

Principles of Self Psychology in the Fiction of Henry James

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We are all echoes and reverberations of the same, and you are noble when your interest and pity as to everything that surrounds you, appears to have a sustaining and harmonizing power.

—Henry James (1883/1987, p. 191)¹

... it is human empathy, as we mirror and confirm the other and as the other confirms and mirrors us, that buttresses an enclave of human meaning—of hate, love, triumph, and defeat ...

—Heinz Kohut (1973/2011b, p. 682)

Sigmund Freud believed that principles of psychoanalysis were exemplified in works of literature and theatre, in Leonardo da Vinci's paintings and Michelangelo's sculpture, and in the antiquities he collected. To be sure, the project of finding art meaningful in this way can go wrong—Freud's interpretations weren't always evidence-based.² But that project can also succeed, I believe: insight that is conveyed through a work of art can even *anticipate* discoveries formulated later in a social science like psychology or sociology.³ James' fiction penned at the turn of the 20th century, with its emphasis on representing the inner lives and travails of its protagonists, prefigures ideas in psychoanalysis that Freud's followers elaborated decades later.

Although the pathways taken by 20th-century psychoanalysis are many and convoluted, I'd like to foreground here exploration of the relational nature of human experience: human psychology is not trapped between culture on the one hand and instinct on the other, as in the classical Freudian model, but unfolds instead in the space of interpersonal relationships that shape identity and desire. Two pioneers of this approach were psychoanalysts Melanie Klein and Anna Freud who emigrated from central Europe to England before the Second World War and made child psychology central to psychoanalytic theory and practice. Donald and Clare Winnicott elaborated object relations psychoanalysis, with ideas about mother-child bonding, transitional objects, holding environments, etc. that departed from orthodox concepts. In the 1960s

and 70s, the encounter of psychoanalysis with the women's movement further renewed the field. Americans Nancy Chodorow, Dorothy Dinnerstein, and Jessica Benjamin, among others, revised the psychoanalytic tradition that had been carried across the ocean from Europe.

Then there was Heinz Kohut, an Austrian Jew who fled the holocaust and arrived in Chicago in 1940.⁴ He underwent psychoanalytic training in the late 1940s and commenced to teach at the Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute and to write not just on the subject of psychoanalysis but also about music and literature. In 1959 he published an article that placed empathy at the conceptual and therapeutic center of psychoanalysis, concluding "that introspection and empathy are essential ingredients of psychoanalytic observation and that the limits of psychoanalysis are, therefore, defined by the potential limits of introspection and empathy." (Kohut, 1959, p. 482) Empathy—defined as the "the capacity to think and feel oneself into the inner life of another person" (Kohut, 1984, p. 82)—became thereafter the foundation of Kohut's re-formulation of psychoanalytic theory and treatment.

Empathy had always been important in psychoanalysis, going back to Freud, for whom empathy ("Einfühlung" in German) "plays the largest part in our understanding of what is inherently foreign to us in other people."⁵ (Freud, 1922, p. 66) But the history of the induction of empathy into the Freudian canon was far from straightforward and not necessarily advantageous to women. Empathy had, after all, been conventionally identified as their innate gift and responsibility, consigning women to stereotypical roles as care givers. (Lobb, 2013) At mid-century, though, a psychoanalytic re-examination of transference, acknowledging the prospect of a beneficial attachment—a "therapeutic alliance"—linking therapist and patient, led to a positive evaluation of the role of empathy in psychoanalytic treatment. Kohut embraced a still wider conception, claiming that introspection and empathy "play a role in *all* psychological understanding." (Kohut, 1959/2011a, p. 211).

This insight is in keeping with the writing of Henry James—consisting of the stories themselves, but also of his prefaces and other commentary—which conveys to readers his agreement with two Kohutian propositions:

1. Human subjectivity is formed out of interpersonal relationships.
2. Empathy is a cognitive as well as an affective relationship that provides an indispensable method for understanding human experience.

The Relational Character of Human Subjectivity

Anticipating the relational turn taken by psychoanalysis (Mitchell, 1988, 1995), the persons that populate the stories written by Henry James are shaped by myriad, shifting relationships that aren't explicable in terms of inalterable instinct, "human nature" or any other fixed point of reference. What is biologically innate is always interwoven with culture—with the acquired experience of interpersonally engaged subjects. The human condition is formed of relations *all the way down*, so to speak: "Really, universally, relations stop nowhere," writes James (1907/1934, p. 5). "All life," James believes, "comes back to the question of our relations with each other," (1905, p. 10) and these relations are fashioned, not given. This radical modernism—which in the 20th century would be embraced by writers like Joyce, Faulkner, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot—distinguishes James from his 19th-century predecessors. The social world that he portrays, composed of interpersonal dependencies, is instable and unpredictable. Characters assume roles and identities not as clearly defined as the leads in a typical Dickens, Balzac, or Zola narrative. Consequently, James' open-ended approach to the representation of human experience does without the kind of closure that is found in much of earlier Victorian literature.

Empathy as Cognition—and How to Get Empathy Wrong

Paradoxically, though, James is by no means a skeptic about the prospect of arriving at knowledge about human experience. On the contrary, his characters' empathic inquiry provides the only reliable path to an awareness of themselves and others that is capable of loosening the knots that entangle their lives. Of course writers before James also made use of empathy to arouse an emotional response in their readers. George Eliot commented that "the greatest benefit we owe to the artist, whether painter, poet, or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies." What distinguishes Eliot and James from earlier authors is that empathy *between characters*, not just empathy invoked *in readers*, plays an extraordinarily pivotal role. And empathy does that in James' narratives by bringing to light psychological relationships long buried in the past—hence the close link of this narrative understanding to that of self psychology.

Empathy, Kohut writes, is as essential to learning as the five senses: "The empathic understanding of the experience of other human beings is as

basic an endowment of man as his vision, hearing, touch, taste and smell.” (Kohut, 1977, p. 144) This view of the innateness of empathic capacity is supported by scientific studies conducted over the past half century (Eisenberg, 2023) and is sharply at odds with dismissal of ‘empathy’ as a concept steeped in tribalism, cultural conformity, and irrationality. Psychologist Paul Bloom alleges in his book *Against Empathy* (Bloom, 2016) that because empathy is based on shared feeling with people who are close to us, it inclines us to pay less attention to the plights of others with whom we have no personal relationship. This critique rests on two mistaken premises. The first is that empathy requires a sharing of experience: “Empathy is *the act of coming to experience the world as you think someone else does.*” (emphasis in the original) This definition excludes too much, since empathy need not involve sameness, mirroring, or even similarity of experience. It requires only that one *infer* or *imagine* what it would be like to walk in the shoes of another. To be sure, for children as well as adults, empathy *may* involve a sharing of experience, as in the case of emotional contagion among infants. But such sharing is not a *necessary* condition for empathy. A doctor can empathize with a patient, a story teller and an audience with a character, a child with a (real or imagined) animal, without a sharing of actual experience. Indeed, the three examples of empathic relationship in James’ fiction that are the subject of this essay have been chosen partly because they exemplify empathy across wide *differences* of experience.

Also questionable in Bloom’s critique of empathy is the separation that he assumes between its cognitive and affective dimensions. Empathy, Bloom writes, does not solve the “problems we face as a society and as individuals,” and he advises that instead of empathizing, “We should strive to use our heads rather than our hearts.” The contrast proposed here is problematic. Although conceptions of ‘empathy’ have changed over time, as documented in Susan Lanzoni’s book *Empathy: A History* (2018), it is commonly understood that empathic response—contrary to Bloom’s dualist account—brings together reasoning and feeling. Empathy belongs to what cultural critic Raymond Williams calls a “structure of feeling,” uniting “thought as felt and feeling as thought.” (Williams, 1977)

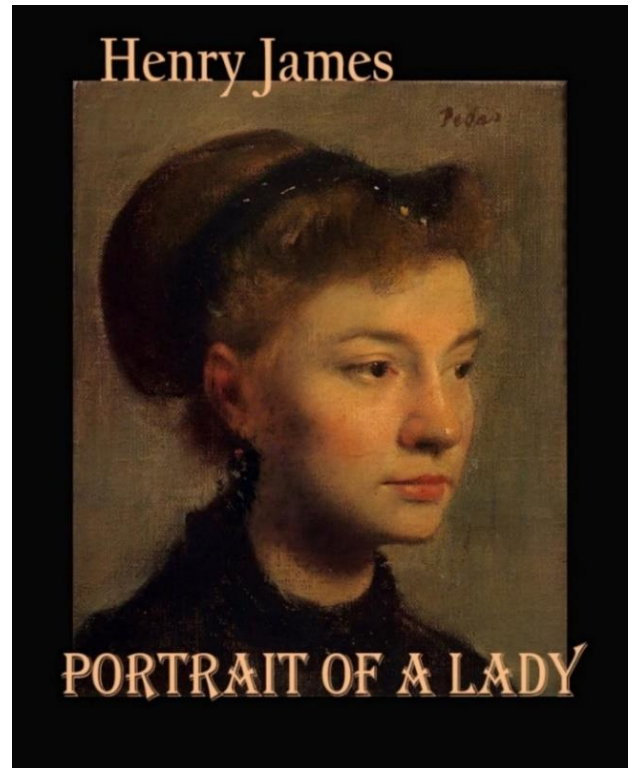
Empathy and Transference in *The Portrait of a Lady*

Isabel Archer, a young American woman, travels to Europe with the aim of exploring the continent and forming a meaningful life for herself. What attracts people to her is her imagination and openness as well as her physical attractiveness. Upon arriving at the English countryside estate of her wealthy uncle and aunt, she is welcomed by her cousin Ralph Touchett and by Madame Merle, a friend of the family who becomes a confidant and guide. These new acquaintances admire her spirited nature and quest for experience and connection.

Isabel is by no means a blank slate, however. Her perceptions are shaped by “transference”: the experiencing of persons encountered in the present in terms of models from the past. James describes her past as follows: Isabel Archer has lost both of her parents: a mother who died when she was very young and a father who was neglectful and unreliable, but always permissive and tolerant of Isabel’s adventurous inclinations.

As is the case for many of the leading characters in James’ fiction, the absence in Isabel’s life of early supporting adults figures as a liability. Her life journey illustrates Heinz Kohut’s point that “the intense needs of those whose self has thus been undernourished make them the easy prey of any seducer who promises to ... give them that feeling of being empathically valued and accepted ...” (Kohut, 1973/2011c, p. 713) Madame Merle is a refined older woman who pays a lot of attention to Isabel and becomes a close friend. She introduces Isabel to Gilbert Osmond, a vain and manipulative man—narcissism would be the diagnosis today—whose painstakingly attentive courtship, in sharp contrast to the neglect by her father when she was a child, blinds her to Osmond’s character flaws.

Isabel’s cousin Ralph, on the other hand, showers her with attention that is genuinely affectionate and sympathetic. He is not represented, though,



as simply an enabling, benevolent ally. Empathy, for James, is often complex and even problematic. Ralph's illness aligns his own interest imperfectly with Isabel's: his negative take on the men who court and propose marriage to her is motivated by his appraisal that none of them will make a suitable partner, but also by his awareness that a marital path will take her away from him.

In this way the friendship that links the two cousins, which began with a mirroring of experience and mutual recognition, gets entangled with cross-purposes and misperception. The course of that friendship is influenced also by the manipulative aims of others who enter into Isabel's life. After turning down the marriage offers of two suitors, she is captured by a third. Gilbert Osmond's interest in Isabel is driven by his wish to get his hands on Isabel's considerable inheritance, which he seeks to obtain through marriage. He offers to Isabel steadfast security, at the price of her becoming another one of his possessions, like his 15-year old daughter Pansy who tells Isabel, "I shall always obey him." (James, 1908/2004, p. 434) Instead of noticing the abundant evidence for Osmond's controlling character, however, Isabel is won over by his seemingly masterful erudition and wise counsel. Visiting Osmond at his home for the first time, Isabel welcomes his authoritative guidance:

Isabel waited, with a certain unuttered contentedness, to have her movements directed; she liked Mr Osmond's talk, his company: she had what always gave her a very private thrill, the consciousness of a new relation ..." (p. 359)

Married to Osmond, Isabel soon becomes acutely aware of his "faculty for making everything wither that he touched, spoiling everything for her that he looked at.... a gulf had opened between them over which they looked at each other with eyes that were on either side a declaration of the deception suffered." (pp. 571-572) Years later, Isabel reflects on her own naiveté—her belief that she could willingly surrender her needs and beliefs to Osmond:

The real offence, as she ultimately perceived, was her having a mind of her own at all. Her mind was to be his—attached to his own like a small garden-plot to a deer-park. He would rake the soil gently and water the flowers; he would weed the beds and gather an occasional nosegay.... He didn't wish her to be stupid. On the contrary, it was because she was clever that she had pleased him. But he expected her intelligence to operate altogether in his favour, and so far from desiring her mind to be a blank he had flattered himself that it would be richly receptive. He had

expected his wife to feel with him and for him, to enter into his opinions, his ambitions, his preferences; and Isabel was obliged to confess that this was no great insolence on the part of a man so accomplished and a husband originally at least so tender ... (p. 582)

This reads like one of Heinz Kohut's case histories. "Idealizing transference," according to Kohut, speaks to a basic human need: to have people in one's life who enable one to feel calm and safe, who make sense of the world so that one can find one's way. Such transference can serve as a child's stepping stone toward learning and independence. But when it occurs in the life of an adult, it may result instead in grim submission, as it does for Isabel.

From the time that Osmond first meets Isabel, James makes the manipulative nature of his courtship glaringly evident, which has led critics to fault the author for having someone as bright and inquisitive as Isabel be oblivious to Osmond's character flaws. But this misrecognition on her part makes sense in the context of Isabel's personal history as James represents it. That young Isabel went without adult guidance and protection explains her eager and gullible embrace of Madame Merle and then of Osmond as well. He impresses Isabel in part because he appears to be such a devoted parent to his daughter. When Isabel invites him to accompany her on a trip to Rome, and he explains that he cannot leave Pansy alone, Isabel is deeply moved. Osmond is for Pansy everything—order, discipline, authority—that her father was not. Identifying with the daughter, who gives the appearance of receiving the attention that went missing in her own childhood, Isabel fails to recognize the controlling character of all of Osmond's relationships.

What is striking is the nuance and complexity in James' treatment of the psychological grip that Isabel's past holds—a preemptory force that defeats the high regard for her own autonomy that she voices early on in the novel, "If there's a thing in the world I'm fond of ...it's my personal independence." (p. 231). Self-confidently unaware of sources of her own motivation, Isabel succumbs readily to Osmond's transparently instrumental (except to Isabel) courtship ritual, "what had become of all her ardours, her aspirations, her theories, her high estimate of her independence and her incipient conviction that she should never marry? These things had been absorbed in a more primitive need—a need the answer to which brushed away numberless questions, yet gratified infinite desires." (p. 291). There is also a second purpose that marriage to Osmond serves for Isabel. He is, she

recognizes, a man with “neither fortune, nor fame, nor extrinsic advantages of any kind.” With the wealth bestowed upon her by Ralph’s father, she proposes to rescue and redeem *his* life, thereby contradicting the pattern of neglect manifest early on in her own: her sympathy for Osmond is a facsimile of the treatment she would have liked to receive. Third—and this may be Isabel’s most significant motivation—her commitment to another person represents what Isabel believes will be a fulfillment of, not an obstacle to, her personal freedom. Hence when Ralph submits that her marriage to Osmond will confine her, “you’re going to be put into a cage,” she at once repudiates the metaphor, “If I like my cage, that needn’t trouble you.” (p. 288). Isabel comes to recognize that what she calls a “free exploration of life” has to eventuate in a tangible project, and that a caring relationship is a good candidate. “It comes over me every now and then,” she acknowledges, “that I can never be happy ... by turning away, by separating myself.” (p. 194). In pursuit of a meaningful life, Isabel comes to believe that—given the limited range of possibilities available to a woman like herself—caring deeply about someone will fulfill the mission that brought her to Europe in the first place.

As it turns out, partnership with Osmond, brought about through artful deception, does not work out as Isabel hopes. And compounding her unhappiness is the death of her child, a boy, at the age of six months. Despairing after three years of a failing marriage, Isabel renews her friendship with Ralph, whose medical condition continues to deteriorate. They become close friends once again, “There was something in Ralph’s talk, in his smile, in the mere fact of his being in Rome, that made the blasted circle round which she walked more spacious. He made her feel the good of the world; he made her feel what might have been” (p. 585). Meeting for the last time in Gardencourt, Ralph’s home since childhood, he and Isabel set right their previous misunderstandings about one another and form an intimacy deeper than either of them has ever known before, “... nothing mattered now but the only knowledge that was not pure anguish—the knowledge that they were looking at the truth together.” Kohut calls mutual recognition of this kind “twinship transference,” which is a way of knowing as well as feeling. Isabel’s empathic relationship with Ralph, which she describes as “a lamp in the darkness,” enables the deliberations that culminate in her recognition of truths about her marriage and herself.

Relational Versus Drive-based Approach to Human Sexuality

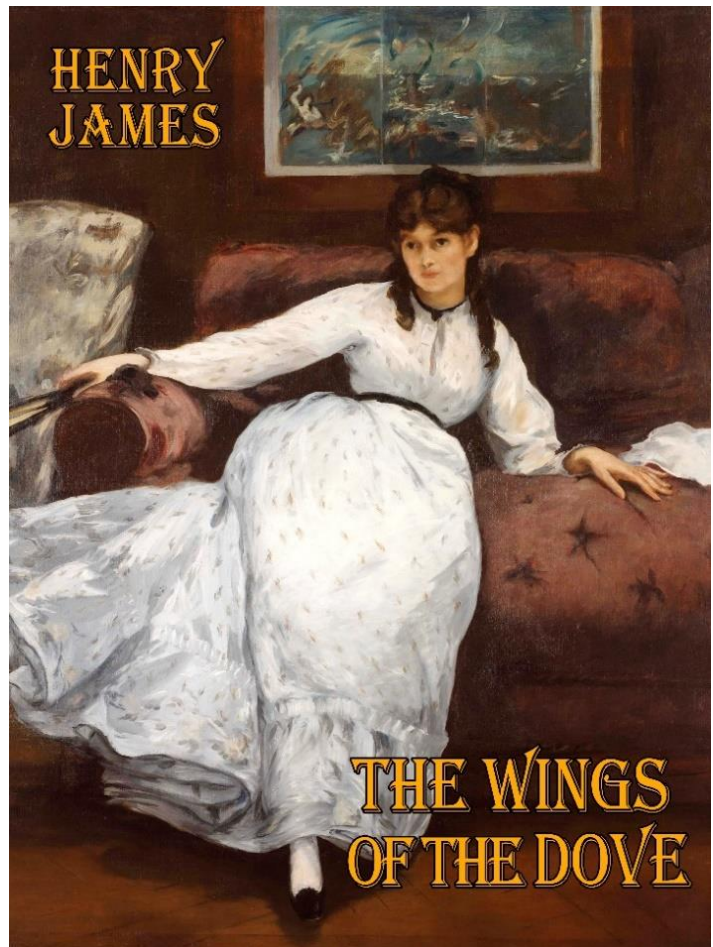
In neither James' fiction nor Kohut's self-psychology can human relationships—empathy among them—be understood within a classical Freudian model of instinctual drives and their repression. A common psychoanalytic take on *Portrait of a Lady* is that, notwithstanding Isabel's openness and curiosity, she is brought down eventually by the stifling conventions that govern her 19th-century Victorian world. Hence when Isabel turns down the courtship mounted by the American Caspar Goodwood, her response is read as dictated by sexual repression: she is "frigid," "cold," "prefers enclosed security to passion."⁶ James' text, however, gives scant support to this reading. It's true that Isabel is bookish and reserved, and certainly not immune to the influence of social convention, but she is not represented as passionless. Her relationship to the American Caspar Goodwood fails to get off the ground not because of sexual aversion but because, given Isabel's interests, there is not enough in him to relate to. He is utterly oblivious to her experiences and ambitions, and presents, in James' words, "rather a hard surface" to the world. In every one of his encounters with Isabel, he remains utterly incapable of hearing what her life, as she understands it, is about. Near the end of the novel Goodwood shows no concern at all with what Isabel has recently experienced: the death of her dear cousin Ralph, and before that the death of her child. Given the depth and passion of her conversations with Ralph, only a few days back, Isabel is in no frame of mind to entertain Goodwood's self-important pleadings. She does not find appealing the prospect of returning with him to the United States and becoming a conventional wife.

Sexuality in all of its dimensions is represented in James' fiction, whether disclosed or—as is often the case—hidden.⁷ Absent, though, is any fundamental clash between "instinct" and "reason" or "culture" that places a limit on the diversity of forms that gender relationships, although anchored in biology, can take. In *Portrait*, sexuality, which for Isabel represents a potential for deep and lasting human affection, is for Osmond parsed in terms of mastery and bondage. Madame Merle understands sexuality as an instrument for economic gain, while Goodwood wields it in a way that conforms to his traditional American view of courtship and marriage.

Literary criticism of James' fiction has sought in recent decades to understand the role played by his own homosexuality in shaping his artistic imagination. Many of his characters indeed make choices that break with conventional gender categories. James' novel *The Awkward Age*, for example, features gender variety, ambiguity, and transgression. In this novel and in all of his writing, though, sexuality is more a vehicle than an inalterable foundation for the aims of his leading characters. Their actions around sexuality are formed by the insecure social relationships in their lives. In James' fiction, writes critic Kenneth Graham, "proliferating analyses of situations and states of mind seem to come dangerously close to dissolving, instead of interpreting, the life we know." (Graham, 1975, p. 10) This interpreting/dissolving is less body-centric and in a way more radically disruptive than the classical conflict between drive and social constraint.

The Wings of the Dove: Social Empathy

While it is true, as some critics have pointed out, that James concentrates on the adventures and misadventures of the affluent and privileged, these individuals engage also with a wider world.⁸ Empathy, for example, can reach across boundaries of social class. In his novel *Wings of the Dove* (James, 1902/2008), young and wealthy American Milly Theale arrives in London, intent on exploring life's possibilities in Europe. However, upon meeting with her doctor in London, she is diagnosed as terminally ill. Following her interview with him, she alights from her carriage and walks through London's Regent's Park:



Here were benches ... here were idle lads at games of ball, with their cries mild in the thick air; here were wanderers anxious and tired like herself; here doubtless were hundreds of others just in the same box. Their box, their great common anxiety, what was it, in this grim breathing-space, but the practical question of life? They could live if they would; that is, like herself, they had been told so: she saw them all about her, on seats, digesting the information, recognising it again as something in a slightly different shape familiar enough, the blessed old truth that they would live if they could. (p. 203)

Newly made aware of her own impossible situation, Milly looks, perhaps for the first time, into the lives of others whose lives are also blocked. "They could live if they would ... they had been told so"—this is the same counsel that, earlier in the day, Millie had she received from her doctor: you can live the life you want, if you just choose to do so. The truth is, Millie recognizes, that she and they "would live if they could." Her destiny is joined with others who have been promised access to a better life:

All she thus shared with them made her wish to sit in their company; which she so far did that she looked for a bench that was empty [Her state] was that of a poor girl with her rent to pay for example—staring before her in a great city. Milly had her rent to pay, her rent for her future; everything else but how to meet it fell away from her in pieces, in tatters. (James, 1902, p. 203)

The Wings of the Dove: Clash of Ambition and Expectation

Milly's predicament is defined by what Heinz Kohut calls a "tension arc"—a disconnect between one's actual life and the more creative, meaningful existence that one would live if one had the capacity and the opportunity. Many of the protagonists in James' stories seek identity and fulfillment under conditions that block their reach for what James called a "larger life." In *The Wings of the Dove* Milly Theale's illness thwarts her hopes, as do the obstacles facing her two London acquaintances, Kate Croy and Merton Densher. Secretly betrothed to one another, they face a mediocre future. Merton is a poorly paid young journalist, while Kate is living with an aunt who is willing to provide handsomely for her only on the condition that she will renounce her relationship with her father. Kate, whose mother and two brothers have

perished and whose father has become a penniless and scheming opium addict, asks herself whether her own prospects will be dragged down too. Near the beginning of *Wings*, Kate pays a visit to her father, and while he is keeping her waiting she stands alone in a room and examines her reflection in a mirror on the mantel:

If she saw more things than her fine face in the dull glass of her father's lodgings she might have seen that after all she was not herself a fact in the collapse. She didn't hold herself cheap, she didn't make for misery. Personally, no, she wasn't chalk-marked for auction. She hadn't given up yet, and the broken sentence, if she was the last word, would end with a sort of meaning. (James, 1902, p. 25)

Receiving no mirroring recognition from her self-absorbed father, Kate feels that she can rely only on her own counsel and resources to create for herself an acceptable life.

Aware that her affluent American friend Milly is quite ill, Kate comes up with a plan: Merton will court Milly with the aim of having her leave much of her fortune to Merton when she dies. Merton reluctantly agrees with this scheme. That Kate acts deviously in this way does not exclude, however, a capacity for empathy. In *Wings*, as in *Portrait of a Lady*, empathy is a relationship that gets interwoven with instrumental aims. In the view of Lord Mark, the aristocrat whom Kate's aunt intends she should marry, "the working and the worked were in London, as one might explain, the parties to every relation." And for Kate too, "every one who had anything to give ... made the sharpest possible bargain for it, got at least its value in return." (p. 151) Such thoughts make Kate sound entirely selfish and manipulative, and that is the way she often is represented—as the femme fatale in the 1997 cinematic version of *Wings*, for example. Yet Kate's empathic outreach to others is evident throughout the novel. Although she is the driving force behind the false front that she and Merton present to Milly, James makes it clear that Kate also has feelings of affection and caring for her. At one point Kate even admits to Milly that "We're of no use to you—it's decent to tell you. You'd be of use to us, but that's a different matter. My honest advice to you would be ... to drop us while you can." (p. 225) Kate may intend to disarm Millie with these words, but there may be some genuine feeling in them too.

Empathy Then and Now

Although Isabel Archer, Milly Theale, and Kate Croy experience the opportunities available to them in very different ways, what any of them can realistically hope for in their lives is circumscribed by a conventionally gendered code of conduct in late 19th-century Victorian England. For all three it is empathic connection to others that enables their awareness of the code and the resistance that they put up against it.

Over the past century in England and America, the range of choices available to women has expanded. But has the outlook for living a rewarding life brightened for most people, irrespective of their gender identifications? Social media today exemplify the relationship shortfalls that, Kohut believes, characterize modern life. (Greif, 2000) An AI-equipped Internet algorithm delivers customized ads to users that are “attuned” to their individual preferences and can move inventory from an Amazon warehouse into their homes. But in what degree does this more “personalized” shopping network satisfy human longings for connection and closeness? Are the rising rates of depression and suicide among American teenagers over the past decade symptomatic of a media-driven culture that fails to link people meaningfully?

Today’s technological mediation of interpersonal relationships belongs to a broader historical transformation that has been taking place in the United States and other industrialized nations. Following World War II, economic growth was such that the proverbial “American Dream”—dignified employment and a living wage, home ownership, quality health care and public education—could be held out as achievable by everyone: those previously underprivileged would now have a shot at living a dignified, fulfilling life. But contemporary levels of inequality and uncertain employment have made the path to realizing that promise more challenging for many Americans, especially those who are not college-educated. Distance between hope and expectation today bears a similarity to the working-class condition that Milly Theale empathically pondered when she walked through Regent’s Park in late-19th century London.

Questions about life’s prospects that were raised by James over a century ago and by Kohut more recently haven’t lost their contemporary relevance. While James’ stories do not supply simple answers any more than self psychology does, they cast light on quandaries, social and political as well as personal, that remain consequential.

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¹ James penned these words of condolence in a letter to his friend Grace Norton, who was fighting depression and despair following a death in the family.

² Adams, 1993. Especially pp. 14-40.

³ Heinz Kohut suggests that "the greatest pioneering artists of any period are dealing with the leading psychological problems of tomorrow." (Kohut, 1975/1985, p. 168)

- ⁴ Thanks to my brother Peter Barglow, M.D. for pointing out to me the relevance of Kohutian self psychology to the fiction of Henry James, and for his editorial assistance. Helpful also has been Margret Schaefer.
- ⁵ Freud, however, misread the experience of some of his patients profoundly, especially those who were women, and that is a risk built into empathy: one may view the experiences of another through the distorting lens of one's own preconceptions.
- ⁶ See Alfred Habegger (1990, p. 60). Criticism of the view that Isabel is out of touch with her own sexuality has been made by Kurt Hochenauer (1990) and others. Nancy Cott's (1978) study of sexual ideology during the Victorian era notes that women's critical attitudes toward sexuality stem in part from their recognition that such conventions as courtship and marriage serve to amplify their subordination to men.
- ⁷ James' treatment of sexuality is sometimes quite direct and physical, as in the erotic relationship of Kate Croy to Morton Densher in *The Wings of the Dove*.
- ⁸ Examples include. *Princess Cassamassima*, *In the Cage*, and *The Wings of the Dove*.