DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

Grasping Imaginations:
The Use of Metaphors of Commodification in
Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*

Verfasserin

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1. Introduction

> We know that he was fond of originals, of rarities, of the superior and the exquisite; and now that he had seen Lord Warburton, whom he thought a very fine example of his race and order, he perceived a new attraction in the idea of taking to himself a young lady who had qualified herself to figure in his collection of choice objects by declining so noble a hand. (James 263)[1]

> Isabel's cheek burned when she asked herself if she had really married on a factitious theory, in order to do something finely appreciable with her money. But she was able to answer quickly enough that this was only half the story. It was because a certain ardour took possession of her — a sense of the earnestness of his affection and a delight in his personal qualities. He was better than any one else. This supreme conviction had filled her life for months, and enough of it still remained to prove to her that she could not have done otherwise. The finest — in the sense of being the subtlest — manly organism she had ever known had become her property, and the recognition of her having but to put out her hands and take it had been originally a sort of act of devotion. (James 365)

As the above examples illustrate, the characters in *The Portrait of a Lady* look at other characters with a view to their purposes and their 'value', effectively commodifying them.[2] My analysis will argue that commodification is one of the main themes in *Portrait*, occurring as a concept on several levels of the narrative: in metaphors like the ones above, on the plot level, and as a key concept for the overall meaning of the novel.

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[1] A note about references to examples from novel: Citations from *Portrait* will be given in the format "James page number" in quotations of examples from the narrative itself. Page numbers refer to the Wordsworth edition of the novel (see 5. Bibliography). Where the quotation is taken from the 'Author's Preface' to *Portrait*, this will be noted in the citation.

[2] For existing literature on commodification - or commerce and finance - in *Portrait* see also Gilmore, Holland, and White among others. A survey of their approaches, and the difference to my approach, is included in 2.5.

I will therefore examine the vocabulary of commodification in *Portrait* with a particular focus on its metaphorical uses, and the interplay between metaphors on the discourse and the plot level. My paper will analyse how metaphors of commodification are employed to describe the relations between characters and the characters' views on people — including themselves. I want to show how the text creates a thoroughly materialist outlook on the characters' relationships, and draws attention to this through its striking use of metaphors.

Concerning methodology, this paper will apply concepts from stylistics, narratology, and rhetoric to analyse metaphor as it is used in particular examples, and to examine common features characterising the use of metaphor of commodification in *Portrait* overall.[3] For wide stretches my analysis will be based on close readings of extracts from the text, ranging from sentences to whole scenes, to explore how the text constructs meanings, and how these meanings are communicated to the reader (or how the reader might read meanings into the text). Although there is therefore an emphasis on the interaction between the text and the reader, my approach is not reader-response criticism; instead my analysis tries to account for the experience of reading from a stylistic and rhetorical point of view, focussing on the aesthetics of reading.

The first part of my analysis try to give an impression of the quantity and range of the vocabulary of commodification. For this purpose I will treat the text as a corpus and survey this body of 'data' regarding the the occurrence of vocabulary related to commodification quantitatively to demonstrate its pervasiveness in the text. The section on corpus linguistics will also to show the extent to which metaphor and literal uses of the same vocabulary items coexist in the text, emphasising the seamless integration of the concept of commodification on the literal as well as the metaphorical level, bringing characters to the same level as

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[3] In this paper the term 'rhetoric' is understood in the sense used by Booth, Kearns, and Phelan, among others.

material possessions, whether they be very expensive pieces of art or more mundane objects:

> "A character like that," [Ralph] said to himself — "a real little passionate force to see at play is the finest thing in nature. It's finer than the finest work of art — than a Greek bas-relief, than a great Titian, than a Gothic cathedral. It's very pleasant to be so well treated where one had least looked for it. I had never been more blue, more bored, than for a week before she came; I had never expected less that anything pleasant would happen. Suddenly I receive a Titian, by the post, to hang on my wall — a Greek bas-relief to stick over my chimney-piece. The key of a beautiful edifice is thrust into my hand, and I'm told to walk in and admire. My poor boy, you've been sadly ungrateful, and now you had better keep very quiet and never grumble again." (James 65)

To get a better understanding of how the metaphors of commodification work on the linguistic level, the analysis will proceed to a closer reading of some examples from a cognitive linguistics perspective. As the last point of the first section, I want to point out how a number of metaphors can be read as representing the text's ambiguous stance towards the concepts of commodification and possession.

The section on narratology will examine possible relations between the use of metaphor and the plot or story level, viewing metaphor as embedded narrative that can be brought into relation with the main narrative or as propositions that the plot of the narrative has to deal with in some form. In addition, my analysis will outline how the use of metaphor in *Portrait* serves to distinguish between the voice of the narrator and that of story characters.

Finally, the chapter on rhetoric will deal with the effects of the use of voice(s) for the perception of character and the interpretation of the meanings of the text. It will also explore the relations between the treatment of commodification, voice, and the open ending of the novel, showing *Portrait* to be a text that denies closure and resists unambiguous interpretation on various levels.

2. Grasping meanings

2.1. Introduction

> "[...] But who's 'quite independent,' and in what sense is the term used? — that point's not yet settled. Does the expression apply more particularly to the young lady my mother has adopted, or does it characterise her sisters equally? — and is it used in a moral or in a financial sense? Does it mean that they've been left well off, or that they wish to be under no obligations? or does it simply mean that they're fond of their own way?" (James 24)

One of the central issues in this section will be to examine how the literary or thematic meanings of *Portrait* might be constructed linguistically and can be explained with reference to linguistic models of how meaning is made from imagery, patterning of the textual surface and other textual phenomena by readers; or in other words which textual phenomena can be adduced to explain what readers read into (literary) texts — in this particular case what some critics and myself have read into the use of a particular category of metaphors James uses in *Portrait*.[4]

One of the concepts at the core of my analysis is 'foregrounding' (see Douthwaite *Towards a linguistic theory of foregrounding*). This chapter will discuss the role of foregrounding effects in drawing the reader's attention to particular linguistic features of a text in the first place, and using corpus linguistics methods, my analysis will try to show the extent to which the foregrounded terms relating to commodification are used in *Portrait*. Then, in a closer reading of an example from the beginning of the novel, I will try to show how the text draws the reader's attention to the *figurative* usage of the language of commodification. The last

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[4] In *Practical Stylistics* Widdowson states that there are no correct readings of poetry, and different readers will read different meanings into texts in accordance with their linguistic and literary knowledge (59). This, I would argue, also holds true for literary prose texts. The following reading therefore is not a definitive 'exegesis' of *Portrait*, but an interpretation based on textual evidence, which, however, could be interpreted in a myriad of other ways.

part of this chapter will be concerned with how the text represents the pervasive notion of commodification, which structures the characters' motivations for action and extends to the way personal relations and people are seen in the text. It will be argued that the text represents commodification as an ambiguous concept and that some of the processes of acquisition and possession in the text might not be as straightforward as they appear to be. The stylistic analysis of *Portrait* thus tries to establish connections between the linguistic patterning of the text and the 'overall' meanings of it.

For this reason, in addition to analysing foregrounding effects, such as repetition and deviation, the idea that linguistic signs can represent literary meanings (or offer readers opportunities to read meanings into the text) plays an important role in this section. For linguistic signs to represent literary meanings means that the way in which they are chosen and arranged into a text is taken to be meaningful beyond the purely semantic meaning that these words or linguistic forms carry. Like a tapestry a text has a particular "texture", i.e. a patterning, by virtue of the way in which the linguistic forms that constitute it are selected and stitched together:

> The novel unfolds in our memories like a piece of cloth woven upon a loom, and the more complicated the pattern the more difficult and protracted will be the process of perceiving it. But that is what we seek, the pattern: some significantly recurring thread which, however deeply hidden in the dense texture and brilliance of local colouring, accounts for our impression of a unique identity in the whole. (Lodge 85)

The 'texture' could for instance be shaped by the fact that a text does not use adjectives to modify any of its nouns. This repetition on the structural level creates a pattern, which Douthwaite refers to as 'parallelism' (181-183). Textual patterns like this are significant in themselves, but they become especially conspicuous when they are broken, that is to say when a 'deviation' occurs (Douthwaite 179, Leech and Short 44-45). This would, for example, be the case when there suddenly is an adjective modifying a noun, drawing attention to itself by breaking the pattern of unmodified nouns and thereby acquiring special significance.

Phenomena of parallelism and deviation, which contribute to creating the texture of a text, are usually assumed to be motivated choices (Douthwaite 153, 178) and therefore patterns and deviations create a 'conversational implicature'. The term 'conversational implicature' is used by Grice (45, 49) to denote the pragmatic effect created by flouting the conventions of 'normal' conversational behaviour, provided that the deviation from the idealised rules he suggests is assumed to be meaningful. As already stated above, foregrounding – including parallelism and deviation– can be understood as an instance of meaningfully flouting conversational principles, such as the principles (or 'maxims') of quantity and quality, to create meaning (Douthwaite 75-76, Grice 47, 52-53).

2.2. Foregrounding through parallelism and deviation

The language of *Portrait* shows a quantitatively remarkable number of terms from the semantic field of possession, commodification, and finance (see 1.6. Table 1, below). This includes words and phrases such as *collector*, *interest*, *property*, *precious*, *valuable* and *take hold of something*. Although many of the terms used in *Portrait* by themselves are not especially frequent and might occur less than ten times in the whole of the text, their overall number adds up to a significant body of financial vocabulary. These recurrences contribute to the specific "aesthetic emphasis" (Ho 6) of *Portrait* and will be shown to be involved in shaping the meanings that can be read from the text (or more precisely those meanings that some readers, including several critics and myself, have read *into* the text and that other readers might also perceive (see Widdowson 59, above)).

In her article about keywords and frequent phrases in *Pride and Prejudice* Fischer-Starcke states that 'keywords', i.e. groups of especially frequently used words from a particular semantic field, are important for the text's meaning and as well as its structure, indicating the "'aboutness' of the data" (495-496). This approach assumes that there is

a relation between frequency and salience in linguistic data, and more specifically in data from literary texts (Fischer-Starcke 494).

Quantitative conspicuousness can be said to have a 'foregrounding' effect (Douthwaite 153), insofar as the sheer number of occurrences of words which are semantically or schematically related makes them noticeable as a violation of Grice's maxim of quantity (Grice 52) and this will likely attract the attention of the reader. But, as Douthwaite (153) points out, frequency alone is not enough to foreground a linguistic feature of a text and make it psychologically salient to the reader (see also Leech and Short 40-41). To qualify as 'foregrounding' there has to be a recognisable purpose, i.e. a motivation, to the repetition of a textual feature for it to have an appreciable effect or implicature (Douthwaite 153). For this reason Douthwaite refers to foregrounding as "motivated prominence" (178).

What, then, is it that makes specific features of a text stand out, stand in the foreground? Douthwaite (178) points out two "global techniques" of foregrounding, namely deviation and parallelism. As already mentioned above, a 'deviation' takes place when the text departs from some assumed (linguistic) expectation that its readers might have. In doing so, the text can draw the attention of the reader to particular phenomena, which is to say it foregrounds certain things over other things. Regarding the 'expectations' that are violated, Douthwaite (155) and Short and Leech (44) distinguish primary and secondary norms. Primary norms are fairly general assumptions about language in general, such as the reader's knowledge about 'standard' unmarked sentence structure (Short and Leech 44). Secondary norms are those created by the text itself, such as the use of a particular metre or rhyme scheme in a poem, and may apply to the whole text or a particular section of it (Douthwaite 155). Once such a regular pattern has been established, any departure from it may be noticed as potentially meaningful deviation by the reader.

'Parallelism', the second technique of foregrounding, can itself be seen as a kind of deviation, since an accumulation of similar phenomena deviates from the expectation that there be no redundant information in a (prose) text (Douthwaite 181). The assumption that an utterance or a text should give no more (and no less information) than necessary has also been formulated in Grice's maxim of quantity (47). Concerning the ways in which linguistic features can be repeated, repetitions can occur verbatim as the repetition of one particular word or phrase, which does not happen very often (Douthwaite 181).[5] The more frequent kinds of repetition are non-literal ones, which could consist, for instance, of the repetition of an abstract structure, such as metre in poetry or parallel syntactic sentence structures (Douthwaite 181). Non-literal repetition therefore also includes semantically or schematically related words occurring with a high frequency.

I want to suggest that the foregrounding of the vocabulary of commodification in *Portrait* is achieved through high frequency of use, parallel literal and metaphorical use of the same expressions, and above all its use in contexts where it may not necessarily be expected. The data thus falls into both of Douthwaite's categories of foregrounding effects simultaneously: on the one hand, individual words are repeated verbatim and in addition other semantically or schematically related words occur throughout the text, constituting what Douthwaite refers to as 'parallelism'. On the other hand, the vocabulary of commodification is used both literally and metaphorically, so that not only are there bankers and collectors in the story, but many things that might not necessarily be conceived of in economic terms, such as love and marriage, are described in terms of collecting and owning property. This can be seen as a case of foregrounding through deviation, i.e. a deviation from primary norms: readers might not expect such an accumulation of vocabulary referring to commodification in a novel, and most of all they might not expect it to be applied to describe relationships.

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[5] This could lead to the speculation that verbatim repetitions, such as the ones in *Portrait*, should be all the more noticeable.

As soon as this special use of language has been recognised as systematic deviation, it can become a secondary norm; the reader has been primed to see people and relations through the framework of commodification that the text has established. This opens up the opportunity for deviations from the secondary norm, representing more subtle points about how the text portrays the concept of commodification and the stances of the characters towards commodification (see 2.8. Representing ambiguity). The parallel literal and metaphorical use of expressions related to the notion of commodification thus adds to its significance and gives it more prominence as well as depth, since considerable parts of the story world are seen through an economic 'lens', shaping the way characters and plot are conceived of and read.

2.3. Foregrounding in *Portrait*

As indicated above, the reader's attention is first drawn to the metaphors of commodification by the unexpectedness of the way in which they are used, namely applying words and phrases related to business and commodification to humans and human relationships, thereby violating a primary norm of how language might be expected to be used. This violation, however, quickly becomes the norm within the novel, so that the reader is apt to read any terms relating to commerce, finance, or possession as potentially metaphorical. This enriches the meanings that can be carried by the text and invites interpretation.

Another factor in making metaphors of commodification uncomfortably noticeable has perhaps to do with conventional uses of expressions of endearment, i.e. primary norms, which also frequently use terms that have a financial or economic sense, such as *dear* or *precious*, though they lack the coldly calculating capitalist ring and the transgressive or coercive sense that many of these expressions convey in

Portrait.[6] On the one hand the way language is used in *Portrait* might be seen as extending from conventional uses of language, but the metaphors in the novel focus on and foreground less conventional implications of thinking about people in terms of precious commodities (or cheap ones), going far beyond what might be called conventional use of language.

Portrait is peopled with characters that are defined by their material possessions and wealth (or lack thereof): Lord Warburton, the rich aristocrat, Mr. Touchett, the retired banker living in a manor house, his son Ralph Touchett, the heir, Isabel, the heiress, Osmond, the collector of rare objects (and fortune hunter), and so on. Furthermore, many of the most important twists of the plot involve the transfer of possessions: Isabel inheriting a fortune after her uncle's death, and her marriage to Mr. Osmond because he is interested in her fortune. Against this background even relatively conventional terms of endearment, such as *precious* take on a distinctly mercenary ring, especially when the adjective is alternately used to describe objects and people, creating a commodifying outlook on that pervades the world of the story.

The example I subject to a close(r) reading in this section is the phrases *to take hold of something or someone.* This examples left a particularly vivid impression on reading *Portrait.* One of the reasons for this might be that it occurs relatively early in the text — in the first chapter when readers still have to orientate themselves with regard to the story world and the kind of plot or story they can expect — and it seems to appear abruptly somewhat 'out of the blue' (more on this below). An additional factor that makes it particularly noticeable is the fact that as a verb, *take hold* denotes actions as opposed to states — like nouns — or

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[6] For the various meanings of *dear, precious* see *Oxford English Dictionary* ("dear, adj.1, n.2, and int."; "precious, adj., adv., and n."). Both entries seem to suggest that the meanings relating to material value and to emotional value appear to have developed in parallel, indicating a cultural convention to express emotional attachment in terms of material value. This is reflected in the fact that Goatly categorises the metaphor AFFECTION = MONEY/WEALTH as a root analogy (48). He also proposes that this relation is reversible (ibid.)

attributes – like adjectives (cf Collins and Hollo 30-31). Furthermore, *to take hold* or other examples like *to do something with someone* as 'action' verbs, as opposed to 'state' verbs or verbs of perception and cognition, foreground the aspect of activity (Collins and Hollo 31). In some ways these metaphorical uses of the language of commodification seem even more violent in their nature than other instances because they describe active processes involving (explicitly or implicitly) agents and patients, showing who does what to whom, or who commodifies who and thereby who tries to exercise power over whom. People are therefore not only *conceptualised* as commodities, sharing characteristics with objects, they are also *treated* (or imagined to be treated) and used like objects.

To take hold of something or *someone*, incidentally, is also the first instance of a blatantly metaphorical use of commodifying expressions in the text of the novel. The first chapter of *Portrait* begins with a tranquil description of an afternoon tea at Mr. Touchett's country-house. It describes Mr. Touchett as a retired banker and gives an account of how he came to be in possession of the house (James 18-19). There is therefore a series of literal references to possession(s) and economics: a *great bargain*, *the successive owners*, *a luxurious interior* (ibid.). In addition, the very setting of the scene suggests an atmosphere of wealth and privilege; the fact that the house has "a name and a history" which goes back to the period of Edward the Sixth (James 18), the ritual of leisurely taking of tea in the garden and the dimensions of the garden that extend from a little hill to the River Thames convey a sense of prosperity and exclusiveness. The dialogue (James 20ff) that follows the initial description of the house and the three characters in the scene fits comfortably into this sedate scene of aristocratic languor, keeping up a light tone even when the conversation touches on presumably difficult subjects, like Mr. Touchett and Ralph's failing health and Lord Warburton's ennui with his privileged lifestyle (James 21). There is also some banter between Mr. Touchett and Lord Warburton revolving around their possessions:

> [Mr. Touchett:] "[...] [A]ll you young men are too idle. You think too much of your pleasure. You're too fastidious, and too indolent, and *too rich*."
> "Oh, I say," cried Lord Warburton, "you're hardly the person to accuse a fellow-creature of being *too rich*!"
> "Do you mean because I'm *a banker*?" asked the old man.
> "Because of that, if you like; and because you have — haven't you? — *such unlimited means*."
> "He isn't very *rich*," the other young man mercifully pleaded. "He has given away an immense deal of *money*."
> "Well, I suppose it was his own," said Lord Warburton; "and in that case could there be a better proof of *wealth*? [...]" (James 22, my italics)

It could be said that the conversation thus jocularly turns the attention towards material possessions and commodification as a problem and thereby introduces one of the major themes of the text. What makes this part of the conversation truly remarkably is, however, how the theme of possession is developed in the subsequent exchanges:

> "I'm very sure there will be great changes, and that all sorts of queer things will happen. That's why I find so much difficulty in applying your advice; you know you told me the other day that I ought to 'take hold' of something. One hesitates to take hold of a thing that may the next moment be knocked sky-high."
> "You ought to take hold of a pretty woman," said his companion. "He's trying hard to fall in love," he added, by way of explanation, to his father. (James 22-23)

As pointed out above, introducing the theme of relationships or love against a background of talk about business emphasises transgressive aspects of the conventional metaphor LOVE IS POSSESSION.[7] Accordingly, this example of the metaphor can probably be safely categorised as an unusual instantiation of the conventional conceptual metaphor relating love to possession, making it conspicuous.

The phrase is further foregrounded due to the fact that Lord Warburton quotes Mr. Touchett verbatim from a previous conversation, drawing attention to the bit of language he chooses to repeat, which in print is also foregrounded visually, being put in quotation marks, and making it somewhat mysterious to the reader because it is not entirely

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[7] Compare to the remarks on conventional terms of endearment above. For more on conceptual metaphors see 2.7.

clear what Lord Warburton refers to since the conversation in which the phrase apparently was first brought up is not otherwise directly referred to. To understand or infer what is being talked about the reader has to put in more interpretative work than for much of the rest of the conversation and this – together with the graphological highlighting in quotation marks – makes the expression stand out; the cluster *take hold* is thus foregrounded and made salient for the reader. In addition, the phrase is repeated and overall occurs three times in this scene (and several times later in the text, for more on the repetition of this phrase, see section on narratology).

2.4. Corpus linguistics methods and potential problems

To methodically analyse the body of semantically related expressions in *Portrait*, which occur repeatedly throughout the text, like the example above, they first have to be identified in the text and then collated. This body of words and phrases subsequently can be examined in terms of (dis-) similarities and other features. Corpus linguistics therefore is particularly suitable as a method of (more or less) systematically extracting all examples of a particular pattern, and of compiling them for further analysis.

While instances of verbatim repetition lend themselves to be analysed or at least extracted with corpus linguistics methods (see below), cases of non-literal repetition and the distinction between literal and figurative uses of words have to be examined in close readings. The significance of commodification and its meanings in *Portrait* therefore have to be analysed both from a qualitative and from a qualitative point of view. The following part of this paper will deal with quantitative aspects of the financial vocabulary in *Portrait*, while subsequent sections will focus on more qualitative features of the its use and the implications this has for narratological and rhetorical issues.

Regarding the method of corpus linguistics as such, corpus linguistics works with machine-readable, i.e. digitalised, texts, which are searched them for specific linguistic features with the help of tools

called 'concordancers', such as WordSmith or AntConc.[8] These tools allow systematic searches to extract all occurrences of, for instance, particular words or phrases, such as *property*, and produce a list of all examples showing the immediate linguistic context in which they occur. This enables the researcher to identify common patterns in the use of the linguistic feature analysed. Commonly investigated types of 'linguistic patterns' include for instance collocations, semantic prosody, and syntactic particularities of usage.[9]

The uses of corpus linguistics as a method for analyses of literary texts are the following ones: with the aid of corpus linguistics quantitatively 'significant' textual features can be retrieved, and in this way it can give insights into what the text is about based on recurring vocabulary items.[10] Thus, corpus linguistics can support intuitions about the themes of a text or can reveal themes that might have been not consciously noticed by the reader, but nevertheless could influence his or her interpretation of the text (see also Fischer-Starcke above). In addition, the precise way in which these words are used can be used to make inferences about how the themes of a text are connected, what perspective the text tries to establish about them, and therefore how the wording of the text might give readers the opportunity to read particular meanings into the text. Trying to get to the core of the meanings conveyed by the use of the vocabulary of commodification in *Portrait* is a task that will be begun in this section but which carries over into the sections on narratology and rhetoric.

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[8] WordSmith Tools http://www.lexically.net/wordsmith/
AntConc http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html

[9] For overviews of corpus linguistics as a method see for example Mc Enery and Wilson or Biber, Conrad & Reppen.

[10] See Fischer-Starcke. However, given that frequency alone is not a criterion for psychological salience in a text, this analysis will dispense with calculating whether the number of occurrences of a token is *statistically* significant. Doing such calculations is, however, common practice for other kinds of analyses in corpus linguistics.

Regarding potential problems with applying corpus linguistics methods in my analysis, efficient though this approach may be, there are several problems when analysing groups of semantically related terms (see Ho). Firstly, either an a priori list of relevant terms is needed, derived from reading the text and 'manually' selecting items. In this case the limitation of the analysis will be the inherently 'flawed' perspective of the researcher who has to rely on his or her intuition and perceptiveness. While the material thus extracted from a corpus may be perfectly adequate to underline the points one wishes to make, it could also be argued that this approach is intrinsically biased and will in all likelihood not produce all of the items in the text that belong to the semantic field in question. On the other hand, there is not automatic method of sifting through the text for tokens from an essentially open and fuzzy category like a semantic field, domain, or a schema.

As a supporter of quantitatively driven analyses Fischer-Starcke argues that 'keywords', which allow conclusions about the main themes of a text, "cannot be identified intuitively" (496). It may indeed be true that critics relying on their (fallible) intuitions might not be able to correctly identify the most *frequent* semantically meaningful words of a text. However, *psychological* salience of particular textual features is, as already mentioned, not only a function of frequency, but involves other strategies of foregrounding as well (see above 1.2, 1.3). As Fischer-Starcke (496) also remarks, the 'aboutness' of a text is represented in the data by groups of semantically related words, which contain keywords, i.e. the most frequent tokens. While critics may not be able to intuitively identify the most frequent item, the probability to recognise frequent usage of terms from a particular semantic field should be much higher and this should be sufficient for the present purposes. Lodge, too, states that the "significance of repetition is not to be determined statistically", but that once a recurring textual feature has been identified as significant, it may be useful to do a (computer-aided) corpus search (90).

In addition, my own intuitions found support in the work of other critics (Gilmore, Holland, White), who had the same intuition about the importance of terms relating to commodification in *Portrait*.[11] Furthermore, Ho points out that corpus stylistics and intuition-based approaches are not irreconcilable, and that to analyse literary texts comprehensively, corpus linguistics methods should not be applied indiscriminately without taking into account readers' intuitions about a text (11).

Aside from the selection of data to be analysed, another problematic issue with corpus methods is the distinction between literal and non-literal, i.e. figurative or metaphorical, uses of certain expressions. It is hard to conceive of an automatic method to reliably isolate metaphorical from literal uses of language. Therefore, again, the researcher is reliant on his or her own judgement (cf Ho 10). To exacerbate the problem, there is an ongoing debate whether or not it is even possible or appropriate to always try to separate literal and from metaphorical expressions, since many recent approaches to metaphor suggest that metaphoricity operates on a continuum with definitely literal and metaphorical expressions being the two extremes on the scale with many degrees of metaphoricity in between (Goatly 38, Ho 157). Ho states that "a large number of examples may appear to be neither entirely metaphorical nor wholly non-metaphorical but are either indeterminate or seem to exist somewhere between the two poles" (158). James and literature being what they are, there might therefore potentially be expressions in the text that can be taken to have both literal and non-literal meanings at the same time.

Nevertheless, many instances are relatively unambiguously literal uses of language, with concrete referents in the story, such as for example: "[...] she had been concealed behind one of the valuable curtains of time-softened damask" (James 441), where *valuable* is used in a literal

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[11] For other analyses relating to commerce, property, and related topics in *Portrait*, and as themes in James's work in general see also Adams, Sánchez-Pardo González, and Sanner, Kristin.

sense, meaning that the curtains are made from expensive fabric, whereas in the following example *valuable* is used in a metaphorically:

Then she wondered if it were vain and stupid to think so well of herself. When had it even been a guarantee to be valuable? Wasn't all history full of the destruction of precious things? Wasn't it much more probable that if one were fine one would suffer? (James 475)

Provided that the number of tokens found in the text does not exceed a certain limit, it is therefore not too difficult to separate those instances that are very likely not open to interpretation as metaphorical expressions from those which might be metaphorical and then to have a closer look at the examples that appear doubtful. And this is indeed the method that is used in my analysis.

2.5. Selection of data for analysis

The words and phrases selected for retrieval with corpus linguistics methods and subsequently for further examination are partially my own examples where they seemed relevant or interesting, but the bulk of them is taken from two articles (Gilmore, White) and a book (Holland) on the topic of financial vocabulary in James and more specifically in *Portrait*. What all these analyses have in common is that they are examples of what could probably be categorised as purely 'intuition-based' approaches (as opposed to quantitative or mixed analyses, see above). They all operate on the a priori assumption that the vocabulary of commodification is meaningful for an interpretation of *Portrait*, whether the analysis in question be about James's relation to the text, the evaluation of characters, or the portrayal of marriage in *Portrait*. In the following section I will briefly summarise the approaches of each of the three analyses towards expressions related to finance, commodification, or commerce and point out which examples from the respective analyses have been included in my own analysis.

Holland's book *The Expense of Vision* is chronologically the first of the three sources. In his chapter on *Portrait*, he focuses on what he refers to as "one of James's most congenial vocabularies, the language of

commerce" (7). He analyses the diction of the preface to the collected edition of James's works, where James frequently uses terms of commerce to describe his writing process (Holland 6). James, for instance, states that he "waked up one morning in possession" of his characters (James, *"Author's Preface"* 12). Holland identifies a whole host of other similar expressions — apart from *possession* — such as *business*, *agents*, *contract*, and *grasp*, which are all used metaphorically in the preface (6-15). Holland also discusses the importance of the concepts of commerce and possession for the plot of the novel, and their relation to the text's notion of marriage (28-42). As with the text of the preface, he draws attention to the fact that the language of the novel itself is rich in expressions of commerce, including again *possession* and *grasp* (Holland 51, 54).

My second source is an article by Gilmore. In "The Commodity World of *The Portrait of a Lady*" Gilmore remarks on James's tendency to blend "aesthetic and pecuniary motives" in the text of *Portrait* as well as in his texts about his work, such as in the introductions to his novels (53). James refers to characters from his novels as precious objects, just like the characters in the text treat each other as material possessions (Gilmore 54). Gilmore distinguishes two different kinds of metaphorical or figurative expressions that both have the theme of commodification in common (56-57). The first group of metaphors likens people to valuable objects or pieces of art, such as ancient coins, delicate porcelain, or a Titian (Gilmore 56). By contrast, the second type equates characters with comparatively mundane objects, like a yard of calico (Gilmore 57) or other material(s). While the first kind of metaphor foregrounds the economic value of people, the second focuses on people as useful tools for practical purposes and the convenience of others, as pawns in the designs of others (ibid.). This is emphasised in the use of phrases such as *do something with someone* (Gilmore 57) (or in my own example of *take hold of something* or *someone*). Gilmore thinks that this division can also be conceived of in terms of "a split between head and hand" or

the separation of thinking or ideas versus physical labour, and therefore thinkers and actors (62-64).

Regarding the third source, "The House of Interest [...]", White deals with the use of the word *interest*, which he refers to as a "keyword" in *Portrait* and in James's fiction in general (191).[12] On the face of it, *interest* is mainly used to signify 'curiosity in something' or 'attraction to something' in *Portrait*. However, White suggests that through the pervasive use of financial vocabulary in *Portrait*, and especially the parallel use of terms in a financial as well as an aesthetic sense, words such as *interest* or *figure* simultaneously invoke both meanings so that "the economic context contaminates the aesthetic intention" – even in contexts that normally do not elicit the financial sense of the word (199). Certain terms can therefore take on a 'double meaning' or have multiple references in a text that is shaped by the influence of an abundance of financial vocabulary, with economic meanings semantically invading susceptible words.

Another case of multiple referentiality similar to *interest*, I would suggest, is the word *belong*. Although not as frequent as *interest* (see Table 1 below), it is an example of a word that blends several meanings as a result of the larger context in which it occurs, namely in the atmosphere of objectification and commodification of *Portrait*. The word occurs in the text with two meanings, the second of which has various subgroups, such as the two below:

1. To be the property or possession of someone: "It belongs to my wife" [Mr. Touchett about his wife's shawl] (James 20)

2. To be connected with something in various relations
   2.1. To be a member of a particular group: "Imagine one's belonging to an English class!" [Isabel to Ralph] (James 61)

---

[12] It should be noted that White's usage of the term "keyword" is different from the quantitative outlook proposed by Fischer-Starcke. In White's approach, the term relates to what might be described as psychological or interpretative salience.

> 2.2. To have its place in a particular generation, time: "I
> was born before the French Revolution. Ah, my dear, je
> viens de loin; I belong to the old, old world." (James 175)
> (cf. *Oxford English Dictionary* "belong v.")

Again, it could be argued that the novels' preoccupation with human relations as economic transactions tinges the 'non-economic' meanings of *belong* with financial connotations. This is especially noticeable for the meaning in 2.1 as being part of a (social) group, given that belonging to a social class is connected with the financial status of its members. White's (192, 194) remark that *interest* can also be read as 'class interest' in many cases also ties in with the connection the text forges between finance, class, and human relations. One way the text establishes the theme of commodification linguistically is thus to exploit double meanings of words that can connote financial meanings and to thereby linguistically represent the invasion of economics into the realm of 'human interests'.

Some of the examples cited in the interpretations of *Portrait* mentioned above occur only once in the whole text of the novel and these 'hapax legomena', like *back-shop*, *loan*, *uninteresting*, *invaluable*, *ownership*, or *tool* – although interesting in themselves – have not been considered in this part of my analysis, which focuses on tokens that occur repeatedly.[13] It must however be conceded that this decision is at least partially based on convenience and feasibility. In cases where hapax legomena occur in the textual vicinity of other items discussed in more depth in this analysis, they will be included in the relevant sections that deal with more qualitative aspects of *Portrait*, since although hapax legomena may not seem as significant as other tokens that occur far more frequently, they of course nevertheless contribute to the corpus of vocabulary dealing with the concept of possession and thus are involved in shaping the economic perspective the text takes on people and their relationships.

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[13] According to *A Glossary of Corpus Linguistics*, a hapax legomenon is a word of which there is only one example in a given text ('hapax legomenon' 81).

2.6. Data extracted from Portrait

Token	Raw Frequency
balance	2
belong	22
coin(s)	3
dealer(s)	3
disinterested	7
do something with someone	17
interest	84
interests (n.)	6
interested	50
interesting	50
material(s)	8
owner(s)	7
possessed	10
possession	14
precious	18
price	8
property(ies)	18
proprietor	6
take hold of sth/so	10
treasure	11
use (n.)	58
useful	10
valuable	11
value (n.)	19

Table 1: Raw Frequencies of Examples of Tokens from the Field of Commodification

The table above shows the material selected for further discussion.[14][15] The selection includes nouns, verbs, and adjectives as well as some longer chunks of language in both their literal uses and in the metaphorical ones. All the expressions in Table 1 form part of a network or cloud of related terms, potentially contributing to making meaning. Given that this body of commodifying vocabulary is fairly heterogenous, general observations must needs remain rather abstract at this stage and it will be necessary to examine how they connect.

Although it would be somewhat farfetched to attribute all of the above examples to any particular semantic field without stretching the term beyond its limits, they are connected 'thematically' so to speak, since they all have to do with the text's preoccupation with commodification (or conversely, the amount of thematically related expressions can be taken to represent the text's concern with commodification). 'Commodification' is the most inclusive term, covering best all of the related subgroups of financial vocabulary, vocabulary referring to commerce, arts and precious objects, and those expressions representing people as serviceable items to be used for their own purposes. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *commodification* as "[t]he action of turning something into, or treating something as, a (mere) commodity; commercialization of an activity, etc., that is not by nature commercial."

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[14] A note on the text used for the corpus analysis: The digital text of *Portrait*, like the Wordsworth edition, is based on the version of *Portrait* published in the collected edition of James's works. Although this means that the texts should in principle be identical, there might be slight deviations of one text from the other since they were edited by different editors. For the sake of consistency in my analysis all quotations are therefore taken from the physical book and page numbers refer to the Wordsworth edition of *Portrait*.

[15] All of the examples include both metaphorical and literal uses of the respective types, except for *do something with someone* and *take hold of something or someone*, where the numbers refer to metaphorical uses only, since there were too many completely unrelated — and therefore interfering — uses of the phrases in the data extracted from *Portrait*.

(*OED* "commodification, n."), and this is the process at the core of the metaphorical language discussed here.

The connection between these words is therefore based on world knowledge, knowledge about the economic system of markets – what capitalism is and does – rather than neat linguistic categories. This sprawling complex of associatively related expressions makes the theme of commodification more easily recognisable for the reader, since it 'intrudes' everywhere, but at the same time it cannot be easily contained in neat terminology. Whether a character is referred to as *superior material*, *precious*, or imagined as fulfilling a particular use for another character, the common denominator is that people are seen as objects with a market value. This (capitalist) stance towards other characters is further elaborated and characters are also *used* like material objects, which becomes apparent in expressions such as *do something with someone*.

As already explained in the section on foregrounding in *Portrait*, it is the parallel use of many literal references to economy, finance, and commodification together with an abundance of thematically related metaphors that draws the attention of the reader to the way language is used in *Portrait*, and ultimately allows inferences about how the text portrays interpersonal relations and attitudes through this specific use of language. This applies to situations where the literal references to commerce and finance establish a thematic background for metaphorical uses of the same concept, reinforcing one another, but the parallelism of literal and metaphorical use of language from the same thematic field is even more poignant when the very same expressions are alternately used in literal and metaphorical ways, as is the case with virtually all of the examples in Table 1.

The quantitative distribution between literal and metaphorical uses varies from example to example; in some cases literal uses outnumber figurative ones, while for other examples the reverse is true. Excluding those words that are used with multiple meanings, such as *belong* or

interest, Table 2 gives an overview of the distribution between literal and metaphorical uses of some of the examples presented in Table 1.

example	literal	figurative	ambiguous
coin	1	2	
material	1	4	1
possession	4	10	
precious	4	11	3
price	1	5	
property	10	4	
useful	6	5	
valuable	5	5	

Table 2: Distribution between Literal and Metaphorical Uses

As already mentioned, metaphoricity is a matter of degree (Ho 157); some examples seem "more metaphorical than others" (Goatly 38). This has partially to do with how creative, i.e. unconventional, they are (Goatly 38). The further removed from conventional uses of language, that is from 'primary norms' (see Douthwaite, Leech and Short above) they are, the more interpretative effort on the part of the reader they require, and as a consequence they become more noticeable than other instances of metaphorical language use.

In the following examples, 3. is probably the most conventional and unobtrusive. The next two are closely related to the previous one, but in the context of mercenary machinations of *Portrait*, they might be understood as slightly more transgressive (maybe because they can be read literally and metaphorically). The last example (6.) is probably the most 'literary' or poetic and most obviously 'metaphorical' of the four examples, the effect being supported by other metaphors in close vicinity.

> 3. Did all women have lovers? Did they all lie and even the best have their price? (James 369)
>
> 4. "Why should I, of all women, set such a price on a husband?" (James 236)

> 5.   "I set a great price on my daughter." (James 324)
>
> 6.   She saw, in the crude light of that revelation which had already become a part of experience and to which the very frailty of the vessel in which it had been offered her only gave an intrinsic price, the dry staring fact that she had been an applied handled hung-up tool, as senseless and convenient as mere shaped wood and iron. (James 468)

In addition, some expressions can be read in a literal and non-literal way at the same time, blurring the boundary between the literal and the metaphorical (see also examples 4. and 5. above, although these would probably still read as predominantly metaphorical by most readers), further blurring the border between the outside world of material objects, and the world of the characters' commodifying thoughts about each other:

> "I think you're very simple." And Madame Merle kept her eye on her cup. "I've come to that with time. I judged you, as I say, of old; but it's only since your marriage that I've understood you. I've seen better what you have been to your wife than I ever saw what you were for me. Please be very careful of that precious object."
> "It already has a wee bit of a tiny crack," said Osmond dryly as he put it down. "If you didn't understand me before I married it was cruelly rash of you to put me into such a box. However, I took a fancy to my box myself; I thought it would be a comfortable fit. I asked very little; I only asked that she should like me." (James 444-445)

In this case, although Madame Merle apparently is referring to a concrete object in the scene, it seems as if she is simultaneously referring to Isabel and Osmond certainly seems to pick up the double-meaning, extending the metaphor in his response.

I will now do a closer reading of two particular subsets of metaphorical expressions from a cognitive linguistics point of view, namely the two conceptual metaphors LOVE IS POSSESSION and PEOPLE ARE USEFUL POSSESSIONS, which are two of the most powerful and widely used metaphors in *Portrait*. Where the previous sections were concerned with the question of *what* is being foregrounded, the following section will take a closer look at the *reasons* behind this and the meanings of the foregrounded elements.

2.7. Cognitive approach to metaphors in Portrait

The concept of 'schemas' and 'domains' from cognitive linguistics is a useful model to explain clusters within the diversity of vocabulary and expressions that all seem to be connected somehow but not exactly part of one single semantic field. A schema encompasses knowledge acquired about a set of related concepts and the activities connected to them in a "skeletal form", i.e. in a schematic form (Lakoff and Turner 61). Lakoff and Turner explain their notion of "schema" with reference to the shared, implicit knowledge of journeys (61-62). The schema of a JOURNEY is relatively flexible and abstract, consisting of a group of potential, typical components, such as a traveler, starting points, goals, a path, and obstacles to overcome (61).[16] These "slots" may or may not be filled in various ways, depending on which aspects of our knowledge of journeys a given metaphor wants to exploit. Thus, the relations of what Turner and Lakoff refer to as "source domain" — in this case the schema of a JOURNEY — can be mapped onto a "target domain", such as for instance LIFE, so that life is seen as a journey (62). Since schemas are fairly non-specific in themselves with many optional components, they yield a great variety of instantiations (Lakoff and Turner 64). Journeys can, for example, be undertaken on foot, in a car, or on a ship and each of these options will map different characteristics onto the target domain of LIFE.

In the case of *Portrait*, one of the relevant domains, I would say, is that of POSSESSION. The concept of possession is related to the 'umbrella term' or schema of COMMODIFICATION, which describes the metaphors analysed in this paper (see above), insofar as the existence of the notion of possession is a necessary precondition for the concept of commodifi-

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[16] In Lakoff and Turner's notation schemas, domains, and conceptual metaphors are given in small caps and I will follow their system.

cation to make sense. [17] Things can only be commodified if there is a system of commerce, i.e. a system to transfer ownership, which relies on knowledge of the concept of possession. POSSESSION as a concept encompasses components such as owners, property, and processes of transferring ownership, i.e. acquisition, like finding, taking, buying, or stealing. It entails a great number of potential activities, like having and using possessions for specific purpose, losing, or breaking them, or having certain rights over something as their owner. Furthermore, a distinction can be made between valuable and less valuable possessions. In *Portrait* there is large number of conceptual metaphors that draws on the concept of POSSESSION throughout the text and activates various aspects or components of it.

The first conceptual metaphor related to the domain of POSSESSION I want to discuss is LOVE IS POSSESSION,[18] and the first example occurring in the text is the one of *take hold of*, which has already been discussed in the context of foregrounding.[19] Literally, *to take hold of something* means "to get something by one's own act into one's (physical) hold; to

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[17] It should be noted that within cognitive linguistics there are diverging views of what should be categorised as 'schema' and what as 'domain', (or 'script', 'frame', and a host of other categories) as Taylor states (90). My approach follows Lakoff and Turner's to the best of my knowledge, but other critics might prefer to categorise the concepts I use differently (which should, however, still not greatly influence the interpretation of the *meanings* of those concepts — commodification and possession — in *Portrait*).

[18] This conceptual metaphor is roughly equivalent to Goatly's 'root analogy' AFFECTION = MONEY/WEALTH (and vice versa) (48).

[19] At this point it might be appropriate to explain this analysis's preoccupation with, and what might seem an excessive use of examples that deal with the phrase 'to take hold of'. One reason, as already mentioned is that this is the first use of a metaphor dealing with commodification in Portrait, making it striking. Secondly, as will hopefully become clear by the end of the analysis, 'grasping' as 'possessing' is one of most evocative metaphors, used by James in his "Author's Preface" (8), the beginning of novel and reoccurs at the end of the novel, tying them together, and finally it is in various instantiations also used in connection with all of Isabel's suitors: Warburton (23), Osmond (365), and Goodwood (496). See also examples 19 and 20 below.

grasp, seize" (*Oxford English Dictionary* "take hold, v."). It can also mean "to get a person or thing into its (or one's) 'hold' or power", and thirdly in can be used in the sense of "to take possession and management of, take under one's control" – a meaning the verb only seems to have acquired during the period when *Portrait* was written, incidentally (ibid.). From the context in which *take hold* occurs, it seems unlikely that there is any concrete physical object Mr. Touchett and Lord Warburton are referring to. Apart from the fact that the first two instances of the phrase are curiously unspecific about what should be taken hold of, it is therefore quite clear that the expression is used metaphorically in some way. *Take hold of something*, *take hold of a thing*, and *take hold of a pretty woman* all seem to involve a conceptual metaphor along the lines of A THING I HOLD IN MY HANDS IS MY POSSESSION.[20] 'Grasping' as a metaphor for 'possessing something' also is an important conceptual metaphor in *Portrait*, as already mentioned above, and reoccurs throughout the text, playing a role at the very end of the novel as well (see section on rhetorics).

But what exactly are the targets of these mappings? What is Lord Warburton supposed to take possession of or avail himself of? In the first two instances he refers back to a previous conversation, using only the semantically relatively empty words *something* and *thing*, which do not give much away about the subject of their conversation. The context of the conversation, however, indicates that Mr. Touchett and Lord Warburton might refer to a business opportunity or a position, stocks, or on the other hand some kind of property, such as a factory or land

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[20] According to Lakoff and Turner metaphors strictly speaking are *mental* constructions, and not the words themselves (109). One conceptual metaphor, such as the one mentioned above, can serve as the mental structure for various linguistic expressions of the same underlying concept, and on the other hand a metaphor using a particular schema is likely to bring to mind other related schemas (Lakoff and Turner 106-109.). Other examples for the metaphor of having something in ones hands as possession are expressions such as 'a grasping person', or the proverb "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush".

perhaps. The first two uses of *take hold* can therefore be read both as 'to use an opportunity' or 'to take possession of something'.

The third occurrence, however, has a different target domain. Ralph metaphorically suggests Lord Warburton take possession of a pretty woman; this can be read as a reference to marriage, which is especially plausible given that historically, marriage was regarded as a contract transferring property from the bride to the groom, including a transfer of the ownership of the woman from father or other male guardian to husband. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS POSSESSION has in the case of marriage therefore a quite literal background related to property and possession.[21] Ralph does talk about *falling in love*, so that the target domain ostensibly is LOVE (and not marriage for mercenary reasons) but being preceded by two other uses of the same phrase, where the target domains presumably are more mundane things, like positions or worldly possessions, and embedded in text with accumulation of words from the semantic field of finance (see above), the aspect of power in possession is pushed into the foreground and to apply the concept of POSSESSION to the notion of falling in love seems morally doubtful or at least overly materialistic.

The relation of metaphors based on the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS POSSESSION to fairly conventional expressions of endearment has already been discussed. There are certainly some metaphors from this category in *Portrait* which seem to be more conventional than others, such as the following one:

> She tasted of the sweets of this preference, and they made her conscious, almost with awe, of the invidious and remorseless tide

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[21] At the time of the composition of the novel this practice had already begun to change and married women had been granted the right to own property in the *First Married Woman's Property Act* ("Timeline of Legislation, Events, and Publications Crucial to the Development of Victorian Feminism"), but since firstly *Portrait* is a work of literature and secondly attitudes exist independently from and sometimes in blatant disregard of laws, the combination of 'woman' and 'possession' might still suggest love or marriage (and in fact still does so today).

of the charmed and possessed condition, great as was the tradi-
tional honour and imputed virtue of being in love. (James 301)

But the main point is that there is a fairly large number of meta-
phors that goes beyond the conventional and emphasises the aspect of
violence or power always implicit in the concept of LOVE IS POSSESSION.
In the light of these more 'extreme' examples the reader is primed to see
transgressive overtones even in more conventional uses of the underly-
ing conceptual metaphor. This sliding from conventional, nonthreaten-
ing uses of language into ones that clearly violate normal moral bounda-
ries is one of the aspects that makes the use of metaphor in *Portrait* in-
triguing.

As Lakoff and Turner remark, conventional conceptual metaphors
are often taken so much for granted that it is difficult to call them into
question, and they can exercise considerable power over language users,
structuring their thinking but going unnoticed (65). It is only when
these conventional conceptual metaphors are used in slightly unusual
instantiations that the structure of the conceptual mapping becomes
more apparent and therefore open to interrogation, as is the case with
LOVE IS POSSESSION in *Portrait*.

As already mentioned, broadly speaking, the target domains for the
metaphors used in *Portrait* tend to fall into the realm of human rela-
tions and more specifically the most frequent target domains involve
either love or people, that is how people can be made useful to other
people (LOVE IS POSSESSION, PEOPLE ARE (USEFUL) POSSESSIONS) (cf
Gilmore).[22] It is to the latter type of metaphor I want to turn now.

> "The ladies will save us," said the old man; "that is the best of
> them will – for I make a difference between them. Make up to a
> good one and marry her, and your life will become much more *in-
> teresting*."
>
> [...]

---

[22] This conceptual metaphor can be seen as equivalent to Goatly's root
analogy HUMAN = VALUABLE OBJECT/COMMODITY.

"If I marry an interesting woman I shall be *interested*: is that what you say?" Lord Warburton asked. "I'm not at all keen about marrying — your son misrepresented me; but there's no knowing what an *interesting* woman might *do with me*." (James 23, my italics)

Here the conceptual metaphor invoked is PEOPLE ARE USEFUL OBJECTS. The domain of POSSESSION includes the notion that material possessions may fulfil particular practical purposes (even if in some cases, such as jewellery or expensive cars it could be argued that the purpose might only be conspicuous consumption). In addition, the owner of an object can do with it and dispose of it as he or she pleases. When Lord Warburton speculates about what an "interesting woman might do with [him]" he casts himself into the role of an object that is used by its owner as they see fit. Other examples of linguistic expressions based on the same conceptual metaphor from *Portrait* are, for instance, those that contain the words *material* and *use*:

7. [Henrietta Stackpole about the other characters in the scene] "Well, I must say I never have had such a collection of bad material!" (James 125)

8. Osmond was in his element; at last he had material to work with. (James 337)

9. "He works with superior material," Ralph said to himself. (James 337)

The above instantiations of the conceptual metaphor map the role of a serviceable raw material onto the people referred to and also clearly assign the role of the owner, 'manipulator' of the object, or the artisan who handles the material to a character. This hints at an important dynamic in the narrative, namely the one between characters who try to use other characters for their won purposes and those characters who are being made use of, as in another linguistic expression of the PEOPLE ARE USEFUL OBJECTS-metaphor:

10. [Countess Gemini to/about Isabel] "Well, I should say as a woman who has been made use of." (James 464)

11. Madame Merle was doubtless of great use to herself and an ornament to any circle; but was she — would she be — of use to others in periods of refined embarrassment? The best way to

profit by her friend – this indeed Isabel had always thought – was to imitate her, to be as firm and bright as she. (James 344)

12. Henrietta, on the other hand, enjoyed the society of a gentleman who appeared somehow, in his way, made, by expensive, roundabout, almost "quaint" processes, for her use, and whose leisured state, though generally indefensible, was a decided boon to a breathless mate [...] (James 193)

13. [Ralph Touchett about his mother] "[...] She thinks me of no more use than a postage-stamp without gum, and she would never forgive me if I should presume to go to Liverpool to meet her." (James 25)

14. His other brother, who was in the army in India, was rather wild and pig-headed and had not been of much use as yet but to make debts for Warburton to pay – one of the most precious privileges of an elder brother. (James 70)

15. "I thought you disliked the English so much."

"So I do; but it's all the greater reason for making use of them."

"Is that your idea of marriage?" And Isabel ventured to add that her aunt appeared to her to have made very little use of Mr. Touchett. (James 126)

In certain respects these examples might be skirting the realm of metaphor and could be categorised as literal uses of language; the question is can people be literally be thought of as being useful or having particular uses? Beyond the inevitable ethical implications, which cannot be taken into account here and do not necessary reflect or have a bearing on linguistic issues anyway, under which conditions can people be described as 'being of use'? In those cases where *use* is used in reference to people, it can be interpreted as 'exploitation', 'abuse', 'maltreatment' or similar (see *Oxford English Dictionary* "use, v.: 14 c."), hinting at the fact that it is not understood in a straightforwardly literal way and that there is an additional interpretative process involved. This is especially true of the phrase 'make use of' (see above), which means "to use as an expedient; to profit from or take advantage of; to exploit (esp. for personal or sexual gain)" (*Oxford English Dictionary* "P12. to make (also take) (a) use of"). This, I would argue, can be explained with reference to the conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE USEFUL OBJECTS. Applying the word *use* to people, and thereby mapping the domain of material objects onto humans, constitutes a conceptual metaphor, even though it

might not be as noticeable as other metaphors because it is comparatively conventional, apart from some more striking examples.[23]

2.8. Representing ambiguity

A closer reading of how metaphors of commodification are used reveals further complications in what might at first glance appear to be a straightforward matter of some characters commodifying other characters and thus using them for their own purposes. It has – hopefully – been amply demonstrated that many if not all characters in *Portrait* think of other characters in terms of serviceable or valuable goods that have a market value, can be collected and admired like porcelain figurines, or used profitably. On the other hand a more detailed examination of the way in which the metaphors in question are phrased shows that the attempts to possess someone and control them are frequently undermined by the very way that the characters phrase them. In addition characters also cast *themselves* in the role of objects for other characters' use. The text thus simultaneously shows the characters' mercenary mindset and frustrates the success of their plans or shows them using their own weapons against themselves, representing the ambiguous attitude the text takes towards the concepts of possession and commodification in the way those concepts are used in context.

Regarding the question of who may become an object of commodification, roles seem to be more fluid than might be expected. Judging from the 'roles' that the characters ostensibly play in the story, such as schemers and victims of the scheming, it could be expected that these relations are reflected in the way metaphors are used. Given that Isabel is being pursued by various men, and that her eventual marriage and the hunt for a husband for Pansy play important roles plot-wise, it could be, for instance, assumed that it is primarily women who figure as desirable objects in metaphors of commodification. While this is partially true, there are also many examples that show the reverse tendency,

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[23] The same principle applies to *do something with someone*, in those cases where it can be taken to mean 'use someone for something'.

namely of women thinking of men (or themselves or other people in general) as commodities:

> 16. [Madame Merle to Isabel] "[...] You'll be my friend till you find a better use for your friendship." (James 178)
>
> 17. [Countess Gemini to Madame Merle] "Why should I, of all women, set such a price on a husband?" (James 236)
>
> 18. "Do you know him well, this unreformed reformer?" Osmond went on, questioning Isabel [about Lord Warburton].
>
> "Well enough for all the use I have for him."
>
> "And how much of a use is that?"
>
> "Well, I like to like him." (James, 261)
>
> (See also example 13 above.)

Even Isabel, who for the most part is portrayed as emphatically not making use of other people, and who rejects an overly materialistic and mercenary outlook on life, and who furthermore is the victim of Madame Merle and Osmond's machinations, is conversant in this style of thinking and talking, and thus just as much an active participant in the 'commodity world' of *Portrait* as the other characters; no one remains completely innocent of commodifying other characters – if not in deed, then at least in their thoughts or words.

Isabel's use of the vocabulary of commodification can also be read as highlighting a certain disparity between the plot level on which Osmond marries Isabel, thus metaphorically and legally taking possession of her, and the way she thinks about possession.

> 19. The finest – in the sense of being the subtlest – manly organism she had ever known had become her property, and the recognition of her having but to put out her hands and take it had been originally a sort of act of devotion (James 365)
>
> 20. They [Isabel's words] made a comparison between Osmond and herself, recalled the fact that she had once held this coveted treasure in her hand and felt herself rich enough to let it fall. (James 404)

Of special note here is that like with the example of 'take hold of', the act of taking something into ones hands is again used to signify possession. The metaphors suggest that Isabel takes possession of Osmond,

whereas the plot of the (main) narrative has her falling victim to Madame Merle and Osmond's scheming with Osmond taking possession of Isabel.

Concerning the success of the characters' mercenary schemes and thoughts, the way metaphors are phrased often calls the success of the act of taking possession into question. The example of 'take hold of' examined previously is a point in case: Mr. Touchett advises Lord Warburton to "take hold of something", as does Henrietta Stackpole later in the text (James 126). In both these cases, there is a discrepancy between the concrete act of taking hold of something, expressed as physical action and the missing object to be taken hold of, turning the act into a gesture of futility.

Finally, in those cases where the metaphors describe successful acts of taking possession, it is often not a person who is successful but a 'personified' abstract concept or emotion.[24]

> 21. It was surprising, as I say, the hold it had taken of her — *the idea* of assisting her husband to be pleased. (James 356, my italics)
>
> 22. [Isabel thinking about Osmond] It was because *a certain ardour* took possession of her — a sense of the earnestness of his affection and a delight in his personal qualities. (James 365, my italics)
>
> 23. *A momentary exultation* took possession of her — a horrible delight in having wounded him [...]. [Isabel about Osmond] (James 404, my italics)
>
> 24. When she saw this rigid system close about her, draped though it was in pictured tapestries, *that sense of darkness and suffocation* of which I have spoken took possession of her; she seemed shut up with an odour of mould and decay. (James 368, my italics)

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[24]Lakoff and Turner define personification quite simply as "metaphors through which we understand other things as people. As human beings we can best understand other things in our own terms. Personification permits us to use our knowledge about ourselves to maximal effect, to use insights about ourselves to help us comprehend such things as forces of nature, common events, abstract concepts, and inanimate objects" (72).

Many successful acts of taking possession (of Isabel) are thus achieved by abstract concepts, not human agents. Again, this contrasts with the many occasions when characters think about other characters, or Isabel specifically, in terms of commodified goods, but do not quite seem to be able to carry through their intentions. And even if they seem to be successful, there are often complicating twists to these acts of possession (see above). Ideas and emotions, in contrast, take possession of people comparatively successfully.

Overall, text shows multiple uses of the concept of commodification, from its use as a source domain in conceptual metaphors to references to the characters' material possession (and thereby the socio-economic world in which the novel is set) and to twists of the plot. Commodification can therefore be seen as an element transgressing several levels of the narrative. The next section will look more closely at how some of these 'transgressions' between linguistic metaphor and plot work and how the concept of possession is realised and embedded on various levels of the narrative.

3. Plotting possession

3.1. Introduction

This chapter, then, will among other things try to take structural and organisational matters of *Portrait* into account insofar as they relate to metaphors of commodification. For this purpose the analysis will turn to some narratological aspects relating to the use of metaphor in *Portrait*. Looking at the use of metaphorical language in *Portrait* from a narratological perspective means looking at the issue from a comparatively wide angle, and thus focussing on the macro-level of the text to some extent. Metaphor is not often discussed from a narratological angle and might not even be seen as a valid subject of narratological analysis, but I hope to be able to show that a narratological approach to the textual phenomena of repetition and metaphor adds valuable insights with regard to the range of functions these phenomena may fulfil in a narrative. Drawing on publications by Fludernik, my analysis will explore which place metaphor can take in the narratological framework, especially as regards the transmission of plot and character to the reader.[25]

The extensive and systematic use of metaphor in *Portrait* indicates that the figures of possession fulfil structural or structuring functions and the section on metaphor and narratology will examine why and how some metaphors are able to transcend their status as elements of style relevant only in the immediate context in which they occur, to convey the mood of a scene for instance – although this of course an important function as well –, and act as connecting elements between the conventional narrative categories of discourse and story; there will be a section exploring specifically how metaphors can interact with the plot level of narrative, suggesting two different views on the matter. Firstly, metaphors can be seen as obstacles that the plot has to engage with (see de

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[25] See "Metaphor and Beyond," "The Cage Metaphor," and *An Introduction to Narratology.*

Man). On the other hand, metaphors can also be regarded as 'disnarrated' stories, which to some degree must be treated as embedded narratives with their own plot (see Fludernik "Cage Metaphor"). These approaches that try to show a link between the 'surface level' of the text and the more abstract plot level – i.e. between discourse and story. Thus, they tie in to a certain degree with matters already discussed in the section on stylistics, insofar as stylistics also tries to show how readers read things 'into' the text with the help of textual evidence. The same is true for the narratological questions in this section: how does the discourse level enable the reader to infer information about the plot level, or which discourse elements allow the reader to draw conclusions about the story?

The second part of this section deals with the concept of voice, especially in connection with repetition. The phenomenon of repeatedly occurring textual elements is central to the present analysis but not extensively dealt with in narratology. However, – like the relation between metaphor and plot – repetition will be shown to have structural relevance, bridging the gap between local micro- and overarching macro-structure of the narrative and creating meaning through interaction between the repeated elements. The narratological perspective on repetition also links up with rhetorical concerns and anticipates some of the issues that will be relevant in the section on the rhetoric of *Portrait*, which focuses on how *Portrait* constructs and contrasts voice(s) for the evaluation of narrator and characters by the reader.

To begin with, however, I want to look at how narratology deals with metaphor or imagery in general (in those cases where narratologists *do* discuss metaphor and attribute more influence to metaphor than being a 'mere' stylistic discourse phenomenon). The following sections will introduce two ways of locating metaphor in a narratological framework , ascribing certain structural functions to imagery and thus to some extent calling into question the neat separation between discourse and story level.

3.2. Imagery and metaphor from a narratological perspective

The previous chapter tried to outline how repetition – and more specifically the repetition of metaphors and imagery in *Portrait* – may affect readings of the text and inferences about its theme(s), attributing representational function to the language of the text. Although this already hints at the fact that textual 'surface' and more abstract levels of a text, such as the story level and the overall meanings readers construct from a text, do not exist completely independently of stylistic concerns, matters of style and diction are nevertheless often seen as separate from narratology, with narratology dealing with 'deeper' structural levels and stylistics dealing with 'surface' phenomena', so that metaphor is treated as an element of style or voice, and is not attributed any structural relevance (Fludernik "Cage Metaphor" 109).

For analytical purposes this the abstraction into distinct levels of narrative may be useful because it can help to focus on particular phenomena that are related to the level of style or structure respectively, and therefore the division will be maintained in this analysis to some extent. However, at the same time it should be emphasised that without the discourse level and the textual evidence it offers, readers cannot make any inferences about the story level, and that the two are consequently inextricable entwined. By the end of my analysis it will hopefully have become clear that surface level phenomena do indeed have structuring functions (see also 5. Rhetoric).

One of the keywords when thinking about imagery in *Portrait* is 'extended metaphor' or 'sustained metaphor' (Kittay 258). As should be abundantly clear by now, imagery in *Portrait* is often repeated, so that it can acquire a rich range of meanings, which are continuously modified and revisited with each use of the metaphorical expression (cf Kittay, Sotirova). Beyond that, not only do the uses of one particular metaphor link up, but to a certain extent all instances of metaphors dealing with possession can be seen in relation to one another, forming a network of semantically (or schematically) related imagery (Fludernik *Introduction*

76). After the importance of a trope that is part of such a network has been recognised, each subsequent use of any metaphor that draws on the same or a related semantic field adds in some way to the process of making meaning in a dialogic process (cf Bakhtin qtd. in Sotirova 133).

This goes some way towards explaining the scope and import of metaphorical expressions in *Portrait*. Yet the narratological significance of metaphor, and its place in narratology, are not as clear. On the one hand, matters of style are seen as 'surface' issues in narratology and relegated to the study of stylistics, that is to linguistic enquiry. As long as the use of metaphors is considered an issue of style, it is not narratologically relevant, but as Fludernik points out, even if a particular linguistic feature is 'only' used to differentiate between characters, or between characters and the narrator, or more generally to differentiate between voices, this already has some narratological implications, since the feature in question marks out one discourse from another and thus goes beyond the linguistic surface level (Fludernik *Introduction* 2009 71, cf Bakhtin qtd. in Sotirova 133).

When imagery (Fludernik specifically includes metaphor, metonymy, as well as simile) is used extensively throughout a text, and figures of speech 'transcend their micro-context', so that they involve nearly all characters, then they may become narratologically pertinent in a narrower sense (*Introduction* 2009: 74). Fludernik mentions *Little Dorrit* by Dickens as one example where imagery goes beyond matters of choice of words (ibid.). Prison metaphors are ubiquitous in *Little Dorrit*, and not restricted to the realm of language itself, they are also present in the theme of novel ('life as a prison') (ibid.). There are also two real, physical prisons in the story, one is a debtors' prison in London and the other a prison in Marseille, so that the prison imagery in *Little Dorrit* could be regarded as "metonymical juxtapositions of the prison-like settings and the situations within the novel" (ibid.). The life of Mrs. Clennam, which is lived entirely secluded in a rather sinister house and two servants as guards or 'jailers', as well as the limited opportunities of Little Dorrit's life, her self-imposed struggle to take care of her family

and many other situations in the novel resemble metaphorical prisons. The metaphor thus can be seen as a structuring device that is not restricted to the level of language, but is reflected in the symbolism of the text as well, occurring on the story level, i.e. the plot and setting, itself (Fludernik *Introduction* 74). Therefore, the prison-metaphor is a macro-structural metaphor, whose production must be attributed to the implied author (ibid.)

The same principles apply to the use of metaphor in *Portrait*, I would argue. It is no coincidence that the characters of the story are all reasonably affluent, or at least affect to be so, and possession is thematised in a literal way as well as used to express metaphorical meanings. The theme of wealth, possession, and commodification is inscribed into the very setting of the novel, which starts, as already mentioned, with the taking of afternoon tea in the garden of Gardencourt. Mr. Touchett is identified as a rich banker and his son's friend is a member of the aristocracy, making them both representatives of affluent classes (although there is of course strictly speaking a difference between old-world landed aristocracy and the American nouveau riche). Furthermore, Gardencourt is described in terms of its purchase and previous owners, introducing the theme of acquisition.

This theme is elaborated in the characters of Ralph Touchett and Gilbert Osmond, who are both collectors of objects d'art, showing their respective collection to Isabel in two juxtaposed scenes. As regards the plot level, one of the most significant moments relating to possession is the inheritance Isabel makes from her uncle. Possession, then, is a pervasive theme that is introduced first in a literal sense and then used figuratively, referring to human relationships (see also section on stylistics). Ultimately one of the key questions that the text raises, then, is whether everything can be bought and sold, including personal freedom and happiness.

Thus, the concept of possession is present in setting, plot and stylistic elements of the text as well as in the abstract 'message' of the text, so

that like the prison-metaphor in *Little Dorrit*, it becomes "a structuring principle of the novel" (Fludernik *Introduction* 2009: 74). If this is indeed the case, how do metaphors help to structure *Portrait*?

3.3. Knots and disnarrated stories: metaphors and plot

Apart from the relation between plot and 'macro-metaphors' – the abstract meanings of the novel – it is also interesting to investigate the relation between plot and 'micro-metaphors', that is to say between plot and individual linguistic units that can be understood as metaphors (as opposed to macro-structural symbolism). The following quote from de Man may serve as a starting point for a discussion of the link between imagery and narrative plot:

> From the *recognition of language as trope*, one is led to the telling of a tale, to the *narrative sequence* [...]. The temporal deployment of an initial complication, of a structural knot, indicates the close, though not necessarily complementary, relationship between trope and narrative, between *knot* and *plot*. If the referent of a narrative is indeed the tropological structure of its discourse, then the narrative will be the attempt to account for this fact. (de Man 21-22)

In this view metaphor and plot are in a kind of dialogic relationship, with the narrative trying to solve a problem presented in the form of a metaphor. Metaphor, then, can be understood as an opportunity to add a 'knot' that the narrative has to engage with in some form. This relationship, as de Man indicates (see above), can be complementary, but it does not have to be; in any case the relation is a very close one. Thus, metaphors may invite speculation about plot developments.

This, I would argue, holds true for the example of *to take hold of*. The opening chapter introduces the connection between possession and love interest, having Ralph Touchett suggest that Lord Warburton should "take hold of a pretty woman," since he is "trying hard to fall in love" (James 23). Then the conversation drifts to Mrs. Touchett's expected arrival and her niece, who is to accompany her. Referring back to Lord Warburton's attempts to "fall in love", Mr. Touchett warns him, "Well, you may fall in love with whomsoever you please; but you mustn't fall in

love with my niece." (James 23). This remark is referred to again at the end of the chapter, making it even more conspicuous (James 25).

Thus, the metaphor introduces a 'knot', namely the wish of a character (shared by other characters as well, as becomes clear later on in the novel) to 'take possession' of a woman. The metaphor of acquisition presents a problem that keeps the characters busy throughout the narrative plot and which is one of the central concerns of the novel. In other words, the metaphor of Lord Warburton's taking possession of a woman proposes a possible plot development for the reader and provided that the reader takes up this supposition, he or she will expect the narrative to either bear out this supposition or to eliminate it and provide an alternative one (Holloway 3-5). This particular knot is tackled when Lord Warburton, indeed, proposes to Isabel and in addition, the issue is again taken up again at the very end of the novel, when Mr. Goodwood physically grasps Isabel and takes possession of her in a kiss, mirroring the proposition of Ralph's metaphor (see also 3.5 and 3.6.).

A slightly different perspective on plot and metaphor is given by Fludernik, who perceives metaphors to have the potential to "generate mini-stories of 'disnarrated' material", which "parallel, counterpoint or complement the main narrative" ("Cage Metaphor" 124). This is made possible through shared features of making meaning between narrative and metaphor (Hanne qtd. in Fludernik "Cage Metaphor" 123). The sentence *My surgeon is a butcher*, for example, tells a mini-story of a surgeon wielding a butcher's knife and posing a threat to the patient (Fludernik "Cage Metaphor" 125). Metaphor thus "allows for narrative extrapolation", i.e. it is 'narrativisable' (ibid.).

As can be seen from the above example, and indeed from examples of metaphors from *Portrait*, the mini-stories generated by metaphors often play on strong contrasts between their constitutive elements. In addition, they can also contrast with the main plot of the narrative, and therefore "make it possible to imagine alternative or subordinate stories

that involve alignments suggested by the transfer from the source to the target domain" (Fludernik "Cage Metaphor" 125).[26]

To illustrate this point, let us return to the first metaphor of possession in *Portrait*. Lord Warburton says to Mr. Touchett, "[...] [Y]ou told me the other day that I ought *to 'take hold' of* something. One hesitates *to take hold of* a thing that may the next moment be knocked sky-high" (James 22). The "thing" that Warburton ought to take hold of in this case is rather elusive. As already explained in the stylistics chapter, from a later remark by Mr. Touchett about social and political changes that might affect this object to be grasped (James 23), it could be inferred that they are talking about a political position, a professional occupation, or maybe an enterprise. This points towards an association of the concept of *grasping* with a professional identity, that is to actively pursue a worthwhile goal, as opposed to the life of leisure that is depicted in the afternoon tea drinking-scene, which embodies the notion of an aristocratic life of languor, filled with genteel social activities. The *taking hold of something*, by contrast, is an active movement that appears all the more aggressive and disruptive in the atmosphere of polite gentility, the polite conversation, in which it occurs.

Nevertheless, the impression of aimlessness and inactivity that Warburton's aristocratic lifestyle implies is transferred into the metaphor through the vagueness of the objects to be grasped. *Something* and *a thing* leave the range of possible objects wide open and semantically empty, so that the decisiveness of the act of *taking hold* is subverted by the indecisiveness of what to take hold of. The action of grasping a particular object turns into goalless groping for something worthwhile to be

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[26] Fludernik is using terminology from cognitive linguistics here. The cognitive linguistics approach to metaphor has already been introduced in 1.7. In the cognitive linguistics model of metaphor, a source domain is mapped to a target domain, creating a new meaning by selecting appropriate features from each of these domains while leaving out any irrelevant features (cf Fludernik *Beyond Metaphor*). In the example sentence *My surgeon is a butcher* the source domain is BUTCHER and the relevant features of this source domain are mapped onto the target domain SURGEON.

grabbed. This particular mini-story, thus, tells about an aristocrat who is desperately trying to find some rewarding goal or purposeful occupation to fill some empty space in his life. The fulfilment of this wish is jeopardised by circumstances outside of Lord Warburton's control, which threaten to forcefully remove the desired object even further from his grasp; it *may be knocked sky-high* and thereby made apparently unattainable.

Despite the threatening prospect, the way Lord Warburton's fears are phrased suggest that at some level this is a (childish) game: someone tries to grab something and someone else knocks it out of reach. The various disparate elements of this metaphor thus combine into an image of a hesitant player involved in a dangerous game that he does not think he can win. Ralph Touchett subsequently widens the referential field of the metaphor even further by introducing the theme of personal relationships.

That being so, it can be said that metaphor invades multiple narratological levels: individual metaphors can be shown to connect different narratological levels, like in the case of mini-stories, which arise from a particular, local semantic context in the narrative discourse but at the same time their plot has a contrastive or amplifying function with regard to the main-plot, connecting the micro-level to the macro-level or in other words binding the main-narrative to an embedded narrative (cf Fludernik "Cage Metaphor" 125). As has already been mentioned in the view of metaphors as knots in the plot, the 'plot' of metaphors might lead readers to make inferences about the narrative that is about to unfold and thus about the story level of the narrative.

Whether these embedded strands of mini-plot function as contrast or amplifier for the 'main-'plot of the narrative, they seem very likely to play a part in negotiating a fuller picture of the plot during the reading process, since they can deliver poignant insights in a very concise form and these bursts of understanding may help the reader construct 'on-line' knowledge, give them hunches about the story level, or at least

about possible stories. This, as has already been indicated, links up with the representational function of language in literature proposed in stylistics. Metaphors can be seen as representing possible plot developments in a very reduced form, linking the discourse level to the more abstract story level.

Furthermore, the individual instances of figurative language use can be seen as metonymical extension to plot elements and elements of the setting of the narrative as such, so that there are metaphors of different orders: "narrative metaphors occur on all levels of narrative – the deep structural story level, the surface-structural discourse level, the level of the *narration* (in Genette's model); and the 'meaning of the text as a whole'" (Fludernik "Cage Metaphor" 125).

Their transgressive and invasive nature makes these metaphors difficult to constrain in a neat model and to describe them accurately from a theoretical point of view. De Man, writing about Condillac's views on metaphor, states that metaphors "are capable of infinite proliferation. They are like weeds, or like a cancer; once you have begun using a single one, they will crop up everywhere. [...] Even after their ambivalent nature has been analyzed on an advanced level of critical understanding, there is little hope they can be mastered" (21). Even though this may be the case and there is at present no narratological model that deals with the uses of metaphor in narrative texts in depth, their very 'proliferating' nature, involving multiple narratological levels at the same time, makes their study worth the theoretical trouble they may cause.

In the following part of the chapter I want to focus on some more conventional narratological issues in *Portrait*, based on Genette's theory of narratology. The concept of 'voice' will be of particular value in the context of analysing metaphor in *Portrait*. The next section discusses some aspects of the category of voice according to Genette's model in general and then relates them to the voice(s) in *Portrait* that produce metaphors of commodification.

3.4. The concept of 'voice' in narratology

In "Narrative Discourse" Genette distinguishes a series of relation-ships between story, narrative (narrative text, discourse) and the proc-ess of narrating (27). These relationships, which according to Genette are the focus of narratological analysis, are organised into three groups: there are connections between story and narrative, connections between narrative and narrating, and connections between narrating and the story (32). Genette's concepts of 'tense' and 'mood' both are concerned with the first kind of connections (ibid.), i.e. the relation between story and discourse as far as regards temporal phenomena — such as order, duration, and frequency of the plot elements — and the 'perspective' from which these events are looked at.[27]

Phenomena of looking, perspective and perception or consciousness are a favourite subject in the criticism of James's works, and focaliza-tion is therefore discussed extensively.[28] These analyses in one way or another all focus on the *perceiver* of the events, whereas the present analysis will put more weight on phenomena of speaking, that is the *teller* of the events. This makes the relationships between narrative and narrating, and those between narrating and the story especially signifi-cant.

Both the connections between narrative and narrating as well as nar-rating and the story are covered by what Genette calls 'voice' (32). As the term already suggests, and as indicated above, this concept is con-cerned with the teller(s) of a narrative. In contrast to mood, which deals with the question of who *sees*, voice addresses the question of who *speaks* (Genette 186). It examines the position of the narrator with re-gard to person, time of the narrating, and the narrative levels (Genette

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[27] More precisely, mood refers to the focalization of narrative; that is to say, to the perceiver of the action. This perceiver or focalizor can be a character in the story or outside the story, and there can be shifts be-tween several focalizors during the narrative.

[28] See for example Booth (*Rhetoric of Fiction*), Jamil, Krook, Lodge, and Teahan.

212-262). Concerning 'person', the narrative can be told by a first-person homodiegetic or third-person heterodiegetic narrator (Genette 244-245).[29] In addition, the time of telling the narrative, i.e. the teller's temporal distance to the events of the narrative, can vary from the relatively rare predictive prior narrative to the more common subsequent narrative (Genette 217). Finally, with regard to the narrative level, the narrator can be part of the story-world (intradiegetic) or outside of the world of the story (extradiegetic) (Genette 228-229).

'Voice' thus covers a range of phenomena that relate to the narratorial voice of the text. Since in many sources on narratology 'voice' is primarily concerned with the voice of the narrating instance, it can therefore also be referred to as 'narrating voice(s)' by Kearns (82-83). However, I would argue that even those characters who do not get to speak as narrating voices may also have their own distinctive voice and although it may be attributed a different narratological level than that of a narrating voice, it will still be treated under the term 'voice' in my analysis (see also below). Furthermore, for the present the principle of one character or narrating instance equalling one voice applies. Whether or not this principle ultimately holds or is useful will be examined in the chapter on the rhetoric of *Portrait*.

The next section will examine both voice, and to a lesser extent mood, i.e. focalization, in the *Portrait* in general, followed by an analysis of voice in the context of metaphors of possession.

3.5. Narrative situation and voice(s) in Portrait

Voice, as has been already mentioned above, strictly speaking refers to the narratorial instance of a narrative text and this formally excludes those parts of the text that are not narrative, which if one wanted to be fastidious would exclude dialogue. Dialogue in prose fiction, in its most

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[29] 'Person' here should not necessarily be understood as 'grammatical person', but rather as a "narrative posture". The difference between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narration lies in the question whether the narrator can speak in the first person (*I*) about a story-character or not (Genette 244).

basic and uncommented form – which of course is a special case rather than the norm but may serve as an abstract ideal nevertheless – is mimetic in nature, or according to Genette "the most 'mimetic'" form of speech (of the characters in the story) (172). In direct speech "the narrator pretends to give the floor to his character" (ibid.). Despite Genette's slight scepticism about the status of dialogue, I would argue that the differentiation between dialogue and narrative passages is an important one for the present purpose of analysing imagery of possession in *Portrait*, so that it makes sense to keep up the distinction. The reasons for this will become clearer in the discussion of the 'voices' in *Portrait* below. The term 'voices', in contrast to 'voice', includes both the narratorial voice(s) and the characters' voices in dialogues.

In *Portrait* the voice of the extradiegetic, heterodiegetic narrator has a strong presence throughout the text. The novel starts with an introduction that privileges this narratorial voice, focusing on external descriptions of the opening scene: Mr. Touchett, his son Ralph, and Ralph's friend Lord Warburton take their afternoon tea in the garden of Gardencourt. While there are some glimpses of the characters' thoughts, or more precisely of their past experiences, and thus some internal views, it is always clearly the voice of the omniscient narrator who relates them and not the characters in their own voices.[30] The following example in which the narrator relates details about the house, drawing partly on Mr. Touchett's personal knowledge, is typical of this narrative situation:

> [...] [I]t had passed into the possession of a shrewd American banker, who had bought it originally because (owing to circumstances too complicated to set forth) it was offered at a great bargain: bought it with much grumbling at its ugliness, its antiquity, its incommodity, and who now, at the end of twenty years, *had become conscious of* a real aesthetic passion for it, so that he *knew* all its points and would tell you just where to

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[30] These brief instances of a character remembering or otherwise perceiving are instances of focalization in which the 'vision' is the character's but the 'voice' the narrator's (cf Bal 142-143). Focalization is discussed in more depth below.

stand to see them in combination [...] [emphases added] (James 18)[31]

The narrator is thus able to invade the characters' minds and is not only able to reveal what their present thoughts are, but also what memories they have and how they would react in hypothetical situations.

In this context it should be pointed out that there are several occasions when the narrator states that it does *not* know what a character is thinking, such as for example when Mr. Goodwood tries to persuade Isabel to leave Mr. Osmond at the end of the novel: "*I know not* whether she believed everything he said; *but she believed* just then that to let him take her in his arms would be the next best thing to her dying" (James 499).[32] These moments are, however, brief and the 'quasi-omniscient' authority of the narrator is immediately restored in the second half of the sentence. In addition, it could be argued that many of the omissions the narrator makes, because it ostensibly does not know something, are strategic omissions, where it does not choose to invade a character's mind and not necessarily 'gaps' of knowledge. It has been argued by Kearns that the (partial) retreat of the narrator from the characters' minds into a position more akin to that of an external position toward the end of the novel might be read as the narrator becoming more 'intradiegetic' by some readers (112). The meaning of the narrator's changing role at the end of the novel will be discussed more extensively in the the section on rhetoric (4.5., 4.6.).

Returning to the situation in the first part of the novel, in the opening passage the authority of the narrator is asserted quite clearly. The narrator emphasises its role in making the decisions of what is related to the (implied) reader and what is not ("owing to circumstances too complicated to set forth", see above). The assertiveness of narrator can also

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[31] Henceforth all emphases are mine except where explicitly indicated otherwise.

[32] Like Bal I choose to refer to the narrator as *it* rather than as *he*, which is the pronoun Genette prefers.

be felt in the references it makes to itself. The narrator repeatedly refers to itself as 'I', particularly in circumstances that help to establish its consciousness as the organising principle of the narrative:

> There are circumstances in which, whether you partake of tea or not – some people of course never do – the situation is in itself delightful. Those that *I have in mind* in beginning to unfold this simple history offered an admirable setting to an innocent pastime. (James 17)

> The house that rose beyond the lawn was a structure to repay such consideration and was the most characteristic object in the peculiarly English picture *I have attempted to sketch.* (James 17)

> Besides this, as *I have said*, he could have counted off most of the successive owners and occupants, several of whom were known to general fame [...] (James 18)

The first two examples, in which the narrator makes references to its own perception, draw attention to the fact that the 'vision' presented is the narrator's own vision. This can be seen as an assertion of the narrator in its role as external focalizor. In the third example given above, in contrast, the narrator emphasises its voice as the narrating instance. Claiming authority both in the realms of seeing and speaking, I would argue, gives the narrator a very strong 'presence' in large parts of the narrative.

The moments in which the narratorial voice allows itself to speak as an 'I' – and this happens quite frequently – with opinions and an individual consciousness reflect the authority of the narrator over the process of narrating: over revealing (and in principle also over withholding information, although it should be noted that this privilege is not used to keep the reader in the dark about essential details in the same way as, for example, in detective novels, namely to reveal the 'truth' only at the end of the novel as a way of creating tension), over organising and commenting on the setting, the characters, and the plot development of

the story.[33] The reader is constantly reminded that there is an active mind or consciousness that tells a story.

At the same time the role that the narrator creates for itself opens a distance between the narrator and the characters within the story, making it clear that it and they exist on a different level, which is compounded by the fact that when the narrator seems to enter the mind of one of the characters, it often still speaks in its own voice, like in the examples given above. While the narrator is aware of what characters know and has access to their thoughts, and even at times focalizes the narrative through a story-character's eyes, it does not usually allow the characters to speak in their own voices in these situations. Except in dialogues, the narrator's voice rings loud and clear throughout the text and its presence is repeatedly asserted through direct reference to its controlling consciousness.

This narratorial voice draws the reader onto the side of sketching and commenting by sometimes including the (implied) reader in its references to itself: "The front of the house overlooking that portion of the lawn with which *we* are concerned was not the entrance-front [...]" (James 18). Drawing the reader into its confidence and suggesting that reader and narrator share the same perspective on the narrative puts them both into a position as 'observer-creators'. Including the reader in a shared 'we' can, firstly, be a device to solicit the reader's consent and to draw readers onto the side of the narrator so that they share its point of view.

Secondly, the way in which this and other examples like it are phrased suggests, at least to some degree, more than passive acquiescence on the part of the reader; it invites the reader to see himself or herself side by side with the creating and observing instance of the nar-

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[33] This relates to Genette's remark (167) about Proustian narrative, which however could equally be applied to *Portrait* and a host of other narratives, that the "narrator is present as source, guarantor, and organizer of the narrative, as analyst and commentator, as stylist [...] and particularly — as we well know — as producer of 'metaphors.'" The last point is one that I will return to again later.

rator and thus to some degree to actively share the role of the sketching, ordering voice. Other examples in which this kind of relationship between the reader and the narrator can be seen include the instances when the narratorial voice refers to Isabel as "our young woman" (see for example James 280) and "our heroine" (see for example James 250), which it does very often.

In addition to the suggested cooperation between narrator and implied reader in imagining the narrated world, the siding of narrator and (implied) reader – together with the above-mentioned distance between narrator and characters – creates the potential for ironies on which the narrator and the reader are in, but the characters are not. The relatively intimate rapport between narrator and (implied) reader, sharing information and observing together, is established in the first chapter, which sets the tone for wide parts of the novel. This cooperation is sometimes explicitly referred to by the narrator:

> "[...] Tell me what they do in America," pursued Madame Merle, who, it must be observed parenthetically, did not deliver herself all at once of these reflexions, which are presented in a cluster *for the convenience of the reader*. (James 176, my italics)

Returning to the topic of focalization, as I see it, leisurely surveying scenes from an outside perspective plays an important role in 'sketching the *Portrait*', as does seeing (in the concrete as well as an abstract sense) and therefore focalization through a character. Although voice plays a more important role for the present purpose of outlining the role of metaphors of possession in *Portrait* (since after all those metaphors are *spoken* and not *seen*), as already mentioned above, focalization is still an important topic in criticism of James and as such deserves a few remarks. As indicated at the beginning of the chapter, focalization through characters plays a crucial role in James's work in general, and particularly in his later novels. Indeed, having a central focalizor has been singled out as one of the distinguishing features of 'Jamesian style' by many critics.[34] This is especially true of situations where there are

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[34] See for example Anderson, Lodge.

several embedded levels of focalization: the focalizor imagines another character's view on yet another character, such as is the case in a scene from *The Ambassadors*, which is analysed by Lodge (200-226).[35]

If there are any traces of the kind of complex embedded focalization described above to be found in *Portrait*, they are precursory forms (Anderson 80-81). There are, however, some passages which could be seen as examples of embedded focalization, such as for instance the scene in chapter 40, when Isabel observes Mr. Osmond and Madame Merle "exchange ideas without uttering them" (James 349), or the meditation on her relationships with Lord Warburton and Mr. Osmond in chapter 42, where she thinks about Mr. Osmond thinking about her.

Another feature which is only partially realised in *Portrait*, but which nevertheless links *Portrait* with other novels by James, is the central focalizor or reflector. While other novels by James in which character-bound focalization plays an important role tend to centre on *one* focalizor, such as Strether in *The Ambassadors*, or Maisie in *What Maisie Knew*, in *Portrait* the attention shifts from character to character as they — usually — briefly become focalizors; there is therefore no exclusive focalization by one central character-bound focalizor in *Portrait*. Instead, there are often swift changes between different focalisers even within one scene. This is, for example, the case in chapter 17, when Isabel ponders over Mr. Goodwood's visit in the previous chapter and is surprised by Henrietta's entrance:

> [S]he had done what was truest to her plan. In the glow of this consciousness the image of Mr Goodwood taking his sad walk homeward through the dingy town presented itself with a certain reproachful force; so that, at the same moment the door of the room was opened, she rose with an apprehension that he had come back. But it was only Henrietta Stackpole returning from her dinner.
>
> Miss Stackpole immediately saw that our young lady had been 'through' something [...]. She went straight to her friend, who received her without a greeting. Isabel's elation in having sent Caspar Goodwood back to America presupposed her being in a

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[35] For embedded focalization also see Bal (156-160).

> manner glad he had come to see her; but at the same time she remembered Henrietta had no right to set a trap for her. (James 149)

In this extract initially, Isabel is the focalizor, with her perceptions in the focus of attention. After Henrietta's arrival, the perspective briefly switches to her vision of Isabel, and finally the focalization returns to Isabel again. There are two additional points worth pointing out about this passage. Firstly, while Henrietta's perspective is allowed some space, Isabel's focalization is still given more room. Isabel's story being the main focus of the novel, it is not surprising that passages in which she is the focalizor are very frequent and carry a special significance. Nevertheless, it is worth bearing in mind that Isabel is not the *only* character-bound focalizor.

Broadly speaking, most of the characters of the novel are granted (short) passages, which are told as perceived from their perspective, from main characters like Isabel to characters that play subordinate roles, like her suitor Mr. Goodwood, whose perceptions and thoughts are, for example, drawn upon in the closing paragraph of the novel: "On which he looked up at her [Henrietta Stackpole] — but only to guess, from her face, with a revulsion, that she simply meant he was young." (James 500).

The second point to be made about the passage with Isabel and Henrietta as focalizors is that even though Henrietta sees Isabel and the quotation marks for the word *through* could indicate that the narrator is quoting Henrietta's thoughts and thus 'giving her voice', Isabel is at the same time referred to as *our young lady*, so that the narrator's (and reader's) perspective intrude into Henrietta's. Bal states that "James is perhaps the most radical experimenter whose project was to demonstrate that [...] narrator and focalizor are not to be conflated" (147). Considering the comparative dominance of the narrator's voice even when a story-character becomes the focalizor, dialogue, i.e. direct speech addressed from one character to another, forms a strong contrast.

Dialogues are an occasion when the characters are unambiguously allowed to speak in their own voices, or in Genette's words "the narrator pretends literally to give the floor to his character" (172); and indeed the characters are given this opportunity very frequently. There are, however, instances when dialogues are not rendered as direct speech, and thus in "mimetic" form (ibid.), but instead are narrated and therefore presented in a hybrid form of the narrator's and the characters' voice that can be closer to one or the other in style:

> She defended England against his mother, but when Ralph sang its praises on purpose, as she said, to work her up, she found herself able to differ from him in a variety of points. In fact, the quality of this small ripe country seemed as sweet to her as the taste of an October pear; and her satisfaction was at the root of the good spirits which enabled her to take her cousin's chaff and return it in kind. (James 63)

Overall, though, dialogue is given quite a lot of space. It is not uncommon for dialogues to extend over several pages, with only very brief interjections by the narrator. The first chapter, for instance, features a nearly six page long dialogue (20-25), which is only sometimes interrupted by verbs of reporting speech, such as 'said' or 'asked' and a few very short descriptive statements, like "And the old man looked down on his green shawl and smoothed it over his knees" (James 20). This means that the characters' views, as presented in their own words, are given a great deal of weight and by the nature of their representation, i.e. without much interference by the narrator, stand in sharp contrast to passages dominated by the narrator's voice. This distinction of voices will become important in the analysis of James's use of metaphors of possession.

3.6. Voicing metaphors of possession in *Portrait*

In Portrait, the contrast between the voices of the narrator and that of the characters is, as will be argued, further emphasised by the way metaphors of commodification are used. For the purpose of illustrating this, the following section will look at the way two metaphors are used with respect to voice in detail: *to take hold of* and *to do something with*

someone. Other examples of metaphors of possession will be mentioned as appropriate for comparisons and to show in how far what is being said about two particular cases may or may not be applicable to other metaphors.

As regards metaphor in the context of narratology, Fludernik ("Cage Metaphor" 117) states that metaphor has received attention only insofar as concerns voice, i.e. in the context of the question whose language the metaphor belongs to, the narrator's or a character's language. This approach places metaphor in the realm of style, and thereby it is treated as a feature of voice rather than as a structural feature of narrative (ibid.). However limited the role of metaphor may appear to be from this point of view, the analysis of voice is still worthwhile in the case of *Portrait* since it can show how metaphors circulate among characters and the narrator. The analysis of the distribution of metaphors across different voices and in various contexts will then serve to substantiate the claim that the use of metaphors of possession in *Portrait* goes beyond matters of style and becomes an element of structure, in so far as it may help readers to distinguish between voices and when it is the voice of the narrator that can be heard and when the voice is probably closer to that of a character in situations where there is doubt about who is speaking (see also Fludernik 117).

The first occurrence of *to take hold of* occurs in the first chapter. As already mentioned, this chapter starts with a description of the setting in the narratorial voice. In a manner of speaking, this passage already introduces the frequently used financial vocabulary of *Portrait*, albeit only with literal meanings: "a shrewed American banker", "[the house] was offered at a great bargain" and "the successive owners [of the house]" (James 20). Here, this vocabulary does not necessarily arouse any special attention because it is used after all in a context where it would be expected, namely with reference to Mr. Touchett's profession as well as the buying and owning of property.

This, however, changes in the dialogue between Mr. Touchett, Ralph Touchett, and Lord Warburton. While the dialogue takes up and continues the literal use of financial terms, such as "banker", "rich" and "money" (James 22), there are also the first metaphorical uses of expressions of possession:

> "I quite agree with you, sir," Lord Warburton declared. "I'm very sure there will be great changes, and that all sorts of queer things will happen. That's why I find so much difficulty in applying your advice; you know you told me the other day that I ought to 'take hold' of something. One hesitates to take hold of a thing that may the next moment be knocked sky-high."
>
> "You ought to take hold of a pretty woman," said his companion. "He's trying hard to fall in love," he added, by way of explanation, to his father.
>
> "The pretty women themselves may be sent flying!" Lord Warburton exclaimed.
>
> "No, no, they'll be firm," the old man rejoined; "they'll not be affected by the social and political changes I just referred to."
>
> "You mean they won't be abolished? Very well, then, I'll lay my hands on one as soon as possible and tie her round my neck as a life-preserver." (James 22-23, my italics)

Whereas the first two instances, however vague with regard to the object to be grasped, could be understood in a literal way, the third one is undoubtedly metaphorical. If the first two examples are taken to refer to an occupation, a social position, or similar, as is suggested by the context, then even these are metaphorical uses of to take hold of.

Likewise, another expression that is at first used literally and can be understood in a metaphorical way later in the text is *interesting* and the corresponding verb *interested*.[36] Both *to take hold of* and *interest* (with all its corresponding forms, including the noun, verb and adjective) are introduced in dialogue by the characters themselves. Unlike Genette's narrator, who is the "producer of 'metaphors'" (167), in *Portrait* the characters themselves activate one of the most widely used source of metaphor in the text, namely the vocabulary of possession. Ultimately,

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[36] For a detailed thematic analysis of the term interest in James's work and in *Portrait* in particular see White.

it could of course be argued that the implied author is the producer of metaphors and this will be one reason for attributing structural status to (some) metaphors of possession. But for the moment the distinction between narrator and characters as producers of metaphors still is important, especially given the consistency of their roles in producing metaphors.

> [Henrietta Stackpole talking to Ralph]
> "Well, now, tell me what I shall do," said Ralph.
> "Go right home, to begin with."
> "Yes, I see. And then?"
> "Take right *hold of something*."
> "Well, now, what sort of thing?"
> "Anything you please, so long as you *take hold*. Some new idea, some big work."
> "Is it very difficult *to take hold*?" Ralph enquired.
> "Not if you put your heart into it."
> "Ah, my heart," said Ralph. "If it depends upon my heart —!"
> "Haven't you got a heart?"
> "I had one a few days ago, but I've lost it since."
> "You're not serious," Miss Stackpole remarked; "that's what's the matter with you." But for all this, in a day or two, she again permitted him to fix her attention and on the later occasion assigned a different cause to her mysterious perversity. "I know what's the matter with you, Mr. Touchett," she said. "You think you're too good to get married." (James 87-88, my italics)

In this passage again story-characters are the ones who use the metaphor and extend its range of readings, which will be discussed in detail in the chapter on stylistic aspects of the metaphors of possession. For now, suffice it to say that the phrase *to take hold of* circulates among Lord Warburton, Ralph Touchett and Henrietta Stackpole, who are coincidentally all trying to steer Isabel in different ways.

> Isabel learned from her the next morning that she had determined not to return to Gardencourt (where old Mr. Touchett had promised her a renewed welcome), but to await in London the arrival of the invitation that Mr. Bantling had promised her from his sister Lady Pensil. Miss Stackpole related very freely her conversation with Ralph Touchett's sociable friend and declared to Isabel that she really believed she had now *got hold of* something that would lead to something. (James 151, my italics)

From dialogue with direct speech, the metaphor filters into narrated speech, which as already mentioned can be seen as something of a hybrid form of voices, since the extent to which the narrator 'imitates' the character's direct statement can never be absolutely ascertained. In the present case the narrated version of speech, however, seems quite close to Henrietta Stackpole's own utterance, especially when comparing it to her usage of the same metaphor in direct speech above. The phrase *to take hold of* is still used in a rather vague manner and attributed to a story-character. It seems as if the narrator is holding off being too closely linked or with the source of metaphors of possession, as if it wanted to distance itself from them and not speak them in its own voice. This, however, finally changes with the penultimate instance of *to take hold of* in *Portrait*.

> It was surprising, as I say, the *hold it had taken of* her — the idea of assisting her husband to be pleased.
>
> It was surprising for a variety of reasons which I shall presently touch upon. On the evening I speak of, while Lord Warburton sat there, she had been on the point of taking the great step of going out of the room and leaving her companions alone. *I say* the great step, because it was in this light that Gilbert Osmond would have regarded it, and Isabel was trying as much as possible to take her husband's view. She succeeded after a fashion, but she fell short of the point I mention. After all she couldn't rise to it; something *held her* and made this impossible. It was not exactly that it would be base or insidious; for women as a general thing practise such manoeuvres with a perfectly good conscience, and Isabel was instinctively much more true than false to the common genius of her sex. There was a vague doubt that interposed — a sense that she was not quite sure. (James 356-357, my italics)

Here, it is undoubtedly the narrator's own voice that is speaking, which is emphasised by its use of the phrase "as I say". The phrase is even repeated, as is the concept of grasping or holding in the phrase "something held her". This marked shift in voice occurs simultaneously with significant changes in tense and syntax. Furthermore, the act of taking hold that has remained an unfulfilled promise up to that point, always spoken of but never carried out, is finally completed: only it is the object that the characters meant to take hold of that has taken hold

of a character (personified concepts have also been discussed in 2.8). Therefore, although the narrator holds off using the *to take hold of* in a metaphorical sense, when it finally does use the phrase, it adds a twist to the expression and significantly transforms it, so that the contribution of the narratorial voice to the development of the metaphor is highly meaningful and cannot be disregarded despite being less noticeable from a purely quantitative point of view.

The example of *to do something with (someone)* acquires its significance in a different way. As will be shown, the way in which this metaphor is used in two juxtaposed scenes serves to divide the characters into subgroups and to implicitly compare them.

> [H]e shouldn't inspire his cousin with a passion, nor would she be able , even should she try, to help him to one. "And now tell me all about the young lady,' he said to his mother. 'What do you mean *to do with her*?"
> Mrs. Touchett was prompt. "I mean to ask your father to invite her to stay three or four weeks at Gardencourt."
> "You needn't stand on any such ceremony as that," said Ralph. "My father will ask her as a matter of course."
> "I don't know about that. She's my niece; she's not his."
> "Good Lord, dear mother; what *a sense of property*! That's all the more reason for his asking her. But after that — I mean after three months (for it's absurd asking the poor girl to remain but for three or four paltry weeks) — what *do you mean to do with her*?"
> "I mean to take her to Paris. I mean to get her clothing."
> "Ah yes, that's of course. But independently of that?"
> "I shall invite her to spend the autumn with me in Florence."
> "You don't rise above detail, dear mother," said Ralph. "I should like to know what you mean *to do with her in a general way.*"
> (James 47, my italics)
>
> "*Do with her*? You talk as if she were a yard of calico. I shall *do absolutely nothing with her*, and she herself will do everything she chooses. She gave me notice of that."
> [...]
> "You've no plan of marrying her?" he smiled.
> "Marrying her? I should be sorry to play her such a trick! But apart from that, she's perfectly able to marry herself. She has every facility." (James 50)
>
> "What do you want to *do with her*?" he asked her at last.
> "What you see. Put her in your way."

> "Isn't she meant for something better than that?"
> "I don't pretend to know what people are meant for," said Madame Merle. "I only know what I can *do with them*." (James 211, my italics)

In both scenes the phrase occurs in a dialogue between two characters, who share a close personal relation: in the first case between mother and son and in the second instance between (ex-) lovers. Ralph Touchett introduces the phrase in a question, which he repeats after a few lines verbatim. Although the next occurrence is not phrased as a question it is still a request for information. His counter-part in the second scene, Mr. Osmond, too, asks Madame Merle exactly the same question mirroring Ralph Touchett's role and imitating to some degree his voice.

The respective answers then put the scenes into sharp contrast, so that the scenes linked through the use of the same phrase become in effect two juxtaposed passages. What is further noticeable is that the theme of love or marriage is explicitly connected with the vocabulary of power in the first scene, similar to the metaphor *to take hold of*, while in the scene with Mr. Osmond and Madame Merle this previously forged connection is exploited and the topic of marriage is only hinted at in Madame Merle's remark.

In the majority of the cases discussed here, the metaphors originate from the speech of the characters and are predominantly used in dialogue. Only rarely does the narrator take these metaphors up, clearly speaking them in its own voice, but when it does so, it transforms them so that another layer of meanings is added to them. This enhances the dichotomy between narratorial voice versus characters' speech, making them different in expression and in function, which is a point that I will return to in the section on rhetoric.

The example of to *do something with someone* furthermore shows that while the characters' speech may share certain traits, thus contrasting their voice and the narrator's, repetition is also used to contrast different subgroups of characters by juxtaposing scenes in which they use

the same metaphors but with significant differences in the effect on the reader and ultimately on the judgement about the characters.

The differentiation of voices thus plays an important part in analysing the use of imagery in *Portrait*. So far, the analysis of the use of imagery has been restricted to the question of who says what and therefore to issues of voice. What has been neglected is the question of which functions repetition as such may serve, or even more generally, which potential functions repetition has from a narratological point of view. This will be the focus of the next section.

3.7. Repetition in Portrait from a narratological perspective

In Genette's model repetition is mainly dealt with in terms of repetition of story events (113). That is to say repetition refers to the relationship between "the narrated events (of the story) and the narrative statements (of the text)" (Genette 114). Genette distinguishes four types of relations: an event that happens once is narrated once, an event that happens *n* times is narrated *n* times, an event that happens once is narrated *n* times, an event that happens *n* times is narrated only once (114-116).

Repetition in Genette's sense then applies to the kind of verbatim repetition the present analysis is concerned with only in a limited sense. The repetition of imagery is situated more on the side of narrative statements, and therefore the textual side, and does not necessarily coincide with the repetition of story events or only in the widest sense (see the example of the juxtaposed scenes above). Recurring forms of imagery would, therefore, be relegated to the realm of style. This view, however, contradicts the intuition that there are more links between the recurring instances of imagery in *Portrait* than can be explained by regarding the repetitions as a mere matter of style. Of course, what repetition does is to provide textual cohesion, but this is only one aspect of its functions.

The repetition of imagery in *Portrait* occurs across character boundaries and is therefore not a feature of speech that distinguishes any one particular character. What can be seen in the repetition of imagery by different characters across a series of scenes is the development of syntagmatic relationships between those scenes. They present the development of a theme through elaboration and juxtapositions and thereby the recurrence of imagery becomes a structuring device in a wider sense, rather than a mere stylistic quirk of the text:

> Two utterances, separated from one another both in time and in space, knowing nothing of one another, when they are compared semantically, reveal dialogic relations if there is any kind of semantic convergence between them (if only a partially shared theme, point of view, and so forth) (Bakthin qtd. in Sotirova 133).

In her article Sotirova treats repetition from a discourse analysis point of view combined with narratology. Her article deals with the phenomenon of repetition in indirect 'styles' in which the voices of narrator and characters partially blend and where it can be difficult to distinguish between voices. She claims that one of the functions repetition serves in this case is to differentiate between speakers and that repetition usually goes hand in hand with a change of the speaker, similar to the following example of direct speech:

> "I wait," Mrs Morel said to herself, "I wait, and what I wait for can never come."
>
> And a few lines down:
>
> "Oh!— Oh!— waitin' for me, lass?" (Lawrence qtd. in Sotirova 126)

The situation in *Portrait* is of course different, most of the repetitions of imagery occurring in dialogue anyway. With regard to repetition, dialogue in narrative seems to conform to the norms of normal conversations, with the participants taking turns, and signalling interaction with their interlocutor by repeating a word or a phrase (Sotirova 132). Repetition creates continuity in the discourse, and it also connects speakers

to the discourse and their interlocutors (ibid.). This is to some extent also true for dialogue in fictional texts.

At the same time, a written text that by all accounts underwent several stages of editing is more carefully planned than a spontaneous conversation, so that the repetition of certain elements implies a motivated choice (see also 2.2. on foregrounding): "repetition and its 'linguistics forms will be extremely significant' in 'highly crafted and planned' discourse" (Ehrlich qtd. in Sotirova 125). The repetition of imagery occurs after all across various characters and in more than one scene. Yet, like the turns in a conversation, these repetitions can be seen as linking up utterances across the boundaries of individual dialogues, so that characters take conversational turns across scenes: "through repetition, the perspectives of two characters or of a character and the narrator were shown to be related to each other, to arise as if in response to the other's point of view" (Sotirova 133).

The use of the same phrases would then mark a continuation of a discussion about a topic that was previously touched upon and the cue of the imagery is given for the benefit of the reader, who can more easily identify the return to the same topic with the help of the conventional conversational device of repeating a phrase. Through accumulating more and more instances of one metaphor, the reader may discern patterns of elaboration or juxtaposition. Repetition therefore "acts as a strong evaluative device when featured across speakers, or narrative consciousness" (Sotirova 131).

There are several instances in which the text explicitly stresses the repetition of phrases as such, so that the citational, "already spoken" (Sotirova 134) nature of the imagery is enhanced. This is for example the case with the first instance of *to take hold of*, which is presented in quotation marks, as something previously mentioned by Mr. Touchett and therefore as a continuation of an ongoing discussion. Another instance where repetitiveness is emphasised is the following remark by the narrator: "It was surprising, as I say, the hold it had taken of her"

(James 356). Interestingly, in both cases the reader does not get to hear, or rather read, the original statement that Lord Warburton and the narrator respectively are referring to. In the first case the conversation alluded to must have taken place before the starting point of the text and in the second case the narrator clearly has not mentioned "the hold it had taken of her" before.

Relating the issue of repetition back to the previous discussion of voice(s) in *Portrait*, it is interesting to note that while the recurring imagery can be seen as part of a progression or development of a theme, there is still a contrast between the positions of the characters and the narrator. According to Bakhtin the viewpoints of characters contrast ideologically with the narrator's and "he sees the different viewpoints wrought in the tissue of the narrative very much as 'rejoinders' in real conversation, although not spelt out as direct speech" (qtd. in Sotirova 133). Although the narrator rarely uses the same metaphors of commodification as the characters (which could be seen as a statement and a positioning in itself), when it does use the same kind of metaphorical expressions, it does so in a way that can be seen in dialogical relation to the characters' previous uses, responding to previous uses of the phrase in question. On the other hand, if characters use the same vocabulary independently from each other, there may be an effect of blurring individual borders of consciousness (cf Sotirova 126).[37]

But whether the repetitions are part of an elaboration of a theme, blurring the borders of individual consciousness, or present contrasting points of views, each recurrence subtly modifies the meanings of the metaphors in question. Bakhtin's 'dialogicity' is closely linked to the effects of repetition, there being continuous interaction between the instances of utterances that show any semantic similarities (Sotirova 133).

> "Whether uniting viewpoints in unison [...] or contrasting them [...], repetition acts as a powerful binding element that interrelates different characters' perceptions of each other and their

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[37] For effects of collective thinking or being in James also see Kurnick, 4.2. and 4.3.

world. So the properties of repetition seem to exceed its formal limits. The textual effects it creates cannot be explained by simply treating it as a formal cue [for a change of perspective]" (Sotirova 130)

Overall, repetition can be seen as a structuring device, interactively constructing meanings that arise from the interrelation between the individual instances of the linguistic units in question. The next section will further explore the rhetorical implications of such repetition in the special case of recurring uses of imagery across character boundaries and voices.

4. The critic's desire for possession

4.1. Introduction

Having explored some of the features of *Portrait* that might strike readers – like me – as remarkable, and having read some examples in more detail, the question remains "What does Jamesian style want [overall]?" (Kurnick 2007). To reiterate, the situation is the following one: in many respects the notion of 'possession', or more broadly that of 'commodification', is critically involved in structuring the plot as well as the discourse of *Portrait*. Commodification plays a significant role in the characters' dealings with each other, their speech and thoughts, and ultimately therefore, their characterisation. Economic transactions shape much of the 'outside' world in the novel – i.e. the setting of the novel in socioeconomically privileged circles, Isabel's inheritance, the occupations (or lack thereof) of the characters as bankers, collectors, landed gentlemen and so on – as well as the 'inside' world of the characters' minds – that is how they think about and see one another. Thus, the concept of commodification invades and pervades the text on all imaginable levels.

What effect or effects does this have? Given the omnipresence of possession and commodification, it appears reasonable to assume that these concepts might play a certain role with regard to the ethical and generally interpretative process of 'reading' the novel. This includes the evaluation of the characters that are involved in literal and figurative transactions and acts of possession, and the ethical framework of the novel as a whole. That is of course not to say that the characters' relation to possession or their use of the commodifying vocabulary are the only factor which comes into play in the ethical evaluation of the novel, but since it is a prominent aspect of the plot as well as the discourse level of the novel it is very likely to influence the reader's judgement. Furthermore, as mentioned in 3.7., the recurrence of particular phrasings of metaphors across scenes can be read as establishing links be-

tween those scenes and the characters in the scene, thereby inviting comparison and evaluation. Accordingly, the novel's treatment of possession can be seen as one of the many 'invitations' for interpretation in the text (see Phelan xi).[38]

To analyse the effect of these 'invitations', I will employ a rhetorical approach to the text. As already indicated in 1., the term 'rhetoric' as it is used in this analysis does not refer to the traditional concept of rhetoric, but to a theoretical approach closely related to narratology. It is, however, still related to rhetoric in the older sense of the word insofar as the 'rhetoric of fiction' is still concerned with what a text tries to "suade" readers of, that is what it tries reader to "accept" (Chatman 186-188). Rhetorical analyses of what texts try to do can take both metaphor (see for example Booth *Metaphor as Rhetoric*) and the concept of voice(s) (see for example Chatman, Kearns, Phelan) into account to explore different readings of texts.

This section thus will focus on how the use of commodifying expressions in conjunction with the use of voice can influence and structure readings of *Portrait*, bringing rhetorical concepts to bear on the text, while still drawing on the narratological as well as the stylistic features of the text already discussed. My analysis will look (again) at the notion of voice or voices, and their relation to evaluation exploiting their analyses as regards structure in the previous section. I will also examine the ending of the novel, which – due to its open nature – has lead to a

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[38] As he mentions in his preface, Phelan's approach to the rhetoric of narratives develops away from his initial position that sees rhetoric as "an author, through the narrative text, extending a multidimensional (aesthetic, emotive, ideational, ethical, political) invitation to a reader who, in turn, seeks to do justice to the complexity of the invitation and then responds" (xi). On the other hand, he also concedes that this earlier view of rhetoric is not necessarily irreconcilable with his later view, where "the lines between author, reader, and text become blurred" (Phelan xii). In my view it does not particularly matter whether the author or the text extend an invitation, or whether the invitation is imagined by a reader, if there is 'a party going on' (figuratively); and in the case of *Portrait*, there are at least three invitees (see Holland, Gilmore, White).

variety of different and sometimes diverging interpretations (see for example Anderson, Holland, Gilmore). In particular, I want to do a close reading comparing the beginning of the novel and the very end to show how these two juxtaposed scenes, which strategically use the vocabulary of commodification to create a link, can be seen to build an argument or a logical progression.

4.2. Characters as puppets versus characters as individuals

To begin with, this section will examine what the pervasive use of similar vocabulary across the speech of virtually all characters does to characterisation, and whether the characters in *Portrait* should be seen as puppets of the implied author, or as individual persons (who are still of course portrayed by an author and evaluated with reference to the implied author's stance towards them). To explain the rationale behind this categorisation of characters into two groups, I want to briefly mention an interesting interpretation of stylistic similarities across characters in James by Kurnick, who suggests that they can be seen as a sign of "a radically collectivist ethical imagination only tangentially related to the differentiating moralism of his plots" (214).[39] Kurnick distinguishes between 'melodramatic' readings of James, which emphasise the moral differentiation of the characters, i.e. "the differentiating moralism", and "an equally compelling vision of collectivity and universalism" (216).

This stance can be read to parallel Phelan's view of characters in novels, who can either be constructed as independent individuals, i.e. as "persons" differentiated also in moral terms, or who can serve as puppets, which are acting out particular roles to make a thematic argument for the implied author (49-50). Characters as puppets can be seen as

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[39] Another approach that sees consciousness in James as a phenomenon transgressing the borders of individual consciousnesses is Butte's 'deep intersubjectivity'. However, in contrast to Kurnick, whose analysis draws on stylistic features of the text, he bases his analysis on "the study of specific behaviors (gaze or look, embrace or kiss, two people alone, two people amidst others, more than two people)" (Butte 134).

always in a sense united by a shared consciousness, quite independently of what their specific role in a given story may be (Kurnick 216). I would suggest that one way of illustrating this seemingly slightly paradoxical situation is to imagine the shared consciousness as a space enclosed or created by a circle of people. The space exists by virtue of their presence and shared purpose in forming the circle, and while they each may occupy different positions in the circle, their connection and purpose also in a sense makes them equals.

Against such a model of distinguishing cases where characters behave more like puppets versus those who are allowed to act as individual persons, it could of course be argued that the characters in a text will always be puppets of the implied author to a certain degree, because after all they are the creations of an author who presumably has a purpose in mind when he or she creates the characters. However, it could be equally argued that the question is to what *degree* this is made apparent in the way characters are constructed in and by the text, i.e. how obvious it is made that they are 'the author's creatures'.[40] One issue that can play a role in the question to which degree characters appear more or less differentiated, or conversely the degree to which they are obviously joined by a common consciousness, is the uniformity of style in the diction of the characters' speech (Kurnick 215).

Writing about *The Wings of the Dove*, Kurnick remarks on a striking stylistic resemblance in the speech of its characters (215). They all tend to use a particular set of adjectives and furthermore the syntax of

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[40] The question what is perceived as 'natural', and hence will produce the impression of characters closely resembling real persons, and what is seen as 'artificial' is of course a minefield, as the debate whether 'showing' or 'telling' is superior or more 'natural' in Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* indicates. Nevertheless, as already stated in the sections on stylistics and narratology, the verbatim repetition of particular phrases across scenes and characters will in all likelihood attract the attention of the reader and can be seen as an indication of the contrived nature of the characters' speech and ultimately therefore of the constructed nature of characters themselves. In the particular case of *Portrait* one possibility of dealing with this phenomenon is that it *can* be read as an indication of a shared consciousness.

their utterances shows strong similarities (215). This creates an impression of uniformity in their speech and thus, so Kurnick argues, at least partially eradicates the boundaries between characters as independent individuals, uniting them under a common purpose:[41]

> "I am suggesting that one effect of this uniformity of style is to intimate a shared purposiveness on the part of these characters. The stylistic consistency of James's fiction lends them a sense of affective and intentional surplus — as if, whatever role they occupy in the story (villain, ingénue, ficelle), Jamesian characters are always haunted by an extra-diegetic consciousness of themselves as engaged in precisely those roles and thus in a larger fictional project." (Kurnick 216)

There is the feeling that certain ideas are bandied about — whether they be about beauty or commodification, as in *Portrait* — by the characters. Everyone seems to engage with the concepts in question, and in fairly similar ways, i.e. using the same terms and processes of thought, thereby uniting the characters in a sense, and making them transcend their individual roles in a way, i.e. they are "engaged [...] in a larger fictional project" (Kurnick 216). Ultimately, as Kurnick points out (see above), this repetitiveness of the characters' utterances can easily arise the suspicion that they are echoing the thoughts of an extradiegetic consciousness. But does *Portrait* fulfil the same conditions as *The Wings of the Dove*, in how far does what applies to *The Wings of the Dove* apply to *Portrait*?

There is an obvious condition that *Portrait* meets and in which it might even surpass *Wings of the Dove*: from parallels in the characters' (commodifying) relations with their fellow characters to verbatim repetitions, there are strong similarities in the speech of the characters — this point has already been discussed at length in the preceding chapters. Furthermore, as Kurnick points out for the case of *Wings of the Dove*, the same vocabulary that is used by the characters of the novel is also used in James's introduction, blurring the borders between author

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[41] Sotirova also thinks that repetition across character boundaries creates the impression of a 'shared' consciousness (126, see also section on narratology).

and characters (216); the same is true for *Portrait*. These parallels between the vocabulary of the preface and the characters' speech support the notion of an extradiegetic consciousness 'haunting' the characters, quite explicitly turning them into puppets with the strings visible (perhaps all too visible, as I would argue).

The fact that there are echoes of the novel's vocabulary in the preface — insofar as there are metaphors that share the concept of POSSESSION as source domain with the metaphors employed in the text of the novel — has already been briefly indicated (see section on stylistics).[42] As mentioned, some of the examples, such as *acquisition*, *back-shop*, and *dealer*, occurring in the preface are not significant from a quantitative point of view in themselves and might not be repeated verbatim in the narrative. As with hapax legomena in the novel they do, however, contribute to the vast body of vocabulary from the domains of POSSESSION and COMMODIFICATION and more importantly, the metaphors in the preface of course still use the same conceptual metaphors as those in the novel.

> All this is a long way round, however, for my word about my dim first move toward "The Portrait," which was exactly my *grasp* of a single character — an *acquisition* I had made, moreover, after a fashion not here to be retraced. Enough that I was, as seemed to me, in complete *possession* of it that I had been so for a long time, that this had made it familiar and yet had not blurred its charm, and that, all urgently, all tormentingly, I saw it in motion and, so to speak, in transit. (James "Author's Preface" 8, my italics)[43]
>
> The figure has to that extent, as you see, BEEN placed — placed in the imagination that detains it, preserves, protects, enjoys it, conscious of its presence in the dusky, crowded, heterogeneous *back-shop* of the mind very much as a wary *dealer* in precious

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[42] It could of course equally be argued that the vocabulary of the novel mirrors that of the preface, but since the preface was only written for the 1908 collected edition of James's works the point is moot. In any case, there are parallels in the author's stance and the attitudes of the characters in the narrative.

[43] Note the use of *grasp* in conjunction with *acquisition*, which can again be read as an instantiation of the conceptual metaphor TAKING SOMETHING INTO ONE'S HANDS IS POSSESSING IT or A THING I HOLD IN MY HAND IS MY POSSESSION (see also 2.7.).

odds and ends, competent to make an "*advance*" on rare objects confided to him, is conscious of the rare little "piece" left in deposit by the reduced, mysterious lady of title or the speculative amateur, and which is already there to disclose its merit afresh as soon as a key shall have clicked in a cupboard-door. (James "Author's Preface" 8, my italics)

That may be, I recognise, a somewhat superfine analogy for the particular "*value*" I here speak of, the image of the young feminine nature that I had had for so considerable a time all curiously at my disposal; but it appears to fond memory quite to fit the fact – with the recall, in addition, of my pious desire but to place my treasure right. I quite remind myself thus of the *dealer* resigned not to "*realise*," resigned to keeping the *precious object* locked up indefinitely rather than commit it, at no matter what *price*, to vulgar hands. For there ARE *dealers* in these forms and figures and treasures capable of that refinement. (James "Author's Preface" 8)

Other examples from the preface numerously occur in the text of the novel itself as well, like *precious*, *object*, and *possession*, of which the latter is especially intriguing. In *Portrait*, it is often abstract concepts, such as ideas that 'take possession of' characters, instead of characters taking possession of things or other characters as is the case with many of the other instances in which vocabulary from the domain of POSSESSION is used (see also 2.8.). Here too, the characters are taken possession of, but in this case it is the author that claims ownership of them (see also in the first example above).

I seem to myself to have waked up one morning in *possession* of them – of Ralph Touchett and his parents, of Madame Merle, of Gilbert Osmond and his daughter and his sister, of Lord Warburton, Caspar Goodwood and Miss Stackpole, the definite array of contributions to Isabel Archer's history. (James "Author's Preface" 12, my italics)

In any case, the most important point about these metaphor is that they describe the author's relation to his characters. Theoretically, James could have chosen any number of other metaphors to describe his relation to the characters of the novel, metaphors that do not use POSSESSION or COMMODIFICATION as their source domains. That he does on the one hand indicates his stance towards his creations, and on the

other hand it echoes the characters' language in the text. Both factors can be taken as further evidence for an extradiegetic consciousness – that is the (implied) author's consciousness – haunting the characters of the narrative.

Regarding the influence of the narrator – as opposed to that of the (implied) author – as far as the characters' roles as individuals or as a collective are concerned, within the narrative itself, the voice of the narrator positions itself as a voice opposite the characters' voices. As already outlined in 3.5., the narrator asserts its presence quite strongly, using phrases such as "I say" and giving explanations for the benefit of the reader. As far as diction is concerned, the narrator's own voice is fairly distinct from that of the characters, using metaphors of commodification only rarely, and then mostly in situations when it is focalising through a character so that it is not understood as source of the metaphor.[44] This could be seen as further emphasising the fusion of the characters' voice with that of the implied author's as opposed to the narrator's (see also below for further purposes of this 4.3., 4.4.).

There are, however, other additional factors, apart from diction, to consider in relation to the narrator's role when trying to evaluate how its stance in the narrative shapes the characters' roles. For instance, at the beginning and through wide stretches of the text, the omniscient narrator uses its privilege to invade characters' minds, demonstrating its powers. Towards the end of the novel, it (sometimes) refuses to make use of this privilege (see 4.4., 4.5.), which might be interpreted as giving the characters more independence or at least the *appearance* of independence. This in turn seems to give the characters more power and

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[44] On the other hand it should be conceded that the narrator occasionally overrides this effect by asserting its presence in the vicinity of a metaphor, thus aligning itself *more* with the proposition than it might otherwise be the case (although even in such cases the narrator's voice still might not unambiguously be the source of the metaphor itself).

consequently makes them less likely to appear as anyone's puppets, whether the narrator's or the implied author's.[45]

Overall, there are therefore many factors, based on the language of the characters in *Portrait* and that of the author in his preface, that point to some kind of collectivity. At the same time this does not necessarily mean that the characters are *always* represented in such as way as to turn them into 'mere' puppets, and especially towards the end of the novel the narrator's stance changes in ways that make it more likely for characters to be perceived as independent individuals. A further point that adds to the characters' individuality is that (although their speech shares many traits) the reader is often invited to see differences in their attitudes towards commodification (see 4.3. below). The notions of collectivity and that of morally differentiated characters as individuals thus coexist in *Portrait*, though not always happily or in a way that is easy to resolve for the reader. The next section will continue to examine this uneasy co-existence and the implications of a sort of collective consciousness for the moral evaluation of the novel.

4.3. Evaluation, moralism, and *Portrait*

Having established a strong probability that there is a focus on making the characters appear to tap into a common source of ideas, or in other words a 'collective consciousness', the question remains what purpose this serves. According to Kurnick

> Both James's moralism and his perspectivalism [...] imply a poetics of division and differentiation. The Jamesian doctrine of "establishing one's successive centres" of consciousness — committed as it is to subtle accounts of individual temperament and thought process — seems perfectly suited to this project [...]. But

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[45] Gilmore remarks "[The narrator's] awareness of [Isabel] as a distinct and separate individual has never been stronger, and even when he enters her consciousness to report that Goodwood's voice 'seemed to come through a confusion of sound,' he distances himself from what she is thinking; he calls her confusion "a subjective fact" that exists only 'in her own head'" (72).

> [...] the style of James's writing actually interrupts the operation of this paramount Jamesian formal principle, inundating the drama of moral and perspectival difference in a bath of stylistic indistinction.
>
> We might thus venture that one thing Jamesian style wants is to replace the differentiating energies of the drama of consciousness with an equally compelling vision of collectivity and universalism. While this vision of collectivity proceeds from a certain stylistic sharing among characters, it also blurs the boundary between author and character in late James.[46] (Kurnick 216)

The blurring of the boundary between author and characters has already been discussed above. The following part of the analysis will try to examine possible implications of this for the evaluation of the characters. It could for instance be assumed that the shared consciousness might either function as a moral leveller in some way and take away the emphasis from moral evaluation altogether, or that on the other hand engaging with the same idea might in fact draw attention to the differences between characters because they choose different stances to the concept of commodification.[47]

What, then, are the options of evaluating the characters? One approach might be to look at the inherently evaluative character of the metaphors used so prominently in the characters' speech themselves. As pointed out by various critics (see for example Ho 150, Lakoff and Turner 65) metaphors are inherently evaluative constructions because they describe one concept in terms of another one, transferring particular features and characteristic from one domain to another, so that they automatically represent a particular stance towards the target concept. This is due to the fact that metaphors exploit positive or negative emo-

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[46] *Portrait* is of course not a late work, but as mentioned above, it shares some characteristics with the features Kurnick describes in relation to *Wings of the Dove*.

[47] The idea that shared consciousness can be exploited to foreground differences between characters might seem to contradict Kurnick's statements above, which see differentiating moralism versus collectivity as opposites. Yet, Kurnick also argues that this does not preclude characters from fulfilling different roles ("villain, ingénue, ficelle") (216).

tive values towards the concepts or domains that are used to describe the target domain (Ho 149). Mapping POSSESSION to LOVE in the way *Portrait* does and USEFUL OBJECTS or COMMODITIES to PEOPLE, or more generally COMMODIFICATION to PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS, signifies a materialist outlook on life, where everything is seen in terms of its market value and economic principles are applied even to abstract concepts and emotions.

Common sense suggests that characters who treat other characters as serviceable objects or glittering prizes to be added to their collections are morally corrupt. Given that all characters engage in this kind of thinking to a greater or lesser degree, an (extreme) option to evaluate them would be to deny any moral differentiation between the characters whatsoever. An alternative would be to try to distinguish between 'better' and 'worse' characters (as a variant of the typical distinction between good versus bad characters), and a third possibility would be to argue that there is great ambiguity in the way the characters are portrayed. I will argue for the latter option and try to show how this is achieved by offsetting a moralising plot with a collectivist consciousness, so that the question of morals cannot be resolved satisfactorily. It will also be argued that ultimately the excessive use of metaphors of commodification fulfils functions other than (or in addition to) moral evaluation, but first I will discuss the other two possibilities of evaluating characters (and why I do not think they apply).

Leaving aside the reader's personal moral values, parallels in framework of the author's values and those in the ones of his characters suggest that their behaviour is – at least up to a certain degree – condoned by the implied author, provided that his statements in the introduction can be taken as they are and are not ironic or sarcastic.[48] Of course the use of particular imagery does not reflect the moral values of the implied author in all its complexity, and conversely merely because characters employ the same kinds of expressions in their speech does

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[48] See also Kurnick's remarks about the blurring of borders between author and character (216).

not mean that their actions and stances are necessarily in accordance with the values of the implied author. But even so, the connection via a shared repertoire of vocabulary and metaphor still appears to align the author with the characters, adding more weight to their actions and behaviour than if they had not been 'sanctioned' by him. This can be interpreted as a   reason not to assume a straightforward framework of evaluation that distinguishes good from bad characters according to whether they see other characters as commodities or not.

Nevertheless, *Portrait* is not structured in such a way that suggests complete levelling of moral judgements. There are two important factors which indicate that the not all characters are meant to be evaluated negatively (or positively) in an absolute sense and that there is some sort of differentiation between them. Firstly, as already mentioned several times, parallel scenes invite comparison between characters and while attention is drawn to these scenes through the repetition of certain expressions, the way these scenes are written still suggests that their purpose is to highlight differences between characters rather than emphasise similarities, although it is of course these very similarities in the speech of the characters that allow a direct comparison in the first place. As explained in the previous chapter, the repetition of the phrase *do something with someone* allows the reader to make a comparison between a scene involving Ralph Touchett and his mother and another scene between Madame Merle and Osmond. While it is the repetition of the phrase that first draws the reader's attention to the connection between the scenes, the reader will realise that Ralph is joking, while Madame Merle and Osmond are not (although they too try to sound witty and blasé).

Regarding the second option (a distinction between good and bad characters), Anderson remarks that in *Portrait* James sets up a system for evaluating characters according to whether they use other characters purely for their own ends — the 'exploiters' — or whether they seek to support other characters' development — the 'appreciators' (196, 202). Thus, within the novel (disregarding the author's preface) it seems clear

that mercenary characters are 'bad' (or at least those who are *more* mercenary than others). Anderson categorises Ralph as an appreciator because he wants to support Isabel her in her self-realisation (Anderson 202, 114), even though this then ironically turns out to be the reason for her loss of self-determination. Osmond, by contrast, is of course an exploiter in this model (114), as presumably is Madame Merle, since she instigates the scheme that Osmond marry Isabel for her money. Isabel herself is seen as a combination of appreciator and exploiter by Anderson, because while she selfishly 'uses' her suitors, she still is not a true egotist like Osmond (114). It should be noted, that Anderson's distinction between appreciators and exploiters is based on *plot elements (*and the symbolism of objects and places in *Portrait)*, whereas Kurnick's assessment of *Wings of the Dove* and my analysis of *Portrait* so far have focused on *linguistic* features of the text.

In addition to the plot elements pointed out by Anderson, there are also some linguistic and narratological clues that suggest a certain moral differentiation between characters. For instance, the text encourages an identification of the reader with Isabel, referring to her as 'our' heroine (see also 3.5.); this ensures that Isabel gets a greater deal of sympathy than other characters. Furthermore, important or particularly evocative scenes are often focalised through Isabel, like for example her meditation on her relationship with Osmond in chapter 42.[49] This gives her point of view comparatively more weight than that of many other characters , so that there is at least one character that will in all likelihood receive more empathy from the reader than those characters whose point of view is not taken as often or only in less evocative scenes (although, as pointed out previously, the focalizor still changes frequently, see 3.5.). Even though Isabel voices her share of mercenary thoughts, and, as Anderson points out, tends to see her suitors in terms

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[49] Booth argues that inside views, especially sustained inside views, of characters tend to make readers wish those characters well, no matter whether they have faults or not (*Rhetoric of Fictio*n 245-246).

of how useful they are to her (114), she is thus still more likely to be seen in a positive light than as a bad (or morally undifferentiated) character.

Discussing *The Wings of the Dove*, Kurnick (215) argues that the very blatancy of the distinction between 'good' and 'bad' characters in *Wings of the Dove* might suggest that there must be more to the matter than is obvious at first glance. In the case of *Portrait* it would seem that plot elements – with Isabel as a victim – clearly suggest some moral differentiation between characters (see Anderson), supported by the way focalisation is used to assure empathy for Isabel.[50] In addition, the repetition of certain metaphorical expressions may sometimes contribute to this effect by foregrounding contrasts between characters. These distinctions may not be so blatant as to arouse immediate suspicion on the part of the reader, but to use Kurnick's words, there is a certain "moral obviousness" (215) that is challenged when the wealth of material *Portrait* offers for interpretation, such as the use of metaphor, is further examined.

For one (as mentioned above), while it is true that in specific cases verbatim repetition may serve to underline differences, and thereby function to differentiate characters, overall, the shared body of vocabulary of commodification still creates the impression of sameness and shared ideas, signifying an overarching framework of thinking that all characters participate in. Furthermore, the ambiguities built into the language of commodification (see 2.8) and its superabundance suggest other functions than that as a heuristic to divide the characters into two simple categories – appreciators and exploiters or 'good' and 'bad'. In

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[50] See also the narrator's direct appeal to the reader to show empathy for Isabel: "Altogether, with her meagre knowledge, her inflated ideals, her confidence at once innocent and dogmatic, her temper at once exacting and indulgent, her mixture of curiosity and fastidiousness, of vivacity and indifference, her desire to look very well and to be if possible even better, her determination to see, to try, to know, her combination of the delicate, desultory, flame-like spirit and the eager and personal creature of conditions: she would be an easy victim of scientific criticism if she were not intended to awaken on the reader's part an impulse more tender and more purely expectant" (James 56).

addition, the above mentioned parallels in the author's voice and the characters' speech throw further doubt on a view of the characters' apparently commodifying patterns of thinking as inviting moral judgement. Therefore, as stated by Kurnick (216), there seems to be a contrast between a morally differentiating plot and a certain collectivism, in *Portrait* as well as in *Wings of the Dove*.

This situation with two conflicting impulses that make straightforward moral judgements difficult might be a reflection of James's attitude towards morality in fiction. As Holland points out, James dismisses conventional morality as "inane" in his preface, favouring instead richness material and liveliness as worthwhile ends in writing (9-10):

> Recognising so promptly the one measure of the worth of a given subject, the question about it that, rightly answered, disposes of all others — is it valid, in a word, is it genuine, is it sincere, the result of some direct impression or perception of life? — I had found small edification, mostly, in a critical pretension that had neglected from the first all delimitation of ground and all definition of terms. The air of my earlier time shows, to memory, as darkened, all round, with that vanity — unless the difference to-day be just in one's own final impatience, the lapse of one's attention. There is, I think, no more nutritive or suggestive truth in this connexion than that of the perfect dependence of the "moral" sense of a work of art on the amount of felt life concerned in producing it. (James "Author's Preface" 6)

With one plane of the narrative, the stylistic collectivism, upsetting as I have said, another plane of the narrative, namely the differentiating plot, the result is what might be called a 'rhetoric of ambiguity'. The text simultaneously allows and subverts moral evaluation, providing rich material for interpretation even as any attempts to draw definite conclusions are undermined by the inconsistencies produced in the interplay between the differentiating moralism of the plot and the collectivism in style.

4.4. Author and narrator: artist, dealer, and critic

Having established that the way metaphor is used in *Portrait* serves to subvert facile moral judgments, I want to return to the issue of how the author (as he represents himself in the "Author's Preface") and the narrator are positioned and how this influences the reading and interpretation process. It has already been pointed out that for the most part the author's voice is positioned closer to those of the characters than that of the narrator's. I will argue that not only do the voices of the author and the narrator differ in their use of metaphor (see above), but they also differ very frequently in the social values they communicate, and thus in their "voices" in Phelan's sense (see below). There are, however, also some important aspects of the author's and the narrator's social voices that overlap, with both speaking as (literary) critics.

The concept of 'voice' used here is slightly different from that introduced in the section on narratology. Both approaches are very useful for analysing the processes of narrating and evaluating *Portrait*; both acknowledge that 'voices' change fluidly and therefore create the impression of 'heteroglossia', which Kearns (97) even refers to as one of the fundamental expectations a reader has towards narrative – readers expect changes in narrating voices, expect shifts and a certain instability. To put it roughly, readers expect the story to be narrated by the voices and stances of different characters over the course of the text. These are the common denominators in approaching the concept of 'voice'.

What distinguishes the two models of voice discussed here is their stance towards its relation to character. In Kearns' approach, one character or other narrating entity equals one 'voice' to put it simply. That does not mean that Kearns does not allow for changes within this voice over the course of the text (97), but to me it would seem that one narrating 'entity' still remains one voice. "Narrating voices" therefore refers to the changes between narrating entities (83, 97). In principle, an ap-

proach similar to Kearns' has been applied in the chapter on narratology.

In Phelan's approach, by contrast, voice is a concept between style and character (44, 47). One narrating 'entity', whether it be an omniscient narrator or a focalizor, may speak in various 'voices', representing various stances, in the course of a text, and therefore embody several social voices (see above). In Phelan's framework, an adaptation of the Bakhtinian concept of voice, voice comprises "style, tone, and values" (45). Similar styles, that is utterances that share characteristics such as vocabulary or syntactic features, can be voiced in different tones, and thus communicate different values (Phelan 45):

> "[...] for inferences about personality and ideological values, style is a necessary but not a sufficient condition: by itself style does not allow us to distinguish between possibilities. The same sentence structure and diction may carry different tones and ideologies – and therefore different personalities – while the same personality and ideology may be revealed through diverse syntactic and semantic structures."

A useful concept to understand the workings of the 'shared' consciousness between characters and the (implied) author is Phelan's "double-voicing" (46).[51] Double-voicing takes place when for one reason or another, the reader gets the impression of hearing the authorial voice 'behind' a narrator's or character's voice (Phelan 47). The reasons for this effect may have to do with diction, tone, or the social values conveyed in an utterance, with Phelan placing special importance on the latter (Phelan 47).

In *Portrait* it is the shared style of speech, and more specifically the shared repertoire of metaphors of commodification, that is likely to first attract the reader's attention. As already discussed at length, verbatim repetitions and the abundance of these specific type of metaphor in general create the impression that the characters are 'haunted' by an extradiegetic consciousness (see above). Another factor that contributes to

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[51] Phelan uses and adapts the term "double-voicing", which was originally coined by Mikhail Bakhtin (46).

being able to hear the author's voice quite clearly is, as also already explained above, the fact that James uses similar metaphors in his preface. Since James deals with the theme of commodification quite extensively in his preface, and since it is his voice that can be heard as overlaying the characters' voices in the text of the novel, it is worth looking more closely at how the theme of commodification is dealt with in the preface to the novel, before coming back to the voices of the characters themselves.

In the preface, James adopts several seemingly contradictory voices, which can be seen as undercutting each other ideologically. On the one hand the reader can hear an artist's voice for whom the creation of the characters comes as a stroke of inspiration; they are then nurtured in his imagination: "The figure has to that extent, as you see, *been* placed — placed in the imagination that detains it, preserves, protects, enjoys it, conscious of its presence [...]" (James "Author's Preface" 8).

But as already mentioned previously (2.5.), in *Portrait* the motives of commodification and the aesthetic are often entangled (see also White, Gilmore above). In the second half of James's sentence the artistic voice appealing to the aesthetic is undermined by the use of metaphors of possession, trivialising the artistic achievement into mundane processes of acquisition, mimicking the diction of a shrewd dealer of precious objects, and thus commodifying art:

> "[...] in the dusky, crowded, heterogeneous *back-shop* of the mind very much as a wary *dealer* in precious odds and ends, competent to make an "advance" on rare objects confided to him, is conscious of the rare little "piece" left in deposit by the reduced, mysterious lady of title or the speculative amateur, and which is already there to disclose its merit afresh as soon as a key shall have clicked in a cupboard-door." (James "Author's Preface" 8).

It is true of course that the use of quotation marks to a certain extent displaces some of the terms from the implied author's voice and emphasises that he is mimicking someone else, distancing himself somewhat from the picture of himself as a petty dealer in literary

oddities.[52] However, the language of commerce is quite persistently present as part of the author's voice, sometimes distancing, but equally sometimes almost unselfconsciously aligning himself with a mercenary ideology, and fusing it with the 'artistic voice':

> "I seem to myself to have waked up one morning in *possession* of them – of Ralph Touchett and his parents, of Madame Merle, of Gilbert Osmond and his daughter and his sister, of Lord Warburton, Caspar Goodwood and Miss Stackpole, the definite array of contributions to Isabel Archer's history." (James "Author's Preface" 12).

This appreciation of art, and the voice of an artist or connoisseur are frequently echoed in the speech of characters in *Portrait*; characters appreciate other characters for their artistic, aesthetic values: "'A character like that,' [Ralph] said to himself – 'a real little passionate force to see at play is the finest thing in nature. It's finer than the finest work of art – than a Greek bas-relief, than a great Titian, than a Gothic cathedral. [...]'" (James 65). But again, the aesthetic is undercut and taken from its pedestal by introducing the voices of commerce and art as entertainment, turning the characters 'collectors' or 'consumers':

> "[...] It's very pleasant to be so well treated where one had least looked for it. I had never been more blue, more bored, than for a week before she came; I had never expected less that anything pleasant would happen. Suddenly I receive a Titian, by the post, to hang on my wall – a Greek bas-relief to stick over my chimney-piece." (James 65)

Like the author, the characters also often use devices to slightly distance themselves from the social voices or values they appeal to. In Ralph's case, his utterances can frequently be understood to be voiced in a slightly humorous tone. The same could be said of many characters, including Osmond, Madame Merle, and Isabel herself, who all use tone as a device to distance themselves from the values expressed. But still, to a greater or lesser degree, the characters all speak in the voices of the

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[52]Gilmore describes this ambivalent attitude as follows: "James's self-presentation of the writer as a capitalist in the Preface to *The Portrait* coexists there with its own negation" (68).

artist/dealer-hybrid as the examples already given in the preceding sections might indicate, showing aesthetic appreciation, while also commodifying other characters.

Concerning the narrator's voices, the first voice the reader hears is a genteel voice at home in the aristocratic surroundings it describes (which is devoid of commercial language, except for literal references to Mr. Touchett as a banker and so on):

> Under certain circumstances there are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea. There are circumstances in which, whether you partake of the tea or not — some people of course never do — the situation is in itself delightful. (James 1)

Thus, what sets the narrator apart from the characters' and the author's voices is that of those metaphors of commodification examined only a small fraction of instances is unambiguously voiced by the narrator itself (as opposed to occurring in characters' dialogues and thoughts), so that it rarely uses the voice of commerce. For the most part the narrator thus ostensibly distances itself from participating in the discourse on commodification and thereby establishes a position for itself apart from commercialisation. At the same time, the narrator can use its voice to create ironies, mimicking certain expressions used by the characters that play on the theme of commodification, which occupies so much of the characters' speech and thoughts, and thus echoing (or double-voicing) the voice of commodification, such as when it states that characters are taken possession of by ideas (see also 2.7. Representing ambiguity).

But an even more important feature that connects the narrator to the author is that the narrator's range of voices includes that of a critic, which can be seen as a reflection of the authorial voice, because the voice of the critic also appears in the preface.

> Altogether, with her meagre knowledge, her inflated ideals, her confidence at once innocent and dogmatic, her temper at once exacting and indulgent, her mixture of curiosity and fastidiousness, of vivacity and indifference, her desire to look very well and

> to be if possible even better, her determination to see, to try, to know, her combination of the delicate, desultory, flame-like spirit and the eager and personal creature of conditions: she would be an easy victim of scientific criticism if she were not intended to awaken on the reader's part an impulse more tender and more purely expectant. (James 56)

On a side note, it could be argued that the critical voice of the narrator symbolically takes possession of the characters in making judgements like the one above. In contrast to the intertwining of the voices of the artist and the dealer, the critic is, however, not involved with possession explicitly (on the linguistic level), but on a purely intellectual level. While the narrator thus ostensibly does not use metaphors of commodification in its speech for the most part, it is still in a sense engaged in processes of commodification. It could be argued that Osmond fulfils both criteria, and Gilmore even sees Osmond's imagination as that closest to the author himself of all characters (54).

Interestingly, it is the ordering, abstracting, penetrating voice of the critic, which for example tells the reader how to read characters, that is conspicuous by its absence at the end of the novel (see also 2.5.). The last discernible trace of this voice is a direct address of the reader at the beginning of the last scene in which Isabel is present:

> I have said that she was restless and unable to occupy herself; and whether or no, if you had seen her there, you would have admired the justice of the former epithet, you would at least have allowed that at this moment she was the image of a victim of idleness. (James 495)

From this point onward, the narrator ceases to interpret and analyse for the reader, to share the insights of the critic who sees 'through' characters. Having previously been invited to join the narrator in this capacity, the reader is left alone with the unmanageable task of interpreting the elusive meanings of the very last scene between Isabel and Goodwood. The following section will analyse this scene in more detail, and especially with regard to its use of the vocabulary of commodification and the narrator's presence or absence in its role as critic.

4.5. Ending *Portrait*

> With strong handling it seems to me that it may all be very true, very powerful, very touching. The obvious criticism of course will be that it is not finished. that I have not seen the heroine to the end of her situation – that I have left her *en l'air*. – This is both true and false. The whole of anything is never told; you can only take what groups together. What I have done has that unity – it groups together. It is complete in itself – and the rest may be taken up or not, later. (James *The Notebooks of Henry James* 18)

To briefly recapitulate what happens to and around Isabel on the plot level: James sets up world in which people and their relationships are seen in terms of commodification and possession. Isabel, who deliberately rejects overly materialist attitudes, is thrown into this commodity world when her aunt takes her to England. Initially Isabel radiates a naive innocence of the mercenary actions that the other characters around her are familiar with, but her idealistic thinking is accompanied by a lack of funds, making her dependent on relatives. Eventually, Isabel makes an inheritance, which gives her economic freedom (or burdens her as it later turns out). She is now free to pursue her own interests and is financially secure.

But Isabel's newfound freedom is soon taken from her – or rather she gives up this freedom – when she becomes part of Mr. Osmond's collection of possessions, and has to 'trade in' freedom of thought and her person to become Osmond's wife. Slowly turning into a useful and beautiful possession without a will of its own to be shown off in public by her husband, she struggles with her commodification at the hands of her husband (or with the *idea* of her husband's possession as the case may be, see 2.8.) and his demands that she use her influence over Lord Warburton to secure him as Pansy' husband.

Then, as Ralph's health fails and Isabel's aunt requests her presence at Gardencourt, the reader gets a sense that on some level she finally manages to transcend this narrow world and the idealistic naivety she shows at the beginning of the novel: acting against husband's wishes she visits Ralph, and in refusing to serve only her husband's purposes in

a sense she breaks away from the role of a serviceable tool he has cast her in, a role she recognises and very aptly describes in a meditation on their relationship:

> She saw, in the crude light of that revelation which had already become a part of experience and to which the very frailty of the vessel in which it had been offered her only gave an intrinsic price, the dry staring fact that she had been an applied handled hung-up tool, as senseless and convenient as mere shaped wood and iron. (James 468)

Nevertheless, the very ending of the novel is deeply ambiguous, with Isabel returning to her unloving husband. The question of why she decides to return and the significance of this decision for her development as a character is not satisfactorily revealed by the text itself and has been interpreted in diverging ways. Holland, for instance, believes that Isabel's decision is based on a feeling of obligation toward her husband and his daughter, which make any other decisions impossible (51). Anderson, in contrast, thinks that Isabel's rejection of Goodwood is based on the fact that she "is still afraid of sexual love, still essentially virginal in spite of years of marriage" (119), while Gilmore argues that Isabel has chosen "mental" freedom over "experiential" freedom and that the author is as much in the dark about what Isabel might do next as the reader, since he has stopped plotting for her, granting her a sort of freedom (72-73).

Doubtful that there is a definitive answer, I want to look instead at the way that the reader is systematically denied closure. The premise for this is of course that the text does not have a conclusive ending. If the ending could be understood as closure, Isabel's final decision to return to Rome would have to be understood either as success or defeat; neither seems to apply here. For a conventional 'happy' ending there would have to be some sort of reconciliation between Isabel and her husband, such as him admitting that he was wrong to alternately treat her as part of his collection of precious objects and as useful tool for engineering a prestigious marriage for his daughter, but there is no possibility of that. An unhappy ending would, for example, have Isabel ruefully crawl back

to her possessive husband to forthwith submit to his will unconditionally. This does not seem to apply either.

While it might appear as if Isabel admits defeat and resignedly returns to her husband, her quiet serenity as she leaves Mr. Goodwood and her determination to return to Rome, even though she is offered the opportunity to escape, make her appear paradoxically successful, or at least emancipated, although this emancipation may have come too late to give her any real freedom, since she is still trapped in her marriage. Of her true motivation to return to Rome the text reveals little, leaving the reader somewhat puzzled. Even rereading does not seem to bring the insight needed to decide what kind of ending there is for Isabel, except that it is wide open (while at the same time it must be paradoxically clear for the character herself; she has come to some sort of decision, only it is not shared as such with the reader).

The inability to access Isabel's thought processes — because the narrator does not choose to reveal more of the decision making process — leaves the reader with little to work with as regards Isabel's motivations. Furthermore, Isabel's attitude towards her commodification and what her decisions might imply for the theme of commodification as such also remain open to question.[53] I will now examine the evocative scene in which Goodwood tries to persuade Isabel to leave her husband and come with him to America regarding the treatment of this theme and its connection to the subversion of closure,

Goodwood surprises Isabel in the garden and grasps her by the wrist: "She had had time only to rise when, with a motion that looked like violence, but felt like — she knew not what, he grasped her by the wrist and made her sink again into the seat." (James 496). He tries to persuade her to leave her husband and come with him to America, which she, however, refuses. After she has already refused him, he kisses her, which is described as an "act of possession":

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[53] Some of her thoughts are revealed in her midnight meditation in chapter 42, but there is nothing that gives any indication about her motivations to return to Rome in the last chapter.

He glared at her a moment through the dusk, and the next instant she felt *his arms about her* and his lips on her own lips. His kiss was like white lightning, a flash that spread, and spread again, and stayed; and it was extraordinarily as if, while she took it, she felt each thing in his hard manhood that had least pleased her, each aggressive fact of his face, his figure, his presence, justified of its intense identity and made one with this *act of possession.* (James 499, my italics)

What the text does here, I would argue, is take up the 'knot' introduced by the metaphor of Lord Warburton's 'taking hold' of a pretty woman from the beginning of the text. The proposition made at the beginning of the text is literally carried out, when Mr. Goodwood physically takes hold of Isabel, in an act that seems like violence to Isabel, and is further elaborated when he kisses her after their long talk. The correspondence between beginning and ending is supported by the use of a metaphorical expression, namely *this act of possession*, that draws on the same conceptual metaphor as the metaphor in the first chapter (LOVE IS POSSESSION). The text thus creates an arc from the beginning to the end of the novel. The theme of 'taking possession' and commodification is reinforced by the narrator using its privilege of invading Isabel's mind and focalising the kiss from her point of view. Isabel is thus literally and symbolically 'taken hold of'.

Like in the rest of the novel, however, possession is represented in a deeply ambiguous way. On the one hand, Goodwood overrules Isabel's plea to leave her alone, and takes possession of her, but on the other hand, Isabel rejects this act of possession and Mr. Goodwood's proposition; in fact she has done so before the kiss even takes place. The act of possession has therefore already been undermined even before it takes place, making it futile. Thus, while the scene at the ending of the novel returns to the proposition suggested by the phrase *take hold of a pretty woman* at its very beginning, this arc does not bring closure, and the desire for possession shown by the characters of the novel has once more been thwarted.

However, as already pointed out, this cannot be regarded as a victory or an act of emancipation for Isabel either. As Holland remarks,

while it may appear as if Isabel were actively making a choice, she is has in fact made her choice in marrying Osmond, and everything that follows after this decision has been made are merely the effects of this momentous step – effects which she is forced to bear because her conscience will not let her escape the consequences of her own actions (51). Another point that raises doubt about how actively Isabel resists being commodified and becoming the possession of other characters is the narrator's assertion that "she had an immense desire to *appear* to resist" (James 499, my italics), which diminishes Isabel's achievement and does not represent her as emancipated from other characters' attempts to 'take hold of her'.

Despite these ambivalences in Isabel's behaviour and her motivations, when the kiss between Goodwood and her breaks, she seems resolved and serene: "She had not known where to turn; but she knew now. There was a very straight path" (James 500). For the reader, however, this path is anything but clear, making this insight into Isabel's thoughts deeply ironical, especially since Isabel is subsequently removed from the picture and the closing passage takes place between Henrietta Stackpole and Goodwood, whom Henrietta informs of Isabel's departure from London to Rome, giving the reader information about Isabel only second hand.

Over all, the ending highlights the way metaphors of commodification are used to structure the text, imposing links between related scenes. On the other hand, the ending also shows a tension between the interpretation of metaphors and the plot level, in so far as although Goodwood seems to 'possess' Isabel for a moment, her refusal in advance of the act makes it unproductive, making it part of the endless series of unfulfilled, unsuccessful acts of possession throughout *Portrait* (see also 2.8. Representing ambiguity). The open ending of *Portrait* is therefore again an instance of a situation where the thematic treatment of commodification – carried on in the text's use of metaphors drawing on the concept of commodification – and the plot are at odds, supporting the effect of denying closure. In general, the 'knots' or embedded

mini-stories represented by metaphors which are not borne out in the main part of the narrative create tensions, just as de facto acts of possession on the plot level may be called into question by the way metaphor is employed, so that certain parts of the text will always upset other parts. These opposing forces in the fabric of the narrative can be seen as indications that *Portrait* is what Phelan refers to as a "stubborn" text (Phelan 178).

4.6. *Portrait* as a stubborn text

> "Well," said Miss Stackpole at last, "I've only one criticism to make. I don't see why you promised little Miss Osmond to go back."
> "I'm not sure I myself see now," Isabel replied. "But I did then."
> "If you've forgotten your reason perhaps you won't return."
> Isabel waited a moment. "Perhaps I shall find another."
> "You'll certainly never find a good one."
> "In default of a better my having promised will do," Isabel suggested.
> "Yes; that's why I hate it."
> "Don't speak of it now. I've a little time. Coming away was a complication, but what will going back be?" (James 478)

Denying easy conclusions while providing a lot of material to evaluate at the same time, *Portrait* could be described as a "stubborn" text — that is a text resisting interpretation by design (compare Phelan 178). Phelan remarks that interpretation as an academic endeavour is often drawn to texts which offer some sort of 'challenge' in terms of understanding them, with the task of interpretation being to overcome the obstacles created by the text and to present a 'solution' to the puzzle (177-178).

Phelan suggests that there are two different kinds of resistance to understanding: the first he calls "the difficult", which is a recalcitrance that can eventually be overcome by putting sufficient effort into the decoding process, whereas the second type of recalcitrance, "the stubborn", cannot be resolved, and in fact contributes vitally to the experience of reading and the meaning of the narrative itself (178-179). The term 'stubborn', then, applies to those narratives that have resistance

against being successfully pinned down by interpretative efforts built into the text itself. Useful as this distinction may be it should also be noted that Phelan does not (and cannot) offer any clues where to draw the line between the difficult and the stubborn. Nevertheless, the concept of stubborn texts seems useful to describe the effect of texts defying straightforward interpretations.

I want to argue that there are correspondences between Phelan's view of the experience of reading, interpretation, and textual recalcitrance and my view on *Portrait*, which thus can be categorised as an example of the stubborn. *Portrait* is and will remain elusive, no matter in which ways criticism tries to pin it down in particular readings.[54] One reason may be a gap between interpretation or existing explanations of *Portrait* and the experience of reading the text (see also Phelan 175). The novel provides rich material for interpretation, which is reflected in a great number of articles, books, chapters in books. Nevertheless, none of these interpretative efforts, I would venture, can 'interpret away' the sense of confusion at the denial of closure at the end of the novel, even as the text suggests that there is some sort of closure for Isabel, who has made the resolution to return to her husband.

Regarding the emotional response to *Portrait* (which of course can only be experienced and judged on a limited subjective base), as mentioned, there is a sense of serenity in the way Isabel exits warring with confusion, because while Isabel may see a straight path set out for her, this is not necessarily the experience of the reader. Where irony has previously worked on characters, it now works on the reader, with the narrator and character on one side of chasm, the reader on the other side and no indication in the text itself of how to close the distance. Where previously the narrator often seemed to have invited the reader to side with it, and see himself or herself as a fellow critic, it withdraws without explanation, pulling the rug from under the reader's feet. Isabel appears to have come to a resolution, which she keeps to herself, except

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[54] See for example the interpretations of Anderson, Holland, Gilmore, White.

for some vague hints, and the narrator refuses to interfere to make things clearer for the reader. Interpretative efforts might try to find a solution to the puzzle that the ending presents, but there are enough ambiguities built into the text even before the ending to make the success of this endeavour questionable, leaving the reader a futile task all for himself or herself.

The difficulty arising from contradictions between embedded narrative (i.e. metaphor) and 'main' narrative have already been outlined above. Although the text insistently draws attention to metaphors of commodification, which are presented in the beginning as an invitation for interpretation, engaging with them does not bring closure. To give some more examples of the tensions between metaphor and main plot, Isabel, for instance, thinks of Osmond as her precious possession (James 365), while on the main plot level she gets trapped into marriage by him. Furthermore, Ralph sees Isabel as a valuable (and entertaining) piece of art to become part of his collection, but he also worries about her welfare and about whether she has enough money to fulfil her own dreams and persuades his father to leave her half of his inheritance (James 65, 164-165).

This tendency of contrasting main narrative and embedded narratives is again exploited at the end of the novel, as discussed above. The phrase used to describe the kiss that Mr. Goodwood initiates reminds of beginning of text, taking up the conceptual metaphor of LOVE IS POSSESSION; Isabel rejects being taken possession of. On the other hand, just as Isabel seem to have been able to emancipate herself, she intends to return into the institution that has taken possession of her, her marriage to Mr. Osmond. In fact, what do all her rejections of suitors throughout the narrative mean, when the most mercenary act of possession still holds? While the plane of collective thinking about commodification (in the text's use of metaphor) seems to suggest fluidity of roles, both failures and successes, and a certain aimlessness at times, on the main plot level – although Isabel 'escapes' from Lord Warburton and Goodwood –

Isabel's marriage to Osmond is a tragic, seemingly irreversible act of commodification.

Overall therefore *Portrait* is a text which seems to invite interpretation, provides rich material, but at the same time refuses to yield any satisfactory conclusions. It forces readers who want to get to grips with the open ending of the novel, and its treatment of the concept of commodification, to reiterate, to trace back their steps, only to encounter possibly even more ambiguities or recalcitrance. Tellingly, Phelan refers to interpretation as a "desire to make texts yield up their secrets, to take *possession* of them" (180, my italics). Gilmore as well remarks that "the deliberate ambiguity or open-endedness of the conclusion can be understood as an effort on James's part to renounce complicity in 'the ownership of human beings'" (72-73). This desire for possession, I would argue, is thus thwarted in *Portrait* at the same time as the text's recalcitrance stimulates the critic's desire to possess.

5. Concluding remarks

> They are but windows at the best, mere holes in a dead wall, disconnected, perched aloft; they are not hinged doors opening straight upon life. But they have this mark of their own that at each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other. He and his neighbours are watching the same show, but one seeing more where the other sees less, one seeing black where the other sees white, one seeing big where the other sees small, one seeing coarse where the other sees fine. And so on, and so on; there is fortunately no saying on what, for the particular pair of eyes, the window may NOT open; " fortunately" by reason, precisely, of this incalculability of range. (James Author's Preface 7)

> [...] I have lost myself once more, I confess, in the curiosity of analysing the structure. (James Author's Preface 9)

In a sense, the stubbornness of text that the last section has tried to demonstrate makes an attempt at writing a 'conclusion' futile to a certain degree; instead I want to briefly look back on how I got from linguistic foregrounding to textual recalcitrance.

A thread that runs throughout the whole of this analysis is that it tries to explore the uses of the concept of commodification as a structuring element of *Portrait* on the level of discourse, plot, and the reading of an overall meaning of the text. Although of course it is by no means the only organising principle that can be used to show connections and counterpoints in the text, my analysis has tried to outline why and how metaphors of commodification may become a device for imposing structure.

This may happen on the discourse level, with metaphor being used to distinguish the voices of the narrator and the characters, or to draw attention to parallel scenes. But metaphor can also be used to counterpoint the plot of the main narrative in mini-stories that offer alternative plot developments, such as Isabel taking possession of Osmond, or Ralph's remarks at the beginning of the text that have Lord Warburton grasp a woman in a Tarzan-like manner. Furthermore, the phrasing of

metaphors relating to commodification often indicates aimlessness or lack of success in the characters' attempts to commodify other characters.

In parallel to the text's thematic engagement with commodification through its use of metaphor, the plot of the novel likewise deals with the theme of possession. As mentioned, these two strands – plot and use of metaphor – in the text often intertwine (see mini-stories), but frequently pull in different directions. In the end, neither strand offers closure and their oppositional tendencies further complicate any attempts to draw definitive conclusions.

Another source of tension is the fact that the characters can be either seen as individual persons or as puppets of an extradiegetic consciousness, and while the text makes both readings possible, there are clashes in the implications when choosing on over the other. Overall, any tensions and contradictions can be seen as part of the process of creating density and a richness of material which characterises James's ideal of writing (see "Author's Preface").

This style, which makes the text resistant to conclusive interpretations because of its wealth of conflicting clues, denies the closure that readers and critics desire. The ironies that work on the novel's characters, who thrive for possession but whose desires are thwarted, in the end also seem to work on the reader, who wants to grasp the meaning of Isabel's actions. Thus, in denying closure, the text perhaps can be said to enact on the reader the experience of thwarted desire for possession.

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7. List of Tables

Data represented in tables extracted with

Anthony, Laurence. "AntConC Build 3.2.2.1m." *Laurence Anthony's Website.* <http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html>. Web 1 May 2011.[55]

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[55] AntConc has been updated since the original research for this paper was undertaken and the version of AntConc used in this analysis is no longer available from Anthony's website.

8. Index

9. Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Analyse von Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady* untersucht das Werk hinsichtlich seines Gebrauches von Begriffen aus dem Bedeutungsfeld der Kommodifizierung und Kommerzialisierung, insbesondere mit dem metaphorischen Gebrauch dieser Begriffe und den Bedeutungen dieser Metaphern, sowie mit narratologischen und rhetorischen Gesichtspunkten der Verwendung von Metaphern in *Portrait*.

Während die Anwendung eines korpuslinguistischen Ansatzes das Ausmaß und die Vielfalt des Vokabulars aus dem Feld der Kommodifizierung verdeutlicht, zeigt das kognitiv-linguistische Modell von Metaphern ('conceptual metaphor') von Turner und Lakoff, dass die verwendeten Kommerzialisierungsmetaphern oft die Beziehungen der Romanfiguren zueinander als 'target domain' teilen. Einerseits sind häufig Frauen — wie die Protagonistin Isabel Archer — das Ziel der gewinngierigen Machenschaften männlicher Charaktere, andererseits machen auch weibliche Figuren Gebrauch von diesen Metaphern, wodurch etwa Isabel Archer ihre Opferrolle auf der Ebene des Plots unterminiert. Was die Beziehung von Metaphern der Kommodifizierung zum Plot anbelangt, so können diese als 'mini-stories' mit eigenem Plot betrachtet werden, die in unterschiedlicher Relation zum Haupterzählstrang stehen können — verstärkend, erläuternd, oder antagonistisch.

Darüber hinaus gilt es zu hinterfragen, welche Implikationen die ubiquitäre Präsenz des Konzeptes der Kommerzialisierung und Objektifizierung für den Leseprozess und die Evaluation der Charaktere haben könnte. Besonders hervorzustreichen sind in dieser Hinsicht auffällige Parallelen zwischen dem Vokabular der Einleitung des Autors zum Vokabular der Romanfiguren selbst. Der Autor beschreibt seine Beziehung zu den Charakteren von *Portrait* in Metaphern, welche die Figuren als Waren mit materiellem Wert darstellen — ebenso wie die Charaktere dies in Aussagen über ihre Beziehungen zueinander tun. Die Ähnlichkeit im Sprachstil — und den damit vermittelten Werten — von Autor

und Romanfiguren ist einer der Gründe, aus denen sich *Portrait* einer geradlinigen Interpretation nach konventionell moralischen Gesichtspunkten entzieht.

Auch die Ähnlichkeiten zwischen dem Stil des Erzählers und der Einleitung des Autors sind für die Interpretation von großer Bedeutung; beide sprechen als „Kritiker" und es scheint so, als ob der Erzähler den Leser dazu einlade, auch selbst die Position eines Kritikers einzunehmen, indem er Phrasen wie 'our heroine' („unsere Heldin" beziehungsweise „unsere Protagonistin") verwendet, Einblick in die Gedankenwelt der Figuren gibt, und somit dem Leser erlaubt, Urteile über die Charaktere zu fällen. Diese Beziehung zwischen Erzähler, Leser, und Charakteren wird am Ende des Romans durch die Verweigerung des Erzählers, in die Gedanken der Protagonistin Isabel einzudringen, problematisiert; wodurch auch das Streben der Leserin nach Beherrschung der Romanfiguren durch Interpretation des Textes aufgezeigt wird. Da der Leserin die Gedankenwelt der Charaktere nicht mehr zugänglich ist, und die Motive für Handlungen somit nicht mehr erklärbar sind, wird eine metaphorische 'Inbesitznahme' oder 'Vereinnahmung' der Charaktere durch eindeutige Interpretation verhindert.

Zusammenfassend ist festzustellen, dass das Konzept der Kommodifizierung eine zentrale Bedeutung in *Portrait* einnimmt, auf der Ebene des Plots, als Stilelement, und für den Lese- und Interpretationsprozess.

10. Lebenslauf

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