secret to her, Mrs. Gracedew no longer acts in ignorance. From this point favor shifts away from the power-enjoying Prodmore, and all become his successful antagonists. Realizing that she would like to marry Yule herself, Mrs. Gracedew makes a deal, a secret, with Cora so that the latter may marry the man with whom she is in love.

Mrs. Gracedew: If I help you, you know, you must help me.

Cora: But how?

Mrs. Gracedew: By a clear assurance. That if Captain Yule should propose to you you'll unconditionally refuse him.

Cora: With my dying breath.

It is interesting that the first act contains many contrived exits and entrances and thus the ficelle scene structure necessary to bring the right people together in order to relay all the pertinent exposition. The first act also has the same large number of short scenes that all of the other plays have had throughout all their acts, approximately a dozen. However, the second and third acts of The High Bid contain an unusually small number, five and three scenes respectively, in comparison to the numerous
scenes of the previous plays. This scene construction limits the action that is due to coincidence and precise timing and increases that for which character is responsible. In the longer scenes the characters are allowed to work out their problems through discourse, by means of internal instead of external motivation. In the second act Mrs. Gracedew convinces, not tricks, Yule to reverse his attitude about the house and accept Prodmore's terms. After Cora informs her what the terms are, that Yule should marry her, Mrs. Gracedew changes her intentions and cleverly speaks to Yule in such a manner that he emerges from the encounter with the intentions both to keep the house and marry Mrs. Gracedew instead of Cora. Also in the second act Cora confides to Mrs. Gracedew her real love interest in a long scene in which the American widow determines her own future too.

The first intrigue has been broken when Cora makes her promise to Mrs. Gracedew. The revelation of the secret is the climax of the play. The newly informed American lady then takes matters into her own hands, makes her own intrigues so to speak, to work out the resolution: first she must obtain the house and then Yule to go with it. James here has relaxed the well-made puppet strings, and the two women are free to act as human beings instead of type characters operating according to the machinations
of a well-oiled plot.

In the first of the two long scenes of the third act Mrs. Gracedew buys Yule's mortgage from Prodmore after informing him that his intrigue has no chance since his daughter has eloped with her comically named sweetheart, Hall Pegg. Prodmore refers to the plan of Cora and Mrs. Gracedew when he says, "So you abetted and protected this wicked, low intrigue." In the second long scene Mrs. Gracedew brings Yule to propose marriage to her. The shorter scene merely concludes the play.

Thus it can be seen that the well-made play elements of intrigue, smoothly contrived exits and entrances limited to the first expository act, and happy ending with the couples paired off are present in The High Bid. However, there are no quiproquo scenes, no important hand props, and diminishing dependence on perfect timing in the last two acts, the lack of which indicate James' lessening reliance on the well-made technique per se. If the play had been more traditionally well-made, the exposure of the first secret would have come near the end of the play, as in Tenants. Then reversals would have followed with Prodmore somehow vanquished, Cora sent on her way with her lover, and Yule dropped into Mrs. Gracedew's arms. As the play stands, James gets rid of the first intrigue early, his own well-made plan, so that the characters, now out of
the prearranged mold, can work out their own destinies. The first mechanical intrigue of Prodmore leads to one based on the character of Mrs. Gracedew, whose actions are not dependent on an artificial secret, highly contrived exits and entrances, or a central quiprocquo. This lessening of artificial motivation prepares for *The Other House*. Cora is heard from no more in the play after the second act. She is no longer needed in the first abortive intrigue. Yule and Prodmore are still rather stiff characters; but Mrs. Gracedew and, to a lesser extent, Cora, foreshadow the strong individuals of *The Other House*.

II.

So far this thesis has shown how James in his dramatic efforts depended, until *The High Bid*, almost exclusively on the surface value of the major well-made play elements of the seesaw plot of intrigue, involving a secret, the quiprocquo device, the happy ending, and the hand prop, all of which indicate a highly artificial, contrived type of playmaking in which neatly arranged circumstances hold the interest of the audience until the suspense is made to work itself out logically to a happy ending. In this discussion, then, *The Other House* almost does not belong; for it lacks the artificiality which has been traced
through all of James' earlier plays. In a sense *The Other House* does not belong in time to the last plays written during the first decade of the twentieth century. Although he wrote the play as it is in 1909, he had sketched the story in early 1894. Unable to interest a theatre manager, he turned the scenario into a novel which appeared serially in the *Illustrated London News* during July, August, and September of 1896. The idea for the play closely followed *Guy Domville* (1893) in time; and since it has been shown in this thesis that that play should not have been conceived so narrowly in relation to the well-made play form, it would seem that James had finally discovered that he could write a play without relying literally on the formula that he had learned by studying so assiduously at the Théâtre Français. Leon Edel states that "*The Other House*, of all of James's plays, can be said to be an 'Ibsen play.'" It is worth quoting his support of this statement:

Between 1891 and 1897 James had devoted four critical articles to Ibsen's plays. He liked the "hard, frugal charm" of the Norwegian, his scenic economy, the manner in which he could confront the audience with the "clash of Ego against Ego and soul against soul." In *The Other House*'s provincial setting, the retrospective method employed in the prologue, the small cast, the use of Dr. Ramage as a family adviser (an Ibsen type recalling Judge Brack or Rector Kroll) and Mrs. Beever as the objective outsider, able to view the struggling characters with judicial calm,
James has reproduced all the Ibsen externals. The plot has elements in common with Rosmersholm, with which James was familiar as far back as 1890 and which was played in London in 1893 when James made his note for his play. Both the James and Ibsen works are haunted by a dead wife: Beata's suicide in Rosmersholm, before the play begins, contributes a barrier of psychological guilt to Rebecca's and Rosmer's love, even as the promise Julia demands from her husband before her death interposes a barrier to Rose's love for Tony Bream, against which she acts with such violence.⁵

Speaking of the underlying seriousness of the melodramatic, murder-mystery, The Other House, Edel further says that James "is concerned with Rose's 'moral repose' and he makes it clear when she walks out 'free' from 'the other house' that her punishment will be greater than any the law can devise."⁵

Brander Matthews many years ago in a discerning article on Ibsen shows that playwright's debt to Scribe. Although Ibsen, Matthews says, was steeped in well-made French drama and began by writing plays à la Scribe, Sardou, and Dumas fils, he very soon adapted the commercially successful French construction to his own ends and produced dramas of character, not of contrived incident: "even in the least individual of Ibsen's earlier pieces, the action is expressive of character, and we cannot fail to see that Ibsen's personages control the plot; whereas in the dramas
of Scribe the situations may be said almost to create the characters, which indeed exist only for the purposes of that particular plot."

In the serious tone, in the sombre ending, in the passionate conflict between Rose and Jean in the second act and in the intense emotional scene between Rose and Dennis Vidal in the third act it can be seen that James is doing "that which alone lends dignity to dramatic story-telling—to observe and portray human character. This is the aim and end of all serious drama." This method of playwriting is a plane removed from that practiced by Scribe and his disciples. Arvin describes the motivation of Scribe:

For him [Scribe] the dramatic interest and value of a situation lay, not in the clash of characters and will that it may produce, or in the study of the passions causing it or arising from it, but in the combinations of circumstances and complexity of interests it may bring about.8

This is definitely a contrast with the "clash of Ego against Ego and soul against soul" and with the "struggling characters" found in The Other House.

In this play James uses a prologue, which is as long as an act, to set his scene and establish the situation so that when the curtain rises on act one, the characters are ready to react. The device of the
prologue is helpful in this play for two reasons: the audience needs to witness the earnestness of Julia's request that Tony not remarry, a dramatic event the seriousness of which would perhaps be unappreciated if told by means of narration; with the situation firmly established in the prologue, James is then free to develop in three acts the effects on his characters of the unusual promise. Instead of performing in an ingenious intrigue which James has devised for them, they make up their own intrigues, as Matthews says the characters do in Ibsen's plays, according to the deep desires of their own wills. The intrigue and the romantic triangle structure are present; but instead of being ends in themselves, they are merely frames upon which the characters may weave their own designs according to the goals that they set for themselves.

The two triangles are Tony, Jean, and Rose and Dennis, Paul, and Rose. By assisting Paul in his long-expected proposal to Jean, in the first act Rose intrigues to get Jean out of the way, thinking that then Tony will love her. Rose even asks Tony to help persuade Jean to accept Paul. The intrigue fails, for Jean and Tony are in love with each other, and Paul is in love with Rose. In act two, Rose works on another intrigue: if she makes everyone, especially Jean, believe that she is engaged to
Dennis, she will be made to seem unselfishly concerned with the welfare of the child whose life is preventing Tony from marrying anyone. With no adult competition for Jean, the child is the only one who will be seen to stand between Jean and Tony. This situation will cast suspicion on Jean should anything happen to the child; and with this in mind, Rose murders the little girl and seeks to place the blame on Jean.

Precise timing is essential in order to provide that all the characters except Jean are not present when Rose carries Effie off the stage and that none should be a witness to the deed. At the same time, upon Rose’s lying, the finger of guilt points to Jean. The exits and entrances, while highly contrived, serve a purpose beyond the ordinary well-made play function of bringing certain persons together at essential moments. Rose calculates how this precise timing will aid her. Her planning the act of murder in keeping with the well-calculated movements of the other personages and her arrangement of using Dennis in a complicated manner to help her alibi are part of Rose’s character. Here Rose, not the playwright, intrigues.

In an excellent study of Ibsen’s technique, Archer also describes Ibsen’s adaptation of Scribe’s craftsmanship to his own ends. Saying that "Scribe's contribution
to theatrical technique was the art of constant movement," Archer goes on to say of Ibsen:

This art of external movement Ibsen acquired and practised in his earlier plays. In *The League of Youth* he exercises it very much as Scribe himself would have done. But, as play follows play, he gradually applies it more and more deliberately to different ends, until at last, instead of external movement, it is psychological movement on which he is intent. With him, too, the pattern, the posture of affairs, is never stationary; but the changes take place in the souls of the actors, and are often scarcely discernible in their external fortunes and relations until the final catastrophe is reached. Movement, in fine, is the secret of Ibsen's theatre, as it is of Scribe's; but the movement is spiritual instead of material.9

In *The Other House* the movement is certainly motivated psychologically. If the characters of Rose, Jean, Tony, Paul, and Dennis do not change as does that of Nora in *A Doll's House*, they nevertheless develop so that we know them better at the end than we do when the play begins, for we have seen how they act and react in situations of their own making.

In this perceptive article, Archer also brings out the fact that "throughout" *A Doll's House* "there runs this strain of insistent antithesis.10 He is speaking of the joyful Christmas setting and the tarantella scene which is presented against the grim emotional and intellectual
crisis which occurs between Nora and Helmer. So too in
*The Other House* James ironically presents the passionate
struggles of his characters against the birthday cele-
bration of Effie, the observance of the day of her birth
ending in the horror of her death. *The Other House* shows
a technical skill which combines the best of Scribe with
some of the innovations of Ibsen.

The all-important prop of the well-made play may be
seen vestigially in *The Other House*, but it has been raised
tremendously in significance. The property, Covering,
in *The High Bid* may be said to be a prop which takes on a
new aspect in the play, contributing to James' changing
approach to the well-made play. Although the house is at
the center of the intrigues and affects the lives of the
characters, it is also connected with the larger idea of
the play: the preservation of old showplaces as valuable
accumulations of the culture of the past. The prop thus
takes on a new and higher meaning than that of being useful
only in itself as mechanically part of an intrigue, as the
props in *The Reprobate*, for example. James' use of the
house and its contents in *The High Bid* is related to the
symbolic and motivational art treasures in *The Spoils of
Poynton*.

The prop in *The Other House* goes both beyond the sig-
nificance of the object as having worth as part of an
intrigue and as having value as the concrete projection of an idea: it is important in bringing out traits of character. Effie, the child, corresponds in a more complicated way to the simpler props of the earlier plays. She dominates the play, although she is seen only briefly once in Rose's arms and although she never speaks a word. She is therefore inanimate, but her life is the cause of her mother's death, the promise that Tony, her father, shall never marry while she lives, the passionate rivalry between Rose and Jean, the frustrated love of Dennis and Paul, the hopeless passion of Tony and Jean, and the decisive act of murder which Rose commits. Her death ironically brings Jean and Tony together, but the other characters are left in helpless misery. The child acts as an agent to shed light on all the characters and set off the explosion of Rose and the attendant reactions of the others. James has at last subordinated the well-made elements which he learned to use expertly in some of the earlier plays to the more important drama of character in *The Other House*.

What basically makes this play less than great is its particularity of plot. The situation of the dead woman's wish exists only in the play, and the reactions of the characters are relevant only to the highly unusual situation which results. What makes Shaw and Ibsen great, who
used well-made play devices, is the universality of their situations. Their characters are true not only to the roles that they play in a certain drama but also to the characters which men and women discover in themselves and others in all situations in life. For example, while it is unlikely that outside of *Candida* a clergyman's marriage would be threatened because a poet falls in love with his wife, couples in real life often do find cause to examine their marital relationships. How the Reverend Morell and Candida react to Marchbanks is meaningful not only to the particular situation of the play but also to countless real life counterparts.

III.

If James temporarily abandoned the well-made play formula *per se* in *The Other House*, while using well-made structural elements, he returned to a narrower conception of the well-made play in one final effort at playmaking, *The Outcry*. The intrigue is established in the first act. Lord Theign's elder daughter, Lady Imber, has enormous gambling debts with Lord John's mother. The latter, interested in bringing about a marriage between Lord John and Lord Theign's younger daughter, Lady Grace, has offered to cancel the debts if Lady Grace will comply with the marriage. Lady Grace knows about the possible cancellation of the
debts; but she does not know the secret that upon the Duchess' settlement of twelve thousand pounds on Lord John, Lord Theign must match the amount with nine or ten thousand of his own. Therefore, when Lord Theign considers selling one of his art treasures to a rich American purchaser in order to raise the necessary dowry, against the wishes of Lady Grace and her romantic interest, Hugh Crimble, who both think that English art treasures ought to remain in England, Lady Grace believes the money is to pay her sister's debts.

However, the original intrigue is unfortunately forgotten after the first act. Lord John abandons his suit following a rebuff from Lady Grace. The intrigue serves only to set the rest of the plot in motion, for Lord Theign would not have become interested in selling the picture if it were not for the objective of raising the necessary dowry for Lady Grace. As the actions of Sir Ralph in *The Album* are based on his ruling passions of a love of money and a fear of marriage, so the actions of Lord Theign in *The Outcry* are based on his quirk of not wanting anyone to tell him what to do. As Hugh Crimble says of him, "The strongest thing in such a type as his, is his resentment of a liberty taken." So when Hugh tries to make a bargain with him at the end of the first act, "... If I contribute in my modest degree, to our estab-
lishing the true authorship of that work, may I have from you the assurance that that result isn't to serve as a basis for any peril—or possibility—of its leaving the country?" Lord Theign takes extreme exception to his interfering with his freedom, to his boldness in attempting to control him in any way. The plot now is independent of the original intrigue and secret, and the conflict is based on Lord Theign's determination to do as he pleases as against others of the cast who either want him to sell the picture or not to sell it. The suspense of the play comes to rest on whether or not the picture in question is a heretofore unrecognized, rare Mantovano or the Moretto it has always been supposed to be, whether or not Lord Theign will sell it to the American, and whether or not Lady Grace and Hugh Crimble will marry. The play would have been improved were the original secret exposed together with the rarity of the painting in a scène à faire.

Abandoning a real struggle between unpatriotic intriguers on one side and loyal art lovers on the other in favor of a Jonsonian humour character pitted against patriotism and artistic integrity was a major blunder of James.

The plot follows a seesaw pattern: up when Hugh believes that he has recognized a Mantovano in the Moretto; down when he is rejected by Theign when Hugh wants to investigate the true artist of the picture in question, and
Lord Theign refuses to give his conditional approval; up when Lady Grace bids him to undertake the proof, when Lady Sandgate sides with the patriots against selling the picture, and when the idea to create an uproar is conceived; down when Lady Grace offers to her father to give up Hugh if he (Lord Theign) gives up his idea of selling the picture, and Pappendick, the art expert, rejects the possibility that the picture is a rare Mantovano; up with the hope that Caselli, another art expert, may pass judgment favorably on the rarity of the work, when Lady Grace decides to keep on seeing Hugh regardless of what her father does with the picture, and when she embraces Hugh and declares her ardour for him; down when Lord Theign decides to sell the picture; up when he talks of giving it to the national museum; down when Lord Theign offers to sell it again to Bender, the American; up when the Prince believes the picture to be rare, Caselli confirms it, Lord Theign decides to give it to the country and shows a little approbation in the relationship of Lady Grace and Hugh. To complete the happy resolution, even Lady Sandgate and Lord Theign are unnecessarily linked at the end of the play.

The picture in question, though never seen on the stage, becomes as important in the plot of The Outcry as the reticule in The Reprobate or the album in the play of that name. It brings Lady Grace and Hugh Crimble together,
creates a temporary estrangement between Lady Grace and her father, Lord Theign, and causes an uproar, an "outcry," in England. James, in promoting the well-made object beyond the status of a hand prop, raises the lowly object of suspense by adapting it to a play of higher meaning than the simple level of intrigue. He builds around it a play of timely national significance, a rendering of the question as to the national loyalty of letting valuable works of art leave the country.

Although the conflict in this play slips out from under the vestige of an intrigue in the first act, there is well-made symmetry of construction and a general feeling of artificiality. The characterization is shallow and the action is still highly contrived with precise timing and rapid reversals resulting in mounting suspense, all of which combine to prove that Henry James was still shackled to the narrow well-made play formula, even after a brief escape from it in The Other House, at the end of his second foray into the "dramatic and theatric mystery and craft."
CONCLUSION

Judgment must be rendered as to the extent of James' structural mastery of the well-made play. He begins rather clumsily in *Daisy Miller* with a false secret and strained happy conclusion; but the next plays, *The American*, *Tenants*, and *Disengaged* show progressive skill in construction, each displaying proficiency over the one immediately preceding it with excellence reached in the last play. With *The Album* James begins the use of the *quiproquo*; but he fails to carry out the plan of his central intrigue, with which is connected a hand prop, resulting in a disappointing craftsmanship and poor play after the brilliant *Disengaged*. *The Reprobate* represents the apex of James' technical skill in holding the interest of an audience by a well-made play. The knot is well-tied and skillfully untied, using the seesaw plot of intrigue with secrets, the *quiproquo*, and the hand prop device. The seesaw of James' achievement goes down with *Guy Domville*. In this play not only did James fail to elevate the elements of the well-made play above the plane of mere situation, but also the intrigues do not follow through in well-made fashion. Not until the next play, *The High Bid*, are the characters able with any success to replace the intrigues of the dramatist with one of their own making. Since the secret is exposed early and the original intrigue disrupted,
the play lacks the suspenseful build-up which should continue until almost the end when it should burst into a satisfactory resolution. The climax, coming in the second act, is too early; the construction of The High Bid is not masterful. In The Other House James successfully builds a play of character upon the well-made elements of intrigue, patterned movement on the psychological plane, and the prop idea raised to special psychological interest. James having finally achieved success in constructing well-made plays with comic themes, The Other House is his only successfully constructed serious play in which the Scribean elements are not used as ends in themselves but as means subordinated to the effectual presentation of a play of character. If this were his last play, one could lament the fact that James left the theatre just when he was beginning to show a mature application of his mastery of dramatic technique. But The Outcry regrettably returns to imperfect construction with the intrigue and accompanying secret abandoned too early for dramatic effect and substituted by inferior motivation for the remaining plot movement. In the last analysis James' structural mastery of the Théâtre Français was complete at times, but he lacked sustained theatrical craftsmanship together with a failure to progress consistently, as he did with the aside and the soliloquy, in the use of all elements with
which he was working. The absence of dramatic maturity over a considerable period of trial and error leaves us with little regret that James did not devote more years to playmaking.

The question has been raised as to the value of James' experience with playwriting, and the answers are various. Dupee, in putting as little significance and value as possible in James' theatrical interlude, denies any real import from it: "The dramatic structure and immediacy he had already mastered in his fiction."¹

Edna Kenton says that James' declarations for going into the theatre in order to make money should not be taken literally but figuratively:

No, James never went into the drama for the sake of getting into the theatre. He went into the theatre for the sake of getting into the very skin and body, the warp and woof and texture of dramatic form, for money absolutely—the "whole stiff mystery of technic" was in his pocket, a treasure box, a bank, a gold mine on which to draw for the rest of his life.²

She points out that before the dramatic years James was primarily concerned with fusing the technique of the novelist with the technique of the painter, and that after his theatrical period, he sought to fuse the rules of the drama with the artistry of the novel.³ Elizabeth
Livermore Forbes adds to Kenton's views: "Those years taught him an ultimate formal perfection which would otherwise have been less than complete."^4

Popkin, in speaking of the imaginary theatre which James sought to create in the later novels, says, "James's creation of this imaginary theatre is manifested not only in the dramatic and scenic nature of the late novels but also in the increasing abundance of theatrical imagery."^5

Fergusson puts the emphasis on what James learned about dramatic form after, not during, his dramatic years:

He abandoned the stage, but without thinking that the drama or even the theatre lacked the resources he required. It was rather that particular form of drama [well-made] and that particular theatre which baffled and thwarted him.

When James embarked upon his last group of novels and his critical prefaces he was free to tackle the subject which really interested him. It was in the effort to "dramatize" this subject that he made his great discoveries in dramatic form and technique.

And I wish to suggest that his ideas of form and of techniques of presentation throw at least as much light upon drama as upon fiction.^6

Fergusson then takes these technical notions (dramatizing the picture as well as the scene by viewing it through not his own [the author's] consciousness but through that of a character involved in the drama; the fine intelligence
as "reflector" and as compositional center; situations as lamps or reflectors in lighting up a "round" subject; suspense as to not what happens but rather what the true values of a situation are; the complete drama revealed as a static composition) and indicates their application to drama and the basic conceptions of dramatic form that they constitute. 7

The ultimate value, then, of James' struggle with the well-made play as he saw it at the Théâtre Français is his strange un-realization of its inadequacy and his unhappy rejection of it by leaving the theatre altogether. "James paid dearly for his position above the battle, but he found there some curiously universal technical concepts, useful in contexts he never dreamed of; and a conception of dramatic form which we still need if we are to see the drama of his time and ours in the right perspective." 8 It is both curious and lamentable that James could not write for the stage using these "universal technical concepts" instead of the well-made play form.
FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION


2 Dupee, p. 150.


4 On February 6, 1891, Henry James wrote to his brother, William, at the time of the provincial production of *The American*, "Now that I have tasted blood, c'est une rage (of determination to do, and triumph, on my part,) for I feel at last as if I had found my real form, which I am capable of carrying far, and for which the pale little art of fiction, as I have practised it, has been, for me, but a limited and restricted substitute. The strange thing is that I always, universally, knew this was my more characteristic form—but was kept away from it by a half-modest, half-exaggerated sense of the difficulty (that is, I mean the practical odiousness) of the conditions." (The *Letters of Henry James*, ed. Percy Lubbock [London, 1920], I, 183).


6 *The Complete Plays*, pp. 57-59.

7 Dupee, p. 150.

8 *The Complete Plays*, p. 61.

9 *The Complete Plays*, p. 67.
The two are The American and Guy Domville. The American was produced in Southport at the Winter Gardens Theatre on January 3, 1891, and it then toured parts of Scotland and Ireland as well as England with the Compton Comedy Company in the spring before its London opening on September 26, 1891. In London it ran at the Opera Comique Theatre through December 3, 1891, after which it toured the provinces again with Compton's repertory company and with a new fourth act. Guy Domville, opening January 5, 1895, had a moderate run of forty performances at the St. James's Theatre with a brief showing at Brighton during the last week. The High Bid was shown for the first time on March 26, 1908, at the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh and for four matinees beginning February 18, 1909, at His Majesty's Theatre in London. Disengaged saw an amateur production in New York by the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and the Empire Theatre Dramatic School in 1902 and had a special professional matinee at the Hudson Theatre on March 11, 1909, as a benefit for St. Andrew's Convalescent Hospital. The one-act The Saloon opened at the Little Theatre in London on January 17, 1911, as a curtain-raiser to Just to Get Married by Cicely Hamilton. The Outcry was produced by the Incorporated Stage Society of London on July 1 and 3, 1917. The Reprobate was produced in London by the Incorporated Stage Society on December 14 and 15, 1919, and in Boston at the Copley Theatre for a week beginning March 12, 1923. Daisy Miller, Tenants, The Album, and The Other House never achieved stage realization. (This information is mostly found in the editor's forewords to each of the plays in The Complete Plays.)

11 The Complete Plays, p. 69.

12 Dupee, p. 149.


CHAPTER ONE


2 In "Shaw's Debt to Scribe," PMLA, LXXVI (1961), 576, fn. 9, Stephen Stanton says, "One should remember . . . that Scribe did not actually invent the technique of the well-made play, but, with a skill and resourcefulness unique in the history of the drama, developed this technique from the elements common to comedy in the classical tradition, to which Terence, Molière, and Beaumarchais belonged." Neil Cole Arvin, however, in his Preface to Eugène Scribe and the French Theatre 1815-1860 (Cambridge, Mass., 1924), pp. vii-viii, says that Scribe did invent the well-made play form. On p. 172 he further clarifies the problem: "After Beaumarchais (who first constructed a complex and, at the same time, compact plot, nervous, brilliant, and bustling), Scribe in his genre, C. Delavigne in his, utilized and developed this law of stage motion discovered by Beaumarchais. As Delavigne lacked the originality and the courage necessary to give this law its fullest development, it is to Scribe that the modern drama is indebted for its form." On pp. 74-75 he says: "Picard . . . alone of the late eighteenth-century writers can claim with Beaumarchais a share in the ancestry of the well-constructed play, which in the hands of Scribe, Augier, the younger Dumas, and Sardou, was to become the consecrated form of the comedy of the nineteenth century."

4 Downer, p. 281.


6 Fergusson, p. 233.

7 Leo B. Levy, Versions of Melodrama: A Study of the Fiction and Drama of Henry James, 1865-1897 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1957), p. 73.


9 Downer, p. 287.

10 Camille and Other Plays, p. xxxix

11 Stanton points out in Camille, p. xviii, that "the well-made play is, in fact, generally worked out backward from its crucial scene."


13 As Sir Montague says of Coverley in the second act of Disengaged, "He runs in and out of the house as if it were a railway station."

14 See also Girdler B. Fitch, "Emile Augier and the Intrusion Plot," PMLA, LXIII (1948), 274-280.

CHAPTER TWO


3 This thesis, which is limited to James' use of well-made play structure, does not consider many aspects of James' plays, such as dialogue, type-characters, or the categorical names which he often gives his personages. However, it is worthwhile to show James' changing use of
the convention of the aside and the soliloquy as part of his progression in dramatic craftsmanship. For a discussion of this aspect of James' development see Appendix A.

4 Popkin, p. 33.


6 Popkin, p. 34.


CHAPTER THREE


2 The Complete Plays, p. 64-65.

3 The Complete Plays, p. 68.


5 The Complete Plays, pp. 678-679.

6 Brander Matthews, "Ibsen the Playwright," Bookman, XXII (1905-1906), 573.


10 Archer, "Ibsen's Craftsmanship," p. 110.
CONCLUSION


APPENDIX A

ASIDES AND SOLILOQUIES

Although not of importance in establishing James' use of well-made play structure, it is helpful to consider briefly his changing employment of the aside and soliloquy as part of his technical growth in playwriting. One critic's viewpoint of this dramatic convention will serve as a point of departure.

Archer has only contempt for the convention of the aside and the soliloquy:

A drama with soliloquies and asides is like a picture with inscribed labels issuing from the mouths of the figures. In that way, any bungler can reveal what is passing in the minds of his personages. But the glorious problem of the modern playwright is to make his characters reveal the inmost workings of their souls without saying or doing anything that they would not say or do in the real world. ... the aside is ten times worse than the soliloquy. It is always possible that a man might speak his thought, but it is glaringly impossible that he should speak it so as to be heard by the audience and not heard by others on the stage. In French light comedy and farce of the nineteenth century, the aside is abused beyond even the license of fantasy. ... An aside is intolerable because it is not heard by the other person on the stage: it outrages physical possibility. An overheard soliloquy, on the other hand, is intolerable because it is heard. It keeps within the bounds of physical possibility, but it stultifies the only logical excuse for the soliloquy, namely that it is an
Matthews speaks of the convention in direct relation to the well-made play: "The inexpert playwright uses soliloquy not merely to unveil the soul of the speaker (its eternally legitimate use), but also to convey information to the audience as to the facts of the intrigue. . . ."\(^2\) James, like the other playwrights of well-made drama, was not concerned that "his characters reveal the inmost workings of their souls," for they usually did not have souls, only clever intrigues to perform before an audience. Although James uses the convention of aside and soliloquy as the makers of well-made plays did, we can see a definite trend in his plays from an overuse of it in the beginning of his dramatic career, when he felt unsure of himself, to almost complete abandonment of it by the time he wrote the last plays.

In *Daisy Miller* he makes unrestrained use of the aside and the soliloquy. For example, Winterbourne has twenty-one asides of his own in the short fourth scene of the first act. He has a lengthy soliloquy ending scene three and another beginning scene six of the same act. Daisy has a soliloquy that is so long opening scene five of the second act that it rivals the length of some whole scenes.

James uses the aside and the soliloquy much less
frequently in *The American*, his second full-length play, than in *Daisy Miller*, his first. There are eighty-five such instances in the first act of the three-act *Daisy Miller* compared to only twenty-nine in the first two acts of the four-act *The American*.

The number of solitary utterances has decreased to less than twenty for all three acts combined by the time of the third play, *Tenants*. The majority of occurrences in the first two plays, on the other hand, are asides, the more odious of the two possibilities according to Archer.

James' use of the soliloquy is closely connected with the scene structure of *Tenants*. In this play short soliloquies occur between the scenes when one character is left alone on the stage before another enters to make the next scene. James uses these speeches as information bulletins to the audience. For example, by means of soliloquy in the first act of *Tenants* the audience discovers such information as the fact that Miss Dyer, Mildred's companion, is interested in Norman and that Norman is aware of it; that Mrs. Vibert is pleased with what she finds when she comes to rent the lodge: charming surroundings, a possible wife and fortune for her son, Claude, a new security for herself with Sir Frederick ("I've succeeded beyond my hope," she says to herself.); but that she also knows winning over Mildred "will be uphill" and
that Norman "must go tonight!"

In *Disengaged* James takes such license less than twenty-five times (three-fourths of the occurrences very short soliloquies). In *The Album* the number decreases to less than ten. An increase to nearly twenty each of soliloquies and asides occurs in *The Reprobate*, but this is the last play to contain such a large number. *Guy Domville* and *The High Bid* have only about five or six each. *The Other House* has none (significant in that this play has been shown to be the least well-made of all), and the last play, *The Outcry*, has only two "brief ejaculations."
FOOTNOTES TO APPENDIX A


2 Brander Matthews, "Ibsen the Playwright," Bookman, XXII (1905-1906), 573.
APPENDIX B

TABLE OF DATES OF COMPOSITION AND STAGE PRODUCTION OF HENRY JAMES' FULL-LENGTH PLAYS

Daisy Miller (1882)
adapted from novel of 1878
not produced

The American (1890)
adapted from novel of 1877
produced at Southport, Winter Gardens Theatre, January 3, 1891; toured parts of Scotland, Ireland, and England before London production, Opera Comique Theatre, September 26, 1891-December 3, 1891; toured provinces again with new fourth act (written 1892)

Tenants (1890)
not produced

Disengaged (late 1891 or early 1892)
 amateur production in New York, 1902, by the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and the Empire Theatre Dramatic School; professional matinee at the Hudson Theatre, March 11, 1909

The Album (1891)
not produced

The Reprobate (1891)

Guy Domville (1893)
produced in London, St. James's Theatre, opening January 5, 1895, for forty performances; at Brighton during the last week
The High Bid (1907)

based on one-act "Summersoft" of 1895 and tale Covering End of 1898
produced at Edinburgh, Royal Lyceum Theatre, March 26, 1908; at London, His Majesty's Theatre, four matinees beginning February 18, 1909

The Other House (1908-1909)

adapted from novel of 1896
not produced

The Outcry (1909)

produced at London by the Incorporated Stage Society, July 1,3, 1917
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