

James (4)

FICTION AND SOCIETY

- 5.1 Fictions are also made out of social conventions: they both *use* and *represent* them. More generally, the meanings of fictions are social through and through.
- 5.2 The most surprising and meaningful engagements with social convention often happen when those conventions are *just* made visible but do not rise to narrative centrality.
 - 5.2.1 One way (not the only way) to discover the social bearings of a text is to read for the traces of what has been excluded.
- 5.3 Oppositions in fiction, which may occur at many levels of theme and form, may often be related to *social* oppositions.
 - 5.3.1 The relation between fictional oppositions and social ones is a matter for investigation. Social contradictions, as with other materials of fiction, are transformed: they may be revealed, distorted, simplified, complicated, resolved, or otherwise remade by the devices of narrative.
 - 5.3.2 Endings are to be interpreted in the context of an *expectation* that they will resolve fundamental oppositions, though they often don't, or do so misleadingly. Endings, like beginnings, are important but not determinative.