
In a chapter of his marvelous 1983 book *A Stroll with William James* entitled "The Reign of William and Henry" Jacques Barzun opens the subject of William and Henry James's common intellectual character. But it has taken Sharon Cameron's new book, *Thinking in Henry James*, to allow us to see the deep identity in these two brother's depictions of human consciousness. Unlike Barzun, who looks primarily at William and Henry James as revealed in their letters, Cameron works from the novels of Henry James (and when appropriate, from the *Psychology* and *Essays in Radical Empiricism* of William James). Cameron finds a world familiar to students of William's radical empiricism in these novels, containing separate yet not clearly delimited selves, whose interminglings of perception and understanding provide much of the drama in *What Maisie Knew*, *The Golden Bowl*, and *The Wings of a Dove*.

Philosophers are not apt to be familiar with the work of Sharon Cameron, who is Professor of English and Humanities at the Johns Hopkins University. Yet students of American philosophy in particular should find food for thought in her several works with a philosophical bent on figures in American literature, among them *Lyric Time* (on Emily Dickinson), *The Corporeal Self* (on Melville and Hawthorne) and *Writing Nature* (on Thoreau). [Reviewed below]. In her new book on Henry James, Cameron argues that thinking, or consciousness, occurs not in isolated selves in James's novels, but "between persons." Her isolation of what is between persons rather than contained entirely within them makes James's novels seem to be built on the very fact on which William James constructs radical empiricism: that "the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience . . . [as] the things themselves."

Consider, for example, the following passage from *What Maisie Knew*, in which Maisie's father replies after Maisie asks what her mother, from whom he is separated, is "about":

"Oh you know!" There was something in the way he said it that made, between them, more of an equality than she has yet imagined; but it had also more the effect of raising her up than of letting him down, and what it did with her was shown by the sound of her assent.

"Yes—I know!" What she knew, what she could know is by this time no secret to us: it grew and grew at any rate, the rest of the day, in the air of what he took for granted. It was better that he should do that than attempt to test her knowledge . . . .
What Maisie knew is not entirely clear to the reader, nor to the narrator who retreats from asserting "what she knew" to "what she could know"; but, in any case, we are shown that what Maisie could have known is not purely "in" her. Maisie's knowledge, whatever it is, grows "in the air of what [her father] took for granted." Her knowledge cannot be extricated from the environment of his belief.

The unstable and uncertain placement of Maisie's knowledge does not entail that Henry James is being imprecise, but rather that he labors to capture precisely the vaguenesses and fluidities of our everyday understanding—as his brother William labored in the Psychology to reinstate "the vague to its proper place in our mental life." Henry James makes this task explicit in the Preface to Maisie when he writes: "The great thing is indeed that the muddled state too is one of the very sharpest of the realities, that it also has colour and form and character" (64).

The relations between William and Henry James exposed in Cameron's book furnish just one reason why it should be of interest to a philosopher. (And I do have some reservations about her treatment of William James, who she seems to think is a reductive materialist (81); Cameron in fact takes most of her phenomenology from Husserl.) Thinking in Henry James also sets forth original and persuasive theses about language in James's novels. Speaking, Cameron shows, is sometimes divorced from meaning, used to obscure the dynamics of conversational understanding, as in the repeated exchange in The Golden Bowl between Maggie Verver and her father Adam. "Charlotte's great," they say to each other, precisely as a means of agreeing not to discuss the way Charlotte has let them down, nor their resolve not to let her betrayal unbalance their lives.

Two related theses emerge from this example. The first is that thought rather than speech is the domain of significance in the James novels. As Cameron puts it, "thought become the medium in which meaning is made audible, and speech the medium in which it is blocked" (96). This claim, so striking on its face, becomes all the more so as an account of such passages as the following, in which Maggie sees her husband's eyes drawn to the shattered pieces of the golden bowl: "Yes, look, look," she seemed to see him hear her say even while her sounded words were other . . . . Look at the possibility that since I am different there may still be something in it for you . . . ."

The second thesis to emerge from Maggie's and Adam's incantation that "Charlotte is great," is that characters in the novels struggle to control meanings for themselves and others. In the first part of The Golden Bowl, Cameron claims, Maggie "is thought for," while in the second part, "she thinks for Amerigo" (112). Cameron cites in support of this claim a passage from The
Golden Bowl in which Charlotte ends by saying to Amerigo (and implicitly in relation to Maggie) in the shop where they contemplate the golden bowl: "You don't refer; I refer" (91). Charlotte thus takes on the responsibility for the gift, or even for the thought of a gift, in the days before Amerigo marries Maggie Verver. Then, in part 2, after Maggie's access of knowledge about her friend's and her husband's past relations, Maggie comes to control, through such devices as the aforementioned "Charlotte's great" exchange, what not only she but those around her are able to mean. A persuasive example of this control is her refusing Amerigo both the understanding and the sharing of her state of mind after the discovery of the golden bowl. When Fanny Assingham asks Maggie, "'he didn't explain--?'" Maggie replies, "'Explain? Thank god, no! . . . And I didn't either!'". Cameron comments: "Separation is the state that they are represented as sharing. Nothing brings them closer than this moment, when the content of that closeness, envisioned through Maggie's eyes, is the prohibition against it. . . . What is between them is the implicitly agreed upon terms of their isolation" (108).

Cameron's observations, like those of any critic, are to be tested against the texts of the novels, in their ability to open new domains of significance. In this respect, no less than in the elegance and boldness with which they are expressed, Cameron succeeds exquisitely. As philosophers we may want also to ask how well these observations--by Cameron and by James--tell us about the human life that, since Socrates, we have devoted ourselves to examining. On this score too, I believe we shall do well to assimilate Thinking in Henry James.

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The first and longest chapter of Walden, entitled "Economy," is full of talk of business, enterprise, industry, profit, interest, investment and success. Assumed in the conventional success manuals of the day was that material rewards, personal wealth and spiritual development were complementary. Thoreau rose to challenge this belief and to critique the meanings of success which his fellow Americans had "bought."

Neufeldt's The Economist, shows that Thoreau's agenda went beyond challenging and redefining the meanings and images used to recommend a well-lived life. Thoreau's programme sought to "re-