

Sound, Speech and Silence in “The Jolly Corner”

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Henry James’s ghost story “The Jolly Corner” was published in 1908. Like *The American Scene*, published one year earlier, “The Jolly Corner” testifies to James’s complex response to his motherland after 20 years of living abroad. In the story under consideration, Spencer Brydon returns to the United States after 33 years in Europe. This essay intends to approach the question of Brydon’s experience from the auditory perspective. Henry James’s ghost stories are usually silent. Both humans and ghosts are quiet. Even dialogues are soundless since they are generated by the characters’ sub-conscious. In “The Jolly Corner,” James dramatizes the ghost hunting game when, at midnight, Spencer Brydon is the only living soul in the jolly corner and silence reigns over the house. Yet, if we listen carefully, we can hear sound and speech within the silence. This essay, therefore, will first reveal how James uses sound to transfer Brydon from the human into the ghostly realm, where his psychological self-examination takes place. It will then explain how speech and silence function in James’s presentation of Brydon’s psychological exploration, analyzing the dialogue of self and other, the confrontation of conscious and unconscious by means of Lacan’s mirror theory. Finally, by revealing what the ghost says, this essay argues that the ghost hunting is not only a metaphor for Brydon’s

self-recognition, but also for James's own sense of place in his reevaluation of American culture and European culture when he, like Brydon, returned to the United States after a twenty-year absence.

SOUND WITHIN SILENCE

The story builds up juxtapositions of two parallel worlds: the present and the past, the realized and the potential, choice and regret, all pointing, finally, to Europe and the United States. The story, like James's other ghost tales, is pervaded by silence. Yet sound is heard through the encroaching silence, functioning as a gateway through which Brydon moves from the human world into the ghost world, where he is determined to meet his American alter ego.

As Brydon steps into the haunted house, he lingers, listens, and focuses "his fine attention, never in his life so fine, on the pulse of the great vague place" (*JC* 86). Brydon begins his exploration by listening to the pulse of the house, which, although apparently empty, is full of life for him. Compared to the almost inaudible pulse of the house, the American scene he experiences when he comes back, is "all mere surface sound" (*JC* 86-87). Brydon

projected himself all day, in thought, straight over the bristling line of hard unconscious heads and into the other, the real, the waiting life; the life that, as soon as he had heard behind him the click of his great house-door, began for him, on the jolly corner, as beguilingly as the slow opening bars of some rich music follows the tap of the conductor's wand. (*JC* 87)

Sounds are used to transfer Brydon to the world of ghosts, the past and the unrealized potential of his life. James compares the "click" of the "great house-door" to "the tap of the conductor's wand" that initiates a sequence of "some rich music."

Repeatedly, James resorts to the effect of sound to reinforce the transition into that mysterious world which is both of the past and the present. When Brydon steps into the house, tapping his walking-stick along the marble floor, the click it makes beckons him back to the world of the past: "He always caught the first effect of the steel point of his stick on the old marble of the hall pavement, large black-and-white squares..." (*JC* 87). The effect is

the dim reverberation *tinkle* as of some far-off *bell* hung who should say where?—in the depths of the house, of the past, of that mystical other world that might have nourished for him had he not, for weal or woe, abandoned it. (*JC 87*; my italics)

The "dim reverberation tinkle of some far-off bell" awakens the mystical other world, so that the jolly corner is both real and virtual, real as the past of Brydon's childhood, virtual as his possible other self.

Comparing this mysterious other world to a "great glass bowl," "the concave crystal," James further pursues the sound effect. Brydon "placed his stick noiselessly away in the corner—feeling the place once more in the likeness of some great glass bowl, all precious concave crystal, set delicately *humming* by the play of a moist finger round its edge" (*JC 87*; my italics). Here, the image of concave crystal conveys both visual and auditory implications. While concave crystals are lenses used to focus sight, quartz crystal lenses can also transmit sounds. Running a moist finger round its edge will send it "delicately humming." This "indescribably fine murmur of its rim was the sigh ... of all the old baffled forsworn possibilities" (*JC 87*). The "great glass bowl" of "the concave crystal" contains the other world, Brydon's unrealized American life.

Sound within silence functions as the transition from one world to the other, delivering Brydon to the world of the past and his unfulfilled potential, and James to the drastically changed American scene from which he had been away for years.

SPEECH AND SILENCE

As the sound of the tinkling bell beckons Brydon from the human world to the ghost world, he is determined to confront his other self, to articulate the "old baffled forsworn possibilities" (*JC 87*). The ghost hunting dramatizes the process of self-recognition through the confrontation of the conscious with the unconscious, self with other. James combines the ghostly with the philosophical. Hunting for the ghost, Brydon is the one who speaks, who has the power of discourse whereas the ghost remains silent. However, the ghost, at first oppressed, assumes the power of speech at the end of the story, revealing to Brydon what he desires but dares not see, and to James what he was shocked to realize. In the silent "chamber of consciousness," while hearing only a monologue, we are aware of two speakers.

In the novella, this ghostly other represents the stunted life of Brydon, “the small tight bud” “blighted for once and for ever” before it grows into “full blown flower” (*JC* 84). It is a life that is unrealized, the other side of Brydon, the unconscious that has been repressed. The ghost, like the human sub-conscious, remains obscure and elusive. He is hunted and hard-pressed, driven to the corner or behind the door, deprived of the right of speech.

Besides the Freudian idea of the conscious and the sub-conscious, the relation of Brydon and the ghost resembles metaphorically that of self and other in the sense proposed by Jacques Lacan. Before confronting his alter-ego, Brydon insists, “He isn’t myself. He is the just so totally other person” (*JC* 85). Brydon definitely regards his alter ego as an “other,” in Lacan’s sense that self consists of the other. And Brydon immediately adds, “But I do want to see him. And I can. And I shall” (*JC* 85). This again supports Lacan’s theory that the subject relies on the other, and that the concept of I is formed through the recognition of the other.

According to Lacan, the mirror stage is the process of identification, “the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image—whose predestination to this phase-effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytic theory, of the ancient term *imago*” (*Écrits* 2). The concept of the mirror stage derives from the “mirror test” conducted by French psychologist Henry Wallon in which a six-month old infant and a baby chimpanzee of the same age are put in front of a looking glass. Dylan Evans explains, “in 1936–49, Lacan seems to see it is a stage which can be located at a specific time in the development of the child with a beginning (six months) and an end (eighteen months),” yet by the early 1950s “Lacan no longer regards it simply as a moment in the life of the infant, but sees it as also representing a permanent structure of subjectivity” (118). Lacan assigns a twofold value to the phenomenon of the mirror stage: “In the first place, it has a historical value as it marks a decisive turning-point in the mental development of the child. In the second place, it typifies an essential libidinal relationship with the body-image” (qtd. in Evans 118). Therefore, the mirror stage is a phase “in which the subject is permanently caught and captivated by his own image” (Evans 118).

Lacan’s “mirror stage” is dramatized twice in the novella when Brydon and his alter ego are face to face. The first episode is when Brydon realizes the ghost is just behind the door, and the second mirror scene appears at the end of the novella, when Brydon is ambushed by the ghost and forced to face

his alter ego. The two mirror scenes, constituting two climaxes in the novella, lead to the subject's self-recognition by means of identification with the other, and the revelation of the unconscious. Yet, while in Lacan's theory, the mirror stage is a visual scene, in "The Jolly Corner," the visual contact is accompanied by the dialogical monologue of Brydon, especially in the first mirror scene, when visual communication is obstructed by the closed door.

When Brydon comes back to the house again one night, he is immediately aware that something is different. He says of the ghost, "He's there, at the top, and waiting – not, as in general, falling back for disappearance. He's holding his ground" (*JC* 89). While Brydon feels a mixture of fear and curiosity, the ghost closes the door which had previously been left open. Facing the closed door, Brydon realizes the ghost is on the other side, "this time at last they were, the two, the opposed projections of him, in presence" (*JC* 92). Here, the "opposed projection" clearly presents the scene of the mirror. Nevertheless, Brydon is psychologically unprepared to see the other side of himself, the self that he had chosen not to be:

It was the strangest of all things that now when, by his taking ten steps and applying his hand to a latch, or even his shoulder and his knee, if necessary, to a panel, all the hunger of his prime need might have been met, his high curiosity crowned, his unrest assuaged—it was amazing, but it was also exquisite and rare, that insistence should have, at a touch, quite dropped from him. (*JC* 92)

Brydon hastens to the door and places his hand on the doorknob but he lacks the courage to open the door, or to face directly his other self, that part of himself that he had relinquished in the past but wishes to get back:

He wouldn't touch it—it seemed now that he might *if* he would: he would only just wait there a little, to show, to prove, that he wouldn't. He had thus another station, close to the thin partition by which revelation was denied him; but with his eyes bent and his hands held off in a mere intensity of stillness. (*JC* 93)

Between the subject and its other, there is only a thin partition. This is a symbolic matrix in which "the I is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject" (Lacan, *Écrits* 2).

In Lacan's mirror scene, the subject sees his reflection in the mirror, communicating visually with it. In the mirror scene of "The Jolly Corner," however, Brydon is conscious of his alter ego's presence, but cannot see him. The communication is not through visual contact, but the soundless dialogue between self and other, the speaking Brydon and the silent ghost. Brydon, as the central consciousness of the novella, speaks for himself and for the ghost. According to Lacan, who emphasizes the power of language, the subject is the one who speaks. It is "language" that "restores to" the I "its function as subject" (*Écrits* 2). In contrast to the speaking Brydon, the ghost remains silent. His silence echoes "the blank face of the door" (*JC* 92). However, silence does not mean speechlessness, and blankness is not nothingness. As John Auchard comments, "In James's fiction, vitality often comes from the force of silences... Language itself becomes anti-language, and silence—not merely dumb tribute to the incommunicability of things—becomes charged expression and the major force of human action" (Auchard 8). Looking into the "blank face of the door," Brydon reads the ghost's silence as a challenge: "Show us how much you have!" (*JC* 92). The ghost, wearing a mask of blankness, "stared" and "glared back" at Brydon (*JC* 92). Brydon recoils:

He *listened* as if there had been something to hear, but this attitude, while it lasted, was his *own communication*. "If you won't then—good: I spare you and I give up. You affect me as by the appeal positively for pity: you convince me that for reasons rigid and sublime—what do I know?—we both of us should have suffered. I respect them then, and, though moved and privileged as, I believe, it has never been given to man, I retire, I renounce—never, on my honor, to try again. So rest for ever—and let *me!*" (*JC* 93; my italics)

The contact between Brydon and his image—the ghost—turns into the former's "own communication." It is Brydon who speaks for his other self and the ghost is deprived of the right to speak. Yet the silence of the ghost does not mean that he is totally at the mercy of Brydon. Brydon himself clearly feels the challenge and horror through the silence and blankness.

In this first mirror scene, Brydon the subject tries to build up his ego, eager to meet his apparitional other. Yet the mirror fails to be reflective. Brydon cannot see his imago reflected in the mirror. He is projecting his self into emptiness. The other is still blocked and the unconscious remains unrevealed. His attempt at self-recognition by means of identification with the other

is frustrated, albeit due to his own cowardice. This sense of frustration is reinforced by the silent and empty town. Corresponding to the silence of the ghost and the blankness of the door, outside the haunted and haunting house, the town wears the mask of void and stillness. It is not emptiness but a denial of revelation. It seemed to Brydon

he had waited an age for some stir of the great grim hush; the life of the town was itself under a spell—so unnaturally, up and down the whole prospect of known and rather ugly objects, the blankness and the silence lasted. Had they ever, he asked himself, the hard-faced houses, which had begun to look livid in the dim dawn, had they ever spoken so little to my need of his spirit? Great builded voids, great crowded stillnesses put on, often, in the heart of cities, for the small hours, a sort of sinister mask, and it was of this large collective negation that Brydon presently became conscious—all the more that the break of day was, almost incredibly now at hand, proving to him what a night he had made of it. (*JC* 93-94)

He yearns to hear "some stir of the great grim hush," yet "the blankness and the silence lasted." The city holds its secret, has "spoken so little" in spite of the need of his spirit. The "great builded voids, great crowded stillnesses" constitute this "large collective negation." The ghost, putting on a "sinister mask," refuses to reveal himself, which, in turn, leads to the second mirror scene.

The second mirror scene appears at the end of section two of the novella. While Brydon didn't dare to open the door previously, the ghost opens the door for him this time: "an appearance produced, he the next instant saw, by the fact that the vestibule gaped wide, that the hinged halves of the inner door had been thrown far back" (*JC* 95). Now the door opens, transforming itself into a mirror. Brydon "gaped at his other self," "a man of his own substance and status," "rigid and conscious, spectral yet human" (*JC* 96).

In the last scene of ghost hunting in the jolly corner, the ghost finally reveals himself before Brydon:

The indistinctness mocked him even while he stared, affected him as somehow shrouding or challenging certitude, so that after faltering an instant on his step he let himself go with the sense that here *was* at last something to meet, to touch, to take, to know—something all unnatural and dreadful, but to advance upon which was the condition for him either of liberation or of supreme defeat. (*JC* 96)

The previously absent other now acquires a presence: “It gloomed, it loomed, it was something, it was somebody, the prodigy of a personal presence” (*JC* 96). The repressed sub-conscious speaks through its presence, informing Brydon of what he wants to know. One important idea forwarded by Lacan is that unconsciousness functions as speech. He takes pains to prove that Freud’s theory actually does interpret the unconscious as language, although in Freudian theory the unconscious is not language. Lacan proposes the famous formula that “the unconscious is structured like a language” (*Seminar* 20). He argues that “the unconscious is neither primordial nor instinctual” (*Écrits* 170); it is primarily linguistic. The unconscious (ness) also has the function of language.

At this moment, it is Brydon who, being appalled, loses his voice, his power to speak: “Horror, with the sight, had leaped into Brydon’s throat, gasping there in a sound he couldn’t utter” (*JC* 96). The ghost is now the powerful one. As the ghost

had advanced as for aggression, and he knew himself give ground. Then harder pressed still, sick with the force of his shock, and falling back as under the hot breath and the roused passion of a life larger than his own, a rage of personality before which his own collapsed, he felt the whole vision turn to darkness and his very feet give away. (*JC* 97)

Just as Lacan “situations aggressivity in the dual relation between the ego and the counterpart” (Evans 6), the ghost is aggressive, exerting a menacing pressure on Brydon.

The power of the ghost in the novella undergoes a transformation from timidity to ferocity. At first, the ghosts in the jolly corner are mere echoes, formless and immaterial: “The concave crystal held, as it were, this mystical other world, and the indescribably fine murmur of its rim was the sigh there, the scarce audible pathetic wail to his strained ear, of all the old baffled forsworn possibilities” (*JC* 87). And it is Brydon who insists on turning these formless, immaterial echoes into ghostly existence: “What he did therefore by this appeal of his flushed presence was to wake into such measure of ghostly life as they might still enjoy” (*JC* 87). This is the first stage of ghost hunting. The ghosts are formless, mere “murmuring sighs,” a scarcely “audible pathetic wail.” It is the recurrent presence of Brydon that awakens them into ghostly life. These ghosts are initially harmless:

They were shy, all but unappeasably shy, but they weren't really sinister; at least they weren't as he had hitherto felt them—before they had taken the Form he so yearned to make them take, the Form he at moments saw himself in the light of fairly hunting on tiptoe, the points of his evening-shoes, from room to room and storey to storey. (*JC* 87)

In the novella, Brydon, as the one who speaks, initially wields power. It is Brydon who is determined to meet the ghost. In the world of apparitions, Brydon is "an incalculable terror" (*JC* 88). He is the one who hunts down the ghost while the latter is terrified, dodging, retreating and hiding. As Martha Banta observes, "Previously the emphasis in James's supernatural tales had been on the man haunted, whether by externally visible ghosts or by invisible apparitions of self. Now there is a noticeable rise of interest in the man who not only finds himself haunted, but haunting others as well" (136).

But as the ghost is continuously molested, he fights back in order to "hold his ground" (*JC* 89). He now becomes "the fanged and antlered animal brought at last to bay" (*JC* 89). James uses the image of the beast to describe the ghost turning from meek to aggressive. It might be worthwhile reading "The Jolly Corner" in the context of "The Beast in the Jungle," published five years earlier. John Marcher in "The Beast in the Jungle" spends his life vainly waiting for a catastrophe, the jumping out of the beast. In "The Jolly Corner," likewise, James also uses the metaphor of the beast. Brydon "had tasted of no pleasure so fine as his actual tension, had been introduced to no sport that demanded at once the patience and the nerve of this stalking of a creature more subtle, yet at bay perhaps more formidable, than any beast of the forest" (*JC* 87).

As "the fanged and antlered animal brought at last to bay," the ghost becomes more challenging, closing the door and waiting behind it for Brydon; Brydon, on the other hand, retreats, not daring to confront his ghostly other. As the ghost becomes stronger, it is Brydon who, from initially being the "terror" in the world of apparitions, turns out to be terrified and tries to flee. However, the ghost won't let him go. He waits for Brydon at the front door and forces him to face his alter ego.

Henry James claims this novella is about power and "violence." In the Prefaces to the New York Edition, tracing the adventure of Brydon in "The Jolly Corner," James says:

At any rate, odd though it may sound to pretend that one feels on safer ground in tracing such an adventure as that of the hero of “The Jolly Corner” than in pursuing a bright career among pirates or detectives, I allow that composition to pass as the measure or limit, on my own part, of any achievable comfort in the “adventure-story”; and this not because I may “render”—well, what my poor gentleman attempted and suffered in the New York house—better than I may render detectives or pirates or other splendid desperadoes, though even here too there would be something to say; but because the spirit engaged with the forces of violence interests me most when I can think of it as engaged most deeply, most finely and most “subtly” (precious term!) (*LC* 1260)

For James, Brydon’s adventure story is better than that of pirates or detectives, because “forces of violence” are played most “deeply, finely and subtly,” not only through the ghost hunting, but through the manipulation of speech and silence. In the novella, power comes from language and speech. Although for Lacan the mirror stage is mainly visual, he claims that “psychological action is developed in and through verbal communication, that is, in a dialectical grasp of meaning” (*Écrits* 9). To Lacan’s way of thinking, language is primarily “a mediating element which permits the subject to attain recognition from the other” (Evans 99).

In “The Jolly Corner,” there exists between Brydon and the ghost a change in a power relationship related to speech and silence. While the speaking Brydon’s power decreases, the silent ghost’s power increases. Initially, it is Brydon who speaks; language endows him with power. Yet his power declines along with his loss of speaking power. He is finally speechless and overwhelmed by the power of the ghost. On the other hand, the ghostly other gradually gains power and, speaks through silence.

WHAT THE GHOST SAYS

So what does the ghostly other say to Brydon that is so overwhelming that it causes him to faint? In the Prefaces to the New York Edition, Henry James attributed “the very source of wise counsel and the very law of charming effect” of the story to “the appeal to wonder and terror and curiosity and pity and to the delight of fine recognitions, as well as to the joy, perhaps sharper still, of the mystified state” (*LC* 1256). What, in other words, are

the "wonder" and "curiosity," the "recognitions," and the consequent "terror" and "pity"?

At the very beginning of the story, Brydon discovers his potential talent for business and is intrigued by the possibility of success if he remained in America. This is Brydon's quandary. The resultant picture of himself seems to him to be horrible. Brydon's alternative is rich, powerful, but monstrous. He wears a "dangling double eye-glass" and is in an evening dress "of gleaming silk lappet and white linen, of pearl button and gold watch-guard and polished shoe" (*JC* 96). Yet Brydon only suffers from a sense of revulsion at his double's elegant appearance. His alter ego, for all his subsequent achievements and triumph, refuses to show his face by covering it with his injured hands. When he finally removes his hands, the face revealed turned out to be "evil, odious, blatant, vulgar," too "hideous" to be his (*JC* 97). The recognition is devastating. Brydon denies any connection with this "unknown, inconceivable, awful" identity (*JC* 96). He can't concur with what the ghost says to him, as if it were too horrible for his conscious to accept his unconscious.

As many scholars have noted, "The Jolly Corner" is, to some extent, the fictional version of *The American Scene*, published a year earlier. James recounted in this novella his ghostly return home relatively fresh from his trip to the US. There exist obvious similarities between Henry James and Brydon. Both came back to America after years of living in Europe and were shocked by what they experienced in their homeland, which is no longer familiar to them. However, if Brydon is so obsessed with his American alternative, does this signify that James was also obsessed with his possible success in the business world if he had stayed in America? That he was terrified by his unconscious desire to be rich, as the unconscious usually reveals one's repressed desires? Might this other self, though repugnant, represent, perhaps, what James desired—power and wealth? As Collins Meissner states, maybe James was not "a genteel aesthete who lived off an inheritance" and stayed far away from the realistic world in which money counts as everything, but actually was always interested with the business world, and his description of successful businessmen such as "Christopher Newman and Adam Verver betrays a latent interest in getting into the corporate game, but also a fear of its intensity and immediacy" (Meissner 265).

It would be pointless to equate Brydon's curiosity to James's curiosity. Actually, James was not curious about what he might have been if he had finished his education at Harvard, but about the ways in which his motherland

had changed during his twenty-year absence. As Brydon is shocked by the image of his American ego reflected by the mirror, James was shocked by what he found in his changed country. Brydon's horror upon seeing his American self echoes what James recounted in *The American Scene*, in which he showed his horror at early twentieth century American commercialization and materialism. The American scene, as observed by Henry James, was what the ghost represents to Brydon. It was rich, powerful, but vulgar. In *The American Scene*, James expressed how he was impressed by the power of New York, "the real appeal, unmistakably, is in that note of vehemence in the local life of which I have spoken, for it is the appeal of a particular type of dauntless power" (AS 74). Nevertheless he complained bitterly about how the worship of money infiltrated every aspect of American life. As has been frequently quoted, "the preliminary American postulate or basis for any successful accommodation of life" is "that of active pecuniary gain and active pecuniary gain only—that of one's making the condition so triumphantly pay that the prices, the manners, the other inconveniences, take their place as a friction it is comparatively easy to salve, wounds directly treatable with the wash of gold" (AS 236-37). James observed, "To make so much money that you won't, that you don't 'mind,' don't mind anything—that is absolutely, I think, the main American formula" (AS 237). In Leon Edel's words, "in the rediscovered country, Henry James found a corrosive materialism, a vulgarity of affluence, as if the very plumbing, in which the nation took such excessive pride, had to be made of gold" (AS xix). As Collin Meissner has commented, "Upon returning to America in 1904 James was shocked at the impression of 'an entire nation squandering a tremendous opportunity by cashing in its potential for the immediacy of gain'" (Meissner 272).

James's shock is dramatized as Brydon's shock. American culture, as represented by the ghost, implies power, brutality, and vulgarity. As Philip Horne has pointed out, the image of the ghost recalls that of Theodore Roosevelt, the man of masculinity and action, who denounced Henry James in the essay "True Americanism" as "the undersized man of letters, who flees his country because he, with his delicate, effeminate sensitiveness, finds the conditions of life on this side of the water crude and raw" (qtd. in Horne 240). What the ghost says to Brydon is what James recognized in the American scene, a culture in which "success" and "identity" were understood as "active pecuniary gain" and "democracy" was symbiotically related to "commercialism" (Meissner 264). Although Brydon's wonder is not James's wonder, Brydon's recognition symbolizes James's recognition, and Brydon's terror dramatizes James's terror.

In Aristotelian tragedies, recognition leads to both fear and pity. In "The Jolly Corner," while Brydon is terrified by the brutal ghost, Alice Staverton pities him and accepts him. Before Brydon meets his other self, she has already seen him in her dreams, but keeps silent until the ghost speaks to Brydon himself.¹ She knows what Brydon would have turned out to be if he had stayed in America and she still loves him, showing her sympathy for the ghost as an American who lives in America at a time of brutality and vulgarity. "He has been unhappy, he has been ravaged," she tells Brydon (*JC* 100). For Alice "he was no horror," and she "had accepted him" (*JC* 100). At the end of the novella, with the help of Alice, Brydon is able to accept his other self. Both Brydon and Alice find love as Brydon "drew her to his breast" (*JC* 100). As Barbara Hardy has noted, "Love makes the divided self whole in understanding not only the existential self but also the whole potential" (13). In Brydon's ghost hunting in "The Jolly Corner," elements of recognition, pity and fear in the Aristotelian sense are identified, followed by reconciliation and love.

Pity and fear were also James's response to the American culture that developed in the early twentieth century. In the face of this awareness, James experienced both fear and pity. While Brydon's attitude to the ghost represents James's fear, Alice's attitude implies his pity. He was terrified by modern America's brutality, as represented by the domineering personality of Roosevelt himself, according to Philip Horne (245). Meanwhile, being an American he loved his country, however scathing his criticism might be. Just as Alice pities the ghost and accepts Brydon's inconceivably different alter ego, James pitied America's degradation, lamenting that the country, though rising as a global power, was "unhappy," and had been "ravaged." In this sense, "The Jolly Corner," in which Brydon finally comes to terms with his American identity, suggests James's final reconciliation to his native culture.

¹ Alice recalls May Bartram in "The Beast in the Jungle" and Maggie in *The Golden Bowl*. In all three works, the heroines know more than the heroes do but are willing to reveal only a limited portion of what they know. May is as silent as a Sphinx: enigmatic and yet all knowing. May keeps to herself what she knows about John Marcher's beast until her death, leaving Marcher to realize too late and suffer forever from the consequences of what he has missed. For Maggie, silence is the weapon she employs to separate Amerigo and Charlotte and so preserve the stability of two marriages. Alice, for her part, maintains a perfect balance between speaking and silence. She fully understands Brydon's self-centered determination to meet his other self, and although she knows what Brydon's Other looks like, she does not tell him directly but promises that she will do so at an appropriate time.

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