

Epilogue

The theory, as well as the practice of the literary approach in this book have, I hope, implied sufficiently strongly that they do not lead to 'conclusions'. Just as Henry James's tale *is* the message, the 'final meaning' and the 'moral', so this essay *is* the thesis and its conclusion. It is the demonstration of the literary analyses of James's works that must bear out the implications and consequences of the theory outlined; just as the theory may be considered the conclusion of practised analysis.

At the outset I pointed to the proposition – made famous by Barthes, though not his invention – which I regard as essential for literary interpretation, namely that the reader is the producer of his text. We can now subjoin a complement and say that the writer is the reader of his text. We saw that not all textual features can be called 'intended' by the writer in a strong sense, determined as they are also by the constraints of the medium. But we can say that they are all *approved* by the writer, who acts simultaneously in his 'subjective' (productive) and 'objective' (critical) roles. Some of his control over the medium consists in the 'appreciation' of its effects – a critical act in James's sense: 'to appreciate, to appropriate, to take intellectual possession'. If passed by this critical editor, a textual effect is rightly called 'intended', meaningful and significant. Such criticism, however, is part of the total creative process, for it is as a creator that he 'saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good' (*Genesis* 1: 31; Authorised Version). He saw, and you behold – the creator and the beholder united in the same appreciation.