I feel great admiration for Professor Nussbaum's paper. But her choice of topic and her own remarkable discussion of the topic chosen have made a respondent's task almost impossible. Merely to identify the areas of disagreement between us and to show where I stand on them would be inadequate. To present my own interpretation of *The Golden Bowl*, to follow this up with a general theory of the novel, to define the central tasks of moral philosophy, and then to put all this into the service of answering in my own terms the questions that Professor Nussbaum raises would not be feasible. I shall resort to compromise. I shall produce some interpretative remarks about *The Golden Bowl*: I shall relate these as I make them to a highly schematic picture of the novel: I shall then consider, inconclusively, why we might think this relevant to moral philosophy, and in doing so I shall reveal some of my own scepticism about morality. I shall leave unformulated but I hope apparent just where I disagree with Professor Nussbaum and just how much I owe to the example of her paper.

*The Golden Bowl* has four principal characters: Adam Verver, Maggie Verver, the Prince or Amerigo, and Charlotte Stant. By the time the story is in full development, each character is a party to two crucial relations, and each of those two relations pairs that character differently. In the case of each character the name of one relation is marriage, and the other relation is something older in their lives and also possesses some of the intransigence, some of the imperiousness, of the vestigial. Adam Verver and Charlotte Stant are husband and wife, and so are the Prince and Maggie Verver. Adam Verver and Maggie Verver are father and daughter, the Prince and Charlotte Stant are lover and mistress. None of these four relations are ordinary. Both marriages, if not marriages of convenience, are certainly arranged; both extramarital relations are passionate and are conducted with a constant sense of concern for the others upon whom they impinge. So as readers we find ourselves no less often comparing
the two extramarital relations and asking ourselves such questions as, Do they have an equal right to exist? Do they impose equal obligations on those whom they relate? Do they constitute equal threats to the marriages in which the parties to them are involved?

These are important questions, they are moral questions, and in life they are not always squarely faced. James obviously intends us to ponder them, and the text of The Golden Bowl contains two general ways of delivering an answer to them. There is the conventional answer and there is the worldly answer. The conventional answer is given by Fanny Assingham to her husband as they sit up talking after the Foreign Office ball. There is no parity between the two extramarital relations: they do not pose equal threats to marriage because, whereas one of them aims to be exclusive, the other does not. No one can entertain two “intensities” in his life at one time—say, marriage and a love affair—though an intensity—say, marriage—can be combined with an attachment to a parent or brother. The worldly answer is offered by the Prince and Charlotte between them to Fanny Assingham at the ball itself, and it is in effect a plea for less certainty. In their case at least, what passes between them does not threaten their marriages. It arises out of, rather than contributes to, such deficiencies as their marriages might have, and in both cases these deficiencies are due to the attachment of father and daughter.

But whatever refinement the answers to these questions receive, such answers can’t constitute the contribution that specifically a novel is expected to make to moral philosophy. Why? Because these are simply responses to the story of the novel, and we respond to any story that we are told, and our capacity to do so reveals only the degree to which human nature is reactive to the world. A novel tells a story, certainly, but it tells it in a particular kind of way. It tells it, by and large, sequentially, and the telling of it is relatively dense; and it looks as though we should confine ourselves to those responses which take into account how the story is told. Siding with Fanny Assingham or siding with the Prince and Charlotte about the compatibility or otherwise of a marriage and a love affair isn’t obviously doing this. We need, in other words, to transcend the view of the novel as Story and pass on to a view of the novel as Narrative.

What are the consequences of this shift of attention? Briefly these: That the novel tells its story as it does means that there is a natural assimilation of the stories that novels tell to those more primitive stories that we, idly and less idly, tell ourselves, and a feature of phantasy is that, as we tell it to ourselves, our viewpoint changes: we identify now with one character, now with another, now with something impersonal that lies outside all characters. Accordingly, the
novel as Narrative is similarly able to recruit identification in the reading of the text, and it therefore seems that the only responses that we should take account of are those which have been enriched in this way. They are responses to the story which draw upon imaginative activity, and since imaginative activity, and specifically the ease or difficulty with which we effect identifications, is one way in which we gain knowledge of ourselves, we may think, that in responding to the novel as Narrative, some part of what I just now described as our reaction to the world gets converted into a reaction to some part of ourselves. That being so, response to Narrative seems more valuable or more profound than mere response to Story.

If we now turn to consider The Golden Bowl as narrative, we see that the narrative falls into two halves. In the first half the characters move into position, and the situation which I equated with the story in its full development is established. The turning or halfway point in the narrative is marked by Maggie's perception of the situation, which is the pagoda in the garden of her life. She doesn't like what she has been trying so hard not to see, and the second half of the narrative recounts her attempt to dismantle the situation. She seeks to repossess her husband: to do so she must separate him from his mistress: and she is prepared to do this even if it means, as it certainly does, that she must separate herself from her father.

Now if we apply what I have said so far about the novel as Narrative to the second half of The Golden Bowl, it looks as though, if we read the text appropriately, or mobilize identification, and are, for instance, concentrating on Maggie's project, which is the central theme of the novel, we shall finish up with an understanding of the project that can be regarded as internal: internal, note, not just in that it takes account of Maggie's mental processes but in that it takes account of how the project appears to all those upon whom it impinges. Suppose we did this, how would the project emerge?—a question that we are asking, let me remind you, as a preliminary to seeing how such an understanding of the project could contribute to moral philosophy.

It is, I think, an adventitious defect of The Golden Bowl that the character of the Prince is presented so prototypically that it is not easy to assume his viewpoint with confidence. He strikes us as amusing, high-spirited, perceptive, sensuous, rather lazy, rather readily dejected, and, if we try to imagine him from within, it is clear that, though he flourished in Charlotte's company, he will, deprived of his mistress, manage to find satisfaction in the simpler, less accommodating, more possessive love of his wife. From the Prince's standpoint Maggie's project is neutral. But when we come to identify with
Charlotte, things start to look very different. For here we have a woman who has sacrificed almost everything for the love of one man. Most recently she has sacrificed peace of mind: before that, she sacrificed freedom: and it began with her sacrificing the man himself. And now she is asked to give up that for which all those sacrifices have been made—she is asked to give up love, and not just his love for her, but her love for him—and for the sake of something which she has been given no particular reason to believe in. If the reader allows his imagination full rein and he identifies with Charlotte to the full, he will experience something like the one moment of anguish that Maggie fails to suppress, which is when she hears the high, quavering voice of Charlotte pointing out the objects in the gallery at Fawns: a cry—as any connoisseur of Maggie will recognize—which breaks out of her at the sight of Charlotte as not merely a woman who has been separated from her lover but a wife who has been relegated to her husband.

But whoever said that in arriving at a deeper assessment of Maggie's conduct, the reader of The Golden Bowl is entitled, let alone expected, to adopt Charlotte's standpoint? If that is what the view of the novel as Narrative authorizes, then it is time that that view in its turn was transcended. For the particular kind of way—as I have called it—in which a novel tells its story requires that any particular novel tell its story in its own particular way, and what we now have to recognize is that these various ways, the ways of particular novels, which are defined by certain specific patterns of changing viewpoints, of shifting identifications, are not just contingent but are essential features of novels. Each novel has its own proper pattern, and what makes that pattern essential to that novel is that it derives from the intention of the novelist. We may think of the novelist as anticipating the reader in the way in which he identifies now with one character, now with another, and the reader who reads the text appropriately must conform to this anticipation. The reader's response to the novel is still enriched by identification, but the identification is now constrained by an intention. We have transcended the view of the novel as Narrative and arrived at the view of the novel as Fiction.

If we now ask what is the justification for this new kind of response—Is it too in its way an enrichment?—we might turn back to The Golden Bowl and ask why James insists that we don't identify with Charlotte in the course of assessing Maggie. Is it simply that he wishes to protect or exculpate his heroine?

I think that we can recognize in this case two distinct motives behind the constraint that James imposes on the reader. The first is superficial, the second less so. The first motive is that, if we do con-
form here to the authorial intention, then our consciousness is to
some degree brought into line with Maggie's, for neither does she
allow herself to adopt Charlotte's viewpoint. Indeed, we might think
that an avoidance of Charlotte's viewpoint—though not necessarily
an avoidance of the question why we are avoiding it—is a prerequisite
of understanding Maggie. But the second motive takes us beyond
this. In reclaiming her husband, Maggie seeks revenge upon his mis-
tress, and the retribution that she exacts is in accord with what we
may think of as the law of primal sadism: the lex talionis. Charlotte's
crime in Maggie's eyes is twofold. Charlotte took something away
from her that belonged to her—that Maggie can right by taking it
back. And Charlotte did so by exploiting Maggie's innocence. She
deprived Maggie of knowledge, she immured her in her ignorance.
To right this, Maggie—with her accomplice, the reclaimed hus-
band—starves Charlotte of knowledge, she stuffs her with ignorance.
"Always not knowing and not knowing" (Bk. II, p. 179) is to be her
fate. And Maggie pursues her revenge by deepening the silence until
finally the distraught Charlotte, mocked by her torturer, hallucinates
triump, and the Prince, in the comfort of his own little prison, pro-
nounces the woman whose company he had once, and not so long
before, preferred to anyone else's, "stupid". Now my contention
would be that the reader who conforms to the authorial intention as
this is realized in the text and voids his mind of any thought of what
is going on in Charlotte's goes beyond concurring with Maggie's con-
sciousness; he recreates in his own mind the very state to which hers
has been reduced by Maggie's stratagem. He repeats the offence, and
in this way he abets the crime. I do not mean by this that James gets
the reader to side with Maggie in her vendetta, in her crusade against
Charlotte. If the reader does this, he is ahead of the text: he would
indeed be ahead of any conceivable text. But what James does do is
so to modify the reader's response that, so long as this modification
holds, the question of sides is to one side. The reader is beyond—or,
some might think, falls short of—morality.

This last point is not, and is not intended to be, decisive against
the thesis of literature as moral philosophy.

For to begin with, I don't think that it can really be Professor Nuss-
baum's thesis that a work, say like The Golden Bowl, just is a text of
moral philosophy. Surely even the truths of moral philosophy that
she has in mind—and she may be right in thinking that the greater
number of truths of moral philosophy are like this—follow from the
text of The Golden Bowl in conjunction with some commentary like
the one that she provides us with. Otherwise she could as well hold
that the supreme text of moral philosophy is life itself. In fact it seems to me that the most powerful considerations for thinking that literature is an essential element in the formulation of moral philosophy also show how crucial it is to have the commentary as well. Let me explain.

Professor Nussbaum's principal reason for thinking that literature is a crucial element in moral philosophy is her view of moral deliberation. Moral deliberation just isn't caught in the simple schemata that some moral philosophy—notably, that of a Kantian persuasion—favours. It is far more complex, and its complexity is well brought out in something like Maggie Verver's project in the second half of The Golden Bowl. Now why I have said that there is nothing in my interpretative remarks about The Golden Bowl that contradicts Professor Nussbaum's claim either in general (about the novel) or in particular (about The Golden Bowl) is that I interpret the fact from which she starts—the complexity of moral reasoning—very differently from the way she does.

I think that the crucial fact here is that morality, being a developmental aspect of the human mind, cannot be sharply or even clearly distinguished from nonmorality—at any rate, in its surface manifestations. Moral philosophers have tried to do this, but they have produced in the process crude idealizations of the phenomenon. For indeed, another aspect of the fact that morality does not clearly separate itself from its psychological environment—indeed, it might not even be all of a piece or continuous—is that morality has a pathological aspect as well as a benign aspect, and it confuses the understanding to separate these two aspects and say that one really belongs to morality and the other doesn't.

This general truth about morality, that it cannot readily be demarcated from nonmorality, along with what I take to be its two consequences—the complexity of moral reasoning and the pathological aspect of morality—strengthen the case, introduced by Professor Nussbaum on only one of these counts, for thinking that literature is essential to moral philosophy, but they also strengthen the case against thinking that literature is moral philosophy. They bring out clearly the requirement of the commentary.

An objection, or a kind of an objection, might be raised if it were maintained that, though the issue of demarcation for morality is grave in life, this is not so in literature. For in literature the distinction becomes clear, and this is just why moral philosophy should appeal to literature. This, however, is a totally different argument, and I see nothing to recommend it.
I have assumed that no one would argue that literature was essential to moral philosophy if he also believed that the reading of literature that moral philosophy required traduced literature or went against its nature. We are talking here, of course, of the novel, and I have produced a schematic account of the novel, three-tiered thus far, at the top of which was the novel viewed as Fiction. Personally I think that this view too needs to be transcended and that we need to come out with a view of the novel as Expression, or one which relates the fiction that the novel presents to the inner processes of the novelist. Unless we do this I do not see how we can justify accepting the authorial constraints on which fiction itself rests. The matter on which I have nothing to say is whether the novel read and responded to as Expression is what moral philosophy needs or is something it cannot make use of. Nor can I hope to persuade you that, as I believe, this matters.

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