

Chapter 3

The Romantics of Place and the Semantics of Love

As tourism developed from the educational practice of the Grand tour into a properly cultural practice for educated members of an increasingly wealthy middle class, it was part of a larger socio-historical process of functional differentiation of Western society. In our analysis of “The Birthplace”, we have discussed tourism as a secularized version of the pilgrimage, where the remnants of the sacred reappear in literature – Shakespeare’s birthplace as a literary “shrine”. The process of functional differentiation bears on the relationship of tourism and literature in that both practices gradually gain cultural independence from their imbrication in the systems of social reproduction and religion (religious morality). As we have noted in the chapter on the travel essay, due to a better infrastructure and an increased affordability of tourism, travelling as a practice becomes more universal and released from the legitimating restraints as political or diplomatic education, or as the scientific collection of data by authenticating eyesight.

Literature, on the other hand, in the course of the 18th century becomes a more wide-spread cultural practice, and the predominant means of its universalization is the genre of the novel.¹ The novel, in turn, allows for a wide inclusion of social discourses and semantics which are used as targets and means of aesthetic effect. In our analysis of “The Birthplace”, we encountered a case of tourism itself being included in the scope of literature as a theme.

One of the structural elements of the novel is the place, the scene of action. As Henry James in *The Ambassadors* – in one of the most brilliant self-reflective stagings of place – calls it, this “background of fiction” is highly variable in novels, but rarely takes precedence over the interest in the action. Its significance as scene has escaped most observers of literature, except in cases where reference is made to an already established significance of place – as in Henry James criticism, where in “transatlantic encounters” America is confronted with Europe in cultural comparison. The association of place and culture examined in this study is manifold, but we have a predominance of the culturally conscious protagonist with a romantic sensitivity.

1. See IAN WATT, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*, Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957 for the development in English literature.

We have to note that the mutual impact of literary meaning and place doesn't rely exclusively on this pattern of the novel of manners. Adventure novels, for instance, base their structure on the space constituted by the sequence of places in which the adventurous events occur; their attraction can be derived from the exoticism of locations and the emotions (often fearful) associated with them. One finds this kind of attraction in the Western, as well as in science fiction, in some kind of detective novels – others turning the familiar place into unfamiliar –, and in spy novels.²

More characteristically Henry Jamesian, though, is another genre which similarly uses the semantic determinations of place to tap into emotions associated with them: the romance, or romantic love novel. The place here serves emphatically as a scene that at once determines the actions of the potential lovers (their unity is usually brought by at the end – in the happy ending) and endows with plausibility *and* improbability an event that is so rarely and unlikely to happen as falling in love with the love of one's life. With plausibility, because the unlikely event will be more likely to happen in a situation where the ordinary categories are “not in place;” and with improbability as an attribute of the non-ordinariness of the place, its specialness, its difference from ordinary life. The place in this respect reflects an effect of literature, the transcendence of the ordinary life experience by generating a different meaning out of familiar elements.³ Using a place which is marked by its “improbability” answers the demands of referential realism and marks the reading experience, as it is re-integrated into the reader's life, with reference to a place “out there,” in reality. We will, further down in chapter 4, closely examine this relation of the experience of reading a fictional construct and the impact of metonymical references to the place.

Here we are more interested in why the improbable place is chosen in love stories, and how this improbability is effected. I argue for a strong semantic link between a romantic place and the semantics of love as it appears in the romance. In order to define the position of the place in the story's structure, then, we will relate it to the semantics of love.⁴

The two texts I interpret below highlight different aspects of how place is positioned in the narrative. Both texts are by the “early” James and reproduce the genre of romance in a quite “generic” fashion. I claim, that is, a larger representativity of the analysis in terms of the genericity of the identified traits. The earlier text, “Travelling Companions,” straightforwardly reproduces the romantic semantics of both place and love. The second text, James's third novel *Confidence*, uses a greater variety of references to the semantics of love and employs a structure in which the semantics of place establishes an undercurrent of “unconscious” meaning, to which the

2. These subgenres are, of course, more present in their filmic translation, where the place is transferred into a different register, that of visual representation. The analysis of the consequential medial differences of positioning will be the topic of another study.
3. The theory behind this function is Wolfgang Iser's aesthetics of the literary effect which will in more detail be explained below in the next chapters (WOLFGANG ISER, *Der Akt des Lesens: Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung*, 4th edition. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1994).
4. The semantics of love will be reconstructed according to NIKLAS LUHMANN, *Liebe als Passion: Zur Codierung von Intimität*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1994, suhrkamp taschenbuch wissenschaft 1124, as he provides a connection to systems theoretical conceptions of the social context. The term literary repertoire refers again to ISER, *Der Akt des Lesens*.

protagonist, in a key scene anticipating James's later dramatic achievements, is able to awaken relatively late in the novel. The roles the place plays in these romances point the way to further touristic practices associated with love as, for instance, the honeymooning trip. In traveling to Niagara Falls, newlyweds symbolically establish their relationship as grounded in a common perception of the world, experiencing together the sublime. The enhancement of intimacy by the intensification of perception effected through love is one of the traits of the romantic semantics of love.

Now we will look at "Travelling Companions" as an instance of a love story that follows the generic model which still is firmly rooted in popular culture.

3.1 True Love and the Object of Appreciation in "Travelling Companions"

"They call it," I answered,—and as I spoke my heart was in my throat,—“a representation of Sacred and Profane Love. The name perhaps roughly expresses its meaning. The serious, stately woman is the likeness, one may say, of love as an experience,—the gracious, impudent goddess of love as a sentiment; this of the passion that fancies, the other of the passion that knows.” And as I spoke I passed my arm, in its strength, around her waist. She let her head sink on my shoulder and looked up into my eye.

HENRY JAMES, JR, 'Travelling Companions', in: *Complete Stories 1864–1874*, New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1999, The Library of America III, p. 542.

James's early story "Travelling Companions" (TC) approaches a realization of the travel writer's fantasy in fiction. The narrative "I" liberates itself from the fixed subject–object position inherent in the role of the witness and becomes a character. As the hero, he travels through Italy like any traveler, or travel writer. Seeing the sights, however, does not yet make a story. The hero's favorite activity is embedded in two narrative patterns in which it acquires a dramatic potential. One pattern is that of the love story, or marriage plot. The other is the pattern of personal maturation: touring Italy becomes a miniature version of the initiation into society dramatized by the era's great exemplars of the Bildungsroman. By means of his aesthetic encounters with the Italian scene, the hero finds a kindred soul to love, and improves his personal defects so that he finally can marry his travelling companion.

The place in the story acts as a catalyst of values, of cultural values whose difference to the "ordinary" constitutes an exclusive sociality. In preparation of the love story, the potential lovers are singled out as individuals who have a passion or a spleen that makes them special. When the hero meets the heroine in front of Leonardo's *Last Supper*, they are the only tourists seriously regarding the fresco – the other one present, Charlotte Evans' father, keeps watching the copyist also present. Mark Evans becomes the foil representing the ignorant for whom Brooke and Charlotte are the odd ones out – as Evans advertises his daughter: "She is crazy about Italy."

(497) Brooke's and Charlotte's common pursuit of their passion for Italy only starts in Milan. The story, then, very generally follows the pattern of two separate individuals that meet in the beginning, and happily end up united in the completion of the story. Between beginning and end there evolves the narrative of how they get together and overcome the obstacles in their way.

The place becomes a catalyst of values through aesthetic perception, which indicates a rich individuality. In that register, there is a tension between aesthetic intensity and the feeling of love, precisely because there is a danger of mistaking one for the other. The distinction between the two maps two oppositions parallel to each other: the personal im/maturity of the hero, and the distinction between false and true love. As we will show, the place serves as an index in the dramatization of these distinctions.

The place unites the lovers, as their common passionate object that distinguishes them from the non-passionately involved "normals" (represented by the heroine's father), and in this capacity provides an obstacle to love, as well. The place, moreover, helps to overcome the hero's immaturity, the symptoms of which constitute one major obstacle and manifest themselves in his overly sentimental romanticizing and mistaking the place's romantic atmosphere for love. The heroine has a double functional load, as well: at first she acts as the hero's desirable object – especially in scenes where she is contiguous with attractive aspects of the place – and, at the same time, as the corrective super-ego to the hero's superficially sentimental outbreaks; that double function is replaced in the end, when she is bereft of all her pride along with her deceased father, with that of the object in need of care which the matured hero happily provides.

The central theme of the story, love, has a double face: on its upper side love is supposed to end in the "stern prose of marriage (Charlotte Evans in her super-ego mode, 536) and thus implies a morality. In that economy of love, the place takes the role of inciting the downside kind of love, a romantic passion which seems false from the point of view of marriage as a life-long companionship based on the true love that can take pains and suffering. It is along this difference that the story establishes the trajectory of the hero's difference.

Narrator's Education

In TC, the narrative shows a strong spatial emphasis: it follows closely the classic tourist route through Italy, from the North to the South. In conjunction with the first-person narrator, this narrative setup has exerted a temptation on the critics to interpret the story as a Jamesian travel account, largely ignoring the fictional frame. As a recent study of the story by Caroline Levine demonstrates, the closeness to the travel account plays into the biographical interest in Edel's interpretation of the story as Jamesian autobiographical testimony, but also poses no resistance to Buzard's equation of the protagonist's values with those of the person Henry James.⁵ Levine's attention to the narrative frame certainly does the story more justice. Her

5. CAROLINE LEVINE, *The Serious Pleasures of Suspense: Victorian Realism and Narrative Doubt*, Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 161–181, LEON EDEL, *Henry James:*

contention is that the story's structure is determined by the tension between a suspense-oriented love plot and a suspenseless, plotless touristic narrative pattern, based on the structure of the tour guide – in TC that would be the *Murray*. The conventionality of the love plot, in that view, results from the incompatibility of the open plotless strand of tourism and the closed suspense-oriented marriage-plot.

That very fine argument chooses to ignore, however, the plot inherent in tourism and travel literature, of which the story, as I contend, is a fictional projection. That plot is the educational narrative also informing autobiographical writing. As for tourism as the underlying temporal and spatial structure, Van den Abbeele has shown that the economy of travel follows a circular path in which the point of departure, home, is constructed upon the return as a difference.⁶ That difference can be clearly framed as educational “progress”, and that is what “Travelling Companions” does by turning the journey through Italy into a process of the hero's self-education. In the linkage to the love plot the “home” of tourism becomes coded as matrimony. The educational and matrimonial plot are coupled through the creation of a lack that cuts through both planes at once. A lack of personal maturity for which the touristic sight is at once the index and the remedy.

When the narrator enters Venice for the first time he tours it immediately, and it is in the Basilica San Marco that he not only tries to convey the strangeness of the place symbolically by the Orientalist invocation of “the East” but also in terms of an axiological verdict on the superficiality of picturesque touring.

The great mosaic images, hideous, grotesque, inhuman, glimmered like the cruel spectres of early superstitions and terrors. There came over me, too, a poignant conviction of the ludicrous folly of the idle spirit of travel. How with Murray and an opera-glass it strolls and stares where omniscient angels stand diffident and sad! How blunted and stupid are its senses! How trivial and superficial its imaginings! To this builded sepulchre of trembling hope and dread, this monument of mighty passions, I had wandered in search of pictorial effects. O vulgarity! Of course I remained, nevertheless, still curious of effects. Suddenly I perceived a very agreeable one. Kneeling on a low *prie-dieu*, with her hands clasped, a lady was gazing upward at the great mosaic Christ in the dome of the choir. She wore a black lace shawl and a purple hat. She was Miss Evans. Her attitude slightly puzzled me. Was she really at her devotions, or was she only playing at prayer? (514)

The specific problem in the educational narrative results from the position of the first-person narrator. The space of the narrative events in which

The Untried Years, 1843–1870, Philadelphia; New York: Lippincott, 1953, JAMES MICHAEL BUZARD, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800–1918*, New York, N.Y.; London: Oxford University Press, 1993

6. See GEORGES VAN DEN ABBEELE, ‘Introduction: The Economy of Travel’, in: *Travel as Metaphor: From Montaigne to Rousseau*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992, pp. xiii–xxx. In a different article, he proposes an alternative use of tourism in the sense of Deleuzian nomadism (GEORGES VAN DEN ABBEELE, ‘Sightseers: The Tourist as Theorist’, *Diacritics*, 10 (1980):4, pp. 2–14), but that is defined as deviation.

the readers place themselves is a result of the sense of suspense, of the tension between the beginning and the end, of the principle openness of the outcome of events in the junction of the present of reading and the present of the narrative. But how can a retrospective first-person narrator establish a position in which suspense, hence surprise is still possible? How can he split himself into the self-observing narrator and un-self-observing hero? In other words, how can a second-level observer become a first-level observer?

In the quote above, we note that the narrator-hero, on his first Venetian sightseeing, in one and the same move he stages his anti-touristic insights and confesses to his being one of the crowd.⁷ One may take this as a case of self-irony: instead of becoming sober, desperate, wrapt in existential contrition, he happily goes on to be vulgar and search for effects. This may not be credibly consistent behaviour for a contemporary reader, but it is functional in the context of the development of the hero-narrator as fictional character. The anti-touristic inconsequentiality, that is, should be read as an attribute of the fictional character, connoting his immaturity. However, on the double edge of the first-person autobiographical mode of narration, in which he is the poetic subject of the fictional world (as authoritative voice of first-person narrator) and its object (as character who is unconscious in performance, not reflecting the contradiction as irony), this attribution threatens to make the narrative position itself appear contradictory. Rather than being reflected and corroborated as defective narrative voice, the incongruence is ignored by the reader in the interest of reading on, and so becomes a further step in the investment into the fictional world in the process of reading.

The lack of seriousness is the starting point for the educational process of the protagonist which establishes a narrative present in spite of (if not at odds with) the omniscient retrospectivity of first-person narration. The narrator's superficiality, somewhat unelegantly, has to be taken as literally denoting the hero's immaturity which will determine his position vis à vis his "travelling companion". That relation complements the narrator's mildly ironic view upon himself in characterizing the lack of the hero's personal authority. In the San Marco scene, that complement is announced in the detection of the woman. He observes her as part of the scene, in prayer as if she were a native (at some later point he questions his memory if she really was Protestant), he can only grasp her superficially as "pictorial effect". She is an object like the scene, metonymically linked to it on the level of "seeing". But she also embodies one of the possible ends of touristic expectations in behaving like a native.

Integrating the female Other into the place has a function: instead of being vulgarly curious of effects like the narrator, as a praying devotee she becomes part of the authenticity of the scene, without the mediation that the protagonist experiences as a necessary consequence of searching for the authentic. She is staged, in axiological terms, as the desirable Other,

7. The term anti-touristic is the conceptual basis of the interpretation of the story in BUZARD, and refers to the setup of cultural values that oppose the mass character and superficiality of tourism.

who the narrator may finally achieve access to by marrying. In the course of their common sightseeings of Venice, Miss Evans turns out to embody the measure of Brooks's imperfection, especially with respect to "feeling". Not just that she has a better sense of how to regard works of art: for instance, she implores him to go and look at the pictures alone; and once they look at them together, she is deeply affected by the content of the pictures and less by the hierarchical placement of art and artist (see also below p. 98f). She also has a better grip on the relation of place and love in her particular access to the romance of the place that the narrator misses: she reads literature. As she tells him after their meeting in San Marco: "I have been reading two or three of George Sand's novels. Do you know *La Dernière Aldini*? I fancy a romance in every palace." (515) Charlotte Evans is not without her own romance: but it remains a romance related to literature. She keeps the fancy to the fancying, and herself in reality, as we will presently see. However, as she tells him after their trip to Padua that she has read Hawthorne's "Rappacini's Daughter" – adding "'you know the scene is laid in Padua'" (533) – we may note here that the reflection of place in literature is represented on a meta-level in this narrative, and that it is in a position of authority that this relation is established.⁸

In this vein, the difference between an innocent and a mature appreciation of the place can be clarified. In Naples, after separating from Miss Evans, Brooke's occupation with the place follows his "plan of vigilance and study". That points to the aesthetic experience as a symbolically disciplined acquisition of learning, through interpretation, in replacement of the exclusive abandonment to the atmospheric presence of the place, "I returned to Rome a wiser man." (538)

The preference for interpretation also gleams through in the difference of the use of pictures between the first and last part of the story. The picture acquired in Vicenza (510) is significant in its magically resembling the loved one, and (ineffectively) referred to as an omen of love in his declaration of love (see quote on p. 95). The picture of Sacred and Profane Love (see the motto above, p. 89) serves as an interpretive guide to the moral of the story; in that, Brooke has learned to reflect the content of a picture apart from its art historical significance, to elicit from art a meaning for his personal "life".

Distinguishing Love

Love and the Scene

Miss Evans' superiority in aesthetic matters extends to matters of love. Although her position will change after the death of her father, in the romantic surroundings of Venice she holds the threatened border between romantic infatuation and serious love intact, between true love and false love.

8. As she reads Hawthorne's story just when Brooke feels pain and anger in contemplating the consequences of his chivalric proposition of marriage, Miss Evans can certainly be said to have a clue to his state. Hawthorne's hero, Giovanni, displays the same weakness in his character and in his love to Rappacini's daughter.

The key romantic scene in which false love is distinguished is a graveyard on the Lido. While the two companions spend some time idling, they discuss matters of love, and that throws some light on the conception of love that is guiding the narrative, as well as on the relation of love and place.

On the Lido, the hero is so taken in by his sense of the scenery that he begins to consider being in love with his companion. The Lido is symbolic of the metonymical relation of place and love, in that its own romantic effect relies on the metonymical, contiguous neighborhood to Venice. The narrator states that he has “often wondered that I should have felt the presence of beauty in a spot so destitute of any exceptional elements of beauty” – the explanation being: “The secret of the Lido is simply your sense of adjacent Venice.” (520)

Before he asks her, however, if she is in love with him, he asks himself: “I lay at my companion’s feet and wondered whether I was in love.” The relation of place and love is temporalized in a sequence of looking.

Miss Evans was sitting on one of the Hebrew tombs, her chin on her hand, her elbow on her knee, watching the broken horizon. I was stretched on the grass on my side, leaning on my elbow and on my hand, with my eyes on her face. She bent her own eyes and encountered mine; we neither of us spoke or moved, but exchanged a long steady regard; after which her eyes returned to the distance. What was her feeling toward me? (521)

His silently watching her silently watching can be analyzed as a succession of

empathy: watching by proxy, watching the watching, second-level observation (second-level observation means being blind for the object being observed by the first-level observer (the broken horizon), Brooke regards her as the process (of observation) itself; the romantic feeling of the place would then possibly be some fusion of first-level and second-level observation, a distribution of blindness and insight across the levels of observation);

reflection: she only looks at him, silently, language that would link them on a symbolic level is not used, his look is reflected in a mirror fashion;

dissection: the reflected look, once turned away, leaves his look to himself, and bequests the meaning of love: “What was her feeling toward me?”

This logic of Brooke’s gaze constitutes the doubt about the unspeakable he tries to rationalize in order to leap over it. He weighs his happiness with the romantic situation against the weak base of ten days’ acquaintance. But if “Love had forced his way” into the narrow circle of their common impressions, one might as well “let him widen the circle! Transcendent Venice!” (521). This hyperbolic invocation of the mythological god of love Amor (that’s “him”) and the transcendentalization of Venice point to the excessiveness of romantic feeling that Brooke musters to wilfully break the

stillness with violent movements and to gallantly motivate his declaration of love by the story of how he bought the painting (of the Madonna resembling Charlotte Evans) in Vicenza. Without success.

“You must forgive me if I doubt your love.”

“Why should you doubt?”

“Love, I fancy, doesn’t come in just this way.”

“It comes as it can. This is surely a very good way.”

“I know it’s a very pretty way, Mr. Brooke; Venice behind us, the Adriatic before us, these old Hebrew tombs! Its very prettiness makes me distrust it.”

“Do you believe only in the love that is born in darkness and pain? Poor love! it has trouble enough, first and last. Allow it a little ease.”

“Listen,” said Miss Evans, after a pause. “It’s not with me you’re in love, but with that painted picture. All this Italian beauty and delight has thrown you into a romantic state of mind. You wish to make it perfect. I happen to be at hand, so you say, ‘Go to, I’ll fall in love.’ And you fancy me, for the purpose, a dozen fine things that I’m not.”

“I fancy you beautiful and good. I’m sorry to find you so dogmatic.”

“You mustn’t abuse me, or we shall be getting serious.”

“Well,” said I, “you can’t prevent me from adoring you.”

“I should be very sorry to. So long as you ‘adore’ me, we’re safe! I can tell you better things than that I’m in love with you.”

I looked at her impatiently. “For instance?”

She held out her hand. “I like you immensely. As for love, I’m in love with Venice.”

“Well, I like Venice immensely, but I’m in love with you.” (522f)

In this central passage the relation of place and love is thematized as the impediment to the narrator’s fulfilment of desire; its thematization is an obstacle, but even more so is the way in which the relation is thematized: Miss Evans accuses him of mistaking his feelings for Venice for feelings of love. A mistake which she herself can be accused of (but is not) – as she calls her own feelings towards Venice “love” – as well as the narrator (in face of his own previous silently uttered doubts). But why is he mistaken and not she?

Concepts of Love

The answer is that there are two different concepts of love in play. While his notion of love is romantic, of total fusion with the other, her paradoxical notion of love can be de-paradoxized in the distinction between true love and false love, where the latter is a, maybe temporary, passion and the former is the one grounded in the everyday. In the economy of the story, the romantic notion of love is relativized as it is associated with an immature state of the character, while the pre-romantic notion of a companionship for life is privileged and differentiated from romantic outbreaks of passion.

Romantic love here is closely linked to the effect of the place, of the beauty and atmosphere of Venice. The passage where Brooke looks at

Charlotte looking at the horizon is emblematic of the linkage of self, other, and “world” in romantic love. Luhmann, in *Liebe als Passion*, describes the romantic concept of love as uniting the individuals by their mutually reflective attention of the other’s relation to the world, a fact that we have already encountered in the watching of the watcher. In that, the aesthetic relation to the world in Charlotte’s “love” is what Brooke loves in loving the same world, a difference that is undifferentiated in the romantic atmosphere of the place; watching Charlotte love the surroundings (in watching) (and loving it) is equal to loving the surroundings in watching. This reflects the state of the discourse of love with the Romantics, as Luhmann writes, starting with the Germans:

The contemporary German Romantic movement takes the step from relating the world to an other to enhancing the world *through* an other. The psychological sophistication concerning the persons themselves and their treatment is followed now by a kind of subjective exploration of the world. The world of objects, nature, becomes the resonating ground of love. Compared to those of the beginning 18th century, in novels from the 19th century the lovers’ dialogue recedes and is supplemented or almost replaced by the enchantment through those objects that make lovers experience their love in relation to the other.⁹

The place in Romantic love becomes the means to unite the lovers. James’s story corroborates Luhmann’s analysis of the semantics of love, and we can add here that a large portion of “Romantic tourism”¹⁰ is directly linked to this semantic constellation of Romantic love. However, that self-reflexive romantic notion of love is only tentatively present. In fact, a pre-romantic notion of love, modeled on the paradoxies of *amour passion*, guides the narrative. The place not only unites, but also separates the lovers.

Their relation falls short of romantic love in lacking the mutuality of their world view, particularly on the topic of being in love. Brooke’s communication of his love results in Charlotte’s denial of the fact of love. The communication of love immediately raises the question of the motive behind Brooke’s confession. That questionable status of Brooke’s communication points to a pre-romantic conception of love in which the paradoxical nature of the *amour passion* is still acted out. We will see below that only in *Confidence* the romantic notion of love has gained grounds in

9. LUHMANN, *Liebe als Passion*, pp. 167f. In the original: “Die zeitgenössische deutsche Romantik geht jedoch von Relationierung der Welt *auf* einen anderen zur Aufwertung der Welt *durch* einen anderen über. Auf das psychologische Raffinement, das nur die Personen selbst und ihre Behandlung betraf, folgt jetzt eine Art subjektive Welterschließung. Die Welt der Objekte, die Natur wird Resonanzboden der Liebe. Vergleicht man Romane aus dem Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts mit denen aus dem 19. Jahrhundert, so tritt der Dialog der Liebenden zurück; er wird ergänzt oder nahezu ersetzt durch die Verzauberung der Objekte, an denen in bezug auf den anderen die Liebenden ihre Liebe erfahren.”

10. See JOHN TOWNER, ‘The Grand Tour: A Key Phase in the History of Tourism’, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 12 (1985), p. 311-315 for the historical description of the Romantic Grand Tour. JOHN URRY, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, London: Sage, 1990, chapter 3, structurally extends the notion in the positional economy of the “romantic gaze”, which contradicts the democratization that enabled it (other tourists do disturb). See also page 103.

shifting the narrative basis from communication to the recognition of the unconscious in which love grows.

What position does the place have in this pattern? Charlotte's ambiguous use of "love" for the place points to its role as motive, as the motive behind the declaration of love. Her "love" for Venice points to the paradox of passion: love is uncontrollable passion, but as passion it has to be controlled. Moreover: declarations of passionate love are suspect of having a motive: in this case the motive is the place. The place as motive is paradoxical: it at once delegitimizes the declarations of love as a "motive" to declare love, and at the same time legitimizes "love", as Charlotte's use is not entirely ironical but contains a kernel of plausibility. We do have a pre-romantic conception of love mixed in with a romantic conception of the touristic place. The place, as object of love, may be not equal to true love, but it is very close, if not contiguous, as the play with the ambivalence indicates (in the chiasmic relationing of "like" and "love" at the end of the quote above on page 95); and it is definitely not a selfish motive.

What is, in contrast, Brooke's concept of "love"? It follows the pattern of false love, induced by pleasure; a pattern that, according to Luhmann, has been around since the 17th century and practiced in gallantry and seduction techniques.¹¹ That de-paradoxizes Charlotte's passionate paradox: passionate love is legitimate for a certain limited domain, as in her passion for Venice, but it is to be mistrusted as love with its universal claim of mutuality (which, paradoxically, links love and the social bond of marriage). The differentiation between *plaisir* and *amour*, as false and true love, is here referenced by way of the pleasure the place affords, that is, the aesthetic force of the romantic place. In this case, there seems too much pleasure in the place to be specifically attributed to the love for Charlotte. There is a whole apparatus of establishing Charlotte in her authoritative role, not least her "divine gift of feeling," and it is this superiority which makes her appealing as an attractive object as well as an ideal to aspire to. In that way, Brooke's love to Charlotte can be related to even anterior models of love in the chivalric ideal love.

However, Charlotte's rejection of Brooke is but an obstacle in the love story. Her distinction of false and true love draws, as a moment in the love story, on a self-reflexive moment in the narrativization of love.¹² The guiding difference between *plaisir* and *amour*, in Luhmann's account, directs the narrativization of love, and that is the pattern James follows in his early story. As Luhmann states, "obstacles have the function to make love conscious, and further obstacles have the function to test love."¹³ Charlotte is a reflector of the immaturity of the hero's romantic notions,

11. LUHMANN, *Liebe als Passion*, pp. 107ff.

12. As LUHMANN, *Liebe als Passion*, p. 71 argues, narrativization of love began in the French classic era when gallant seduction became the initial stage of a structure that had a beginning, middle, and end. Obstacles structure the progression of the narrative. One main obstacle is, of course, the suspicion of motive, a suspicion that Luhmann also sees as the condition of the development of individuality in NIKLAS LUHMANN, 'Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus', in: *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik: Studien zur Wissenssoziologie der modernen Gesellschaft Band 3*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1993, p. 190.

13. "Das gibt Hindernissen die Funktion, Liebe bewußt zu machen, und dann weiteren Hindernissen die Funktion, Liebe zu prüfen." LUHMANN, *Liebe als Passion*, pp. 116f.

and as they both are engaged in the perception of the place her comments and corrections at once put more obstacles in their way and establish a togetherness of companionship.

The scene of looking reproduced in the quote on p. 94 is emblematic of how the place is used as mediation (both enabling and as an obstacle) between the togetherness of the couple and their hindering inequality. Although both are perceiving the place, it is Charlotte's perception that corrects and informs the hero's. That is played out in more concreteness when they study Italian art together.

The Aesthetics of the Place

After their failure to agree upon a common notion of love, our two protagonists meet by chance in a little church. They are both interested in a painting there, Tintoretto's Crucifixion. We get a description of the stunning reality effect of the picture, and of Charlotte's reaction to the picture, which culminates in an "agony of sobs." (525)

"What is it here," I asked, "that has moved you most, the painter or the subject?"

"I suppose it's the subject. And you?"

"I'm afraid it's the painter." (525)

In this repetition of the chiasmic positioning of the two lovers appears their common ground, which supplements and enhances their mutual world relation. That common ground is art, of which the place is a subcategory. Art is conceived as aesthetic experience, and thus is compatible with "the place" as its object. In the story, the nature of the experience is distributed on two characters, the narrator embodying an interpretive stance via discursive preconceptions, and Charlotte standing for a more direct receptive approach. In the above quote, this directness is established by "feeling". But, as is made clear in the following mini-episode, it may be also concretized in aesthetic perception. When they compare Veronese's *Rape of Europa* [sic!] with Tintoretto's *Bacchus and Ariadne*, Brooke praises the former, Charlotte the latter.

"This, I think, is the brighter dream of the two," she answered, indicating the Bacchus and Ariadne. Miss Evans, on the whole, was perhaps right. In Tintoretto's picture there is no shimmer of drapery, no splendor of flowers and gems; nothing but the broad, bright glory of deep-toned sea and sky, and the shining purity and symmetry of deified human flesh. (526)

Clearly, Charlotte acts as an interpreter of the place for Brooke. She provides, so to speak, an educational experience for him. As an object of love, she is metonymically related to the place she helps to explain. As long as he needs her explanations, he is separate both from her and an understanding of the place that he forms on his own – something that Charlotte has urged him to do. Charlotte acts, then, as a super-ego to Brooke's not yet fully developed ego. That doesn't, however, say that Brooke is in a complete

dependency; rather, he is able to recognize how Charlotte is right, and that is how their talks are an educational experience between “companions”.

The climax of their togetherness takes place in Padua to where they day-trip while Charlotte’s father is on a business trip. Their stay in Padua starts with another rebuke for Brooke after another distinction he failed to make; he called them both “vulgar” compared to a native couple they watch together in the church of St. Anthony (where “the idea of palpable, material sanctity is nowhere more potently enforced” (527)). Miss Evans doesn’t like to be called vulgar. But the note of commonness is set: after that, they themselves become a couple watched – as they look at Giotto in his chapel, “[the] loutish boy who had come with the key lounged on a bench, awaiting tribute, and gazing at us as we gazed.” (529) That repetition with a difference of Brooke’s gaze cited in our motto is supplemented by the internal representation of their aesthetic degustation of Giotto’s pictures: “We went over the little compartments one by one: we lingered and returned and compared; we studied; we melted together in unanimous homage.” (529) This “melting together” is explicitly bound to the mediating function of the place/art, but it connotes, of course, the possibility of a further union.

What all these gazings on art point to, and especially the gazing upon the couple, is the gaze of the reader on the couple. The reader’s gaze is, of course, no gaze in the literal sense, and yet he is the third companion in the protagonists’ discussions of what they perceive. The narrator’s descriptions of the place – outside the situations with Charlotte – are like a travel essay narrator’s: the place, in that vein, is staged as an important experience. The situations with Charlotte are staged in the narrative, moreover, as educational experiences, connecting a perception with an insight or a “feeling”. What in a travel narrative can only be described as that which cannot be described (the atmosphere of the place) is turned here into the motivation of the story: the educational experience, the meeting with the woman, the romantic feelings bordering on love. That motivation is ultimately grounded in the perception of the place: that is what the couple discusses, that is what romantic love feels like, that is what inspires the story of falling in love. The perception of the place is thus staged at the center of the story, as what the reader can receive through the filter of the narration.

That element of perception is further advanced by the other role the place takes besides that of retarding element: it is the source of experience for the protagonist who matures during the separation that ensues after their return from Padua and her rebuke of his marriage proposition (“we have been living, Mr. Brooke, in poetry. Marriage is stern prose. Do let me bid you farewell.” (536)) The hero continues his travels of Italy and in Naples, “pursued my plan of vigilance and study.” (538) Instead of Ms. Evans, the place itself becomes the source of educational experience. “It seemed to me that I returned to Rome a wiser man.” (538) Which is further enhanced by the different aesthetics employed on his winterly excursions to the Campagna which he experiences as rather sublime: “The aspect of all this sunny solitude and haunted vacancy used to fill me with a mingled sense of exaltation and dread.” (538) The changed aesthetics signifies a contrast to

the initial “search for pictorial effects”. And that contrast is made to bear when, just as he returns from one of his “super-sensitive flights” (538) on the Campagna, he meets Charlotte again in St. Peter’s Cathedral, where she shows symptoms of psychical strain after her father’s death. She has clearly lost all proud presumptions of being a teacher and, instead, needs care.

Her pale face, her wilful smile, her spiritless gestures, spoke most forcibly of loneliness and weakness. Over this gentle weakness and dependence I secretly rejoiced; I felt in my heart an immense uprising of pity,—of the pity that goes hand in hand with love.
(540)

Instead of the romantic passion, love is associated with pity, a genuine feeling. Genuine? At the same time, he “secretly rejoiced”: that is a little paradoxical. Of course, he rejoices because he feels that now he “really” loves: but that is just another motivation for love (and not pure love itself). The passionate paradox of the immature lover is replaced by the empathic paradox of pity. It seems, however, that this paradox is the key paradox for the concept of love in the story – after all, it is the right motive to bring about marriage. In accordance with the compulsive interpretation of pictures in the story, another picture is regarded at the end, Titian’s *Sacred and Profane Love*, and now it is Brooke himself who does the explaining. “The serious, stately woman is the likeness, one may say, of love as an experience, – the gracious, impudent goddess of love as a sentiment; this of the passion that fancies, the other of the passion that knows.” (541f)

It may be that the direct connection of “experience” and place in the second part of the story remains unconvincing because it is just stated and not as thoroughly dramatized, like the “false” passion that “fancies”. The concept of love that is championed here, at any rate, is one based on companionship rather than on passion. It echoes the 18th century puritanical concept of marriage as based on the intimacy of friendship rather than love.¹⁴ It also points to the improbability of the semantic innovations of romanticism with regard to love which are remoralized in 19th century middle class concepts of marriage, of which the story at hand seems to be an instance.¹⁵ The devaluing of “fancy” thus comes as an anti-climax in the story, its “seriousness” cannot meet the intensity of the romantic passages. The representation of the fusion of self, loved other and place has much more narrative space than the passage that deals with the realism of “experience”. The interest of the story is thus in the romantics of the place, and the key concept of love puts that romantic experience of the place into an irrecoverable past. It is a realm of a passion that is in contrast to the real as much as the fictions are that Charlotte read in Venice.

We will now turn to a text that links place and love in a less explicit but more potent fashion. The fusion of love and place will be seen as rather confirmed than denied, the place builds up an undercurrent keeping love present on a “subconscious” level from where it has to be dragged to the light of consciousness.

14. LUHMANN, *Liebe als Passion*, pp. 102f.

15. LUHMANN, *Liebe als Passion*, pp. 118f, 187ff.

3.2 Place as the Undercurrent of Love in *Confidence*

Compared to others of his novels, Henry James's *Confidence*¹⁶ has not received 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*."¹⁷ However, Edel also notes that from *Confidence* on James began to write novels about heroines instead about heroes.

Interestingly enough, the first entry in the *Notebooks* is a sketch of what later became *Confidence*. The novel follows the outline set in the notebook: the incidental meeting of the protagonist and his later love in the first chapter, the protagonist's conflict of loyalty (as his best friend loves the same woman), resulting in the hero's moral dilemma. The ending of the novel, however, is an overwhelmingly happy one, in contrast to the melodramatic sketch, where jealousy incites a murderous rage and the desired woman converts from the blood bath of passion to a religious life.¹⁸ The ending of the novel has been criticized by the editors of the *Notebooks* as too miraculously and excessively happy.¹⁹

The novel exhibits a fairly typical romantic pattern in which the start of a love story is placed in a foreign setting. It shares with "Travelling Companions" the focus on the protagonist and his growing maturity during the process of bringing love to his consciousness, but it differs in its length and its third-person narrative perspective. Most importantly, the place is assigned a different role in the narrative economy of the love plot: the initial conjunction of place and falling in love is not or only obliquely thematized until the last part of the novel. The place thus has to hold, metonymically, the presence of love in the unconscious.²⁰ The novel's interest, then, is the narrative implementation of the theory of the unconscious. I will spell out in more detail what this means in the analysis of the significant scenes where the narrative is especially dense. The place in each of the situations

16. Published in HENRY JAMES, JR, 'Confidence', in: WILLIAM T. STAFFORD, editor, *Novels 1871–1880*, New York, N.Y.: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1880, The Library of America 13, pp. 1039–1252.

17. Edel LEON EDEL, *The Conquest of London (1870–1881)*, Volume 2, The Life of Henry James, Philadelphia; New York: Lippincott, 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.)

18. That is the solution James chose for Mme. de Cintré in *The American*.

19. "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 in HENRY JAMES, JR, *The Notebooks of Henry James*, New York, N.Y.; London: Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 7

20. That James has a concept of the unconscious here has been the subject of demonstration in LEO B. LEVY, 'Henry James's *Confidence* and the Development of the Idea of the Unconscious', *American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography*, 28 (1956/57), pp. 347–58. He uses the concept to point to current institutional practices in that the heroine, Angela, acts like an analyst in treating Gordon and Blanche analogous to patients in psychotherapy.

is a key factor for the semantic determination and narrative dynamics of the story.

The narrative separates its three parts by temporal ellipsis and the functional use of the semantic connotations of the respective settings. The first period is limited to the first chapter, which establishes the key from which the rest of the story sets itself off and returns, almost imitating the pattern of the economy of travel, gaining love and self-consciousness in the process.²¹ Here the protagonist, Bernard Longueville, is introduced and the initial situation is established in his meeting an unknown compatriot and her mother in Siena. The second part takes place in Baden-Baden after a lapse of two months (elliptically accounted for as a stay in Venice). Here the protagonist meets all the other relevant characters. The woman his friend called him to judge for marriagability turns out to be none other than the stranger from Siena. Which eventually leads to the conflict between loyalty (as disinterested judge) to his long-time friend Gordon Wright and the love he himself had developed unconsciously but cannot confess to. This entanglement is temporarily solved by the final dispersion of all parties and the lapse of time Bernard needs to travel around the world and around the United States. That elliptical narrative is interrupted by Bernard's visit in New York of Gordon and his new wife, an other member of the Baden clique, only to be taken up again until the hero finds himself back in Europe. On a Norman beach, he meets Angela again and recognizes their mutual love. The remaining obstacle to their Parisian marriage, Gordon's still vivid attachment to Angela and his own unhappy marriage, is finally overcome by female cunning.

In tracing these key steps of the narrative, the function of the place, and its relation to the concept of love James presents here, will become clear.

Catching Love in Siena

Like in "Travelling Companions", in *Confidence* the romantic place serves as the means of identifying the protagonists' unique individualities and to attach them to each other. And like in the story, a painted picture is the symbol of the common bond created by the affection with the place. Only here, the protagonist himself is the painter (and not just the interpreter of the picture) of his significant-other-to-be. The scene in which this happens prefigures the pattern of belated recognition that determines the whole narrative.

It is on the last day of his prolonged stay in Siena that Bernard Longueville decides to finally do what he had planned all along, and sketch a view that he had selected on one of his wanderings through the city.

The thing was what painters call a subject, and he had promised himself to come back with his utensils. This morning he returned

21. For the economy of travel see VAN DEN ABEELE, 'Introduction: The Economy of Travel', pp. xiii–xxx. The relations are, however, inverted, as "home" in Abbeele's concept is "Siena" in the novel, which is an already foreign place. And it is "almost" that pattern because the return to Siena is not on the level of physical presence but on that of the figuration of significance.

to the inn and took possession of them, and then he made his way through a labyrinth of empty streets, lying on the edge of the town, within the wall, like the superfluous folds of a garment whose wearer has shrunken with old age. [...] Longueville settled himself on the empty bench, and, arranging his little portable apparatus, began to ply his brushes. He worked for some time smoothly and rapidly, with an agreeable sense of the absence of obstacles. It seemed almost an interruption when, in the silent air, he heard a distant bell in the town strike noon. Shortly after this, there was another interruption. The sound of a soft footstep caused him to look up; whereupon he saw a young woman standing there and bending her eyes upon the graceful artist. A second glance assured him that she was that nice girl whom he had seen going into the other inn with her mother, and suggested that she had just emerged from the little church. He suspected however—I hardly know why—that she had been looking at him for some moments before he perceived her.²²

What needs a little supplementary explanation here is the reference to already set signs of the presence of an Other. “The other inn” had been thematized in the first paragraph of the chapter as the place where the protagonist didn’t put up his residence, to possibly enjoy the company of the girl and her mother. The girl had been mentioned as possibly being able to share his “intellectual banquet” of “reflections and meditations upon Sieneese architecture and early Tuscan art, upon Italian street-life and the geological idiosyncrasies of the Appenines.” (1042) Now, two pages later, she stumbles on him sketching a view. The imagined object of Bernard’s attention has become a reality when he is most oblivious of reality in the act of painting.

The other important thing to notice here is the emphasis on Bernard’s solitude. His decision to visit that lonely place fell 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”. (1043) In accordance with what John Urry has called “romantic tourism,”²³ the consumption of a romantic sight is dependent on the total submission of the scene to the viewer, so other tourists (or, sometimes, people) become a disruption. In Bernard’s sketching activity we can see the prototype of this kind of tourism; as artist, however, he transfers his experience into a drawn or painted record, turning the picturesque into a picture. For that to be a true record, the prerequisite is that the view is the artist’s own. Which doesn’t mean, of course, in literal appropriation, but rather as an unbroken communion between the artist and his subject (that is, the artist fuses in a way with the subject): he worked “smoothly and rapidly, with an agreeable sense of the absence of obstacles.” The “sense of the absence” indicates that the concern with obstacles is the inverse measure of the concentration achieved.

22. JAMES, ‘*Confidence*’, pp. 1043f. The following references to this novel are placed in parentheses after the quote.

23. Cf. URRY, chapter 3.

Now, within this state of unsocial communion with the view Bernard is being interrupted by a “soft footstep” which does not exactly constitute a destruction of the imaginary space around Bernard but rather a slipping in – as is further corroborated by his noted suspicion that she had looked longer than he was aware of. When she turns away as soon as he answers her look, she becomes part of the scene; that means, first, that his attention is now at least partly deflected from the view he is still sketching, and second, that she becomes part of the view.

She stood there a moment longer—long enough to let him see that she was a person of easy attitudes—and then she walked away slowly to the parapet of the terrace. Here she stationed herself, leaning her arms upon the high stone ledge, presenting her back to Longueville, and gazing at rural Italy. Longueville went on with his sketch, but less attentively than before. . . . 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. Little by little she turned more into profile, leaning only one arm upon the parapet, while the other hand, holding her folded parasol, hung down at her side. She was motionless; it was almost as if she were standing there on purpose to be drawn. Yes, certainly she improved the picture. Her profile, delicate and thin, defined itself against the sky, in the clear shadow of a coquettish hat; her figure was light; she bent and leaned easily; she wore a gray dress, fastened up as was then the fashion, and displaying the broad edge of a crimson petticoat. She kept her position; she seemed absorbed in the view. “Is she *posing*—is she attitudinizing for my benefit?” Longueville asked of himself. (1044f)

As Bernard goes on to incorporate her into his picture, he lays the foundation of the love story. His act touches on four dimensions that determine the relations between story, protagonists and place.

The first dimension concerns the choice of view. As Angela steps into the very center of Bernard’s view, before he realizes that she is in his “foreground,” he notices that she prefers just the scene that he prefers above all others as worthy of sketching. That is, they both share the same values in this aesthetic respect. Now, this value is addressed in the term “preference,” and that introduces a subjective element into the sameness of the value, which relates to the motivation of sketching. The preference for the same view, established as beautiful to the extent of being sketchable, unites the two persons through their special experience of the world. Aesthetic perception is a matter coded as highly individualized, as containing feelings that are hardly if ever expressable.²⁴ That is why the aesthetic perception of a beautiful landscape lends itself to the semantics of love even before love is established. As we have seen above (96), it is in the common relation to the objects of the world in which Luhmann reconstructs romantic love as establishing itself – as the consequence of the fact that the world relation

24. See the definition of this perception in terms of bodily sensation in the Normandy beach scene, discussed on page 116.

of the other becomes ego's frame of orientation. The emphasis on the highly individualized nature of the aesthetic perception indicated by its status as the object of artistic reproduction, and by the socially isolated nature of that activity, produces an increased probability that the sharing of the object of this activity, the view, with another individual might be symptomatic of romantic love as the sharing the socially otherwise excluded kernel of individuality. The way Bernard and Angela are defined against the other characters – as being to some extent in opposition to the social norms that these characters represent – encourage this reading. Angela's characterization as "a person of easy attitudes" makes her contemporary in distinction to traditional notions of manner and behavior – which doesn't only point to her being possibly American but also to her sharing a romantic unconventionality with the protagonist and the reader.

The second dimension is the activity of sketching, which is at once the production of reference and the production of beauty. It might seem trivial that the picture and the pictured share the same attributes of (and are mutually motivated in) their beauty – only that is represented in painting that is itself beautiful. But the represented and the representation do only have a quasi-photographic relationship: the beauty of the rural Italian picturesque is, of course, only reproducible in a faithful reproduction, as is the "likeness" of a portrait. The reproduction is, however, an artistic activity, it requires the talent that Bernard is described as having; it is, at best, an act of translation. That is the relay on which a reproduction of beauty becomes an expression, an expression of felt beauty rather than recorded beauty.

The artistic activity is not defined positively in more detail here, but its negative determination by the sense of the absence of obstacles and its setting in an a-social frame of mind and situation suggest that it has to be viewed as a process internal to the individual, inaccessible to direct description and representable only by its effects, by the beautiful picture. The word "talent" situates that capacity within the individual, isolating him in this respect from the conventionally social: talent is innate, not just a matter of learning or acquiring it as skill. The point to make here is that sketching (as an artistic activity) produces meaning that is situated on a level only partly controllable by conscious intention.²⁵ Thus, integrating the beauty of the unknown girl into the picture shifts her status from (social) interruption of his communion with himself to being a part of that communion.

Third, as object of sketching, as "improvement" of the view, the girl becomes equal in significance to the place. That has two consequences. On the one hand, she takes part in the heightened significance of the landscape as experience, that is, as that experience that is so worthy of artistic reproduction. Artistic reproduction itself is staged as being a special event in terms of Bernard's biographical account, which – in Siena – mainly

25. The Romantic notion of a correspondence between the outer and the inner world has its precursor in the privileged and mysterious access of the artist to the beautiful that had been a stock element of Neoplatonic theories of art, where the Platonic εἶδος is conceptualized as a direct emanation from god; see ERWIN PANOFSKY, *IDEA: Ein Beitrag zur Begriffsgeschichte der älteren Kunsttheorie*, Berlin: Wissenschaftsverlag Volker Spiess, 1985.

consists of the leisurely activities of musing and lingering (or “lounging”). On the other hand, by her integration into the sketch and her promotion to significance, the girl’s entering the view changes the biographical significance of the act of sketching. It binds the sense of heightened existence associated with art (doubly heightened because of the heightening of the already heightened intensity caused by the place itself as perceptual object) to the meeting of another individual. Symbolically, in the equalization of aesthetic value, the object of aesthetic perception becomes able to speak back.²⁶ This symbolic capacity as representative of the “Italian experience” colors the many consequent dialogues between Bernard and Angela. James goes as far as to incapacitate his protagonist temporarily of his talent, in order to emphasize the autobiographical impact of the intervention of Angela’s profile, in the last sentence of Chapter 1, when Bernard attempts another sketch of the old beggar-woman at the church-door: “But his attempt to reproduce her features was not gratifying, and he suddenly laid down his brush. She was not pretty enough — she had a bad profile.” (1050)

Fourth, the sketch produces an objectification, a crystallization of the three dimensions just outlined. Although it produces an objective capacity, beauty or “likeness,” as the girl’s mother repeatedly calls it, it is a trace of the individual’s creativity (as the product of a production), but also of the conjunction of place and girl, and, at the same time, of the choice of subject (the view) as the consequence of individual affection. It is, moreover, a token of remembrance, a souvenir, metonymically linked to the place as a trace of its presence.²⁷ This capacity is displaced almost immediately when Bernard gives the sketch to the girl’s mother, partly as a means to soothe her daughter’s apparent regrets at being made an object, partly because her mother cherishes it as an art object in its beauty and likeness. As a token of remembrance, it is the ideal object to symbolize the unconsciousness of love when later in the story its existence is denied and its subject (the Siena view and their meeting there) is avoided. Instead of his heart, Bernard gives his picture away, and he isn’t even aware of this replacement.

Displacing Love in Baden-Baden

The first chapter of *Confidence*, from the perspective of the later chapters, soon becomes a distinct, emblematic entity, like the prologue in a Medieval romance or the pre-titles scene in a film; it is referenced in denial, first in the events at Baden-Baden as a topic avoided by the women and later, in Paris, as the origin of what the story thematizes: love. It has been important in embedding love into the story as an unconscious strand in the sharing of a unique aesthetic vision. This subconscious thread is further woven into the constellation of characters that the Baden chapters develop. That

26. In Benjamin’s conception of the aura, works of art “speak back”, respond to the gaze afforded with. “Die Aura einer Erscheinung erfahren, heißt, sie mit dem Vermögen belehnen, den Blick aufzuschlagen.” WALTER BENJAMIN, ‘Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire’, in: *Illuminationen*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1977, p. 223

27. On the souvenir, see SUSAN STEWART, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984.

constellation in Baden-Baden produces a key scene in which love is rekindled but all the more firmly established on an unconscious level.

Configurations

The constellation is made up of the relations between four principal characters. Bernard Longueville, the protagonist, furnishes the story's point of view which is intermittently differentiated from a separate, ironical point of view of the narrator. After the first chapter, Bernard's principal relation is to his long-time friend Gordon Wright, who takes Bernard into his confidence as expert on matters of women and love; his relations to the girl from Siena are colored both by the incident in Siena and her role as Gordon's love object. Blanche Evers is a side-character in Baden who becomes more central later as Gordon's wife when she is rumored by the New York press to have a relationship with Bernard. Gordon's relations to Angela are those of "false love;" his intention to marry Angela as an object of his esteem fail due to the lack of reciprocity. Gordon's relation to Blanche are characterized by an initial disinterested affection (he understands her problems with her suitor, the pauperized and gambling Englishman Captain Lovelock who serves as a negative foil to all four principal characters) to an interest in her as means to his end of matrimony (she makes a pretty wife, although she is not his intellectual equal), to final real emotional involvement (thanks to Angela's midwifery services). Angela's relation to Blanche change from disinterested patience to emotional acceptance once she discovers that behind all the chatterbox surface there beats a heart that loves her husband.

The characters fall into two different groups according to the symbolic significance of the relations between them. The two groups represent romantic individuality, on the one hand (Bernard, Angela), and social conventionality, on the other (Gordon, Blanche). The distinction is primarily achieved by the characters' relation to language, but this serves further to distinguish areas of culture of which Bernard and Gordon are representative.

Since Gordon's role in the story is that of the anti-hero, providing Bernard's love-story with the necessary obstacles, the characterization of the two principal male characters by opposition is most straightforward. As Bernard provides the focal center of the story, his characterization as imaginative and talented in the arts (sketching, history, conversation) serves as a base for further differentiation in comparison with Gordon, with whom he has in common that he doesn't aspire to a career nor to a commercial enlargement of the inherited wealth in the American Way. In contrast to Bernard, he exercises his intellect in a more utilitarian bent and sponsors scientific experiments in chemistry both in Europe and the United States. His intellect has its limitations – and his best friend has been frank with him about that. "Bernard had often spoken of his comrade's want of imagination as a bottomless pit [...] 'You know, I have dropped things down — little jokes and metaphors, little fantasies and paradoxes — and I have never heard them touch bottom!'" (1052) Later, Gordon's expressive attempts in conversation are described by Angela as "'excellent things, but I should not exactly call them ingenious remarks.'" (1075) Bernard's friendship with Gordon rests on the "simple, candid, manly, affectionate

nature of his comrade, ” (1054) while Bernard’s qualities are less appealing to a manly taste in that “[h]e pleased superficially, as well as fundamentally.” (1054)

The axis of distinction between Bernard/Angela and Gordon is constituted in language performance. The protagonist’s greater capacity of imagination manifests itself on the language plane in using figures of speech that Gordon is not capable of following or replying to. Moreover, Bernard’s social skills are expressed in his capacity for gallant conversation; which is performed in the novel in the dialogues between Bernard and Angela as a play of discursive positions. Although that playful character is most prominent in the dialogic performances, it is also evident in Bernard’s tendency to make only provisional plans;²⁸ as well as in Angela’s predilection for sudden turns and exits. Gordon, in contrast, is only half as amusing: he takes plans seriously, and his approach to love is to take it as a consequence of the plan to get married. Before we get to this central motive on the plane of the narrative action, in which Bernard is made assistant to Gordon’s experimental approach to the execution of his plan, we will shortly account for role of Blanche Evers. She is, on the plane of language, the exact counterpart to Gordon: where the latter rather acts than speaks, and tends to reduce language to its representational function, Blanche is the source of a flood of superficial discourse that is termed monological at times and represented as long paragraphs of what nowadays would count as the rendering of the one end of a telephone conversation. Both excess and lack of language do not make these characters unbearable for the others, but they cause a pathological condition between Gordon and Blanche as married couple that can only be repaired by Angela. The limited awareness of language is accompanied by attributions that align Blanche and Gordon with the cultural distinctions of “society”; Gordon’s occupation in chemistry points to a thriving and rising industry at the beginning of the second industrial revolution (business “society”), while Blanche’s exaggerated skills as a chatterbox ironically represent the function of the female gender as constituting a social-cultural “society”.²⁹

Confidences

As already hinted at, Gordon’s love to Angela forms the obstacle to Bernard’s recognition of his own love, and that is not only due to the latter’s loyalty to his best friend but also due to the behavior of Angela Vivian and her mother in Baden-Baden. The latter at first doesn’t want to recognize Bernard, and both specifically avoid the topic of Siena. It is made obvious that Angela’s mother, despite herself, sees the prospect of her daughter’s marrying the

28. “He was not a man who made plans and held to them. He made them, indeed — few men made more — but he made them as a basis for variation.” (1051)

29. As an aside, one might put forward the interpretation that the final resolution of the novel thanks to Angela’s powers of language represent the writer’s self-reflective statement on how the cultural shortcomings of the Gilded Age in post-Civil War America may be mended by the powers of real culture in literature. Gordon then would be symbolic of non-cultured business, Blanche of the deficient culture of female circles. For an extensive account of the political implications of the culture question at the time see ALAN TRACHTENBERG, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

wealthy Gordon Wright as a relief she doesn't easily want to let go of. It is kept ambivalent if Angela's reserve in contradicting is based on her consideration for her mother or on her intention to perhaps finally take advantage of that situation. It is made clear, however, that Gordon's proposal of marrying had already been rejected by Angela when Bernard has arrived in Baden-Baden.

When Gordon is forced to leave Baden-Baden for England in family affairs, the story develops a key situation in which love becomes locked in tighter on the plane of the unconscious of the story (or the reader's or the protagonist(s)'s unconscious). Love in this situation is kindled anew and at the same time displaced in a paradoxical configuration. And the romantic places around Baden-Baden are, again, indicators of the presence of love that remains unsaid.

Gordon, in leaving Baden-Baden, makes explicit what has been implicit before: that Bernard serves as a stand-in for him in his relations to Angela, observing her behavior for indications of possible misbehavior, " 'that she might flirt, for instance!' " (1101) This furthers the complication of a situation of which Bernard had a double consciousness. In Baden-Baden, he has become a member "of the quiet little circle" in which "conversation formed indeed the chief entertainment," and his main interlocutor is Angela.

Gordon was, after all, wooing her; it was very natural he should seek her society. In fact, he was never far off; but Bernard, for three or four days, had the anomalous consciousness of being still nearer. Presently, however, he perceived that he owed this privilege simply to his friend's desire that he should become acquainted with Miss Vivian — should receive a vivid impression of a person in whom Gordon was so deeply interested. (1082)

It is only after this initial acquaintance, however, that Gordon briefs him on her rejection of the marriage proposal. And this, for the reader, shows that Gordon, in matters of getting hold of Angela, is less trustworthy than the protagonist implies when he proposes as a joke to Gordon if not he, Bernard himself, might become a reason to be jealous, " 'leaving me alone, with an open field, with the woman of your choice?' 'I wish to heaven I could be jealous!' Gordon exclaimed. 'That would simplify the thing — that would give me a lift.' " (1101) Gordon doesn't contradict Bernard in his understanding that the simplification would be Gordon's abstention from further marriage proposals. On the other hand, Gordon doesn't commit himself to follow the judgement he charges Bernard with passing after observing Angela. In Gordon's dubious behaviour the reader is prepared for the following development of Bernard's role as Gordon's representative.

When, after four days of the ladies' abstinence from the usual meeting-places, Bernard calls on them at their boardings, his legitimation — as caretaker in place of Gordon's — elicits the first turn in the roles. While Mrs. Vivian is grateful for the presence of "a gentleman near us," Angela objects to being watched and cared for like an object, " 'I don't like being deposited, like a parcel, or being watched, like a curious animal. I am too

fond of my liberty.’” (1107) Spitefully, she snubs Bernard and vows not to leave her rooms again.

What sense he makes of Angela’s behavior, the same evening in the Conversation-house (where he is oblivious to the general commotion), is only indicated by his being retrospectively amused at “the whole field of Angela Vivian’s oddities of conduct.” (1110) He is interrupted in his wandering meditations when Angela appears, accompanied by Blanche and her suitor, Captain Lovelock. She doesn’t take up his questions as to her inconsequence and the inappropriateness of so late a walk; rather, she answers by questioning if that was part of the “examination” that she apparently discovered Bernard was charged with by Gordon. He thinks her very clever for guessing his mind. “She made him feel very much ashamed of his critical attitude, and 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) That is, her choice of a behaviour that serves as a criticism of his mission effectively hits his weak spot, his self-respect. His attempts at repairing their relations, however, become highly critical, in the two orthogonal dimensions of the interpretation of his behaviour as either flirtation or controlled conversation.

As Gordon’s faithful friend, he should not display any behaviour that could be interpreted as vulgar flirtation. “Under the circumstances, it savoured both of flirtation and of vulgarity that they should even fall out with each other;” (1114) paradoxically, if they don’t quarrel, this might still count as flirtation. In any case, it would all be well if he, Bernard, didn’t mean it. As the narrator states, “his only reasonable line of conduct would be instantly to leave Baden” to get out of the paradoxical situation. Instead, he stays. He stays because “he was induced to make the reflection that he had really succeeded in putting Miss Vivian off her guard.” (1114) That is a consequence of his conversational skills. “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) This self-congratulatory tenor is only the surface, however. He doesn’t only deceive Miss Vivian, he deceives himself, since “Miss Vivian was, in fact, perpetually in his thoughts. He made it a point of conscience not to think of her, but he was thinking of her most when his conscience was most lively.” (1114) His behavior is eminently self-contradictory, in that he vows to leave her alone “and meanwhile he was roaming afield and plucking personal impressions in great fragrant handfuls. All this, as I say, was natural, given the man and the situation.” (1114)

Angela’s behavior is characterized as “a note of sweet submissiveness which re-appeared again at frequent intervals. She was gentle, accessible, tenderly gracious, expressive, demonstrative, almost flattering.” (1115) This, and the avoidance of the topic of Gordon after she has told Bernard that his judgement over her mattered greatly to her, lead Bernard to interpret her behavior as cunning him into a favorite statement to Gordon so that she may follow her mother’s advice and marry him for his money. On the other hand, Bernard cannot ignore that he himself is the object of her

maidenly urbanity, but he kept reminding himself that *he* was not in question and that everything must be looked at in the light of Gordon's requirements. There was all this time an absurd logical twist in his view of things. In the first place he was not to judge at all; and in the second he was to judge strictly on Gordon's behalf. This latter clause always served as a justification when the former had failed to serve as a deterrent. When Bernard reproached himself for thinking too much of the girl, he drew comfort from the reflection that he was not thinking well. . . . Bernard had luminous glimpses of another situation, in which Angela Vivian's coquetry should meet with a different appreciation; but just now it was not an item to be entered on the credit side of Wright's account. (1116)

Bernard's behaviour can be characterized as addictive, the narrator calls it "a sort of unconscious experimentation". Instead of avoiding contact with Angela in the first place, he enjoys her changed style of conversation. He feels a little guilty at his enjoyment, as is indicated in "Happily he was on his own!" which invokes the absence of the person whom he would be most embarrassed to justify his behavior to. Bernard's double consciousness, then, not only exercises itself in his relation to Angela – in denouncing her behavior as coquetry and, at the same time, appreciating it (without full acknowledgment) – but also in judging his own position from two positions at once, one determined by his pledge to Gordon and one, also not wholly spelled out, from his own interest in Angela ("another situation").

To summarize the effects of Gordon's presence in absence, Bernard's relations to Angela are characterized by an instrumentalization of his capabilities of gallant talk, the matching response to which in Angela's gentleness of discourse opens a double relation: it is at once interpreted in terms of Gordon's view, that is, as discourse that instrumentalizes gallantry in order to elicit a positive judgement about her (and mirrors his own instrumentalization of talk as a means to take her "off her guard"), and as a response that directly affects him as pleasurable as much as his own pleasure expresses itself in gallant talk (that is, "she was off her guard with a vengeance!" (1116)). The second relation is the one that is indicated as the driving moment of Bernard's behavior – the "happily he was on his own" perspective is a sign of the retrospective powerlessness of his moral conscience in face of the independent workings of his 'unconscious experimentation'.

By relating the pleasurable use of gallant talk to Luhmann's description of the semantics of love, we can see that James uses gallantry in the old sense of creating *plaisir* but with an individualistic twist. As gallantry is still dependent on the control of language, one could say, it represents a social stratification, but this is grounded in individual inclinations – Gordon has a more utilitarian inclination of intellect, which is linked to his limited powers of imagination; imagination then, serves as a differentiation mechanism between talk that is gallant, producing pleasure, and plain talk that serves other ends.³⁰ Being able to produce gallant talk, in democratic conditions,

30. Blanche's monological gallantry is not pleasurable, either, because of its lack of the dialogical imagination.

serves not as a means of access to occasions of love, in a medium which is unable to produce the form “love” (*amour*) by itself, as in the aristocratic *code amour*;³¹ rather, this capacity serves as a distinction of the individual. Moreover, the pleasure that is created by gallant talk, although as a dialogic form still within the logic of action and reaction and answer to that reaction (thus a play of connectings), is defined by this distinction as individual expression. As a consequence, individuality makes of gallant talk (note the requirement of imagination) a machine for the romantic production of illusions of love. The self-reflexive nature of the talk between Angela and Bernard, the pleasure they have in playing at pleasure, is a variant of the Romantic contract between author and reader to view the fictitiousness of the world representation as significant only in its capacity as an index for the the representation of the unrepresentable.³² Metonymically related, the talking pleasure and love are reflexively illustrating that love is caused by love, that is, love means to love loving.³³ Moreover, for love the story opens the register of the unconscious, in accordance with Luhmann’s observation that the novel has become the means of representing love as developing on the axis of consciousness/unconsciousness.³⁴

The unconscious in the case of *Confidence* is constituted as the level below the surface of the moral or logical paradox, as well as that what is repressed from communication in the dialogues, e. g., the subject of Siena. In the passage at hand, the protagonist’s motivation to stay is staged as irrational behavior (it would be rational to leave the place), since staying implies talk and pleasure dangerous to his “position,” but not to “himself.” The danger is even increased by the attractions of the place.

Happily he was on his own! He flattered himself that he remained so on occasions that were even more insidiously relaxing — 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. Bernard, in such matters, was extremely alert and considerate; he developed an unexpected talent for arranging excursions, and he had taken regularly into his service the red-waistcoated proprietor of a big

31. About gallantry as a mediation between sociality and intimacy in the upper classes see LUHMANN, *Liebe als Passion*, pp. 97ff, chapter 7, “Von der Galanterie zur Freundschaft”.
32. “Die Romantik selbst beruht darauf, daß Autor und Leser einander zumuten (und voneinander wissen, daß sie einander zumuten), daß die Inszenierung, obwohl sie Welt bedeuten soll, nicht ernst zu nehmen sei. Gerade dies wird zur Verständigungsbasis, zum Reiz des Kunstwerks gemacht und als Verweisung verstanden auf etwas, was direkter Kommunikation nicht zugänglich ist.” LUHMANN, *Liebe als Passion*, p. 161
33. “Das Lieben vom Hörensagen wird ersetzt durch das Lieben des Liebens, das sich sein Objekt sucht und in der Gegenliebe soziale Reflexivität aufbaut.” LUHMANN, *Liebe als Passion*, p. 174
34. See above on page ??.

Teutonic landau, which had a courier's seat behind and was always at the service of the ladies. The functionary in the red waistcoat was a capital charioteer; he was constantly proposing new drives, and he introduced our little party to treasures of romantic scenery. (1116f)

It is almost as a postscript to Bernard's anguish about his position as Gordon's stand-in that the attractions of the place are brought in. They provide the "atmosphere" as an indicator of unconsciousness: we begin to see its effect on other senses than the visual. "Insidiously relaxing," warmth of the night, audible tree-tops murmur, all these attributions create the mold for what significance the "romantic scenery" may develop. As in "Travelling Companions", the romantics of the place and the theme of love are metonymically related – not, however, in consciously linking the aesthetic perception to the companion, but rather in an independent register where it waits for detection: in the unconscious.

It is in the spirit of this scenic atmosphere that the next stage in the relationship between Bernard and Angela develops. First, the scene of the Baden *Schloss* with its view on the valley is made the stage for the repetition of the Siena scene.

One of the terraces had a high parapet, against which Angela was leaning, looking across the valley. [...] As Bernard approached the young girl, Angela, who had not seen him, turned round.

"Don't move," he said. "You were just in the position in which I painted your portrait at Siena."

"Don't speak of that," she answered.

"I have never understood," said Bernard, "why you insist upon ignoring that charming incident."

She resumed for a moment her former position, and stood looking at the opposite hills.

"That's just how you were — in profile — with your head a little thrown back."

"It was an odious incident!" Angela exclaimed, rapidly changing her attitude.

Bernard was on the point of making a rejoinder, but he thought of Gordon Wright and held his tongue. He presently told her that he intended to leave Baden on the morrow. (1118)

The visual aesthetic experience of the place is here referred back to its first instance of narrative significance, which is renewed and brought back into the game of dialogue. This is paralleled by the communication of Bernard's intention to leave, which he had so far neither communicated nor exercised. After a walk through the garden (which "was filled with things that Bernard liked" (1119)) Angela makes a move that is, compared to her initial pricklyness, significant. "Angela mentioned very quietly that she had heard that morning from Mr. Wright, and that he would not return for another week. 'You had better stay,' she presently added, as if Gordon's continued absence were an added reason." (1119) As she asks something from him for the first time in the novel this is significant enough to bring in the narrator's voice again, as so often when Bernard "contradicts" himself.

"I don't know," said Bernard. "It is sometimes difficult to say what one had better do."

I hesitate to bring against him that most inglorious of all charges, an accusation of sentimental fatuity, of the disposition to invent obstacles to enjoyment so that he might have the pleasure of seeing a pretty girl attempt to remove them. But it must be admitted that if Bernard really thought at present that he had better leave Baden, the observation I have just quoted was not so much a sign of this conviction as of the hope that his companion would proceed to gainsay it. The hope was not disappointed, though I must add that no sooner had it been gratified than Bernard began to feel ashamed of it. (1119)

The respite granted, in the dark evening, Angela receives his consent to stay on the balcony under romantic conditions, – the stereotypical balcony is one more literary device to keep the love story going on unrecognized, as a game for the reader.

When Gordon returns, he makes Bernard answer his suggestions that Angela behaved like a coquette; Bernard answers in the positive, suspecting that Gordon would not propose once more to her. Immediately after his interview with Gordon, Bernard begins his lone wanderings in the Baden Casino where he wins an extraordinary amount of francs which he gradually returns to the bank through the hands of Captain Lovelock, who is beraved of money and the company of Blanche Evers, who has left Baden with the Vivians a few hours after Gordon did. For Bernard, two years of travelling follow which he cannot wholeheartedly enjoy, why, “he would have been very much at a loss to say;” (1134) the factors that are named are the estrangement between him and Gordon, and the frequent return of the question if he did Angela a wrong in affecting her prospects by his judgement to Gordon.

It cannot be said, however, that he suffered this fact to occupy at all times the foreground of his consciousness. Bernard was like some great painters; his foregrounds were very happily arranged. He heard nothing of Mrs. Vivian and her daughter, beyond a rumor that they had gone to Italy; . . . Had he done a harm to Angela Vivan, and did she know that he had done it? This inquiry by no means made him miserable, and it was far from awaiting him regularly on his pillow. But it visited him at intervals, and sometimes in the strangest places — suddenly, abruptly, in the stillness of an Indian temple, or amid the shrillness of an Oriental crowd. He became familiar with it at last; he called it his Jack-in-the-box. (1136)

He is relieved when he hears of Gordon’s marriage to Blanche Evers. His other concern, however, hovers in the background, and the mood is one of absence, of unconscious lack.

Love, which takes the form of guilt towards Angela here, and place enact an occasional game of flip-flopping between background and foreground. They are supplemental to each other, the touristic spectacle as distracting foreground, colored by the fits of guilt. Together they constitute an unsatisfactory mood, which transpires in his characterization, apropos his stay with the Wrights in New York, as “the restless and professionless mortal that we know, wandering in life from one vague experiment to another, contently gratified and never satisfied” (1151). When he leaves for

California, in order to evade the false public image of himself and Blanche flirting, he feels restless again and beset by “that chronic chagrin which had accompanied him through his long journey in the East.” (1155) the narrator finds his remedy “not in the least original, and I am almost ashamed to mention so stale and conventional a device,” namely, the return to Europe.

In the restlessness we can see the effect of the background behind Bernard’s foreground consciousness: that is his love to Angela. In Romantic love, the absence of the loved one serves as an intensifier of love;³⁵ here it is not a conscious intensification, because the absence is not named as such by the affected; the lack of a conscious absence serves to de-intensify experience. Bernard’s restlessness, then, is a symptom of the presence of love, which is unfulfilled by the absence of the loved one. Thus the unconscious strand of love is still active in a subterranean fashion. Bernard is unconsciously longing, and his return to Europe, for the reader, promises a return to the origin of that longing.

Awakening to Love in Normandy

The scene in Normandy is the place where the underground strand of love wriggles itself to the surface, by way of dream and sensual experience. On the Norman beach, Bernard literally awakens to his love for Angela. The process is organized in three stages. First, a dream tells him that he is preoccupied with a woman; on awakening, he finds Angela sitting near him. Second, he recognizes that he loves Angela. Third, he recognizes that Angela loves him.

The dream mirrors the function of Siena in the establishment of the relation between Bernard and Angela. It anticipates a fact that is to be interpreted and understood later. It thus serves as the medium of the surfacing of the unconscious. The dream is embedded in the sensual aesthetics of the place; it is provoked and enabled by the relaxing effect of the scene on the perceptive individual. The beach is staged in contrast to the malodorous little town of Le Havre, where the protagonist doesn’t stay long in his room facing a bleak wall, but leaves for the “fresh” countryside “open to the traveller’s eye” (1157) until he gets to a small, but naturally picturesque “unfashionable resort . . . twenty miles from a railway”. As Bernard joins the natives in bathing, he feels a change coming over him.

When he had dressed himself again, Bernard stretched himself on the beach, feeling happier than he had done in a long time, and pulled his hat over his eyes. The feeling of happiness was an odd one; it had come over him suddenly, without visible cause; but, such as it was, our hero made the most of it. As he lay here it seemed to deepen; his immersion and his exercise in the salt water had given him an agreeable languor. This presently became a drowsiness

35. “In all dem setzt sich eine neuartige, typisch romantische Paradoxie durch: die Erfahrung in der *Steigerung* des Sehens, Erlebens, Genießens *durch Distanz*. Der Abstand ermöglicht jene Einheit von Selbstreflexion und Engagement, die im unmittelbaren Genuß verlorengehen würde. So wird der Akzent von der Erfüllung in die Hoffnung, in die Sehnsucht, in die Ferne verlagert, und man muß den Fortschritt im Prozeß des Liebens dann ebenso suchen wie fürchten.” LUHMANN, *Liebe als Passion*, p. 172

which was not less agreeable, and Bernard felt himself going to sleep. 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. Bernard enjoyed half an hour of that light and easy slumber which is apt to overtake idle people in recumbent attitudes in the open air on August afternoons. It brought with it an exquisite sense of rest, and the rest was not spoiled by the fact that it was animated by 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. (1158f)

The inner emotional change to happiness is contiguous, via the perception (of perception) of outer things (which fade), to the inner events of a dream, which has as content the beautiful eyes of a woman. That this inner state is itself contiguous with the place is signified not only in the specific use Bernard makes of the ocean (he bathes in it and exhausts himself bodily) but in the intermittent generalization of Bernard's outer aspect as something that happens to people in such places (at such times: the typification "August" is metonymically related to the bathing place as the time for the beach). The noises associated with the place help construct the bridge of contiguity between the perception of the outside and the perception of the inside (dream). Thus, literally, the place becomes conducive to love in leading to the dream as a first step toward consciousness.

The displacement of visual perception establishes the body (in the swimming exercise, but also in all non-visual perceptions) as the excluded third between consciousness and unconsciousness, as a kind of catalyzing instance that mediates between the two, and gives unconsciousness a place from where to be transformed.

When Bernard awakes from his dream, the only thing that has changed during his sleep is that a young woman sits not far away from him, reading. After he recognizes her as Angela Vivan he "had become aware that he was agitated" (1160). When he finally gives in to his bad conscience and stands up to leave she recognizes him. When she turns out not to be resentful at all, they talk and walk to her little house and meet again in the evening at the little Casino. After their conversation, he remains at the Casino.

The ocean was rumbling just beneath; it made a ruder but richer music. Bernard stood looking at it a moment; then he went down the steps to the beach. The tide was rather low; he walked slowly down to the line of the breaking waves. The sea looked huge and black and simple; everything was vague in the unassisted darkness. 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)

Again, it is the absence of visual stimuli, the blindness, one might say, and the accompanying auditory and olfactory sensations that constitute a contiguous bridge to Bernard's unconscious. Again, bodily effects signal the transition from unconscious to consciousness: his heart beating fast, breath withheld, the urge to sit down. The sound of the waves and his realization that "was like a word spoken in the darkness" convene to undifferentiate the outer and the inner, in the commingling of his blind perceptions and his unconscious, the recognition of love (in the form of conviction) takes shape.

In the next moment he notices an accompanying recognition of "an attendant shadow" (1172) that this is "forbidden fruit." That prevents him from approaching Angela the next day, instead he sleeps off his "dread" and entertains himself at length by taking a walk until evening. When he wants to take leave of the ladies he meets only their housemaid, who tells him that they have gone to Paris, but withholds the exact address of their banker.

"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)

The fortnight spent alone is an extension of the long walk he took after his recognition of being in love with Angela. His preference to be alone is motivated by his bad conscience, which forbids him to think of the future, and he avoids it by taking "refuge among the warm and familiar episodes of the past." (1177) The intervention of the narrator in the above quotation, addressing the reader's expectations, clearly reflects the strength of the construction of the devices used in Bernard's recognition of his love; but it also is put forward to underline Bernard's standing as a serious person. The conditions are only changed by the next revelation which signals the end of his predicament.

It is all the more singular, therefore, that one evening, after he had been at Blanquais a fortnight, a train of thought should suddenly have been set in motion in his mind. It was kindled by no outward occurrence, but by some wandering spark of fancy or of memory, and the immediate effect of it was to startle our hero very much

as he had been startled on the evening I have described. 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 is reserved about telling the contents of the murmuring, he will only give indirect indications. This is the last revelation that Bernard experiences as a short-circuiting with his unconscious. The rest is explanation, communication, and it all takes place in Paris. A propos the journey to Paris the narrator gives some hints as to what nature the coming to consciousness and bringing to communication will be of.

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)

Reflecting Love in Paris

Paris is immediately established as the place of truth and reconciliation. We don't lose any time, accompanying the protagonist directly to the Vivian's "diminutive apartment at the summit of one of the tall white houses" near the Arc, which feature, beside the elegance of its little space, a balcony with a view.

It was late in the afternoon when Bernard was ushered into Mrs. Vivian's little high-nestling drawing-room, and a patch of sunset tints, faintly red, rested softly upon the gilded wall. [...] The long windows — the ceiling being low, they were really very short — opened upon one of those solid balconies, occupying the width of the apartment, which are often in Paris a compensation for living up five flights of stairs, and this balcony was filled with flowers and cushions. Bernard stepped out upon it to wait the coming of Mrs. Vivian, and, as she was not quick to appear, he had time to see that his friends enjoyed a magnificent view. They looked up at the triumphal Arch, which presented itself at a picturesque angle, and near the green tree-tops of the Champs Elysées, beyond which they caught a broad gleam of the Seine and a glimpse, blue in the distance, of the great towers of Notre Dame. The whole vast city lay before them and beneath them, with its ordered brilliancy and its mingled aspect of compression and expansion; and yet the huge Parisian murmur died away before it reached Mrs. Vivian's sky-parlor, which seemed to Bernard the brightest and quietest little habitation he had ever known. (118of)

The place becomes an emblem of the function of place in the narrative as the stage for the declaration of truths and the reconciliation of strayed parties. It is the place where communication explains and orders the events

that had been ambivalent in meaning. Like the panorama it offers of Paris, the little apartment provides a view, a light, over the events of the story. The view establishes order, but what it views is itself, contiguously, metonymically, of an “ordered brilliancy.” The visual metaphor is implicit – as much as the exclusion of the other sense, hearing, is explicit: “the huge Parisian murmur died away”.

Enlightenment is what follows in the sequence of interviews Bernard has with Angela in Chapter 23. She listens to his declaration of love “intently, looking straight out of the window and without moving. ‘You have seen very little of me,’ she said, presently, turning her illuminated eye on him.” (1186) While he illuminates her (as her eye expresses) she looks out of the window, into the aesthetically ordered Paris. After his declaration, she moves out on the balcony, telling him “‘You have said enough; explain some other time.’” (1186) In the four following interviews that are represented as instances of a whole month of daily visits by Bernard they explain to each other the incidents at Baden-Baden, deepening their intimacy to the point of setting a wedding date at the end of the chapter.

Appropriately, at the very end of the chapter the social problematics of Bernard’s loyalty conflict to Gordon (his other item of bad consciousness) comes up as unresolved. Bernard’s letter to him crosses Gordon’s announcement of his visit in Paris. The issue is dramatized in the estrangement of the members of the Wright matrimony; Blanche is followed around by Captain Lovelock, and Gordon is in an embittered mood. When Gordon and Bernard, at their first meeting in Paris (“the day was a perfect example of the mellowest mood of autumn” (1203)), are out for a walk, they meet Angela and her mother, and Gordon seems to fall for Angela again. When Bernard tells him of his impending marriage to her, Gordon spitefully renews claims to her, which are, however, rejected by Angela. Angela assumes the role of midwife in reconciling Blanche and Gordon, both of whom she recognizes as being in love with each other, but unable to communicate that. While that takes up the rest of the novel, including a plot of making Gordon aware of the illusionary nature of his love for Angela by just allowing him to be present and bored with her (while Bernard stays away in London), Gordon’s claims can be considered a last provocation for Bernard and Angela to communicate their love.³⁶

Gordon behaves like the prosecution in court, and Angela’s defense gives occasion to more explanations.³⁷ One is, that Gordon didn’t take Bernard’s advice in Baden that she wasn’t marriageable; as she tells Bernard, he had proposed and Angela rejected him, again (1213). Then, in order to refute Gordon’s accusation that Bernard prevented his happiness by deception, “‘You put me off my guard, and then you took it,’” (1232) Also, Angela denies Gordon’s claims to precedence of acquaintance.

“I had seen him before I ever saw you,” said the girl.

36. That Angela causes Gordon to feel bored suggests the problem of the everyday life as a test to romantic passionate love – only that Gordon is hardly romantically passionate (like, e. g., the immature hero of “Travelling Companions”), only violently so.
37. Gordon says: “‘And then, it isn’t only my feelings; it’s the right; it’s the justice. I must say that you have no right to marry her; and beg of her to listen to me and let you go.’” (1231)

Bernard suppressed an exclamation. There seemed to flash through these words a sort of retrospective confession which told him something that she had never directly told him. She blushed as soon as she had spoken, and Bernard found a beauty in this of which the brightness blinded him to the awkward aspect of the fact she had just presented to Gordon. At this fact Gordon stood staring, then at last he apprehended it — largely.

“Ah, then, it had been a plot between you!” he cried out.

Bernard and Angela exchanged a glance of pity.

“We had met for five minutes, and had exchanged a few words before I came to Baden. It was in Italy — at Siena. It was a simple accident that I never told you,” Bernard explained.

“I wished that nothing should be said about it,” said Angela.

“Ah, you loved him!” Gordon explained.

Angela turned away — she went to the window. Bernard followed her for three seconds with his eyes; then he went on—

“If it were so, I had no reason to suppose it. You have accused me of deceiving you, but I deceived only myself. You say I put you off your guard, but you should rather say you put me on mine. . . .
(1233f)

Under the impact of Gordon’s delusions, Angela is pressed to confess that Siena for herself was significant in a way similar to Bernard’s recognition that his love started there. What comes to light here, to the surface of communication, is the subterranean strand at work for the extension of the whole novel. The story turns back to its beginnings, it makes its memory explicit, under the pressure of the loyalty conflict between love and friendship. It is only after Gordon cannot understand her explanations that Angela resorts to the abovesaid plot of reconciliation – of letting Gordon feel that he is bored with her and of keeping Captain Lovelace off Blanche (Bernard meets him in London). Bernard’s return to Paris is a repetition of his first marching in, now to seal the love and the story by marriage.

The concluding Paris episode, then, stands under the sign of Siena. The prologue, which had been the subject of repression, of avoidance, of exclusion, is reintegrated into the story at its end, in acknowledgement of being its beginning. The form of the acknowledgement, in dialogues of explanation, interpretation, even defense, is one of bringing to consciousness and to common agreement. That is, bringing into communication of what had been on the level of the unspoken, the unconscious, before. In the narrative, then, the meaning of Siena, as the place of unconscious love, is transformed in the discourse of confession into the origin of self-conscious love. Siena is a topic in the introductory talk with Mrs. Vivian when Bernard makes his first visit in their Paris apartment (“‘We don’t mind about Siena now’” (1182)), and it is Siena, which signifies the end to Gordon’s legitimacy of claims to Angela (see dialogue above), that ends up as the measure of happiness that Angela’s plot tries to achieve with her plot for Gordon and Blanche, as well. One can see Angela’s love midwifery in a different light: it is as the removal of the final misinterpretation of Siena, as base of Gordon’s mistrusting supposition of a plot, that Angela tries to bring Gordon back into his right mind, and recognize his love for Blanche.

The return to the beginning is, of course, one way to formally round off the end of a story. The difference between beginning and end in the way the place serves as referent of love signifies the kind of the process that the narrative establishes: it is a coming to consciousness. The means to achieve consciousness are not only by interpretation, but by communication. The interpretations of the protagonist of his own situation are frequently characterized as not too consequent. In that respect, the communication between Angela and Bernard is a privileged communication: it is both self-reflective and honest; it is self-reflective in the sense that it plays with pragmatic roles of speech acts as such, but also in that it represents in that play the inconsequence of their positions, the gap that later becomes filled with the direct address of their (love) relations, signifying honesty. It is this play around the “hot” issue which is highly ambivalent and as such only recognizable by supplementary devices, of which the prime one is the use of place. The privileged status of the place becomes obvious in its placement as a symbol of the main characters’ love in the above dialogue. As symbol, Siena refers to the function of the Romantic place as signifier of the unconscious love.

3.3 Conclusion: Love and Place

The difference of the two texts analyzed may now be put more poignantly. Whereas in “Travelling Companions” the place is referred to in its effects only discursively, the very mechanisms referred to in the discourse – most notoriously the function of coloring the world view, thematized in mistaking for love the aesthetic immersion in the sight – are put into service of the narrative strategy in *Confidence* as a device for creating the sense of a love that is present unconsciously.

The story in *Confidence* can then apply itself to the coming to consciousness and communication of love and its realization. The realization of love in *Confidence* is staged as the mutual recognition of two individuals, and “consciousness” is just what characterizes these individuals. The place is used at the interface of consciousness and unconsciousness, as the repository from where unconscious “facts” can arise. That use of place takes account of the individuality of the characters, which is thus defined as comprising unconscious and conscious motivations; communication is established as the “telos” of the intimate relationship. The reader, in this game, is made to experience the unconscious force of love, in that the place offers semantic connotations of love (based on individuality) that emerge in the divergence of the characters’ interpretation of their situation and the narrative suggestions of their meaning; these are recovered in the course of the narrative in the communication between the lovers, reinterpreting the situations. The place in these confessional interpretations serves as a mark in the memory of the individuals as well as vessel of semantic meaning. For instance, in the dialogue from *Confidence* quoted on page 119, the double function of Siena as biographic marker and vessel of a specific meaning is indicated by the “brightness” in Bernard’s reinterpretation which causes a blindness to the further implications of the confessional speech act. It is

this blindness on the insight that highlights the momentary experience of Romantic love, as well as its foundation in the World view of the Other.³⁸

It is one characteristic of love stories that they thematize love in relation to society as a moment of initiation. In “Travelling Companions”, the initiation is completely imaginary, that is, an imaginary identification with the cultural values which are dispersed in art, sight, and woman, and that come together in the end in an imaginary fusion of all and the subject of the imagination, the first-person narrator. In *Confidence*, the initiation is staged as a coming to consciousness by a new quality in communication, as the possibility of finding in the other the equivalent to one’s own individuality. The place, as a mark in one’s retrospective reinterpretation of the story of love, becomes metonymical for the change love marks in one’s life. The place connotes a significant experience whose meaning is only accessible to retrospective reflection.

The place is selected by a mark that indicates the possibility of biographically significant experience. It seems, then, that the level of biography, or autobiography, determines the significance of the place. We will proceed to further investigate this relation in the analysis of *The Ambassadors* as a paradigmatic instance of inspection, retrospection, and projection.

38. As a side-note, one may view touristic destinations of honeymooning, such as Niagara Falls, as the concurrence of the two experiential frames of love and the aesthetic: experiencing the sublime (which “blinds” one to the world) and experiencing love as the immersion in the Other; in the honeymooning destination they promise to intensify and, possibly, stabilize each other in mutual reference. For Niagara, see ROB SHIELDS, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*, London/New York: Routledge, 1990; ELIZABETH MCKINSEY, *Niagara Falls: Icon of the American Sublime*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.