

1 The Semantics of Love and Place

This chapter considers the relations between tourism and literature under the specific perspective of the semantics of love plots. On the one hand, I will try to reconstruct the literary form this takes in James's *Confidence*, on the other I attempt an hypothetical application of the result to the phenomenon of the honeymoon. It will be interesting to see in how far love and travel share some of their semantic qualities – especially in the cultural mould of individualism.

1.1 Love and Place in *Confidence*

Henry James's *Confidence*¹ has not had much attention by critics and scholars. An explanation may be that James didn't select *Confidence* for his New York Edition. Edel calls it Henry James's "worst novel, or at any rate a piece of fiction that might be considered a regression to the days of *Watch and Ward*."² However, Edel also notes that from *Confidence* on James began to write novels about heroines instead of about heroes. — Although James didn't favor this novel later, he seems to have been convinced by its qualities at the time of its publication.³

Incidentally or not, the first entry in the *Notebooks* is a sketch of what later became *Confidence*. The novel basically follows the outline set in the notebook: the incidental meeting of the protagonist and his later love object in the first chapter, the protagonist's conflicting loyalties between friendship to his collage mate and love to the object common to their desires, the final surmounting of these moral difficulties. The ending, however, in the novel is an overwhelmingly happy one, in contrast to the melodramatic sketch, where jealousy incites a murderous rage and the object of desire converts from the blood bath of passion to a religious life. The ending of the novel has been criticized by the editors of the *Notebooks* as too miraculously and excessively happy.⁴

The novel falls into three disjunct pieces which are separated on the level of story by the simple passing of relatively long periods of time and by their assignment to specific places. The first piece is contained in the first chapter, which seems to be something of a prologue to the whole story. Here the protagonist, Bernard Longueville, is

¹Published in James (1880).

²Edel (Edel 1962, p. 385) goes on to say that "its plot is like an old eighteenth century comedy ...". He also puts it into the biographical context of Henry James's family life which had just seen the marriage of his brother William: "In some strange way this novel goes through a series of comings together and fallings out, and its personal statement appears to contain strong elements of rejection, jealousy and need for self-consolation." (loc.cit.)

³citation, letter to someone (probably in Edel)

⁴"The men virtually fade out of the book before a demonstration of the power of pure women. ... At last he comes back to Paris ... free to marry Angela as placidly as the hero of any sentimental tale in the magazines of James' day." Matthiesen, Murdoch (James 1940, in p. 7)

introduced and the initial situation is established by means of his meeting an unknown compatriot and her mother in Siena. The second part takes place after a lapse of two months in Baden-Baden. Here the protagonist meets all the other characters and enters the main conflict between the loyalty to his long-time friend Gordon Wright and the sympathy towards the object of his friend's love, Angela Vivian, who is the same person he met at Siena. This entanglement is temporarily solved by the final dispersion of all parties and a lapse of time. The third part reunites all parties back in couples, i. e. Gordon marries first and Bernard and Angela finally recognize their love for each other after having met each other again on a beach in Normandy. The final obstacle to their Parisian marriage, Gordon's still vivid attachment to Angela and his own unhappy marriage, is overcome by female cunning.

1.1.1 The magic of Siena

The first chapter does not only introduce the male principal character, the protagonist or "hero", but also two other persons, women, to make of Siena a special "scene". A scene which is to be remembered throughout the novel, and the denials and evasions which characterize its surfacing in the middle part of the novel makes it the signifier of a special truth and the presence of a wrong. It is the foil against which the behavior of the characters can be read as an obstacle. It holds a subterranean tension throughout the story's partings and wanderings which is to be redeemed at the end of the novel. The love plot is instantiated in a "scene" in the second part of this first chapter. What are the ingredients, then, to the fertilizer that promises success to the planting of the germ of love? A close reading of this chapter will hopefully answer this question.

The Protagonist Bernard Longueville is not characterized by his social standing but rather by his capabilities of perceiving and acting in the world. He has an urbanity which makes him an agreeable partner in conversation. The narrator, however, insists on the even greater value of his inner life. If we look at the semantics of the characterization closely it is a romantic individuality that asks the reader to identify him- or herself with.

We start at the beginning.

It was in the early days of April; Bernard Longueville had been spending the winter in Rome. He had travelled northward with the consciousness of several social duties that appealed to him from the further side of the Alps, but he was under the charm of the Italian spring, and he made a pretext for lingering. (1041)⁵

⁵Quotes which just give the page number in parentheses are from *Confidence* (James (1880))

The first two sentences of the novel introduce a conflict between the appeal of social duties and the charm of the Italian spring. This prefigures the course of the novel where the moral, contractual demands of friendship will stand against the overwhelming individual and “natural” facts of love. Later the narrator explicitly states of the protagonist “that he had a nature which seemed at several points to contradict itself ...” (1042). But this is a view which is not necessarily shared by the narrator. The text goes on:

He had spent five days at Siena, where he had intended to spend but two, and still it was impossible to continue his journey. He was a young man of a contemplative and speculative turn, and this was his first visit to Italy, so that if he dallied by the way he should not be harshly judged. (1041)

The appeal to the reader to judge not “harshly” mounts a double position towards the protagonist: those who are taking sides with him, i. e. the reader and the narrator, and those who possibly don’t, which are the “others” in the novel, those who are the social context of the protagonist. Here we already are prepared for the other non-conforming traits of the protagonist and also the benefits we are to appreciate. Only when his friend Gordon Wright is introduced in the novel Bernard’s standing is mentioned (they both don’t have a regular occupation but are heirs, Gordon being the scientific humanist, Bernard the aesthete). Here he is rather characterized by his capabilities, as the next sentence in the novel shows:

He had a fancy for sketching, and it was on his conscience to take a few pictorial notes. (1041)

His conscience doesn’t contain social duties only, but with them balances duties concerning his own individual capabilities of expression. This is being elaborated a bit more extensively in the next paragraph of the chapter. Before that, however, we are confronted with something completely different. The text goes on with:

There were two old inns at Siena, both of them very shabby and very dirty. The one at which Longueville had taken up his abode was entered by a dark, pestiferous arch-way, surmounted by a sign which at a distance might have been read by the travellers as the Dantean injunction to renounce all hope. The other was not far off, and the day after his arrival, as he passed it, he saw two ladies going in who evidently belonged to the large fraternity of Anglo-Saxon tourists, and one of whom was young and carried herself very well. Longueville had his share—or more than his share—of gallantry, and this incident awakened a regret. If he had gone to

the other inn he might have had charming company: at his own establishment there was no one but an æsthetic German who smoked bad tobacco in the dining-room. (1041)

Here Longueville is characterized as versed in the idiom of gallantry, on occasion of the introduction of possible objects of such a mode of address. Such is already established a part of the “scene” or situation which finally will lead to a love story. We are told of the gaze of the protagonist clinging itself to two ladies, one of whom is remarkable, marked off as young and “carrying herself well”. Supported by the pair of inns which suggests coupling in general (of course, not vulgarly). However, the narrator gives a hint that it is not necessarily a love plot that has to result from such a pairing, it might as well be just another occasion for gallantry. This is at once a less serious and more general relation to the other sex than love. It is a matter of “charming company”. But isn’t gallantry a prerequisite for love? We’ll get to this question later.

The text continues to back up the characterization:

He remarked to himself that this was always his luck, and the remark was characteristic of the man; it was charged with the feeling of the moment, but it was not absolutely just; it was the result of an acute impression made by the particular occasion; but it failed in appreciation of a providence which had sprinkled Longueville’s career with happy accidents – accidents, especially, in which his characteristic gallantry was not allowed to rust for want of exercise. (1041)

Here the attentive reader might already ask why Bernard’s feeling of the moment is determined by his missing out on the right hotel. He nonetheless seems to be able to do without gallantry, and if it’s not about gallantry, it still is well:

He lounged, however, contentedly enough through these bright, still days of a Tuscan April, drawing much entertainment from the high picturesqueness of the things about him.

Obviously, he can do without gallantry, it doesn’t seem of too essential an importance. The possible suspicion that there is nothing at all of essential importance to Longueville – after his activity is described as “lounging” – is countered in the rest of the paragraph, where the serious side of Bernard Longueville is elaborated. His serious side is connected to Siena as a place of historical attraction.

Siena, a few years since, was a flawless gift of the Middle Ages to the modern imagination. No other Italian city could have been more interesting to an observer fond of reconstructing obsolete manners. This was a

taste of Bernard Longueville's, who had a relish for serious literature, and at one time had made several lively excursions into mediæval history. His friends thought him very clever, and at the same time had an easy feeling about him which was a tribute to his freedom from pedantry. He was clever indeed, and an excellent companion; but the real measure of his brilliancy was in the success with which he entertained himself. He was much addicted to conversing with his own wit, and he greatly enjoyed his own society. Clever as he often was in talking with his friends, I am not sure that his best things, as the phrase is, were not for his own ears. And this was not on account of any cynical contempt for the understanding of his fellow-creatures: it was simply because what I have called his own society was more of a stimulus than that of most other people. And yet he was not for this reason fond of solitude; he was, on the contrary, a very sociable animal. It must be admitted at the outset that he had a nature which seemed at several points to contradict itself, as will probably be perceived in the course of this narration.

The serious side of Longueville is characterized by his interest for "serious literature" and mediaeval history, also the qualification that his cleverness in this respect is not pedantic; but more so by his habit of using his imagination, or, probably the same fact in different terms, "conversing with his own wit". The narrator is anxious to exclude the possible negative sides of self-sufficient individuality, i. e. pedantry, misanthropy, and fondness for solitude, by motivating it through the concept of "stimulation". Stimulation is what the romantically conceived individual receives from the world, it is the source of experience.⁶ The narrator's apologetic admittance that the protagonist's character seems a little contradictory is to be taken rather ironically, it might be supposed to imply an answer to the criticism of those who don't agree with the cultural hierarchy latent in the narrator's "I am not sure that his best things were not for his own ears." One might suspect that it is not only that the proper audience is missing for this kind of conversation but also that it carries meanings which cannot be expressed directly.⁷ This "inner side" of Bernard Longueville is not only reflected in his mental capabilities but also through the exercise of his sensitivities, as we see in his sketching habits and his capability of appreciating picturesqueness. That the inner, individual as well as the outer, conventional side of Bernard are "natural" makes him a synthesis of the romantic hero and the urbane gentleman.

Note that Siena is a "gift . . . to the modern imagination." Siena is apt for a particular kind of tourism which, as the text exemplifies, depends on a special relationship

⁶William James's psychology has a similar base.

⁷This is the same problematics as Derrida's writing as endless substitution but still in a romantic form.

of text to reality. The phrase “reconstructing obsolete manners” is a little vague as to the form and medium of the expression – supposedly it is what Bernard converses about with himself. But this activity is nonetheless linked to the reading of serious literature and history – I would rather say, dependent on it. Also, the application of the knowledge gathered about the place in literature is a decidedly individual act of imagining – highlighted by the fact that Bernard is expressing it all to himself. Moreover, if viewed as an authenticating activity (the referent of literature is visited and thus literature authenticated) it is also the individual who authenticates by experience in reality his experience in the imagination stimulated by the text, and thus authenticates himself as individual – by posing his own imagination against the textual imaginary. The common ground for this is, of course, the place.

The logic of inner and outer, essential and non-essential is well established on the level of the individual by the distinction of the perceived cleverness and the almost Thoreauian self-contentedness of real intellectual stimulus. But there is an analogy between being clever on the level of conversation and being gallant on the level intersexual relations. Both bear the danger of being taken as superficial and of slipping into the conventional. If we look for an equivalent to the inner–outer opposition of individuality and manners on the level of intersexual relations we probably come up with the contrast of mere gallantry to love. The text soon gives some hints in this direction. After characterizing the deeper side of Bernard it describes him entertaining himself on the serious level:

He entertained himself greatly with his reflections and meditations upon Sieneſe architecture and early Tuſcan art, upon Italian ſtreet-life and the geological idioſyncraſies of the Apennines. If he had only gone to the other inn, that nice-looking girl whom he had ſeen paſſing under the duſky portal with her face turned away from him might have broken bread with him at this intellectual banquet. Then came a day, however, when it ſeemed for a moment that if ſhe were diſpoſed ſhe might gather up the crumbs of the feaſt. (1042)

Since we now know what status the self-stimulated reflections and meditations have the longing for a companion to share them is significant. Although gallant entertainment had been introduced as the chief mode of possible intercourse with the ladies there might be another mode still possible. It is purely suggestive on the part of the narrator to insinuate that the person in question is not just nice but also capable of appreciating the food at this “intellectual banquet”. The expectations that are raised in the last sentence, then, are freighted with the connotations of the “inner side” of individuality. We are prepared for the scene of the meeting.

The Scene Before that happens, the narrator goes on to describe in more detail what Bernard does, that is, takes a look at that day. We can only guess that Longueville's decision to leave Siena has something to do with his missed opportunity, but in face of the promise we have received, he can't leave so easily. Before that he has to do something for his portfolio, the narrator hastens to tell.

On the last morning of his visit, as he stood staring about him in the crowded piazza, and feeling that, in spite of its picturesqueness, this was an awkward place for setting up an easel, he bethought himself, by contrast, of a quiet corner in another part of the town, which he had chanced upon in one of his first walks – an angle of a lonely terrace that abutted upon the city-wall, where three or four superannuated objects seemed to slumber in the sunshine – the open door of an empty church, with a faded fresco exposed to the air in the arch above it, and an ancient beggar-woman sitting beside it on a three-legged stool. (1043)

The relation of the romantic tourist individual towards his object, the "scene", is one in which crowdedness is a disturbing factor. The quiet corner, instead, allows for a communion between artist and motif. It is just this communal atmosphere which characterizes the description of Bernard's painting efforts in "unbroken stillness", in which "he worked for some time smoothly and rapidly, with an agreeable sense of the absence of obstacles." (1043f) The second interruption (the first is the bell ringing for noon) to his solitude is – as he realizes on second glance – "that nice girl whom he had seen going into the other inn with her mother" (1044). After having exchanged a short look with Bernard she goes into the center of the view he is just sketching and has her own communion with the landscape.

The young lady, however, at present preferred the view that Longueville was painting; he became aware that she had placed herself in the very centre of his foreground. His first feeling was that she would spoil it; his second was that she would improve it. (1044)

We notice here that both of them do prefer the same piece of view, and considering the status the view has as individual choice on the basis of individual sensitivity of an individual picturesque little nook, the reader might diagnose a case of kindred souls. After some hesitation Longueville takes the risk and includes her in her sketch. Before he is done,

[S]he turned away, facing Longueville again, and slowly came back, as if to re-enter the church. To do so she had to pass near him, and as she

approached he instinctively got up, holding his drawing in one hand. She looked at him again, with that expression that he had mentally characterized as “bold,” a few minutes before – with dark, intelligent eyes. Her hair was dark and dense; she was a strikingly handsome girl.

The description of the American girl follows the expectation, that is, the convention of describing the female beauty innocently by eyes and hair, except for the characterization of her expression as “bold”, which is neither immediately visual nor entirely inappropriate.

He in turn boldly asks her to continue posing for him, to which she after some provocative dialogue agrees. The session is finished by the appearance of her mother, who appreciates the drawing. Her daughter, however, answers to Longueville’s thanks with the questioning of his right to begin in the first place. The dialogue continues with her in the position of attack and him in the position of unsuccessfully trying to produce a last word of harmony. Although they argue quite seriously they also play with the roles as roles. This inclusion of the meta-level of dialogue into the dialogue is characteristic of most of their dialogues later in the novel. – Although the daughter protests, Longueville finally offers the picture to the mother, who accepts. They part without telling each other their name.

1.1.2 Semantics of the Story

The first chapter covers most of the semantic field on which the narrative expands. It establishes the suspense characteristic of love story which keeps the reader interested and is able to anchor ambivalences during the course of the novel which refer to their solution at the end of the novel.

The Individuality of the Protagonist The distinguishing characteristics of the protagonist as individual get more into relief when he is compared to his friend Gordon Wright in the second chapter. There are two levels to be distinguished: the level of social placement and the level of individual sensibility.

Although both of them had “come into property sufficient to make violent exertion superfluous” (1053), Gordon is the more utilitarian of them. He uses his money to support scientific experiments in chemistry. In the letter asking Bernard to join him in Baden-Baden he uses the word “assistant” for the help he expects the latter to give in his love affair. The basis for their friendship is, on Bernard’s part, an appreciation of the fine quality of “simple, candid, manly, affectionate nature of his comrade”, while Bernard is characterized as appreciable because “he pleased superficially, as well as fundamentally.” He is “very good-looking,” has “a number of talents” of which “he had made something” (1054).

He was almost always spoken of as “accomplished;” people asked why he did n’t do something. This question was never satisfactorily answered, the feeling being that Longueville did more than many people in causing it to be asked. Moreover, there was one thing he did constantly – he enjoyed himself. This is manifestly not a career, and it has been said at the outset that he was not attached to any of the recognized professions. But without going into details, he was a charming fellow – clever, urbane, free-handed, and with that fortunate quality in his appearance which is known as distinction.

These are not attributions of Gordon to Bernard, but are rather the narrator’s explanations to the reader. The protagonist is not only special because he has this role but also because he has certain attributes which reflect back on the reader and his situation and so encourage identification. He is somewhat unlocatable in the realm of everyday professional life, and with respect to his talents and capabilities he is a regular literary “hero”, if not a superman. The rather apologetic sparing of the details by the narrator hints to the function of Bernard as protagonist: the special nature of the identification asked for in this romantic love story requires the protagonist to be as universally equipped as possible and a distinct identity different from the reader might interfere. He is at once a projection screen and a perceptive agent for the reader momentarily located outside the everyday world and in the fictional world of the narrative.

It is not only his social marginality but also his superior sensitivities that distinguish Bernard from the rest. Although he can strike a friendship on the basis of mutual sympathy with his friend Gordon, the latter is by no means his equal. Gordon is characterized as having a “want of imagination” and a “firmly-treading, rather than a winged intellect” (1052) in Chapter 2; Bernard reflects that Gordon’s mind “has no atmosphere; his intellectual process goes on in the void. There are no currents and eddies to affect it, no high winds nor hot suns, no changes of season and temperature. His premises are neatly arranged, and his conclusions are perfectly calculable.” (1053)

Bernard is, like the reader, basically alone in this world, because he sees more than he can tell. On the one hand, he is described as enjoying himself by that, which is exactly what the reader does. On the other hand we already encountered in chapter 1 a lack of companionship at his “intellectual banquet” in Siena. Since this lack is general, built into the semantics of the attributions, we might wonder why specifically the nice girl in the other hotel should be able to mend it – specifically since she is in no way known either to the protagonist or the reader. The special status of the first chapter allows precisely this subterranean linkage of a general lack to a particular object – by placement, so to speak. Also, in the excess of meaning which makes this linkage possible, the place itself has to play a role. It delivers the “atmosphere”, it is the object

of the distinguishing, particular, individual perceptive capabilities of the protagonist, the expression of which needs sharing. As much as this desire has to remain unfulfilled in the first chapter, it nonetheless gets a promise of redemption in the scene at the end of chapter 1, where the “nice girl” prefers just the view the protagonist is painting. They obviously share sensibilities which are coded as individual, unique, natural, not dependent on convention, tradition, culture.⁸ This impression is confirmed later in the novel.

Gallantry and the relation of the sexes Conversational gallantry or gallant conversation is one more semantic field distinguishing the two sides of the protagonist. He is naturally able to please in conversation but also keeps a lot to himself. The distinction is further expanded in the novel in two ways. On the one hand the meaning of gallantry is put into perspective by the assignation of two characters to the attribute of the superficially gallant. Those characters serve as a foil for the figures of identification in the novel. Dialogues, moreover, exemplify these attributions. On the other hand, conversation is exactly what is becoming problematic in the distinction of Bernard and Gordon with respect to the latter’s object of love.

As a contrast figure to Angela Vivian, the “nice girl” Bernard met in Siena, James sets up Blanche Evers, a superficial flirt. She figures already in the notebooks as an unnamed and unindividualized opposite to Angela.⁹ In the story she has been trusted to Mrs. Vivian’s supervision by her mother and it seems because of her that they are in Baden-Baden. She is being attended by an Englishman named Captain Lovelock, who has expensive habits, no money and is considered by the group as a “mere trifler”. The two are shown as keeping on an interminable inconsequential dialogue, he insting on admiring her while she humorously rejects his advances.

The dialogue between Blanche Evers and Bernard Longueville taking place just after the discovery of his friend Gordon in the Baden-Baden Kursaal is basically a monologue by Blanche. It exemplifies what we could call a pervasive other-directedness of conduct which James’s narrator describes thus:

... and while he listened Bernard, according to his wont, made his reflections. He said to himself that there were two kinds of pretty girls – the acutely conscious and the finely unconscious. Mrs. Vivian’s *protégée* was a member of the former category; she belonged to the genus coquette. We all have our conception of the indispensable, and the indispensable, to this

⁸Of course the appreciation of scenery is a cultural code, and it is used to distinguish on class of people from another. It is nonetheless naturalized as an *individual* sensibility once obtained – presumably because it is linked to a mode of expression coded as individual (lyrical mode).

⁹“The figure of the bride to be studied—an opposition to Bianca” [Bianca becoming Angela in the novel]. (James 1940, p. 5)

young lady, was a spectator; almost any male biped would serve the purpose. To her spectator she addressed, for the moment, the whole volume of her being – addressed it in her glances, her attitudes, her exclamations, in a hundred little experiments of tone and gesture and position. And these rustling artifices were so innocent and obvious that the directness of her desire to be well with her observer became in itself a grace; it led Bernard afterward to say to himself that the natural vocation and *métier* of little girls for whom existence was but a shimmering surface, was to prattle and ruffle their plumage; their view of life and its duties was as simple and superficial as that of an Oriental *bayadere*. (1061f)

In literary exemplification the visual and auditory aspects of this performance get largely lost, what remains are long paragraphs of hardly coherent speech. This serves, of course, to underline the difference from the more interesting dialogues Angela and Bernard enact. For Bernard, talking to Blanche Evers is hardly engaging. As the quote above demonstrates, he is able to entertain whole trains of thought privately in the process.

The dialogues between Angela and Bernard, in contrast, are comparatively difficult to follow. It is serious talk. Their first interview starts with Bernard unsuccessfully trying to make Angela acknowledge their meeting in Siena, which she has been declining to do at their introduction to each other by Gordon. When they discuss the qualities of admiration Angela's remark that some admiration is impertinent refers implicitly to the Siena scene – the narrator does not comment, instead gives Bernard's reply. When they discuss the merits of Gordon's incapability of producing remarks as ingenious as just this reply of Bernard's they drift into a philosophical argument about virtue and charm. Angela's observations implicitly reflect on Gordon's inability to please and his virtuous behavior being boring. "Implicitly", again, means that this is left to the interpretation of the reader, who cannot be sure of the reference at a first reading. The dialogue is a discussion of the term "virtue" in its own right, and this makes the interruption of it (by Mrs. Vivian who wants Angela's attention for Gordon) effective not only on the level of representation, but also on the performative level of the reader's response.

The second dialogue between Angela and Bernard ends in a similar fashion. Twice, actually, because after the first interruption Angela protests against the interruption by her mother, after which the whole party changes place. Then Angela and Bernard retreat into yet another room and just on the verge of an answer to Bernard's inquiries about Siena they are interrupted again by the arrival of the rest of the party headed by Gordon. Before the first interruption they talked about the topic of this section, about gallantry's pro's and con's. Angela's position is as critical towards gallantry as her

dialogical behaviour exemplifies. On being accused by Bernard to be “not an easy person to say appreciative things to” (1077) and the ensuing effectiveness of his praising her modesty she expresses the view that pleasant talk doesn’t help anybody but rather serves the vanity of men who “wish to appear agreeable and get credit for cleverness and *tendresse*, no matter how silly it would be for another person to believe them” (1078). On Bernard’s question if women like to appear disagreeable, she answers in the positive, provided there is a purpose, or necessity. She counters Bernard’s objection that these are sure odious necessities with the remark that women, other than man, face them instead of shirking them. Bernard’s gallant logic leads him to reply that women are necessities, too, but who are not odious, which in turn meets her protest.

“I object to being called a necessity,” said Angela Vivian. “It diminishes one’s merit.”

“Ah, but it enhances the charm of life!”

“For men, doubtless!”

“The charm of life is very great,” Bernard went on, looking up at the dusky hills and the summer stars, seen through a sort of mist of music and talk, and of powdery light projected from the softly lurid windows of the gaming-rooms. “The charm of life is extreme. I am unacquainted with odious necessities. I object to nothing!”

Angela Vivian looked about her as he had done – looked perhaps a moment longer at the summer stars; and if she had not already proved herself a young lady of a contradictory turn, it might have been supposed she was just then tacitly admitting the charm of life to be considerable.

It is significant here that Angela is constantly on her guard considering the effects of gallantry. She draws out the implications of compliments and assesses their merits accordingly. The following turn after this break in their dialogue has them agree that Blanche Evers is too weak to be disagreeable and thus reinforces the impression that Angela and Bernard in contradistinction belong to the same class of individuals. Their mutual attraction is not of the superficially pleasing kind but on the level of – shall we say experience? It is a certain resistance to the conventional meanings in words that make the dialogues somewhat edgy and interesting. It is on a level beyond words that they understand each other and yet words are the medium they use proficiently.

1.1.3 Intricacies of Loyalty

The alliance, which is nowhere explicitly stated neither in its factuality nor in its nature, is further made clear for the reader in chapter 8 where Gordon is said to reclaim his rights of the lover and described as bestowing a “sober but by no means inexpressive

gallantry” (1083) upon Angela, who seems to Bernard “profoundly impartial” in the way she accepts it. A little further on Gordon lets the cat out of the bag and tells Bernard that Angela had rejected his proposal but is still willing to bear his presence and that he hopes she will change her mind. The reader could have sensed some of the problematic differences in values when in the first interview between Bernard and Gordon the latter described the favorites of mother and daughter in a roundabout fashion as “They are very fond of books, fond of music, and art, and all that.” (1070) Although Gordon admits that he does not feel at his ease with Angela because he doesn’t understand her, he still counts on Bernard’s support to make his bid successful.

Here the story divides into two levels, thanks to the semantics of the established attributions. On the one hand the reader has a hunch as to who fits together in this game of couples. Angela’s rejection of Gordon leaves no doubt that if there is a question of coupling it is certainly Bernard and Angela that belong together. Also, a little later the reader gets glimpses of another possible pairing, which are so well hidden as to result in a pleasant recognition of something already suspectable when Gordon and Blanche marry later on in the novel: in chapter 9 Blanche uncharacteristically “murmurs” (1092) her appreciation of Gordon’s qualities, and in chapter 10 Gordon expresses his concern for Blanche and her “being extremely bored” (1099) by the attendances of the Captain. This all while above this level of possible pairings the story goes on with the complications Bernard’s role as Gordon’s assistant in his love-making entails. It is not only the loyalty to Gordon as a friend that is an obstacle in the way of a coming together of Angela and Bernard but also the fact that Bernard is not sure about Angela’s intentions. He finds out that her mother seems to be bent upon making the match between Angela and Gordon and that that seems to be the reason for the avoidance of the Siena topic. When Gordon has to leave Baden-Baden for some time he urges Bernard to stay, take his role as caretaker of the women and further investigate on Angela, so that on his return Bernard can give some final advice if he should try another proposal for marriage.

When Bernard after a few days visits the Vivians in their apartment to tell them of his responsibility Angela senses that she is being made an object. She refuses to follow her mother and put faith in Bernard.

“Ah, mamma’s confidence is wonderful!” Angela exclaimed. “There was never anything like mamma’s confidence. I am very different; I have no confidence. And then I don’t like being deposited, like a parcel, or being watched, like a curious animal. I am too fond of my liberty.” (1107)

After he denies her accusations of examining her he feels a little ashamed of his critical attitude. “He did everything he could think of to put her off her guard and persuade

her that for the moment he had ceased to be an observer.” (1113). Since as a representative of Gordon he should avoid any flirtatious contact with Angela, but any contact – even, or especially a row – might be interpreted as such, he is in a dilemma only his immediate leaving would solve. But he doesn’t, because he is vainly proud of his success in putting Angela off her guard. It is his technique of gallant conversation that he attributes his success to.

He believed, at all events, that he was successful now, and that the virtue of his conversation itself had persuaded this keen and brilliant girl that he was thinking of anything in the world but herself. He flattered himself that the civil indifference of his manner, the abstract character of the topics he selected, the irrelevancy of his allusions and the laxity of his attention, all contributed to this result. (1114)

His success is so great (“now at least she was off her guard with a vengeance!” (1116)) that he has to constantly remind himself that Angela is not for him, and in Gordon’s place as he is now he has to judge her behavior negatively as that of an “extremely clever coquette”. The most seductive occasions being their common experience of the attractions of Baden,

when, in the evening, she strolled away with him to parts of the grounds of the Conversation-house, where the music sank to sweeter softness and the murmur of the tree-tops of the Black Forest, stirred by the warm night-air, became almost audible; or when, in the long afternoons, they wandered in the woods apart from the others – from Mrs. Vivian and the amiable object of her more avowed solicitude, the object of the sportive adoration of the irrepressible, the ever-present Lovelock. They were constantly having parties in the woods at this time – driving over the hills to points of interest which Bernard had looked out in the guide-book. (1116)

When he finally has to deliver his unfavorable verdict to Gordon (“a heavy thunderstorm had broken over the place an hour before” (1122)) he is in a regular guilt trap. According to this he reconstructs the events of which he doesn’t have more evidence than the sudden leaving of all the parties concerned. He thinks he has deprived Angela of an opportunity to secure her future because, as he thinks, his verdict has made Gordon not try to propose again.

This guilt, although “it was far from awaiting him regularly on his pillow”, visits Bernard at intervals on his journey around the world, which is on the whole not as enjoyable as he thought it would be. The reader here suspects that it is not only the guilt toward Angela that is responsible. It is that same lack which we had a glimpse of

in Siena. The fact that Bernard hears from Gordon's marriage to Blanche Evers keeps the thread of the semantic of love alive. Bernard visits the newly married but leaves for California after the New York press misinterpretes the flirtatious Blanche's and his relation. California is boring, and he returns to New York where he solves his problem of unrest by following an impulse to return to Europe.

1.1.4 Falling in Love by the Sea

Chapter 19 witnesses the return of Bernard to Europe and his meeting Angela again on a small beach in Normandy. It is here that he is officially falling in love and the subterranean thread of the narrative surfaces. Step for step the unaccountabilities and hunches are put into explanation. At the end the explanatory backward movement has reached the beginning, the meeting in Siena, and the whole novel finishes in happy transparence and a double honeymoon.

While the connotations of Siena as a romantic place with a medieval history and picturesque views were specifically suited to the invocation of a love story, the beach in Normandy uses a different register to support the depth of recognition of a strong feeling. A bodily synesthesia of smell, sound, and look, and the symbolism of the sea work hand in hand.

On his arrival in Europe Bernard's decision to leave Le Havre is motivated by the impressions his nostrils convey, a "malodorous Norman sea-port". Once he is on his way on the coast, the olfactory mode changes to a lyrical visual.

Once he had begun to rumble through this charming landscape, he was in much better humor with his situation; the air was freshened by a breeze from the sea; the blooming country, without walls or fences, lay open to the traveller's eye; the grain-fields and copses were shimmering in the summer wind; the pink-faced cottages peeped through the ripening orchard-boughs, and the gray towers of the old churches were silvered by the morning-light of France. (1157f)

The epitome of picturesqueness is the little "watering-place" he reaches after a few hours.

It had a quaint and primitive aspect and a natural picturesqueness which commended it to Bernard's taste. There was evidently a great deal of nature about it, and at this moment, nature, embodied in the clear, gay sunshine, in the blue and quiet sea, in the daisied grass of the high-shouldered downs, had an air of inviting the intelligent observer to postpone his difficulties. Blanquais-les-Galets, as Bernard learned the name of this unfash-

ionable resort to be, was twenty miles from a railway, and the place wore an expression of unaffected rusticity. (1158)

Sun, sea, and grass are the exact opposite of the view he had in his inn at Le Havre, which was a “blank wall . . . painted a dirty yellow and much discolored by the weather, . . . which struck him in some degree as a symbol of his own present moral prospect.” (1157) As so often in Henry James’s novels, the protagonist tries to get away from some problem which concerns his relations to others and finds a place to be alone. In this case it is the change needed to make the protagonist forget his own aimlessness. The sun, sea, and grass represent natural primary colors; they stand in a relation to the blank wall like the Platonic light of day to the shadows in the cave. The village inhabitants’ natural idleness in spending the day on the beach touches a paradisiacal note. Bernard “took a bath with the rest. The ocean was, after all, very large, and when one took one’s plunge one seemed to have it quite to one’s self.” (1158) The exercise results in a feeling of happiness, and in a bodily relaxation which turns into sleep. The narrator makes a point to describe the drifting off in detail.

There were sounds in the air above his head – sounds of the crunching and rattling of the loose, smooth stones as his neighbors moved about on them; of high-pitched French voices exchanging colloquial cries; of the splash of the bathers in the distant water, and the short, soft breaking of the waves. But these things came to his ears more vaguely and remotely, and at last they faded away. (1159)

In this state of almost back-to-the-womb happiness he has a “charming dream.”

Dreams are vague things, and this one had the defects of its species; but it was somehow concerned with the image of a young lady whom Bernard had formerly known, and who had beautiful eyes, into which – in the dream – he found himself looking. (1159)

In these circumstances the dream is obviously a key. It is of no big surprise for the attuned reader that on his waking up he finds the beach world around him the same, except for the presence of a young lady reading a book in a portable chair. Unbelievably but true, it is Angela Vivian. When she discovers him unbelievably staring at her, not knowing why he doesn’t leave because of his bad conscience toward her, she gets up and walks away, a sign of her surprise as Bernard learns when he finally dares to follow her. He discovers that she obviously doesn’t bear a grudge against him, and he follows her to the little house she and her mother have rented. In the evening they meet at the local Casino for a half hour. When he walks down to the beach after that in the darkness it happens.

Bernard stood there some time; there was nothing but the sound and the sharp, fresh smell. Suddenly he put his hand to his heart; it was beating very fast. An immense conviction had come over him – abruptly, then and there – and for a moment he held his breath. It was like a word spoken in the darkness – he held his breath to listen. He was in love with Angela Vivian, and his love was a throbbing passion! He sat down on the stones where he stood – it filled him with a kind of awe. (1171)

For the second time the ocean is the midwife of existential recognitions. There is a third to come. Now, Bernard's second thought is of his love as a forbidden fruit, because "friendship and honor were at stake; they stood at his left hand, as his newborn passion stood already at his right" (1172), and his third is that "he had been in love with Angela Vivian any time these three years." (1173) Here the protagonist's knowledge makes official what the reader had already divined. Since Angela doesn't know about it he thinks backing out by just leaving and seeing Angela never again would solve the dilemma. After one day of lonely walks on the beach (no surprises happen there), when he wants to say good-bye to the Vivians the next day he finds them gone already. The maid is still there and gives him the address of their banker. The self-conscious play of the narrator (or rather, the author?) upon the conventions of plotting obstacles into the course of love gets hilarious:

"Very good – I will find him out," said our hero, turning away.

The discriminating reader who has been so good as to interest himself in this little narrative will perhaps at this point exclaim with a pardonable consciousness of shrewdness: "Of course he went the next day to the Rue de Provence!" Of course, yes; only as it happens Bernard did nothing of the kind. He did one of the most singular things he ever did in his life – a thing that puzzled him even at the time, and with regard to which he often afterward wondered whence he had drawn the ability for so remarkable a feat – he simply spent a fortnight at Blanquais-les-Galets. It was a very quiet fortnight; he spoke to no one, he formed no relations, he was company to himself. (1177)

Bernard obviously tries to be consequential this time. Then he has the third revelation at the seafront.

The circumstances were the same; he had wandered down to the beach alone, very late, and he stood looking at the duskily-tumbling sea. Suddenly the same voice that had spoken before murmured another phrase in the darkness, and it rang upon his ear for the rest of the night. It startled

him, as I have said, at first; then, the next morning, it led him to take his departure for Paris. (1178)

The narrator refuses to give us the content of the recognition explicitly, but his hints are enough to conclude that Bernard discovered that Angela is in love with him, too.

The theory that Angela hated him had evaporated in her presence, and another of a very different sort had sprung into being. It fitted a great many of the facts, it explained a great many contradictions, anomalies, mysteries, and it accounted for Miss Vivian's insisting upon her mother's leaving Blanquais at a few hours' notice, even better than the theory of her resentment could have done. (1178)

The sea is a prominent player in this part of the drama. The level of symbolism, denoting the unconscious, the womb, the eternal, supports the existential quality of the recognition of being in love. But it also serves, metonymically through the sounds and the situation, as a fountain of "voices". The hard knots of the moral dilemma are softened and eroded by the constant movement of the waves. While Siena is the stage for realizing a cultural imagination the Normannic sea functions as the catalyst to break down cultural resistance to nature.

The process of dissolution is continued in the novel in the form of a step-by-step explanation of the ambiguities having confused the protagonist and the reader alike during the Baden-Baden period. Bernard has to realize that Angela has seen far more than he did at the time. "Men are so stupid; it's only women that have real discernment," as Angela has it (1238). Even the last obstacle, Gordon's reviving affection for Angela and his ensuing claim on her – analyzed by the Vivian duo as a result of marital problems between him and Blanche – is solved thanks to the cleverness of Angela and her mother.

1.2 Place, Love, Individuality

This part of the chapter wants to follow the implications of the analysis of *Confidence*. The guiding principles for this chapter are the further elucidation of the relationship between the love plot and the semantic of tourism. As I have tried to show, the interesting points about the story are the relations of attributes of individuality to the characters, and the role these play in the development of a love plot. Moreover, the use of tourist places in the character attribution and the narrative deployment of the love story is dependent on the semantics of individuality. What we have to face in this

I will try to elaborate the relations of the elements of this constellation with summary reference to the novel analyzed above. In the process I hope to shed some more light on the issues in the novel itself.

1.2.1 Love

With respect to the semantics of love I will have to place it historically. This makes sense not just because the notion of gallantry, for instance, is hardly familiar to us today and it seems not to have been really en vogue when James published his novel, the events of which he dates back to 25 years earlier (James 1880, p. 1056). Also because, as Luhmann (Luhmann (1994)) and de Rougemont (de Rougemont (1983)) show in their respective ways, the meaning of love has changed and was not always thought of as ending in marriage. I will try to find out in how far it is romantic love that we encounter in the novel. This will be linked to the question of how individuality is embedded in the concept of love and what kind of interface to other semantic fields (as literature/art or tourism) it allows for. I will also try to assess the impact of the inherent narrativity in love, a fact which both de Rougemont and Luhmann stress.

The hypothesis concerning the relation of love and tourism is that both are in an intimate relation, so to speak, to literature on the one hand and individuality on the other. They share the pattern of expectation → fulfilment, and what are to love the necessary obstacles is to traveling/tourism the distance to be traveled. Before and after we are supposedly in a different world. But it is also necessary to find out what the relation exactly is between traveling to a different place and love: just the analogy won't do. In narrative this might indicate a reinforcing factor, in the practice of tourism there might be reverberations on the level of expectations.

1.2.2 Place

The touristic semantics of the two main chief places should allow for some further understanding of the role they play in the narrative.

Siena is a typical place for romantic tourism as John Urry outlines it (Urry (1990)). There are indications in the passages at the beginning that Urry's economic formulation of the romantic tourist gaze as "positional good" seem relevant here. It denotes the gaze as inherent individualistic, that is, the effectiveness of the scene is dependent on the absence of other tourists.¹⁰

A different, less visual mode, is dominant in the beach scene in Chapter 19 of *Confidence*. We could suspect the underlying form of tourism is an early form of "Nature tourism" with Rousseauian undertones.¹¹ It has, however, a long history in

¹⁰This is also the tourism which is criticized in Enzensberger (1964).

¹¹"Nature tourism" is Graburn's expression (Graburn 1977, p. 26).

the fashion of bathing places, to which the little “Casino” in the novel testifies. The semantics has however changed: the romantic experience of nature, or of the natural habitat of a forgotten people, has replaced the social life of mundane high society (Corbin 1994, see). The sea has a metonymical relation to tappings of the protagonist into his subconscious feelings; it is used to invoke the almost proverbial “oceanic feeling.”

Some of the atmosphere of bathing fashion is resurrected in Baden-Baden, which in its name conspicuously doubles the reference. The links of scene to novel are traceable through the uses, misuses and non-uses of gallantry, to which the occasional romantic excursion serves as a welcome support. The place itself has less direct effect in the narrative economy of the story, because its semantics doesn't support the individual communion with the genius loci – whose interruption is the effective device used in the other two scenes. In a more associative mode it is, however, conducive to the thickening of the love plot (vide quotes on p. 12 or on p. 14).

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