THE WOMEN IN THE NOVELS OF HENRY JAMES : A study of three texts

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Dedicated to 'DADU'

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Certified that the dissertation entitled **THE WOMEN IN THE NOVELS OF HENRY JAMES: A Study of Three Texts**, submitted by Anubha Mukherji is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree to this University or to any other University and is her own work.

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Anubha Mukherji

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INTRODUCTION

A LITANY FOR SURVIVAL

For those of us who live at the shoreline
standing upon the constant edges of decision
crucial and alone
for those of us who cannot indulge
the passing dreams of choice
---- seeking a now that can breed futures
like bread in our children's mouths
so their dream will not reflect
the death of our;
---- are when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard nor welcomed

but when we are silent
we are still afraid.
But it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive.

Aundre Lorde

INTRODUCTION

In the Book of Genesis, Eve was held responsible for Adam's fall from the Garden of Eden. Women subsequently have been made to carry the burden of Eve, and made to assume a subservient role in the post lapsarian world. Adam and Eve may have entered the Garden of Eden hand in hand, but no where in the western world, not even in America, where the story of man began afresh in the seventeenth century, was this equality of status evident. The professed ideology of Amerian society stressed democracy, equality and freedom, but the literature of the country which is a often a better indicator of the reality as well as dreams and aspirations of the people does not substantiate these professed ideals of equality as far as gender is concerned. In this dissertation I will focus on the women in the novels of Henry James, more specifically on three texts *Daisy Miller* (1878), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1882), and *The Bostonians* (1886), in order to understand the status of women in America in the eighteen eightees.

The American Renaissance of the nineteenth century was essentially dominated by a male imagination, [illegible]. The experience depicted in literature was an experience of a man, whether it be on board Pequod (Moby Dick) or in the cottage at Walden, or in the raft along the

Mississippi (Huckleberry Finn). When Whitman celebrated the indivdual in 'Song of Myself' the female experience was excluded from his sweeping purview. The lone female voice of Emily Dickinson was not publicly heard during her life time. But for the single exception of Hawthorne the major American writers projected a view of life where women were peripheral. Emerson, Thoreau, Meliville and Whitman seemed to inhabit a world where women were either absent or inconsequential. There were others like Fennimore Cooper and Washington Irving who essentialized the women in their fiction as female types: diabolical or angelic. In the popular fiction of the day men appeared as authoritative and individualised figures who established the rules of the universe within which women were either accomodated to perform prescribed domestic roles or were prizes to be won or lost. While in real life many women among the early settlers were hardy helpmates of men, ~~but~~ great literature of the day did not reflect such characters. Popular literature whereas projected an image of the ideal American woman who was an embodiment of "self abnegation, humility, peity, love, openness, generosity, mildness and forgiveness",[1] who sought her fulfllment only in matrimony and motherhood. While the American Adam was :

> an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestory, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritance of family and race; an individual standing alone, self reliant and self-propelling----,[2]

there was no corresponding conceptualizationof an Amerian Eve, But in a way her role had been spelt out implicitly: If Eve was the cause of the original Adam's down fall, the role of new Eve was to be minimal, so that in the American version of the Biblical myth of the Garden of Eden there would be no fall.

The popular fiction of the time perpetuated certain feminine stereotypes. In *The Wide, Wide World* (Susan Warner, 1850), *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Hariet Beecher Stowe, 1852), *The Lamplighter* (Maria Cummins, 1854), *St. Elmo* (Augusta Jane Evans) and *Little Women.* (Louisa May Alcott, 1869) marriage and motherhood were advocated as the most desirable goals for a woman. Even the bold and intellectually strongwomen in the novels were made to meekly accept subservient roles. Alcott's novels are good examples of this. There is probably no reader of hers who does not feel disappointed at the marriage and domestication of Jo March, the spirited, unconventional heroine. But the author had to give in to the social and literary demands of the day. In *St.Elmo* for instance, the author makes the talented heroine use her literary abilities to write essays against women's suffrage glorifying woman's domestic sphere of influence. The heroines of these popular books were portrayed as angelic, generous, self-effacing and pliant. If a woman happened to be full of wayward passion or

assertiveness, in these novels she had to be discplined into the mould of gracious womanhood. The other stereotype was that of the diabolical woman. This woman with drive was at linked with vengefulness, duplicity coldness and malevolence. For example the two native heroines in *Typee* (Melville) and Goneril in Melville's *The Confidence Man.*

Much of the popular fiction was written by women, but these writers had internalized the patriarchal norms and expectations of society. In some of these texts traces of an internal tension can be seen, but by the end of the novel usually the values that prevail conform to the conventional social order. In certain cases the conventional closure goes against the grain of the heroine's growth (as for example in Alcott's novel) but there was no doubt that popular fiction could challenge neither the formulaic models nor the hegemonic values of the culture. Most of the eminent writers of the American Renaissance-Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman did nothing to change the stereotypes. In the work of Edgar Allen Poe there was an equation of the feminine with death and decay. Poe's women were symbols rather than living palpable human beings. Emerson and Thoreau's approach was essentially sexless while Whitman tried to transcend gender and talk about 'multitude'. It was Hawthorne who for the first time treated his women characters as individuals. They were exceptional women in their needs, talents and passions.

In *The Marble Faun* (1859), *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) and *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) through Hilda, Zenobia and Hester, Hawthorne touched on many gender issues: of loneliness of the abandoned woman, difficulties of supporting onself, the conflicts of motherhood, the fate of a woman' s passion in a repressive community. Hawthorne was fascinated with the problem of strongly individualised women who try to live with integrity and self respect in restrictive societies. Hawthorne's influence on Henry James was undeniable, and towards the end of the century we find James exploring the predicaments of such women in a number of novels. But he often took his heroines to a different territory altogether, and in a number of texts he examined the new woman in the old world, his favorite theme being an American girl, "affronting her destiny" in Europe.

The period between 1840's and 1880's in America was a period of social ferment. The popular literature of the period did not reflect the various reform movements which were questioning the traditional relationship between the sexes and proposing a new individualism for women. Some of the radical women were inereasingly disassociating themsleves from the meekness docility and submissiveness traditionally required of their sex. In 1843 Margaret Fuller set forth her programme for women in, 'The great lawsuit; Man Versus Men; Woman Versus Women', subsequently published as *Woman in the*

Nineteenth Century. Fuller argued that renunciation was not a piercing virtue but a waste of human potential and described the bourgeois home as dreary and bleak.[3] Many middle class women motivated by increased opportunities, influenced by ideals of democratic individualism frequently sounded in public rhetoric, began to rebel. This was the age of all sorts of reform movements which gathered momentum and especially the women's movement. The first Woman Suffrage bill was enacted in 1869 in Wyoming Territory and the first co-educational institution of higher learning was established in 1833 at Oberlin. The first bill permitting married women to hold property was passed in 1849 at New York. The situation of women was undergoing a change and the 'American Eve' was fighting for new identity, rights and freedom. The "puritan maiden" had become a "romantic rebel".[4] The ideal of the 'angel in the house' was gradually being challenged. In 'Women in American Literature 1790-1870', Nina Baym sets out to describe how the middle class and upper middle class women involved in institutions beyoond the family, college, club, settlement or profession were agitating for reform in woman's life. The 'New Woman' who was not recognised and labelled until after the Civil War, already had an enhanced sense of self, gender and mission. Charles Bellamy in his novel *Looking Backward* (1888) advocated the right of women working together with men. There were debates on such

issues and women began to forge identities other than the traditionaal ones of mother and wife.

For Henry James this new assertivenes among women was an interesting phenomenon and he chose to depict such women with an emerging new identify in his novels. Some of his heroines challenge the decadent conventions of Europe with a pioneering energy. They appear unchaperoned in an alien land in order to explore life and gain a greater awareness. Jamesian heroines are unique in their endeavour to seek a new identity in the hallowed and stratified terrains of Europe where they bring an American innocence and spontaniety. Their alien graftings of James make an interesting study of the viability of the new discourse of women under inimical conditions.

The condition of the women in Victorian England was much more servile and passive than in America. It was in Coventry Patmore's work that the ideal of the 'Angel in the House' first obtained concrete shape in 1855. The training of Victorian women was directed to the learning of the subtle art of capturing a husband without appearing to be a predator. Marriage was deemed the "apotheosis of womanly fulfilment"[5] alternatives to which were regarded as pitiable and unnatural. One of the pervasive ideologies of the age rested on the concept of 'True Womanhood'. The

cardinal vitues of a true woman were purity, self effacement and domesticity. In Coventry Patmore's words :-

> Her disposition is so devout
> Her countenance angelical;
> The best things that the best believe
> Are in her face so kindly writ
> The faithless seeing her conceive
> Not only heaven, but hope it.[6]

In a way the connubial and maternal 'true woman' was a familiar notion both in the nineteenth century America ~~f~~and in Victorian England, perhaps more so in England where the hierarchy of class and gender was more rigid. This doctrine of adulation was in reality a masculine self-preserving strategy. The Victorians compensated women for their increased domestic responsibility by enveloping them in a mystique which granted them higher status in the moral sphere while guaranteeing their actual subordination in the material sphere. The endless polemics of moral purity and spiritual genius of women insisted that these could find their highest expression only ~~in~~ at home. The home was thus safeguarded at all costs from the corrupting influence of the man made world. The Victorian women thus became the custodian of morality in society.

Regarded as the cultural index of a nation, women were expected to be the upholders of spirituality, morality and traditions. While women on both sides of the Atlantic were encouraged to perpetuate the notion of true womanhood, some

American woman had at least in certain spheres of life, a greater space for autonomy. The American women abroad had yet another function to perform, that of representing America to Europe and by reflection to itself. This is amply portrayed by Hawthorne's and James' heroines. The American ~~woman~~ women abroad had to project two different and often contradictory images. She was the inheritor of the American spirit of democracy, freedom and spontaniety, but as a woman she also had to embody the traditional feminine ideals that were not always in harmony with the American ideology of liberty. The American woman and her new identity existed fundamentally for others and not for herself.[7] Her role remained strictly confined in other words, and she did not even have the right of franchise till the 1920's.

It was this American woman with a projected image of an "heiress" of American innocence, spontaniety and enthusiasm for life, who became James' preoccupation. She offered an alternative both to the corruption of Europe and rampant materialism of America. James tried to delve deep -into the inherent paradox of his heroine's unique situation. Bred in an air devoid of the complications of Europe, they invariably fail "to take the whole assault of life."[8] Invariably loosing themselves in the cauldron of portentuous happenings the heroines ultimately prove to be a liability for James. They are eager to seek experience and determined to assert

their sanity and the veracity of their existence in an increasingly unstable world. In their desperate need to redefine their identity and break away from the reductive images, they often end up destroying their essential self before a new viable self-identity can emerge.

The three texts chosen for study, form a chronological sequence and trace the evolution of a 'New Woman' in James' work. *Daisy Miller* (1878) is the prototype of Jamesian woman whose destruction raises questions about the real nature of individuality and freedom. These questions once again appear in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1882) where they are explored in depth. The disillusionment inherent in Isabel Archer's failure comes to the surface in *The Bostonians* (1886), in which the heroine struggles relentlessly to resist complete absorption or passive surrender. The Jamesian protogonists invariably begin as romantics who through varying situations are educated into a realistic view of life. Isable Archer, Daisy Miller and Verena Tarrant are "intelligent presumptuous girls", "affronting their destiny".[8] Henry James traces the career of these three American women groping their way through the European social landscape dense with moral ambiguities, dominated by elaborate customs and manners. Their plight is unique for they are neither aware of their vulnerable selves nor of the sordidness of social customs and the obligations they are expected to fulfil Daisy, Isabel and

Verena are the embodiment of a Jamesian dielmma for they do not fit into a 'they lived happily ever after' syndrome. These three women are not very different from each other in their urge for fulfilment and yet their denouement is different. All of them fail to break away from the patriarchal society but it is in their individual decisions that they assume the mantle of James' 'New Woman'.

Elaine Showalter in *A literature of Their Own* (1977) identifies the period between 1880 and 1920 as the 'Feminist phase' - a phase of protest against the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition and advocacy of minority rights including a demand for autonomy. By the eighteen eighties the women's movement in Europe had gathered momentum and the Victorian women had won a few legal weapons to fight their batle, like the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857. All this had led to the opening up of issues of dress, marriage, sexual incompatibility, divorce and adultery in public debate, traces of which can be seen even in the novels of Hardy, George Eliot and Gissing. Elizabeth Allen in *Women in the Nineteenth Century* describes how Gissing in the *Odd Women* (1893) and Hardy in *Jude the Obscure* (1895) were exploring the notion of 'New Woman' - the middle class woman who demanded education and financial independence and who challenged the subservience of women in marriage. But Henry James' 'American Girl' arrived in Europe a decade earlier than Gissing's Odd

Women and Hardy's Sue, with a vision of freedom much broader and larger than that of her counterparts in Europe.

For Henry James, America embodied and symbolized a 'masculine age' of business and technology which as demonstrated throughout his fiction and non-fiction seemed to him to threaten the values of culture and civilization. James observed that men were the obvious products of business unmitigated by any other influence. Thus in consequence the woman alone was left to discover "what civilization actually is"[10]. James' complete identification of civilization with women is nowhere more strikingly apparent than in *The American Scene*, where he at one point describes America as "a society of women located in world of men, which is so different a matter from a collection of men of the world, the men supplying as it were, all the canvas and women all the embroidery".[11]

For James the American woman not only stood for the decorative, visually pleasing side of America but was also the embodiment of American energy, enthusiam and innocence. And hence in his novels his heroines became the instruments through which the potency of these American values could be tested. Attuned to deeper rhythms of nature, the Jamesian herione invariably accepts the world around her at its face value. Uninhibited and unconditioned she is open to new

vistas and views. She comes to Europe armed with a wholesome conscience, a splendid innocence and moral integrity. However her virginal freshness and extreme spontaniety are the very qualities which mark her out as a victim. She fails to realize that the world is not what it seems, and by the time the realization sinks in, she becomes adept in masking her disillusionment. She continues to persist in her error. And it is this stoic adherence to her moral integrity which makes her predicament unique and unsatisfying at the same time. The Jamesian heroine is one in whom the puritanic spirit of America is awakenend to a liberal urge for freedom, but is not awakened enough to subvert her moral integrity which defeats Daisy, Isabel and Verena's journey to self-discovery. They do gain an ennobled martyr like image but fail to achieve a larger self expansion where their innocence cannot co-exist with experience.

This dissertation is an attempt to trace the struggle of Henry James alongside his heroines to provide them with an alternative within the limited parameters of their age, I will try and explore the complexity and ambivalence of James' treatment of women in the context of the uncertainty and fluidity of the gender ideology in the late nineteenth century. Henry James has been accused of an inability to do more than merely represent the psychology and sociology of woman's servitude. Besides briefly touching upon this aspect

of Henry James' novels the role of money, love and marriage will also be analysed. The basic thrust of my exploration will be to see, whether James' women characters end up achieving only the awareness of their contradictory relationship to social institutions or they gain a new identity in more meaningful ways.

CHAPTER I

DAISY MILLER

CHAPTER -1

DAISY MILLER

Daisy Miller (1878) sketches the portrait of an "innocent American girl", which later became the prototype of all Jamesian heroines, "affrontng their destiny". The first readers of the story were quick to identify Daisy Miller as the new type of American girl abroad, seeking her identity in an alien terrain, that is Europe. Daisy was seen as a 'child of nature and freeedom' who resisted all attempts to make her conform to social mores and norms. She became a "perennial figure synonymous with all the brash young ladies who frequently showed up in continental surroundings."1 She became a composite type and eventually a myth. There grew even a fashion for Daisy Miller hats in America.

Henry James had discvered nothing less than 'the American girl' - as a social phenomenon, a type that had figured in novels before, but never had she stood in fiction so pertly and bravely, smoothing her dress and asking the world to pay court to her. Hawthorne's American girl in Rome, Howells' American girl in Venice had been different in the sense that they did not challenge Europe with their distinct individuality.

Daisy was unique in her indifference or insolence, in her total disregard of 'Europe' and in her refusal to yield her heritage of American innocence. An undesirable fallout was that the tale proved a godsent to the etiquette writers of Victorian England and America. It was read as as a social satire. It was just the text from which "the plausible risks of being an unescorted independent female could be enumerated."[2] The American readers felt that Daisy Miller was "an outrage on American girlhood" and Daisy Millerism came to be associated with not so revenential a treatment of American girls in fiction. Although James claimed that the figure of "Daisy was of course pure poetry and had never been anything else," yet many readers failed to see the childish pathos in the wounded independence of Daisy. They also failed to see James' dilemma in providing Daisy with an alternative fate, a dilemma emerging out of his own socio-cultural entrapment. The stultifying ambience of Europe fails to sustain Daisy's vulnerable, wild, Edenic, charm. In short, society has no place for her and having created her, James is unable to think of a way out for her heroine.

Henry James' first two novels *Roderick Hudson* (1975) and *The American* (1877) dealt with the existential problems of two American men on their encounter with Europe and their subsequent disillusionment. But in later novels James chose

women as central characters. James ardently believed that women were the best representatives of the vigour and intensity of American spirit. *In American Scene* (1907) he identified 'civilization' with 'women'. Moreover James' reliance on the American girl to represent America was necessitated, he says in the preface to *The Reverberator*, by his own personal "incompetence at grasping the American man."3 It was in *Daisy Miller* that James for the first time created a character who continued to evolve with the evolution of James' perception and thought process to eventually emerge as the 'Jamesian New Woman.' The gradual emergence of this New Woman can be traced from Daisy Miller through Bessie Alden in 'An International Episode' (1878-79) and Francie Dosson in *The Reverberator* (1988) to Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1982) and finally Milly Theale in *The Wings of a Dove* (1902).

Daisy Miller is a typical Jamesian heroine with an overwhelming zest for life, she finds herself at Vevey in Switzerland trailing after her morose mother on a European tour. Winterbourne, an ethically anxious American expatriate runs into her at Vevey. He is highly amused by her spontaneity nonchalance about social norms and indifference towards the prim European insistence on chaperones and propriety. He is himself however quite happy to accompany her on an unchaperoned sight seeing trip to a local castle

Chateau de Chillon, he thinks:

> it very possible that master Randolph's sister was a coquette, he was sure that she had a spirit of her own, but in her bright, sweet supericial little visage there was no mockery, no irony. (p.10).

Winterbourne is at a loss to understand Daisy's matter of fact statement, "I have always had a great deal of gentlemen's society" (p.14). Winterbourne is simply inclined to think, "Miss Daisy Miller was a flirt-a pretty American flirt" (p.15). They meet again in Rome, where the homesick Miller trio is bravely pursuing their European tour.

The American ladies in Rome condemn Daisy for going about unchaperoned. Miss Miller's tendency to stroll about sight seeing by herself or even worse, in the company of an "Italian fortune hunter", becomes the delicious talking point of the horrified matrons. Winerbourne timidly disapproves of her behaviour, the American ladies boycott her socially and amidst these circling opinions, Daisy remains unruffled, quite sure of her own rectitude and determination she shuns the interfering society. Winterbourne is unable to categorize her atttitude as defiance or arrogance, "He asked himself whether Daisy's defiance came from the consciousness of innocence or from being, essentially a young person of the reckless class". (p.70)

The malarial infections or the 'villaious miasma' of the Colosseum at midnight acting *as deus ex machina*, bring a sudden end to it all. Winterbourne chances upon Daisy and her escort in the Colosseum by the moonlight active and simply dismisses her from his thoughts. "It was as if a sudden illumination had been flashed upon the ambiguity of Daisy's behaviour and the riddle has become easy to read" (p.74). A paragraph or two later Daisy is dead. "It is going round at night" (p.18) says her young brother Randolph, "that's what made made her sick." (p.8) From her mother we learn that, "she was never engaged to that handsome Italian". She tells Winterbourne, "she asked me to tell you if you remembered the time you went to the castle in Switzerland" (p.79). We are uneasy at the remembrance. Daisy's escapade with Winterbourne to Castle de Chillon however innocent doesn't go unpunished in the end.

So Daisy dies unceremoniously. Daisy's innocent defiance against the bourgeois millieu of Europe, threatens her very survival. And James in order to save her from further ignominy of disillusionment cuts her life span short. Struck down by the 'mal-air' of Europe, Daisy dies a premature death. She remains "a pure poem"[2] without aquiring a greater self awareness.

Thirty years later, in his preface to the New York edition of *Daisy Miller*, Henry James wrote;

> The whole idea of the story is the little tragedy of a light, thin, natural, unsuspecting creature being sacrificed as it were to a social rumpus, that went on quite over her head.[5]

It is the use of the word 'sacrifice' that we mull over. Is there a world where Daisy could have lived with her dignity intact, pride unsullied and innocence unscathed? Her naivette proves to be a handicap. She is fated to be martyr of freedom, like the prisoner of Chillon, whose cells she visits, and like the Christians who were thrown to the beasts at the Colosseum. Europe throws into relief Daisy's vulnerable humanity. Her natural freedom lacks the gloss of culture, which is so essential for survival. She is quintessentially alone, in her naive confidence in the adequacy of the self to deal with all the complications of experience.

James wrote *Daisy Miller* in London in the spring of 1878 and sent it to *Lipineott's* magazine, whose editor promptly rejected it without explanation. But Leslie Stephen gladly accepted it for *Cornhill*. William Dean Howells, who himself managed to please the American reading public all his life with his own characterizations of the

American girl, felt it necessary to apolozise for Daisy. He felt that, "James had divided the society between Daisy Millerites and anti Daisy Millerites"[6]. But once published Daisy Miller becamc̸ an instant hit with the readers and be~~tween~~ came some sort of a literary sensation.

In the hundred years since its publication *Daisy Miller* has been viewed differently by different genertions of critics. From "a pathetic little figure with little understanding",[7] to, "One of the last heirs of the romantic tradition"[8] Daisy in later years was seen as Winterbourne's chance to embrace an American reality, its freshness and vitality along with its brashness and crudity. His failure to do so was a "rejection of these national characteristics".[9] But hardly anabody saw Daisy as an individual, who could not be fitted into the European scheme of things, because her 'disregrad to appearances' could never be innocent according to European standards. Daisy is unaware that she carries on her slender shoulder the burden of a Clarissa like image.[10] Her transgression of social norms is associated with immorality, her freedom is seen as sexual flippancy. Her refusal to play the 'pure maiden' is seen as sacrilege as if on her depends the ethical purity of her class, race. It is this misreading and misconception about Daisy, which is effectively portrayed in Daisy Fay Buchanan of Scott Fitzerald's. *The Great Gatsby*. She is the first

anti-virgin figure in American fiction, delibrately called Daisy after Henry James's misunderstood American girl.

Daisy Miller stands for the American need for freedom at all levels of being and existence. Armed with her innocence, insouciance and integrity she comes to Europe on a pilgrimage of self-discovery. And Europe becomes the testing ground of her American values. However it is her virginal freshness and extreme spontaniety that mark her out as a victim. Hawthorne believed that no adulthood, no society, no tragic sense of life could exist without the knowledge of evil, a belief that he mentions in the opening sentences of *The Scarlet Letter*. Henry James who agreed with this point of view extends the idea a bit further and illustrates it by portraying individuals without a sense of evil, as vulnerable beings. Daisy is such a character who has to take full in the face the whole assault of life, failing to realize that the world is not tailored in consonance with her delicate sensibility. She accepts the world around her at its face value and is prepared to stretch her faith to the point of pitiful and tragic artlessness. And even after she discovers her error, she continues to wear her crown of thorns. It is in this Sisyphian defiance of Daisy that we see the germs of a Jamesian 'New Woman.'

Daisy's story is narrated by Winterbourne and Winterbourne's inability to form any opinion about her adds ambiguity to the tale. He resorts to cliched judgements to explain Daisy's unusual candidness. He is conscious of taking freedom beyond the codes he knows, but has no compunctions. At another extreme are the American dowager figures of Mrs. Costello and Mrs. Walker who form a choric crowd, passing judgements on Daisy, reminiscient of the stern, puritanical society in *The Scarlet Letter.* Mrs.Costello fiercely guarding her "exclusivensess" behind the facade of her headaches considers Milers as common. Winterbourne out of touch with America and Americans, oscillates between censure and sympathy and finds Daisy an "inscrutable combination of audacity and innocence".

Winterbourne begins by trying to believe that Daisy is, "very ignorant very innocent---utterly uncivilized," (p.21) but definitely not bad. He promptly decides that "with Miss Miller there was no great need of walking on tiptoe". (p.23). His casual approach is not rebuffed by Daisy and that only accentuates his desire to accompany her to Castle Chillon. But when Daisy seems equally content in Giovanelli's company, Winterbourne suddenly has reservations. His final judgement in the Colosseum: "she was a young lady whom a gentleman need no longer be at pains to respect", (p.30) damns him more than

it damns Daisy. We are given very few clues to Daisy's own response to events, we have very little access to her subjectivity. She is to be observed from the outside unlike Isabel Archer of The Portrait of a lady. Once her appearance is disapproved of and once she is cut dead by everyone, she ceases to exist for the reader. Daisy, a representative of unconventional individuality is ironically dependent on external recognition. As we see Daisy only through Winterbourne's eyes, the narrative is naturally coloured by his biases and prejudices. Winterboune shares Lockwood's narratological position in *The Wuthering Heights.* Their undecisiveness as narrators and the readers inability to identity with them leave one with a sense that the last word has not been said as yet.

Winterbourne has been admirably conceived as a narrator who is emotionally attached to the protagonist but remains more or less in the periphery as an objective bystander. He is a typical Jamesian figure who stands back and appreciates the enactment unfolding before him. He is a prototype of Ralph Touchett (*The Potrait of Lady*) in whom all Jamesian spectators coalesce. We see Daisy through Winterbourne's eyes and he is seen through the eyes of an omniscient narrator. This double narrative is a clever narrative strategy which requires the intervention of the reader to sieve the reality, and thus bridging the gap

between Winterbourne's biased narrative and the complex reality. Winterbourne thus functions as the sieve which not only separates the chaff but makes the reader aware of the difficulty of passing judgements on Daisy Miller. Winterbourne is as insensitive and as complacent as Lockwood and his incomprehension provokes the readers to unravel the riddle for themselves. His apparent detachment with the course of events in the novel serves a dual purpose. One, it lends authenticity and credibility to the narrative and two, it effectively brings out his inflexbility and rigidity which in the first place had forced him to take a detached stance.

The tragedy of Daisy it that she has an idea of freedom which is even less intelligently developed than say that of Isabel Archer. She might be a stranger to the big bad world but with all her lack of maturity and lack of understanding she mocks Winterbourne's prim proper world. She is quick to perceive the 'stiffness' in Winterbourne. When Winterbourne jumps at the prospect of rowing her on lake Geneva at night, having successfully circumvented his stiffness, she adopts a mocking attitude, "I was bound I would make you say something", (p.31). Her words to the courier, "Oh Eugenio, I am going out in a boat," are similarly designed to elicit his disapproval and mock it. She finally abandons the idea by

saying, "thats all I want - a little fuss." (p.33) If this behaviour seems irresponsible then it is less irrespponsible than that of Winterbourne, a man who genuinely considers the action improper but is excited enough by the impropriety to pursue it. Her crudity and petulance also contain a naive irony, which is sometimes conscious, sometimes instinctive. Her peculiar and suspiciously mocking attitude is something which the disapprovers find exasperating. Their own hypocricies and chicanery get shown up by having Daisy as a home bred irritant and a raw little judge in their midst. Daisy is not wholly ignorant of the ways of the European society. When Winterbourne tells her that flirting is not understood here, she replies, "I thought they understood nothing else"---, "Not in young unmarried women," he tells her and Daisy's characteristic reply not only testifies her innocence but also her moral integrity: "It seems much more proper in young unmarried women than in old married ones." (p.62) Her keen sense of perception seems all the more evident when she says, "They are only pretending to be shocked. They don't really care a straw what I do." (p.72) A girl as young as Daisy who has already learnt that society cares very little about corruption, but great deal about appearances is not exactly a fool. As the story progresses her 'notorious' behaviour becomes assertive and 'self protective'. Her spontaniety turns into an impudent mask.

Winterbourne is caught in his own double standards when he tells her, "You are a very nice girl, but I wish you'd flirt with me only." And Daisy guarding her freedom fiercely says, "I have never allowed a gentleman to dictate me or to interfere with anything I do." Walking about the cynical streets of Rome, Daisy wonders why she should change her behaviour, "for such stupids." (p.61) And it is precisely through these categorical statements that we have a glimpse of her inner landscape. She is forever laughing at the European penchant for exclusiveness:

> I'm dying to be exclusive myself. Well, I guess we are exclusive mother and I. We don't speak to anyone or they don't speak to us. I suppose its about the same thing.(p.24)

Daisy unwittingly hits out at the decadent, European morality which the American expatriates have absorbed. With the rigidity of new converts, the expatriates curb sincere and spontaneous impulse. Winterbourne himself is highly uncertain in his own moral composition, a man living between two worlds and at home in neither, attracted to fresh substance of life in Daisy, repelled by her formlessness and vaguely threatened by her life force. He admits at the end of the story that he had been living too long in foreign parts. Daisy is a critical commentary on the extremes of cultural failure, a barren resourcelessness on one side and

on equally barren formalism on the other.

Daisy is unconstrained by her mother, her absent father or her own sense of what is socially desirable or condemnable. Mrs. Miller provides the blank canvass against which Daisy's character is thrown in relief. Mrs. Miller is a mother who has abdicated her responsibility. Her lack of response, her apathy and indifference makes Daisy's predicament all the more poignant. Mrs. Miller is unaware of the subtleties of an European sense of propriety and hence Daisy remains uneducated. She makes feeble protests against Daisy's indiscriminate wandering but knows that Daisy will do, "what she likes". Daisy's alienation is almost complete with irresponsible admirers and a vacuous mother. Mrs. Miller is a quaint mother figure, an antithesis of Mrs. Bennet in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice.* She is neither a scheming woman whose sole aim is to rope in an eligible bachelor for her daughter, nor is she concerned about her daughter's carrer like Mrs. Tarrant in *The Bostonians.* She is merely handy during Daisy's illness like Mrs. Touchett in *The Portrait of a lady.*

Daisy is a significant addition to the convention of motherless fictional figures like Emma, Catherine Earnshaw Jane Eyre, Dorothea Brooke, Isabel Archer and Sue Bridehead.

While the authors of the age could not visualise the role of mother figures for their deviant heroines, the motherless figures were also a product of authorial convenience. It is indeed difficult to visualise the role of say Catherine Earnshaw's or Sue Bridehead's mother but what is interesting to note here is that most of these heroines are also father less figures. Which confirms the hypothesis that it was easier to chart out an unhampered course for these heroines in the absence a parental authority. Seen in this context Daisy's mother is bound to be somewhat absent and ineffectual so that Daisy's fierce independence could be seen in its full glory, unrestrained by an authoritative parent. Mrs. Miller is just another addition to the mother figures of Victorian fiction who are weak, embarrassing, and ineffectual, if not dead or non-existent. Dorothea Brook and Isabel Archer who are both orphans, get married to men who are virtually father figures. What they look forward to is the benevolent guidance of their husbands, but are terribly disillusioned, which only goes to prove that a father figure or a father who could satisfy the expectations of the emancipated, freedom loving heroines of Victorian fiction was realistically impossible to create. In contrast the authoritarian fathers like Dombey Gradgrind and Osborne were easier to conceive because such role models were easily available. As it is the author had his handsful with a deviant heroine, and a

liberated father figure, inspiring his daughers to achieve greater awareness, would not only make things difficult but also unrealistic. The same holds true for mothers too. Talking of mother figures - the sheer absence of any significant mother figures in Victorian fiction leaves out an interesting dimension of a woman protagonist's life unexplored. This area remains unexplored even in the later day novels. One wonders what kind of a relationship would Emma, Catherine Earnoshaw, Jane Eyre, Dorothea Brooke and Daisy Miller would have shared with their daughters if they ever became mothers. Though Isabel Archer does assume the role of a mother, in trying to save Pansy from a nightmarish predicament she herself has faced, that's the mere beginning of an interesting mother-daughter relationship and we do not have a sequel to it in the later day Literature.

The background of Rome in Daisy Miller has a symbolic function to play. A Roman past that reaches out to claim American innocence is vividly and palpably present in the story. The picturesque setting of its museums, churches, Villa Borghese, Pincian Garden and the Colosseum represents a living accumulation of art and history. Hawthorne is brought to mind by the Roman garden of *Daisy Miller* where American innocence is placed in a delicate juxtaposition with ancient European corruption. Hawthorne has depicted his Roman

Gardens as versions of a fatally deceptive Eden. This Italian city seen at the end of the 19th century is not the land of sun, gaiety, and pleasure but rather the Rome of Quattrocento and the baroque era offering inspiration for a new aestheticism, and a quest for truth. The variegated yet stereotyped backdrop contributes to the heroine's ordeal in Europe. Rome is never concretized but felt as a totality of notions, European morality exotic, colourful and corrupt, decadent at the same time. And it is against this backdrop that Daisy seeks her destiny, tries to retain her innocence and achieve a greater wisdom amidst the desolation and ruin.

There is a definite shift in James's authorial intention and attitude regarding Daisy. To begin with she is seen as a non-conformist, blissfully unaware of certain social codes and with a total disregard for the rest. By the end of the novel she becomes an idealized figure of natural vitality, freedom and innocence, almost a "charming apparition". This shift in authorial intention adds to the sentimental appeal of the protagonist and Daisy became "pure poetry", instead of a flesh and blood figure. She is much like Hawthorne's Hester Prynne in her final predicament, who has to be idealized through a community punishment. James shared Hawthorne's dilemma in his attempt to reconcile the needs of the artistic self with the demands of the society which had no place for

the deviants. And hence the self-reliance that Daisy is endowed with in the beginning of the novel is taken away from her for authorial convenience. She dies a wronged woman, wronged by the likes of Winterbourne and Giovanelli.

Daisy has no apparent counterpart in the English literature of the day. But she shares a few common traits with some of them. She is like the child bride Dora of Dickens' *David Copperfield* (1849) a "favourite child of nature", but she is for ornament and not for use. And Winterbourne is no different from the Victorian male characters of the day. He is like Angel Clare of Hardy's *Tess of the d'ubervilles* (1891) typifying a Victorian morality demanding Daisy's absolute virtue. When Winterbourne finds her flawed he rejects her though he himself has a mistress tucked away. He initially feels that Daisy is misunderstood but her independence is no match for his moth eaten class-conscious righteousness. In Winterbourne's eyes Daisy by visiting Colosseum at night in the company of Giovanelli has transgressed all the so called sacred social norms and is no more worthy of his attention. Daisy dies wronged and forsaken both by Winterbourne and Henry James. She, like Tess pays the penalty for having failed to play the 'ideal virgin'. Daisy says nothing in her own defence nor does Henry James. Her usual assertion is absent when it is

most required. Whether her silence implies rebellion arising out of an utter contempt of decadent social norms or is a result of unrequited love is never made clear. James tries to salvage Daisy by making Giovanelli eulogise about her innocence. Daisy is thus put on a pedestal as an ideal of innocence wronged by the society. And by this martyr like idealization of Daisy, Henry James fails to evade the Victorian idolatorous control of women.

In later years Henry James disliked being known as the author of *Daisy Miller*.[11] The dilemma that James himself faced with Daisy led him to reorganise, redo and improvise upon the blueprint of the earliest of his heroines, "affronting destiny." The unmistakable evidence of his efforts to redeem Daisy can be seen in the story 'An International Episode' (1878-79) and the novel *The Reverberator* (1888) both of which can be considered as companion pieces to *Daisy Miller*. The ingenuous, intelligent Bessie Alden of 'An International Episode', (1878), visits the old world (England in this case), for a "swarm of fresh emotions", Her rhapsodies about England however soon take a sober colouring. Like Daisy, she encounters, 'minute hierarchies of Europe' and an obsession with customs and manners. Unlike Daisy she finds them interesting but nonetheless burdensome and leaves Europe in a huff. While Daisy dies of unrequited love and malaria,

Bessie Alden receives the satisfaction of snubbing an English Lord. At the end of the story Bessie Alden 'seems to regret nothing' unlike Daisy, who according to Winterbourne, would have loved to have "someone's esteem".

Francie Dosson of *The Reverberator* (1888) is not quite so untaught as Daisy but is exposed to the worst kind of vulgarity. She unwittingly passes on some gossip on the personal foibles and tales about her lover's French relations. Francie and her family the helpless Americans fail to understand why this newspaper publicity constitutes such an offence. But Francie unlike Daisy not only manages to wriggle out of this controversy unscathed but also succeeds in retaining her relationship with her lover. Henry James was obviously not satisfied with such a tame ending and carried on with his numerous experiments to provide Daisy Miller with another alternative.

James wrote another story in 1984-'Pandora'. In the preface he wrote, "I don't see why I shouldn't do the 'self-made' girl, whom I noted here last winter in a way to make her a rival to Daisy Miller".12 It was clear that in many ways Pandora was an inversion of Daisy. Pandora survives Europe and safely returns to America with her family members. If initially she is snubbed by Mrs. Dangerfield

(Mrs. Costello's counterpart) an American expatriate, and continously misjudged by her German admirer Count Volgenstein who interestingly enough identifies himself as Winterbourne and uses the novel *Daisy Miller* (which he uses for extensive reference) to arrive at an analysis on Pandora Days. But Pandora's subsequent success in New York and Washington clearly invalidates the judgements of both the Europeanised American and the German Aristocrat. Pandora Days is the "latest fruit of our great American revolution."[13] She is the 'self-made girl' of Henry James, who not only chalks out a career for herself, but also arranges a diplomatic career for her future husband. She is the new American girl who proves the remarkable powerlessness of the social judgement of American expatriates in Europe. Henry James felt that the ideal free woman had finally evolved in the shape of Pandora. "There was now ground for a new induction as to the self-made girl."[14]

The inversion of the plot in 'Pandora' serves various important functions. It not only emphasizes the historic changes in the American society, but also notes the ironic reversal of fortune for a young heroine from the tragic naivette of a Daisy Miller to the success of a mature and determined Pandora Days. Henry James thus sees his fictional heroines not as "frozen in time, static figures but as

changing and changeable participants in a historical continuum."15 Henry James felt that a novelist was essentially a historian, an "artist with a varnish bottle", repainting, rearranging possibilities of situation to take into account the historical development. So through Pandora, Henry James not only tries to redeem Daisy Miller but also provides his 'New Woman' with an established identity.

CHAPTER II

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

CHAPTER -2

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Like Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) Henry James in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1882) seems to be occupied with probing the self-reliance of his 'New Woman'. Hawthorne could assert Hester Prynne's individuality by making her deviate from the community's norm and accept her punishment with pride and dignity. James on the other hand made Isabel Archer self-reliant by endowing her with a fortune and by removing her from the community she grew up in and transplanting her in a society where, as a foreigner she would, be permitted a certain measure of non-conformity. Isabel Archer posed to James an artistic difficulty. He seems to have confronted the limitations, of realistic fiction as a mode for exploring the full potential of the 'American girl'. By placing the American girl in a novelistic world closely resembling the actual world of the 1870's, James was forced to focus not so much on the girl's latent potential for growth but on her actual situation.

Isabel Archer portrays the dilemma of a nineteenth century woman who has to overcome the social and economic restraints of her age before beginning to dream of a larger self-expansion. But because Isabel Archer belongs to the

nineteenth century, her economic independence alone is not enough to make her self-reliant. The patriarchal society and also James, believe that Isabel cannot and should not go against the established social norms. Isabel must conform because it is on her confirmation to the prescribed social codes - however stultifying, depends her very survival. Her economic independence can in no way become a threat to the existing social relationships and thus she is made an emotionally handicapped entity who refuses to abjure, that very social set up which ironically saps her vitality. This dependece of Isabel on the social set up (partly imposed on her by the society and partly by Henry James) immediately narrows down her choice. Her choice gets limited finally to, which of her possible suitors she will marry which one would interfere least with her freedom. The conditions of Isabel Archer's world, not only the American but also the European, impinge upon her life and dicates the course of Isable's destiny. Isabel's caeer thus suffers from a blight even before it begins.

Isabel Archer is a more finely realized Daisy Miller who meekly forsakes her possiblities at the sign of the very first crisis. Henry James makes no attempt to minimize her deficiencies as he wishes to highlight, that Isabel is essentially a product of that very social set up which she rebels against.

In Isabel Archer, James wished to draw, "the character and aspect of a particular and engaging young woman"[1] and to show her in the act of "affronting her destiny".[2] Like her male predecessors in *Roderick Hudson* (1875) and Christopher Newmann in *The American* (1877)]. Isabel goes aborad, a thorough provincial with her, "meagre knowledge and inflated ideals". From her sparse New England beginnings, Isabel moves through beautiful panoramas of Europe, glamorous, soaked in tradition and bathed in culture. Against this backdrop Isabel's story unfolds as a story of innocence beguiled, of romantic idealism pathetically entrapped and then rising to tragic heights as it chooses to embrace the destiny that overtakes it.

The story can be briefly summarised. Isabel Archer, is an American girl, innocent and charming, fired with a typical American conviction of her value and her destiny. She rejects the proposal of a young American businesman, Caspar Goodwood. She is rescued from the provincial backwaters of New England by her aunt Mrs. Touchett,an expatriate American who takes her to Europe. In England her imaginative, rich and consumptive cousin Ralph, finds her immensely interesting and takes a ringside seat to watch Isabel's story unfold. Concealing his passion behind a smoke screen of witty disenchanted levity, Ralph makes Isabel's career the object of his detached and amused contemplation. At Gardencourt one

Lord Warburton promptly falls in love with her and proposes marriage but Isabel is eager to live and follow the instinct of her independent spirit. After rejecting Warburton, she wonders : "what view of life, what design upon fate, what conception of happiness had she that pretended to a larger than these large, these fabulous occasion?" (p.164)

Ralph, who wants to have the thrill of seeing what a young lady does who won't marry Lord Warburton, makes her the object of a benevolent intrigue. He persuades his father to bequeath half of his fortune to Isabel. Isabel with "wind in her sails" travels to Italy where she meets Gilbert Osmond. Isabel finds Gilbert Osmond the very epitome of elegance, style, beauty and sophistication. She decides that she would live life by settling down and "cultivating a corner" with Gilbert Osmond a life filled with beauty, replete with fresh, exhilarating impressions. Isabel marries Gilbert Osmond and is terribly disillusioned. Caspar Goodwood, Lord Warburton and Ralph stage a comeback in her life and plead with her to escape from her cage. But Isabel in her heroic idealism chooses to stand by her mistake.

The novel began as a luminous portrait in his (James') imagination. But his portrait required for its background, a social matrix that would set off the finely etched psychology of the heroine. The chief problem, he recalls in his 1907 preface to the novel, lay in balancing the character and

plot; that is, in balancing "the young woman's consciousness -- her relation to herself", with her "relations' to the human "satellites" around her.(3) (p.50) The heroine was to be isolated, working out her destiny for herself, yet existing also at the center of a complex social web. James goes on to explain that the solution was to make his protagonists' relations to others always "contributive" to her developing sense of herself. Isable Archer confronts a problem similar to one that James faced in creating her. She must reconcile the demands of her own psyche with those of the world around her. She must define both "her relation to herself" and her relation to society and try to establish a relation between the two selves.

Early in the novel, we find Isabel aimlessly spending her days in Albany. She longs for escape, for change, for "a desire to leave the past behind her" and "begin afresh". Like the disciples of Bergson adn Pater she revels in the "elan vital" of her being, and dreads everything in society that is mechanical static and stereotypic. Possessing, "an immense curiosity about life" and "a delicate, desultory, flamelike spirit", her deepest enjoyment is "to feel the continuity between the movements of her own soul and the agitations of the world".(p.89) Paradoxically, this desire for self development carries with it a need for almost self-induced blindness to particular realities in the outside

world. Perfect happiness, she tells Henrietta Stackpole, would be riding in "a swift carriage, of a dark night, rattling with four horses over roads that one can't see". (p.219). It is significant that when she is depicted in the Albany house, she is shown as a solitary, engaged in reading a history of German idealist philosophy-the source of American Transcendentalism. She is already identified with an attitude that is, idealized, and remote, Isabel has an Emersonian self-culture, a radical innocence that reflects suffering and endorses self-trust. Her theories, her imaginative ideals, her book-fed romanticisms in a way predetermine her destiny. After Mrs. Touchett appears like a fairy godmother and whisks her off to England, Isabel discovers that only the cultural refinement and complex variety of European society can fully sustain her passion for knowledge and self-development. The challenge that she faces, is to sample delicately the intellectual riches of this world without becoming trapped as a social fixture in it.

Isabel voices the sentiments of Daisy Miller when she remarks, "I am very fond of my liberty" (p.82), but unlike Daisy, she soon realizes the dilemma that unrestricted freedom imposes upon the individual. While total freedom offers an infinite range of potential experiences, the moment one commits onseself to any particular life-style or to any

single individual, one forfeits one's freedom. Thus, Isabel declares early in the novel, "I don't wish to touch the cup of experience. It's a poisoned drink! I only want to see for myself." (p.203). The only problem is that "seeing" as Isabel uses the word is not really living or as Ralph terms it, "feeling". After a year of perpetual travel, Isabel herself acknowledges that she has been engaged, not "in ~~of~~ act of living, but that of observing." (p.392). Isabel with her inflated American ideal of sincerity, refuses to accept any social identity that does not express her true spiritual being. She insists that "her life should produce," that she "would be what she appeared, and she would appear what she was". But Isabel miserably fails in her quest when she has to inevitably mask her true self in order to portray what society demands.

In order that Isable's affronting her destiny be an act of the freest choice, the author defines the conditions of her freedom. She has a brave, eager nature, a "determination to see, to try, to know," (p.89)

> She spent half her time in thinking of beauty and bravery and magnanimity, she had a fixed determination to regard the world as a place of brightness, of free expansion, of irresistible action. (p.104)

Her very lack of settled and orderly ideas is a part of her young freedom; her thoughts are as uncommitted as her actions. Thus innocent and free but subject to fancies and vagaries instead of controlled by realities and rules, eager to see and to affront her destiny but unwilling to feel and to yield to the needs of her own nature and the demands of life upon her, Isabel is in a paradoxical situation. James compares his heroine, in the preface to the novel, to girls in George Eliot's novel and to Portia in *The Merchant of Venice.* Isabel's freedom is merely the indecision which precedes choice. She cannot both choose and not choose; her commitment to life costs her liberty, and the question is whether like Portia, she will choose rightly. There is pathos in her eagerness, there is irony in her liberty, for only after she has forefeited it by a choice of destinies will she know whether it has been a good choice. James organised "an ado" about her-that is, placed her in a situation where all the vistas of possibility are open before her and sorrounded her with characters who are interested in her choice. The characters around her are fascinated by her situation, which represents to them the liberty and promise of which all have some idea, but which life seldom furnishes. They attempt to aid her or to use her and inevitably her freedom proves as illusory as it is transient, for it is succeptible to influences which play around her.

For Isabel, liberty means to know everything in order to choose freely, confidently, responsibly. She tells her aunt that she always likes to know the things one shouldn't do, "so as to choose". She is afraid of becoming "a mere sheep in the flock," she declines to be a puppet and wishes to be the sole master of her own fate. She wants to be free to exist magnificently in terms of her own ideal image of herself and she feels that to live ideally she must live above the ordinary world. And that is why she views marriage as an institution that diminishes one's liberty. But for her as for most women of the nineteenth century, an escape from marriage was impossible. When Lord Warburton, an amiable impeccably mannered English aristocrat with a seat in the parliament proposes to her, she retreats hastily for it would impose a false social identity upon her. Although she is "lost in admiration of her opportunity" at his proposal, "she...moves back into the deppest shade of it, even as some wild, caught creature in a vast cage,"(p.162). She views Warburton as the embodiment of a social class and fears that marriage to such a man would fix narrow limits upon her ever expanding consciousness. Lord Warburton represents for her, the challenge of a whole world of facts beyond both her experience and her dreams. What he offers is a real world in place of her "ideal". Her refusal of him is a rejection of a real world, and an expression of her determination to pursue

the "ideal". She does not dislike him personally but she resents his having so definite an outward form:

> What she felt was that a territorial, a political, a social magnute had conceived the design of drawing her into thesystem in which he rather indiviously lived and moved. (p.156).

Lord Warburton in offering her a solidly defined world is offering an actuality that would obscure her ideal. James lends a certain subtle support to his heroine's rejection of Warburton by gently caricaturing him. Warburton's imagination is no match for Isabel's fertile imagination. He thinks he would be able to provide her with the opportunity to explore life, but Isabel knows that by marrying him she would get trapped into his world, his standards and the realities of his life, she seeks "an orbit of her own".

Isabel's indefatigable American suitor, Caspar Goodwood, makes his first appearance at Gardencourt on the heels of Warburton's failure. If Lord Warburton presents a gentle threat, Caspar Goodwood with his "hard manhood", presents a threat more dangerous and more personal:

> ....he seemed to deprive her of the sense of freedom. There was disagreeably strong push, a kind of hardness in his presence, in his way of rising before her .....more than

> any man she had ever known..... Caspar Goodwood expressed for her an energy - and she had already felt it as power - that was of his very nature .... She might like it or not, but he insisted, ever, with his whole weight and force:..... The idea of a diminished liberty was particularly disagreeable to her. (p.169)

Isabel's fears are also sexual. She senses something quintessentially masculine, yet frightening and inflexible in his "supremely strong, clean make". Like Warbuton, he exists in her eyes more as an images than a man :

> she saw the different fitted parts of him as she had seen, in musuems and portraits, the different fitted parts of armoured warriours - in plates of steel handsomely inlaid with gold. (p.171).

All the restrictive qualities that Isabel associates with industrialized America - its mechanical strength, its ostentatious wealth, its insensitivity to man's spiritual needs, its lack of cultural variety - coalesce in this vision Isabel senses in him "a want of easy consonance with the deeper rhythms of life" to which her own finely tuned consciousness pulsates". (p.171). The young industrialist exerts a kind of raw sexual magnetism, but Isabel believes that to marry him would be to submit her fluid inner self to a prison of mechnaical American conventions.

But after Goodwood's departure and the death of Mr.Touchett, Isabel gradually begins to adopt a new attitude towards herself and her experience. Instead of rebelling at anything that threatened to inhibit her wide-ranging quest for new impressions, she comes to feel the need for some underlying principle of order in her personality. James tells us that:

> the desire for unlimited expansion had beensucceded in her sould by the sense that life was vacant without some private duty that might gather one's energies to a point. (p.403).

This "more primitve need for private duty", demands that Isabel selects a particular way to life which in turn requires that she presents some public version of herself. The driving force behind Isabel's need to establish her identity begins wehn she inherits a large fortune.

It is Ralph who persuades his father to leave a lion's share of his inheritance to her and thus becomes instrumental in chalking out Isabel's fate. Ralph makes her rich for he believes that the money will "put wind in her sails", and he fancies her "going before the breeze". With his own obvious physical limitations Ralph wishes to live vicariously through Isable., His foyndest desire is to see what life will make of her, to witness the develpoment of

her intellect to watch her personality expand in the whirpool of social activity. Ralph like Winterbourne (*Daisy Miller*) is a recurring Jamesian figure-the subtly debarred ringside spectator who is banned from participation. He is content to watch and appreciate Isabel. In his own way he is also an aesthete who stands back and relishes the beautiful.

But ironically, the fortune through which he intends to liberate Isabel from all self-limiting choices has just the opposite effect. Unwittingly he becomes the author of all her woe. The money imposes upon her the burden of widely recognised social stereotype-she finds that, in the world's eyes, she has become an heiress. Stupefied by Mr. Tocuchett's bequest to her, Isabel initially finds herself oppressed. The stigma of affluence is especially false and uncomfortable to her. The oppression Isabel experiences from her newly acquired wealth stems from her belief that it necessitates action, it has an enabling quality. She knows she must exercise this power some time or the other. The necessity to rationalize her wealth as something good becomes her driving force henceforth. She says to Ralph:

> a large fortune means means freedom, and I'm afraid of that. It's such a fine thing and one should make such a good use of it. If one shouldn't one would be ashamed. And one must keep thinking; It's a constant effort. I'm not sure it's not a greater happiness to be powerless (p.274).

Her fortune brings her a totally new kind freedom. Though it removes her earlier restrictions and limitations, it imposes upon her a new set of codes. Mrs. Touchett is of the opinion that Isabel must know to play her part which requires not only surrounding herself with "everything handsome", but also learning to "take care of" these supposed "external manifestations of character". It is this fortune which colours her judgements henceforth. It is her feelings of guilt about her fortune that makes her transfer the burden on to the shoulders of Gilbert Osmand who is in dire need of money. Osmond's poverty influence's Isabel's decision to marry. Her wealth gives her a power which Osmond lacks and Isabel thinks its blasphemeus to retain such powers as a woman. She feels in some way responsible for Osmond's want. She feels marrying Osmond" 'Would rub off a certain grossness" (p.476) of her inheritance. Moreover it would be a marriage where she would be contributing, a priviledge she would have lacked in marrying Caspar Goodwod or Lord Warburton. " She would launch his boat for him, she would be his providence". (p.476). Like Ralph, Isabel wishes to live for someone else. Her fortune deludes her into believing that her financial assets can constitute a continuous, real power that will allow her to marry and maintain her freedom as well. By such fatal logic Isabel enters the "cage" of marriage to Osmond.

Isabel's motives in accepting Osmond are complex. Her most explicit motive is the deluded notion that it will be a relationship in which she can retain her self-possession and dispense bounties to another. Marrying Goodwood would have meant surrendering her womanhood to his manhood and marrying Warburton would have been a loss of her personal identity by being sucked into his system. But Osmond makes the least demands on her, his wonderfully polished opaque surface, with its charming absence of the assertive edges of Warburton and Goodwood, makes him the most desirable partner. He offers to her just the world she had been questing, for a realm of brightness and freedom in which she would move under the constant inspiration of the finest and best things in life. He seems to offer a mirror in which she may find herself amdiringly reflected, confirmed in her own finest image.

While Warburton offered a whole world of actualities to her, Osmond offers only to add her to his collection. The theorising, idealising part of her is quite prepared to be placed in Osmond's collection.

> The lady is half willing to be turned into a portrait. It offers a reprieve from the disturbing ordeals awaiting the self in the mire of the actual.[5]

Their marriage is the union of two aesthetes. Yet Isabel's marriage provides neither freedom nor fulfilment

in a personal relationship; it becomes on the contrary "the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation". (p.478) When James draws the curtain back three years after her marriage, we realize unmistakably that Osmond's fine aestheticism, generosity and desire for privacy have been a sham. In place of her ideal, Isabel finds a vain and vicious brute, an all absorbing egoist who wishes to make his wife, with his other possessions, an extension of himself : "Her mind was to be his", she realizes, "attached to his own like a small garden plot to a deer park ..." (p. 481) Beneath Osmond's good manners, cleverness and aminity, "his egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers", (p.477). Isabel comes to realize that her husband's egotism can be gratified only by an admiring audience, and that this admiration can be won only through a complete submission to the values, standards, and customs of society. As a living portrait in Osmond's gallery Isabel finds herself catering to enlargement of Osmond's identity. In her role of a perpetual hostess, she is condemned to wear a mask that bears no resemblance to the inner self that she had imagined.

In the 1870's George Eliot published two of the greatest novels in English, *Middlemarch* (1873) and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), which James reviewed and discussed at length in letters to his family and friends; and it was sometime

shortly after *Daniel Deronda* was published that James wrote his fragmentary opening for *The Portrait of a Lady*. Isabel Archer, indeed has the most extraordinary resemblance to both Dorothea Brooke the herione of *Middlemarch* and Gwendolyn Harleth the heroine of *Daniel Deronda* Dorothea Brooke has a puritan strain in her nature that causes her, even if unknowingly, to "seek martyrdom". Her mind is "theoretic"; she is "enamoured of intensity and greatness", and consequently, against the advice of all her friends, she marries an older man whose intellectual accomplishments she has idealized. Her life with pedantic casaubon becomes a misery to her, as all of her generous, expansive impulses are constricted within a "chill, colourless, narrowed lanscape". Seeking enlargement, she finds a cruel imprisonment in marriage. She suffers in her marriage, unwisely made, in the same way, incurring the same kind of psychological torment as Isabel Archer. Both Casaubon and Osmond are virtually father figures. Osmond's remarks during his courtship with Isabel are very revealing. He says, "you are remarkably fresh, and I'm remarkably well seasoned" (p.403), a statement which implies authority based on years of experience and is synonymous with fatherly attributes. A similar generation gap is referred to by Casaubon in his letter of proposal to Dorothea in which he apologises for his advanced years but promises to compensate it with his emotions unspent over the years. One years. One

wonders what would be the quality of those emotions if they are even brought into play. Dorothea's disappointment with Casaubon is qualitatively different from that of Isabel's disappointment with Osmond. Both Dorothea and Isabel wish to serve their husbands. Dorothea's prospect of delight is in devoting herself to her husband - body and soul, but Casaubon is not interested in her complete surrender for fear of his own exposure. On the other hand Isabel's soul is her prized possession which will improve under Osmond but would never become an adjuct to his ego. She dreams of "cultivating a corner" with Osmond forever experiencing new sensations, and Dorothea thinks it would be wonderful to assist Casaubon in his efforts to "to reconstruct a past". Dorothea thinks Casaubon would deliver her from the walled in maze of girlish ignorance and elevate her. Osmond on the other hand inspires in Isabel the role of a self-sacrificing wife and mother, quietly under the benevolent guidance, in cultivation of wisdom and beauty. But Casaubon's indifference and Osmond's coercion stupefies and strangulates Dorothea and Isabel's dreams of expansion and enlargement. Both Isabel and Dorothea land up in a tomb with their respective husbands - a "domestic dungeon" bereft of light.

Dorothea's idealism like Isabel's is her hamartia. Like Dorothea, Isabel emerges painfully and reluctantly from one

ruined ideal ~~to~~ only to be subjected to the distortions of another ruined ideal. But there is a distinct difference in their final attitudes. While Dorothea's conflicts culminate in affirmation and greater self-acceptance, Isabel chooses to deny her self for the sake of a commitment. Dorothea finally renounces the ideal of renunciation and opts for love while Isabel takes refuge in stoicism and refuses to escape the ordeal of self mortification.

The meditation scene in *The portrait of a lady*, in which Isabel takes stock of her life and career is unmistakably the "best thing in the book" that Isabel's "motionlessly seeing" is a "prime illustration of the general", which means that the heroines education is the book's central thematic movement. At the beginning of Isabel's nocturnal vigil by the dying fire, she closes her eyes and coaxes "unexpected recognition". She tries to break "out of the labyrinth" with the help of her new insights so as to abrogate the prison of her former subectivity and see her marriage & her own situation as it really exists. It is once again, clarity of perception that the heroine is cultivating. These meditations bring to mind the meditations in *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*. Isabel like the heroines of George Eliot, views her physical sorrounding in terms of contraction and darkness of her own expectations and experience of marriage. The images of "shadows gathering",

"prison" and metaphors of "closed vista" are central to the meditations of all these heroines: "she had suddenly found the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end" (p.474).

But this revelation does not equip Isabel with the neccessary courage to break out. She refuses to acknowledge any dishonour in her position, choosing to cling to the notion that "her honour" in an ideal sense depends on a difficult loyalty to her husband: "Almost anything seemed to her preferable to violating the traditionary sanctitities and decencies of marriage". She attempts to continue living by her theory of the ideal. "They had attempted only one thing, but that one thing was to have been exquisite. Once they missed it nothing else would do". (p.479). The artifice, the sheer perversion of values in pursuing that ideal which involves even betrayal of Pansy. Yet she labours to convice herself that what she is doing is simply a difficult perusal of a difficult form of the ideal[17]. Her mask slips a little and natural feelings surge in when impulsively she decides to go and meet dying Ralph. But her going to Gardencourt is not at all a clear choice. In her heart of hearts she considers her act-a sacrilege, an act against, "something sacred and precious the observance of a magnificent form". p(583). Her love of the ideal becomes more vividly evident in her reactions to Henrietta Stackpole's marriage & Lord

Warburton's impending marriage. She is disappointed, because they do not live up to the ideal attitudes she had conceived for them, but reveal in showing up as ordinary human beings, "a certain grossness". So it is quite understandable that though Isabel's marriage has brought her pain and unhappiness, she will not end it or flee from it because she regards it, as a commitment of the highest sort: "the most serious act-the single sacred act of her life". She knows that she has been a victim of Madame Merle and Osmond's intrigue, yet she would refuse to credit them by naming the act as an act of free choice. What she can perhaps do in order to remain as close to the ideal as possible - she can make her suffering and experiences meaningful and rational. She had been afraid of suffering but now she would not attempt to anesthetize herself to the suffering that knowledge brings:

> .... suffering with Isabel, was an active condition; it was not a chill, a stupor, a despair; it was a passion of thought, of speculation of response to every pressure. (p.474).

The path for Isabel is clearly away from Goodwood who at moments of crisis can only offer his consuming passions. Yet one does not knows where the straight path leads Isabel - to Italy, to escape the passion which still seems to be the greatest threat to her freedom, to keep her promise to

Pansy, or to buy her freedom from Osmond, or to make the best of her prison - a prison for which Ralph has been indirectly responsible. Isabel who prides herself on her willingness to confront the truth, significantly refuses to recognise the fact that, she has never been as agent of 'free choice', she has always been a victim. As a character who reflects a actual possibilities, including psychological possibilities, open to a woman of 1870's, Isabel's decision reflects all such possibilities. Like most actual unions of the nineteenth century, Isabel's marriage is confining; like most women of her day, she must define her self in terms of her own marriage. Though the 'Matrimonial Causes Act' 1857 (England) did give the women an opportunity to seek divorce but it was easier said than done. In *Jude the Obscure* (1895) we see Sue Bridehead is divorced by Phillotson, instead of it being the other way round, simply because procedures of dissolving a marriage was simpler in a man's case. Isabel in order to divorce Osmond would have to provide evidence of her husband's adultery or of bigamy - which obviously Isabel would not stoop to. Osmond himself would never initiate such legal proceedings. But they were married under Roman laws of marriage which if nothing else would never allow divorce on grounds of incompatibility or mental cruelty. So isabel's fate is almost sealed.

Isabel's story traces the growth of a conscience to a helpless maturity - helpless because maturity has come too late to save itself. Isabel's Sisyphian persistence in her marriage does give a noble touch to her resolve but one cannot ignore the fact that her commitment would be just another act of self delusion. She might think that after she returns to Rome with a regained vision, the most essential part of her being would always be beyond the reach and violation of her husband. The full implications of her returns are not faced up to by Henry James. He is aware that she is misguided and that she is in error but James finds his hands tied. He cannot blame her, for both of them are the products of a society which does not have many alternatives to offer. So James tries to cloak his heroine's last act in heroic idealism. Isabel is to be admired and not pitied. To reserve our sympathies for Isabel everyone around her is caricatured except Ralph and Osmond.

So Isabel does what "seemed right" to her and her creator and goes back to Osmond, to Rome, renouncing the refuge of Gardencourt to begin her work of re-education and re-habilitation. Isabel's stance reminds one of Sue Bridehead of *Jude the Obscure* (1895) Sue's reaction against orthodoxy was idealist like Isabel's disgust with conventions and forms. Sue was trapped between old and new while Isabel is trapped between what others expect of her

and her own ideals of her own self. While ~~Sue~~ Isabel gets trapped in the very conventions of marriage which she had always considered stultiifying, Sue's attempt to live authentically on her own terms collapses into a guilty self-punishment, a movement from freedom into the consoling embrace of an impersonal system of authority which if nothing else relieves one of the burden of selfhood and so of the responsibility. While Sue flays her flesh and brings her body into a corpse-like submission to a man, she physically detests, Isabel seals her fate in not too different a manner. She forsakes her freedom to maintain the facade of a defeated ideal. Isabel like Sue had unconsciously internalized those values of the male world which functions to keep her an imprisoned and unquestioning victim. And so both Sue & Isabel continue to indulge themselves in their false consciousness.

All the women characters in *The Portait of a lady* have been delineated in great detail so as to accentuate Isabel's portrait and to throw her in relief. Besides offering a contrast, they also prove to be instrumental in her career. Henrietta Stackpole is Isabel's friend from America. They have many traits in common and their careers run parallel through the novel. Henrietta is a newspaper correspondent and thus an observer-spectator. Her name 'Stackpole' suggests height implying that she looks upon the various social

arrangements from above. Both Isabel and Henrietta refuse to tie the matrimonial knot. Isabel is courageous and admires Henrietta's courage. "she was brave; she went into cages, she flourished lashes". (p.146). Both are highly theoretical and it is by jingoist notions that Henrictta gauges Europe, criticising its manners and customs. Her engagement to Bantling after five years of courtship represents a choice in marriage. But Isabel is disappointed with Henrietta's engagement. She admires Henrietta for being a "disembodied voice", a flame and she protests agaist Henrietta's admission to susceptibilities. Ralph's estimate of her and probably James' is that "she smells so of the Future - it almost knocks one down!" (p147). Henrietta has been gently parodied by James but she makes some significant statements in the novel. She tells Isabel, "the peril for you that you live too much in the world of your own dreams. You are not enough in contact with reality - with the toiling, striving and suffering". (p.220). Henrietta by the end of the novel does acquire a larger awareness. In her accomodation with England, with Ralph she does not relinquish her self.

Mrs. Touchett is a unique Jamesian mother who loves her independence even more than Isabel. she is the vivid embodiment of freedom without commitment. Indifferent about her husband and son she follows a meaningless idiosyncracy of following her fixed time table of travels. Isabel pities

her, "Nothing tender, nothing sympathetic, had ever a chance to fasten upon it, no wind sown blossom, no familiar softening moss". (p.272). Lacking any enrichment of consciousness or suffering she remains untouched by life. Without a sense of "having lived" she remains an "old woman without memories". Looking at her Isabel wonders at one point, with twinge of fear, if her insistence on her freedom may not lead to some desert of pride and isolation.

Madam Merle is another self absorbed woman who shares a trait with Mrs. Touchett of using people. Mrs. Touchett teaches her niece that one maries not for love, but to make use of people. Madame Merle also sees people as instruments and has no sense of their intrinsic worth. Madame Merle represents the sterility of European civilization. She has abdicated morality in favour of the aesthetic and has a morbid occupation with the self. She is a disciple of appearances and is a perfect artifice that reflects Osmonds tastes' as a connoisseur. In emulating her Isabel commits the sin of love for the self. Isabel contrives to appear to Osmond as he wants her to appear; like a finished piece of art which re-echoes and reflects his ideas and taste. Madame Merle had warned Isabel: "when you have lived as long as I, you'll see that every human being has his shell and that you must take the shell into accoutn". (p253). It is this shell Isabel hated but unwittingly slips into and even till the

very end cannot throw away. The mask she hates becomes at the end her established projected self. Madame Marle is used and abused by Osmond and then she herself becomes the agent of evil, always choosing the right mask for the right occasion. But she ends up utterly dried up, unable to cry; "you've dried up my soul" she says to Osmond. She knows that she has been "vile for nothing" and that is her greatest defeat. Her crime is more grave than Osmond's, for she uses Isabel, who of all people believed herself to be free and self-reliant.

Pansy is the perfect artifice created by Osmond. Removed from the active sphere of life, Pansy is a kind of abstraction - a little angel from heaven. Sheltered and kept spotless, she reflects Osmonds taste for uncorrupted but pliant beauty. Both Pansy and Isabel have been manipulated by Osmond & Madame Merle but Pansy becomes the ultimate testing ground for Isabel's freedom. Isabel sees herself in Pansy who had been another "daddy's girl" kept apart from life by her father in the world of "theories" and "idealisms" which becomes a bane for her. She refuses to be a collaborator in Pansy's marriage to Lord Warburton. And it is Pansy who provides Isabel with a mirror to visualise her 'self'. It is Pansy who unconsciously drives Isabel to face the "unexpected recognitions". And it is through Pansy that Isabel's journey to salvation begins.

Many critics have pointed out that Isabel falls short of being Henry James' 'New woman'. But Isabel is the 'New woman' in the process of evolution. With her peculiar dilemmas and obsessions, she portrays that woman of 1880's who is struggling to survive in a patriarchal world on her own terms. Isabel yet has the scope of development unlike Henrietta, Madame Merle on Pansy. She is now better equipped to face the world armed with a knowledge of both good and evil. She would not escape or retreat from her predicament instead meet it head on. ~~Unlike~~ 'life' would continue to be her "business" unlike that of Daisy Miller. The ambiguous treatment of the ending of the novel shows that the author has not yet said a last word on her and plans to take her up again in his next venture on his 'New woman'.

CHAPTER III

THE BOSTONIANS

CHAPTER 3

THE BOSTONIANS

The Bostonians (1889) was conceived by Henry James, during his last interlude in America. The years between 1881 and 1883 was a period of fatigue and demoralization. He was a stranger in his own homeland and yet he was acutely conscious of American provincialism and the strident morality, of as well as the innocence and poetry of the new country. His whole education and upbringing had been such that it had given him a multiple and international perspective on various cultures and had ensured that he would not get bogged down by orthodoxies of any one school of thought or the culture of one nation. Thus Henry James had the unique privilege of viewing America both from inside and outside. Europe for James was the symbol of aesthetic finesse and charm and yet he never forswore America for Europe. During his stay in America in 1883, James thought of writing "a very American tale" He wrote in his Notebook:

> I asked myself what was the most salient and peculiar point in our social life. the answer was: the situation of women, the decline of the sentiment of sex, the agitation on their behalf.[1]

The Bostonians was intended as a caricature of Feminism in the United States. The mushroom growth of reforming

societies between 1840 and 1850 in America was the natural outcome of the optimism which pervaved American society in the nineteenth century. Henry James too felt the influence of the Transcendentalists, the Brook Farmers and the Romantic Humanitarians. He came to think of them as, "Long haired men and short haired women... a great irregular army of nostrum mongers domiciled in humanitary Bohemia"[2] James' own father was the most ardent of Swedenborgians and a convinced Fourierite. Henry James was thus well versed in the tenor of Boston society. *The Bostonians* was a satire of these New England reformers- but it was not entirely free from a nostalgia for the crude energy and earnest zeal of the New England reform movement, for the expanded moral consciousness which he felt to be lacking in Europe.

The Bostonians serialized in the *Century magazine* in 1885 before its book publication in 1886, is the only full length novel by Henry James, which is entirely American in its characters and scenes. The novel portrays a world of New England reformers and suffragetes, mesmeric healers and spiritualists and journalists all frantically eager to sustain the flagging idealism of the Transeendentalist movement and the Abolitionist cause. James turns this world over and over again prodding and probing, with a brilliant wit, revealing the deceptive idealism of the reformers,

and their aspirations of power in the garb of altruism. It was against this backdrop that Henry James chose to deal with the situation of women. Unfortunately the publication of *The Bostonians* proved a serious setback in James' career. The sales were very poor, the publisher went bankcrupt and above all it met with a hostile critical reception in America. Rather than being shocked by James' irreverent treatment of Boston, reviewers were merely puzzled and bored by the novel's slow movement and abnormal characters. Mark Twain's remark on the novel is well known:

> I can't stand George Eliot and Hawthorne and those people," he wrote to Howells, "... they just bore me to death. And as for *The Bostonians*, I would rather be damned to John Bunyan's heaven than read that.[3]

Henry James did not include the novel in the latter New york edition which only goes to show James' awareness of the fact that America was not yet ready for self criticism. In a tone of biting cleverness that must have bewildered many of his readers, James had called into question the persistent fondness of Americans " for thinking of themselves as the salt of the earth-the newest salt and the best salt."[4]

The novel can be briefly summarized thus: Olive Chancellor, an inhibited Boston Brahmin who seeks sisterhood and salvation in the women's movement, is stricken with an obsession to possess beautiful, pliant Verena Tarrant. Daughter and subject of a sleazy mesmerist, Verena is endowed with the gift of compelling talk. Gripped with excitement, Olive buys the girl from her parents, thus initiating a bond which through Verena's melifluous, magnetic speeches promises to make the fortunes of the feminist movement and to attain Olive's happiness forever. The women's only antagonist is Olive's cousin Basil Ransom, a displaced southerner adrift with medieval feudal ideas ~~Olives~~ in progressive New England, who falls in love with Verena and vows to restore her to her "normal" sphere of ornamental privacy.

The burlesqued dissipation of New England's 'heroic age'- is exposed brilliantly by James' satiric treatment. He presents us with a great carnival, of genuine freaks and spurious saints, among them Verena's father, Selah Tarrant, the spiritualist with an enthusiasm for nature camps, sorely trying to his tremulously trusting wife; and Mrs. Farrinder who affects large hats and larger views and who sails through the shoals and shallows of social movments like a launched frigate; and Miss

Birdseye, sweet and vague and suffering from the battle, fatigue of innumerble campaigns, of whom it is defintively said that. " the whole moral history of Boston was reflected in her displaced spectacles". But the central focus of the novel is the women of New England typifying the American energy and enthusiasm for emancipation. In this novel James makes a penetrating study of his 'New Woman' in her native sorroundings. His 'New Women' who had earlier appeared rootless in the European landscape, dense with moral ambiguities, saturated in history and dominated by old precedents manners and conventions, is seen here in New England asserting her freedom and with a mission of liberating her stock, and thus creating a new history a new culture for an America without a past.

Beyond the satiric tone of James we have a penetrating study of Olive Chancellor, whose repressed loves and sublimated passion, whose aggressions and shyness, anguishes and altruisms, constitute a vivid rendering of a profoundly wounded psyche. It is also a study of Verena Tarrant, the symbol of American innocence as ill equiped as Daisy Miller, to "affront her destiny", almost a *tabula rassa* waiting to be written on. The two women between themselves represent the New England consciousness characterised by renunciation and self immolation. James begins to probe very

early in the novel, the psychological basis of Olive's puritanism. We are told that:

> The most secret, the most sacred hope of her nature , was that some day she might have such a chance, she might be a martyr and die for something (p. 13)

We are thus prepared for the fulfilment of her desires in her relationship with Verena Tarrant. Verena's response to the plea that they should "renounce, refrain, abstain" was to wonder "what could be the need of this scheme of renunciation". She is the typical Jamesian innocent, ruthlessly cultivated as a vehicle for the Feminist movement and her connection with it is the most unreal, accidental, illusory thing in the world. Her fickleness towards the cause, and the final rupture between the two women, cause Olive a great deal of suffering. But, "the prospect of suffering was always spiritually speaking, so much cash in her pocket" and she freely avails herself of this supply in the closing scenes of the book. Typically enough she spares herself no degradation and goes off to face the hisses and boos ~~of the great disappointed~~ in the Boston lecture hall:

> like some feminine firebrand of Paris revolutions erect on a barricade, or even the sacrificial figure of Hypatia whirled through the furious mob of Alexandria, (p. 462-63).

In choosing to write about " the situation of women, the decline of the sentiment of sex," against the backdrop of the post-Civil War, and in choosing Boston as the locale of action, James was consciously trying to juxtapose one war over the other, that is the war between the sexes with the war between North and South. James invokes a long history of animosity that exists between a southerner and a Bostonian and links it with the battle between men and women, both wars characterised by a struggle for power. Boston is representative of that element of reform which had so much to do with bringing the forces behind the civil war to a head and Ransom recognises that. He locates the source of war in the aggressive energy of Boston women and wishes to annihilate it thus avenging his defect in the Civil war.[5] Disadvantaged and struggling for economic survival all Ransom's secret yearnings have come to a nought. Like Verena and Olive, Ransom also craves for a social identity:

> he had always had a desire for public life; to cause one's ideas to be embodied in national conduct appeared to him the highest form of human enjoyment. (p. 193)

For all his present difficulties, he holds the Boston women responsible, for they constitute an economic and

political threat to Ransom. Ransom thus belongs to that class of men whom Olive hates. And Olive is not mistaken in her hatred, for Ransom's threat is a threat of subjection and sexual subjugation which she is fighting against. Ransom stands for that male ego which holds Boston women's love for freedom and equality at ransom. The battle lines are clearly drawn with Verena for a prize. While the Boston women have all the material privileges, including an encouraging media, Ransom is armed with his domineering male virility and a confidence of the victories won in the past, over women of various hues. Ransom has the psychology of a victor while Olive is handicapped with her personal fears. Besides fighting Ransom, she has to fight herself. She doesnot merely wish to liberate women (or Verena to be specific) from male subjugation but she also wishes to exercise power over her. She is mistaken about her motivation, she dreams of being a martyr but in reality she wishes to be a matriarch. She also suffers from a false conciousness like isabel, never realizing her true drives, her true leanings and inclinations. Her's also is a book fed idealism like that of Isabel Archer.

Olive shares with Isabel the puritanic-transcendental heritage that estranges them from life; Isables sense of mission is alluded to repeatedly and it is the same sense of

mission, that propels Olive when she quote's Goethe's *Faust* in support of her aspirations. Her house in Back bay becomes a "headquarters" from which she wages her campaigns, a place where the great reforming names of the past, like that of Eliza P. Moseley are mentioned reverentially. While the puritan imagination in her makes her a crusader of women's rights, the transeendentalist in her gets enraptured by the music of Beethoven.[6] Olive's heroic mode of perception makes her the victim of continual self deception. The most poignant thing about her is that, she continually lacerates or crucifies her taste, for the sake of her theories. In embracing democracy as her ideal, she rides the horse car to share the lot of the less privileged. But the experience always wounds her taste. She feels guilty for having money and cannot rest until she finds a use for it beyond herself. She is incapable of allowing herself pleasures except in the context of some higher good, that is how she chooses to stay at a New Jerusalem boarding house while in New york, which is a haven for the Utopian reformers, having a," hot faded parlor with a rug" representing a, " New foundland dog saving a child from drowning" (p.286) When she finds herslf detesting Dr.Tarrant, she has to assure herself that she dislikes him, "only as a type". Rationalizing in a similar fashion she affirms that she dislikes men only " as a class". Olive in a Jamesian fashion is in search for a higher

synthesis in life and in her search feelings in Olive turn into almost an abstraction. The sexual passion turns into a soul-hunger and the search eventually becomes self -destructive.

The self destructiveness of Olive is distinctly Conradian-though without Conrad's ultimate bleakness. It demonstrates how the highest idealism (like Kurtz's or Jim's) in the name of an idea like freedom, expansion, or heroism, can quickly turn into its own travesty: self aggrandizment and narcissistic self-delusion and the constriction of others.[8] But Olives career has another interesting parallel with Conrad's Jim, they both become martyrs to save their idealism from any taint and yet fail to win sympathy. Olive's self-denial is reflected in her character, in her severe deportment, plain dress, in her shyness, in her guilt in her penchant for renunciation (her favourite passage in *Faust* is the one on renunciation) Olive Chancellor, James goes on to explain, " was subject to fits of tragic shyness, during which she was unable to meet even her own eyes in the mirror". (p. 10) The compulsion to conceal herself becomes almost pathological. James had admired Zenobia (*The Blithedale Romance*) as Howthorne's most complete person; yet when he came to create his own lady reformer, he could not create a fully realised human being.

While Zenobia is almost defined by her sexuality, Olive as the name suggests is green, unripe, almost plain, and unlike Zenobia, she hates her sexuality. Hawthorne equated strength and independence in his women-Hester and Zenobia-with a threatening sexuality and made his lady reformer, the most passionate of his women, whereas James made Olive Chancellor his most self -denying women. Olive seems to be an afterword on Isabel Archer, carrying self mortification to its ultimate point.

The conflict that results out of Olive's self denial, effectively fragments her identity. The women's movement takes a back seat white she fights a duel with Ransom for the possession of Verena:

> Miss Chancellor (Chancellor suggests power and authority) would have been much happier if the movements she was interested in could five been carried on only by the people she liked, and if revolutions, somehow did not always have to begin with one's self-with internal convulsions, sacrifices, executions. (P. 113)

Olive could definitely do without, the hundred misgivings she has in keeping Verena away from Ransom, the hundreds of doubts she has when Verena is with him. Olive's theoretic self constantly interposes between herself and her

desires. Torn between her ideal and her desire, Olive goes on chasing a chimera, an illusion, that her fulfilment lies in saving Verena from the clutches of Ransom. Olive thus becomes the self-appointed protectress of Verena. It is Olive's greatest wish to keep the girl pure and uncontaminated from men, for Olive's brand of feminism believes not in equality between men and women, but in hatred towards men as a class. For her, the great revolution would have meant reversing the scales. And that is why it is so necessary for her to save Verena. The righteousness of her cause has a religious colouring. For Olive Feminism is a religious cause and losing Verena, would be losing consecrated maiden to the devil. Olive's passion for Verena is in the same religious vein.

Verena embodies in her all Olive's aspirations. In fact, Olive perceives how fatally " without Verena's tender notes, her crusade would lack.... what Catholics call unction" (p.160). Together they would serve a religious cause: Olive with her money, Verena with her gift. Olive Chancellor appears to have better chances in the contest for Verena. She has wealth to pay Verena's avaricious father and help Mrs. ~~Tawith~~ Tannant to climb out of the "social swamp" and with all that Olive seems to have the initial success. Olive's social position, while apparently a source of power is really useless, because her society is

willing to support the claims of everyone else, parents, suitors newspaper correspondents, and particularly Ransom's claim to Verena, but not Olive's. Miss Birdseye is lost in a romantic fantasy about Verena's reconstruction of the handsome southerner; Mrs. Burrage wants Verena for Henry; Mrs Farrinder wants her for her movement; Dr. prance is only too happy to assist Ransom and Mrs Luna is hardly helpful. Olive is thus without support. But Olive is willing to go to any length to keep Verena for herself alone. Mrs Burrage promises Olive, to put her fortune at the disposal of the Cause, in return for Verena, and Olive is tempted. Olive recognises it as a magnificent opportunity, both for Verena and the Cause. But Verena now means to her much more than a mere instrument to achieve the Cause. Verena is her projected self and giving her away would mean, destroying the ideal self she sees projected in her. Olive says at one place, "I should like to be able to say that you are my form my envelope", (p. 159). Thus afraid of losing her "form", her "envelope" she rejects Mrs. Burrage's proposal. Olive is successful in warding off another suitor, Matthias Pardon and is partially successful in even warding off her greatest threat-Ransom, but what she fails to ward of is, the knowledge, the growing awareness in Verena.

Verena to begin with is "admirably docile" and like Pansy in "*The Portrait of a lady*" blank as a page. Verena is an advocate of Women's Rights and speaks eloquently on the cruelty of man, of his immemorial injustice. But all that is abstract and Platonic, for "she didn't detest him men in consequence". Verena believes that like Olive she is also unalterably dedicated to the Cause, yet enjoys fame, praise and the attentions of men. She thinks one day she would be able to "renounce, refrain and abstain" from worldly temptation. She is absolutely overhelmed with what Olive tries to show her:

> Olive had taken her up, in the literal sense of the phrase, like a bird of the air, had spread and extraordinary pair of wings, and carried her through the dizzying void of space. Verena liked it, for the most part; liked to shoot upward without an effort of her own and look down upon all creation, upon all history, from such a height (p.182).

Olive inspires in Verena a lofty vision. Verena's speeches on the rights and wrongs of women, the equality of sexes, the hysterics of conventions, the ~~the~~ stultification of the Suffrage, deludes Olive into believing that Verena feels what she says. But Verena herself doesn't know, what she means:

> she didn't know, what she meant, she had been stuffed with this trash by her father, and she was neither more nor less willing to say it than say anything else; for the necessity of her nature was not to make converts to a ridiculous cause, but to please everyone who came near her, and be happy that she pleased. (p.62).

It is Olive who identifies for Verena, that she is one of the chosen few on whom depends the success of the Cause. Olive is thus not only guilty of self deception, she also deceives Verena. They share a relationship like Isabel Archer and Osmond who are deluded by each other Verena says, "Do you know Olive, I sometimes wonder whether, if it was not for you, I should feel it so very much."(p.159). Verena is like Daisy Miller, innocent, charming, eager to enjoy life and be happy, whereas Olive is like Isabel Archer, an objectless idealist who remains undaunted, unbroken in the face of crisis refusing to let go her idealist stance. One wonders whether James had consciously arranged the confrontation of his two must important women, Daisy and Isabel in order to test their veracity and vulnerability.

Verena is seen and realized through the desires and the needs of others. The conflicting desires of Ransom, Olive, Tarrants, Matthias Pardon, Mrs Burrage and her son. In formless society of Boston, jostling for publicity and

novelty, driven by futilities of different kinds and dominated by the memory of war and the hope of a thousand different Utopias, Verena represents, what others feel they lack. She is their personal or their public holy grail, a beautiful empty vessel, who will give shape and meaning to their own dreams and restlessness. Verena exploited by all for their own narrow interests. Her father wishes to be in the newspapers, through her, her mother wishes to climb the social ladder. Olive wishes to seek her ideal, through her while Ransom wants to relegate her to the dinning table where she can perform, for his entertainment alone. Ironically the image that Verena wants to portray, is that of a fiery crusader, but instead conveys an image of a docile, charming woman with a delightful voice spouting sweet nothings for the entertainment of men.

The only redeeming feature about Ransom, the greatest threat to the Cause, is his clarity of perception. He can see through Verena's self-delusion but uses it to his advantage, to subjugate her. The starkness the bleakness of his material furnishings are an image of his mental housing; his mind is itself a narrow room crudely furnished with a few chauvinistic thoughts. If Olive's reading Goethe provides a clue to her psychology, Ransom's reading of Carlyle provides a clue to his. He is said to have, "an

immense desire for success"(p.113), "a bigger stomach than all the culture, if Charles street could fill" (p.14) an image of ambition that seems devouring. His attitude towards women, that they are inferior to men and should be "gracious and grateful" (p.163) belongs to a plantation psychology of master and slave, of power relationships. Ransom wants women to be private being rather than public because such an arrangement is economically advantageous; it reduces his competition and enhances his chances of success. Verena poses as a threat to him and so he wishes to keep her maimed, her wings clipped, so that she never dares to cross over to the male territory, "you won't sing in the Music Hall but you will sing to me;"(p.402)

He knows that by winning Verena, he can effectively assert his male authority. He wishes to strike her dumb. His sadism and male brutality is evident throughout. He thinks about Verena not lovingly, but in terms of, how to humiliate her, and ultimately vanquish her. Her persistently pursues her in Boston in Marmion and finally in the Music hall, not to take Verena away from the suffocating cloister of Olive but more to restrict her to the confines of his parlor and kitchen.

> He did not care for her engagement, her campaigns or all the expectancy of her friends... to squelch all that

> at a stroke was the dearest wish of his heart. It would represent to him his own succes, it would symbolise his victory. (p.405).

Ransom's wish to bind Verena is not protective or loving like Olive's Olive wants Verena to live with her, out of her own free choice but Ransom prefers to aggresively snatch her away, throwing a cloak over her "concealing her" and obliterating her identity. By crushing her freedom he wants to dewomanize the age. He cannot dare to awaken Olive to love but he can spoil her plans, by taking away her ideal 'form' and thus defacing her:

> The whole generation is womanised; the masculine tone is passing out of the world, its a feminine a mervous hysterical chattering, canting age an age of hollow phrases... The masculine character, the ability to dare and endure, to to known and yet not fear reality to look the would in the face and take it for what I want to preserve, or rather, as I may say to recover. (P.343).

Though these ringing words make Verena" slightly sick" she could not "imagine anything more crudely profane" (p.343). Yet she is shaken by his conviction, the " novelty of a man taking that sort of religious tone about such a cause." (343) But her eventual flight to Marmion is short lived not because Ranson pursues her there but because

finally she has begun to see herself "afresh and strange" liking, "herself better than in the old exaggerated glamour of the lecture lamps".(p.396) Verena gives herself up to Ransom out of loyalty to herself and her intuitions, ~~but~~ and leaves Olive behind to die the death of a martyr. Olive is left behind to enact the classic Jamesian ideal of stoicism and renunciation. Verena in chosing to go away with Ransom exercises the choice that was denied to Daisy with her premature death, and by Isabel Archer. But James was never sure of this alternative, ~~his heroines never Verena's act~~. It seems as if James wished to silence his critics who continually cribbed about Isabel's rejection of Caspar Goodwood. But James' misgivings are still there. "Ah now I am glad" said Verena, when they reached the street But though she was glad, he presently discovered that, beneath her hood she was in tears. It is to be feared, that with the union so for from brilliant, into which she was about to enter, these were not the last she was destined to shed". (p.464).

Out of loyalty to herself Verena gave up Olive, but apparently she was not being loyal to herself. She lost the freedom and equality she thought, she was fighting for. Her fall is not like Isabel's, for she was never destined to embrace the ideal image of civilization. She does not gain in expansion or awareness but she does outgrow Olive.

Hopefully once the process of liberation has started once, next time she won't need a knight errant like Basil Ransom to step out of the narrow confines of her new home. For under Olive's tutelage and influence, and as a result of the opportunities Olive had provided her, Verena has matured. Now she has a reasoning ability, with which to analyse her position:

> It was of no use for her to tell herself that Olive had begun it entirely and she had only responded out of a kind of charmed politeness, at first to a tremendous appeal she has lent herself, given herself utterly". (p.398)

One only hopes that this time she does not give herself up "utterly" to Basil Ransom.

James provides an important commentary on Olive and Verena's situation through his handling of other women characters in the novel. One of then is Olives' sister Mrs. Luna who does not think it important to fight for womens' right. She prefers to fight her battles within the terms set out and by men. Her wiles and charms are enough to fulfil her demands from men yet she fails to win Ransom, for Ransom has room only for women who like Verena, who are essentially passive and have no will or desire of their own and simply respond to the power of men. Yet her femininity has all the assertiveness which men like Ransom are wary of

Mrs. Tarrant is another Jamesian mother, who is different from others for she has a mind of her own. She wants to get out of the "swamp" her husband has put her in. Whatever slight social status she had inherited from her abolitionist father is lost in her marriage to Selah Tarrant, just as her hopes of rising socially through her daughter are lost through the latters marriage to Ransom. She fails to spare her daughter from a similar fate inspite of Verena's considerable advantage of talent and beauty and thus proves to be as ineffectual as Daisy's Mother.

Mrs. Birdseye and Dr. Prance are both professional unconventional women. Miss. Birdseye is the most truly disinterested of the reformers and has the purest integrity. She has spent her life in the heroic service of various social movements. She is vague, bemused and totally unaware of the realities of the power game of sexes. She is the survivors of the Transcendental strain and has spent her best hours in fancying that, "she was helping, some southern slave to escape she was in love with, even in those days only with causes and she languished only for emancipations." (p.28). She is a tragicomic figure whose death at Marmion, on Cape God forms one of the most poignant episodes of the novel. She dies leaving behind her eighty years of illusion. She neither provides a role model

for her successors, most is she a threat to men like Ransom. Ransom interestingly enough, likes Mrs. Birdseye, because he thinks, that is the way by which "human beings keep themselves engaged in harmless social work". Although she is pathetic and ineffectual and a target for James' satire, yet she represents all that was best in the reform movement in contrast to such figures as Matthias Pardon, Selah Tarrant and even Olive Chancellor.

Ransom likes Dr. Prance too. She is a purposeful, professional New England woman. Like the name "Birdseye" the name "Prance" has diminutive connotations. Dr. Prance is little and is always referred to in terms of her smallness: "little Dr. Prance" engaged in her "own little revolution". Her littleness along with Miss Birdseye's is an expression of their absence of sexuality. To Basil Ransom, she is a "perfect example of a Yankee female" a figure produced by the New England school system, the Puritan Code, the ungenial climate, the absence of Southern chivalry. Completely dedicated to her profession, she lacks all feminine grace and charm, and has some definite ideas about men and women, i.e. about the homosapiens in general : "Men and Women are all the same to me", she tells Ransom, "I don't see any difference. There is room for improvement in both the sexes" (p.42). Again, Ransom likes Dr. Prance because

inspite of all her purposefulness she poses no threat to his system. Like Miss. Birdseye's, her energies have been also channeled in to some 'harmless' service. Dr. Prance is willing to believe that women as a class suffer no particular handicaps and face no especial discrimination, as she has faced none. But she is not willing to make her private revolution a public issue. She has unlike Olive given up her sexuality in order to accomplish her goals. Ransom does not know how to deal with her, whether to offer her a cigar or a seat on the fence. He finally goes fishing with her at Marmion.

All said and done, non of the female figures of *The Bostanians* are James' portrait of a New Woman. Olive with her twisted logic and abstract idealism, Verena with her vulnerabilty and betrayal, Mrs. Luna with her feminine charms, Miss Birdseye with her humanitarian service and Dr. Prance a reductive version of a female committed to her profession (a product of indulgent satire like Henrietta Stackpole) are all imperfect versions of the New Woman, whom Henry James was continually seeking. Shuffling all the role models he had in front of him, in all possible situations, in all possible combinations, he was trying to create "a heiress of all ages". But even the Boston women with their high aspirations fall a little short of being James' ideal

New Woman. Olive Chancellor is an open enemy of the pleasure principle, because it cannot be reconciled with her peculiar brand of feminism. Verena Tarrant has "bad lecture-blood in her veins". Olive Chancellor regards the sexual impulse as an enemy of her purpose and starves it with her radical fanaticisim and feels nothing but aggression towards the society. Whereas Mrs. Luna employs her sexuality as an instrument to attain and to appropriate the comforts that the society offers her. Dr. Prance represents an extreme possibility of feminism, frightening in her disciplined incapacity for emotion. She is what Olive Chancellor would like to be but cannot quite manage. In this bleak set up, the only redeeming figure is that of Verena Tarrant, with an "innocent impressionable mind", but even she fails to assume the crucial role of a New Woman. She remains merely a charming creature, providing the battle ground for the clash of violent ideologies.

James does talk disparagingly of the large glaring elements of the ridiculous that were inherent in the feminist movement of 1870's in America but he is aware of the fact that the failure of the feminine effort to find new modes of social conduct are entirely due to the malaise that exists in the American culture of 1870's. James' heroines fail to achieve self-realization in moribund Europe due to

its decadent social norms, but they also fail to achieve any such expansion in their native land for its has no history, no culture to shape one's individuality. And Boston Feminism is not entirely inseperable from the social convulsions that revolutionized American life after the Civil War. Olivé's reaction is not only against the men, but is essentially against the elementary conditions of life that has eroded the traditional role of women without providing satisfying alternative modes of life. The American democracy with its visions of liberty and equality (with the statute of liberty as its totem), has failed to generate a society in which Olive and Verena can realise their full potential. James' satire is not directed against the incapacity of his women but against the social and moral malaise that afflicts the American society. And it is that malignity of which Olive is a victim. Towards the end of the novel James allows not merely an awareness of how painful her defeat is but also a sense that in defeat she achieves a gloomy sort of magnificence-which is a typical Jamesian reconciliation.

CONCLUSION

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Henry James' 'American girl' came to Europe at a time when rethinking about gender roles had begun on both sides of the Atlantic, but had not gathered momentum. He needed to dislodge his heroines from their given social context in America to highlight their uniqueness and potential. Europe was to provide the matrix for Jamesian protagnists seeking self expansion. The Jamesian heroines were different from their English counterparts in their overwhelming desire to explore life, and in their enthusiasm to understand the culture of Europe. Bereft of an ancestory of myth, tradition and history, they wished to experience the grandeur of the old world. But in doing so both James and his adventurous heroines got enmeshed in the decadent web of traditions. While heroines unconsciously internalized the European norms of formality, decorum and propriety, James too, in the process of delineating the change lost the American vision of liberty and individuality. Even his Bostonian heroines do not appear too different from his 'American girl visiting Europe".

All the three novels are shot through James' own ambivalence about the autonomy of women. In these novels, love never appears as a dominant or overwhelming passion. The

women protagonists of experience love during the course of their lives, but are hardly ever shown immersed in their involvement. Daisy, Isabel and Verena never appear to be torn in the anguish of love with its doubts, tribulations and joys. In Daisy, love appears more as a whim, a desire for Winterbourne's attention than as an all consuming passion. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, Isabel's marriage is not prompted by love. Osmond is almost an instrument through which Isabel hopes to achieve self expansion. Verena's love for Ransom is only a means to escape Olive's "clinching terrible grasp". Ransom provides Verena with the knowledge that she has been deceived by Olive and she herself suffered from self deception. Verena knows that Ransom, can offer her nothing but 'eternal heartache' yet she opts for Ransom. Verena suffers from a false consiciousness-that one must give up oneself for the pleasure of others. She thinks her choice is limited and she must give herself up, either to Ransom or to the movement. Her surrender to Ransom therefore is not entirely directed by love.

James' heroines are afraid of the possessive aspect of love because love implied for them the exclusive power of one partner over another, both physically, as well as morally.

Isabel shies away from Casper Goodwood's ardent love and chooses Osmond who makes the least demand on her emotions. Typical of many Jamesian heroines Isabel has an almost pedantic, fastidious approach to love and marriage. She is convinced that marriage offers a sheltered and peaceful existence that is too easily achieved and therefore thwarts an individual's striving for a wider, meaningful exploration of the world. Jamesian heroines are unwitting portrayals of denied sexual passion. Daisy, Isabel, Olive and Verena are all elegant ladies who end up as embodients of all the cherished Victorian values. They are neither sexually aggressive, nor do they become victims of passion.

In order to make his heroines self-reliant, James tries to remove in his novels, the socio-economic constraints suffered by the average nineteenth century women. While Daisy is a product of 'nouveau-riche' American business class, Isabel has the good fortune of an inheritance. Olive's position s qualitatively different from that of Daisy and Isable, for her affluence is not new to her. Olive's affluence is different because she enjoys those peculiar privileges in the society which are usually associated with a person of social standing, whereas Daisy belongs to a 'business class' where money lacks the gloss of 'class. But this economic security provided by Henry James as a launching

pad for his heriones, fails to liberate them and infact in isabel's case, leads to an entrapment. Daisy, inspite of her affluence, lacks the "exclusive snobbery" of the American expartriates in Europe. Absence of a superficial gloss that accompanies material wealth makes Daisy a victim of social snobbery. Daisy herself aspires to be 'exclusive' but does not know the art of creating an aura of class about her. Her being a rich American is incentive enough for the likes of Winterbourne to courts her, but Daisy fails to use money as a weapon against social ostracism. Henry James seems to be saying that it is not enough for a woman to be rich. She should know how to wield the power of her material wealth. Henry James seems to be reconfirming a popular bias of the day that unconventional behaviour in a woman cannot go unnoticed, unpunished, no matter how rich she is.

To "meet the requirements of imagination", Henry James provides Isabel with a large inheritance. Ralph who is James' spokesman believes that money will "put wind in her sails". However both Ralph and his creator James become the author of Isabel's disillusionment. Unused to the material wealth Isabel is almost transformed under its weight. She is forced to perform, for she thinks that money gives a power which must be exercised. Though money removes her earlier limitations, it imposes upon her, a new set of codes. She

tries to relieve herself of the guilt of possessing a fortune at the very first opportunity by providing for Osmond. One wonders whether Isabel would have actually married Osmond if she did not have the property or had Osmond been rich. Unlike Daisy, Isabel is aware of the power money wields but she exercises the power wrongly, impairing her own freedom in the process. Henry James seems uneasy about the threat an economically independent woman can pose to society. Thus, though he empowers her with money, he shows her incapable of using discretion in economic matters. James, thus endorses the values of the partriarchal society regarding lack of practical sense, among women.

In the *The Bostonians*, Olive's monetary power is used to buy Verena's independence but Ransom does not even need that. Inspite of her affluence Olive cannot keep Verena with her, for theirs is an arrangement which society cannot support while society approves Ransom's overtures to Verena. Money gives Olive the power to translate her aspirations to concrete reality but because she is a woman, she operates within certain limitations that Ransom is not subject to. Mrs. Burrage fails to win Verena for her son with all her wealth while Ransom kidnaps Verena on the basis of one single published article (his only income in the novel). For Ransom, Olive and Verena constitute an economic threat. Ransom finds

that they dominate not only the profession of law, but are formidable competitors in the field of journalism too (as pointed out by Matthias Pardon in *The Bostonians*). To Ransom's horror, The Bostonian women not only dominate the lecture business but also make a lucrative business out of it. It is his ambition, "to prevent if he could, their (women) having the opportunity to earn for themselves." (p.140). Ransom wants Verena's talent for good reason, because it is an economically advantageous arrangement which reduces his competition, and enhances his chance of success.

Henrietta Stackpole and Dr.Prance are the only two characters of Henry James who earn a living for themselves. But they are not seen as ideal role model of emancipated, economically independent women. Both Henrietta and Dr. Prance are caricatures, and James by dewomanizing them, makes them undesirable alternatives to Isabel, Olive and Verena. Henrietta and Mary Prance are competitors in the business world of men and possess a worldly common sense unlike the Jamesian heroines, but they become comic and slightly grotesque figures in their lack of so called womanly propriety and feminine charm. James calls them the woman of the 'future' but deliberately underplays them. These women of the 'future' are not desirable ideals for James. James continues to uphold the martyr like images of Daisy, Isabel

and Olive rather than the brisk and successful Henrietta and Mary Prance.

The economic base which James provides for this heroines to make them self reliant proved to be illusory. A freedom in which one can choose only marriage, however, stultifying and claustrophobic, or death, is a limited freedom indeed. The ending of novels leaves one with a lingering doubt about James' ideological positions in the Women Question. He begins by encouraging the aspirations of his women protagonists only to thwart them at the end by offering them the limited choice of marriage or death. Daisy dies to salvage her reputation and James is unable to think of any other alternative for her. Isabel stoically adheres to an error of judgement to salvage her moral integrity. Verena gains in self knowledge, but that knowledge does not help her to free herself from Ransom. All the heroines proceed from one claustrophobic ideal to another and fail to be true to themselves. Neither Isabel nor Verena can visualize themselves in an independent existence nor can James. James seems to imply that no escape is possible from a restricting society. His heroines are rebels who operate within a given social structure and would do nothing to rehaul, break or renovae it. James, like his late Victorian contemporaries was not ready for a social convulsion leading to chaotic

disorders where conventions would be inverted, and ideals would be lost. Daisy, Isabel and Verena can neither remain spinsters nor become divorcees because James possibly shared the conventional prejudice against a single woman. Inspite of their potential for growth these heroines dwarf their ambitions to conform to the feminine mould. James seems to be prepared to sacrifice his heroines at the altar of social order. He justifies his stance by saying that his heroines are not yet ready to enter the new world, for they have in them too much of the Old World. But that definitely does not explain the caricature of Henrietta and Dr. Prance who have nothing of the Old World in them and represent the future. James' ambivalence and contradiction arise from the confusions of the time which was sceptical about providing its women with an enhanced status and an enhanced social role. James in the ultimate analysis remains unredeemend like his heroines.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Nina Baym, Protrayal of women in American Literature, 1790-1870 in Marlene Springer (ed.) *What Manner of Women : Essays on English and American life and literature* (N.Y.: N.Y. University Press, 1977) p. 229.

2. R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam : Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press : 1955), p.5

3. Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (N.Y. : William Morriss & Company, 1945), passim.

4. P.J. Eakin, *The New England Girl* (Athens; Georgia, 1976), p.221.

5. Shirley Foster, *Victorian Women's Fiction : Marriage, Freedom and the Individual,* (Kent : Arnold Heinemann, 1985), p.6

6. C.Patmore, *The Angel in the House,* (London : Carolin Press, 1866), P, Book I, Canto II, Preludes I.

7. Ellizabeth Allen, in *Women in the Nineteenth Century* says that the a nineteenth century woman's status was that of a sign, she does not exist for and in herself. More so in the case of a nineteenth century American woman whose function was singled out as that of the sign, who represented the changing, dynamic and eternal American values.

8. Henry James' Introduction to *The Portrait of a Lady,* (Penguin, 1984) p. 46.

9. Henry James' Introduction to *The Portrait of a Lady,* (Penguin, 1984), p. 48.

10. Virginia C. Fowler, *Henry James' American Girl; The Embroidery on the Canvas,* (University of Wisconsin, 1984). p. 6.

11. Henry James, *The American Scene,* (N.Y. 1907) p.66.

CHAPTER 1

DAISY MILLER

1. Jean sisk and Harold Herman in *Henry James; Lessons in Critical Reading and Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), p.261.

2. Jean Gooder in his introduction to *Henry James; Daisy Miller and other stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.xiv, writes that James had misgivings about success of *Daisy Miller* as a book of conduct. It is ironic that James was aiming to hit out at the decadent social norms but was seen as an upholder of those values.

3. Augustus M. Kelly (ed), Henry James (1848-1916) preface to *The Reverberator* vol.3(Scribner, 1979), p.xi.

4. Henry James in his preface to the 1907 New York edition of *Daisy Miller* as Repr. in Jean Gooder (ed) *Daisy Miller and other stories* (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1985), p.xiii.

5. Henry James, Preface to Vol.xviii of *The Novels and Tales of Henry James* (Augustus M. Kelly, 1976), p.xiii.

6. Edward Wagenknecht, *Eve and Henry James; Portraits of Women and Girls in his Fiction* (Oklohama; Univ. of Oklohama, 1978), p.6.

7. Manfred Mckenzie, *Communities of Honour and Love in Henry James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.38.

8. Wagenknecht, p.6

9. P.J. Eakin, *The New England Girl* (Athens : Georgia, 1976), p.12.

10. Leslie Fiedler in *Love and Death in American Fiction* (Stein & Day, 1982), p.67. says that Richardson's Clarissa over the years has acquired a symbolic signification, she is the buorgeois ideal for purity. Fiedler says, "She is the persecuted Maiden, a profection of Male guilt before the female....and she

flees through 200 years of fiction, hounded by father, brother, lover and fiance". She offers solution as a pure maiden, "and upon her maintenance of that purify depends not only her own eternal bless but that of the male who attempts to destroy it. She is the bourgeois maiden whose virginity is the emblem of purity of her class.." Fielder further goes on to say that "in a society, where morality comes to be associated more and more exclusively with sexual continence, where being good is equated with being chaste [or the mere appearance of it in Daisy Miller's case]...there is a natural demand for "purity" in its most physical sense - for the unruptured hymen." Daisy Miller carries a similar burden on her shoulders. The social codes of Europe demands the 'appearance of chastity' if not chastity itself. Daisy is ostracised for she fails to play the role of the 'pure maiden' and her behaviour threatens the fragile purity of the society.

11. Wagenknecht, p.3.

12. Bettina Friedl, 'The Misreading of Daisy Miller as Revision: Henry James Pandora' in *The Magic Circle of Henry James; Essays in honour of Henry James* (Envoy Press, 1989), p.14.

13. Gooder, p.128.

14. Gooder, p.147.

15. Friedl, p.16.

CHAPTER 2

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

1. Isabel Archer, Olive and Milly Theale are all economically independent heriones of Henry James but ironically their material wealth limits their freedom instead of divesting the process of liberation of all its social limitations. Their economic independence is qualitatively different from that of Henrietta Stackpole and Mary Prance who earn their living. But Henry James is sceptical about the latter kind of women and shares a bias with Victorians regarding a working woman who is perhaps less of a lady and hence not Henry James' ideal.

2. Preface to the New York edition by Henry James in the Geoffrey Moore (ed.). *The Portrait of a Lady.* (Penguin Classics, 1984), p.42.

3. Ibid. p.50.

4. Virginia C.Fowler in *Henry James' American Girl : The Embroidery on the Canvas.* (Wisconsin, 1984), p. 74 says that fortune "Confers on her [Isabel] a kind of masculine power, it finds her pitifully unprepared to know how to accept such power or how to integrate it successfully with her own sense of her feminine identity". One wonders why Isabel's sense of "feminine identity" is identical to the social sense or the patriarchal view of "feminine identity", given her deviant status.

5. Tony Tanner in *Henry James : Modern Judgements.* (McMillians, 1968), p,147, says that Osmond is a sterile dilletante for whom Isabel is another piece of connoiseurs collection. Which reminds us of the dandified followers of Whistler for whom art meant decorating one's house with ethnic china crockeries, imported draperies and carpets from the Orient. By 1880' the time when Henry James was writing this novel, Aestheticism had dwindled into mere surface foppery and art had almost no relation to daily life and was a matter of accumulation of prized art objects so much reminiscient of the present day Indian perchant for ethnicity.

6. John Halperin, *The Language of Meditation.* (London : Arthur Stockwell Ltd., 1973), p, 128.

7. A.D. Moody, The James' Portrait of an Ideal, in *The Magic Circle of Henry James; Essays in honour of Henry James* (N.Y. : Envoy Press, 1989), p.30.

CHAPTER 3

THE BOSTONIANS

1. As quoted by Irving Howe (ed.) in the introduction to *The Bostonians* by Henry James (N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1956), p. XI.

2. Ibid. p. 72.

3. As quoted by Robert Emmet Long in *The Early Novels* (N.Y. : G.K. Hall and Company, 198), p. 129.

4. Howe, p. VI.

5. Judith Fetterley in *The Resisting Reader : A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Amherst : University of Massachussets Press, 1977), p. 118. Writes that the sexual war that Ransom wages has a political colouring. Ransom holds the Boston women responsible for his deprived status. He wishes to annihilate their enhanced status both politically and socially by driving a wedge into the women's reform movement and by enslaving Verena. Verena by the end of the novel is bereft of a political voice and Ransom given a choice would not allow her to have a say even at home and force her to assume a servile status like his mother and sister, of whom we hear nothing in the novel.

6. Long, p. 144. Becthoven was a musician of Emerson's generation. His music was dedicated to the greatness of the individual's striving, the democratic vision, the imminent overthrow of injustice and regeneration of the world. It is under the Olympian bust of Beethoven that Olive worships. Olive thus has aspirations, to reach the Olympian heights of Beethoven and Emerson but her masochistic tendencies prove to be a handicap in her career of self-enlargement.

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