CHAPTER I
INTERNATIONAL THEME AND THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF HENRY JAMES

Henry James - the greatest literary figure to appear during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries - was born in New York City in 1843 and died in London in 1916 as an Englishman. He had invented the novel of international contrasts where he exhibited both the socially correct Europeans and less cultivated Americans. His sphere was the novel of manners and he was concerned with a limited class, the rich and leisured, highly civilized, oversophisticated, international society, that neither has any particular country nor feels at home in any part of the world. He studied these people from the point of view of the development of character through the clash of wills, the give and take, of social intercourse and personal relations. He realized and expressed, far beyond any other writer, the contrast and confrontation between the United States and Europe - the New world and the Old. He even realized the limitations of the Americans of his period, and especially their vulnerability when exposed to the European experience, but at the same time he also foresaw America's future greatness.

James was one of the most prolific writers of his times and is best known in the novels and stories dealing with the international scene. He wrote novels, short
stories, plays, several books of criticism, several books of travel literature, a notebook, and thousands of letters. He was the first writer to give the international scene a major importance in fiction, and left an interesting and detailed account of the experiences, the characters, and the places that figured prominently in that scene. James's virtue as a novelist lies in his ability to express, through the medium of the international scene, deep truths about the life of mankind. But what does actually the term 'international' imply and how did Henry James come to acquire a deep interest in the international theme which constitutes a major part of his works?

Henry James was the inventor of the international novel and though there were other practitioners of this type of novel, like W.D. Howells and Edith Wharton, yet it was in James that the international theme predominated so much that his name was ever after to be associated with it.

The first impression which the term 'international' gives us is that a novel having an international theme should deal with national differences. In such a novel "the mixture of manners," as observed by James in the preface to 'Lady Barberina', is very essential. Besides, an international novel is not one in which a foreign

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setting merely gives a romantic interest to the reader—but it is something more. Oscar Cargill rightly defines the international novel in the following manner:

An international novel is one in which a character, usually guided in his actions by the mores of one environment, is set down in another, where his learned reflexes are of no use to him, where he must employ all his individual resources to meet successive situations, and where he must intelligently accommodate himself to the new mores, or, in one way or another, be destroyed. It is... a device for the revelation of character.²

The international theme deals primarily with the opposition of manners. In its simplest form it is the contrast of Europe and America. But it is something different from the internal American contrast between New England and Virginia. On the other hand, it resembles the contrast between the Old East and the New West. It was not just a question of American girls marrying European men and of European women never, or rarely, marrying American men; nor was it only the question of why American men went to Europe for culture. But it was even more than this. It was a dualism of right and wrong, of white and black, home or exile; and like any true dualism its terms were reversible, without any weakening of their reality. Now the questions at the heart of the 'international theme' can be put afresh. What happens to Americans in Europe? What does Europe do to them? On the other hand what happens to Europeans under impact of Americans?

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What effect do the Americans and Europeans have on each other? The answers to these questions can be found in the international novels and stories of Henry James. He himself observes:

... I at one period sought to illustrate and enliven the supposed "international" conflict of manners; a general theme dealing for the most part with the bewilderment of the good American, of either sex and of almost any age; in presence of the "European" order.... I simply note therefore, on one corner of the ground, the scant results, above all for interesting detail, promised by confronting the fruits of a considered order with the fruits of no order at all.  

The treatment of the international theme in different novels is marked by nuances and finer shades of difference. All his novels approach this theme from diverse angles. 'The American' (1877) was almost a scientific study of internationalism, bringing before us the differences of manners and breeding, of traditional standards and ideals and the impossibility of reconciling such opposites, even when there is a desire for mutual understanding. Again, in 'The Portrait of a Lady' (1881) the theme of the American in Europe is a major concern and from the opening pages the reader becomes aware of an interest in the difference between American and European cultures and ideals. On the contrary, the novels of his later period - 'The Wings of the Dove' (1902), 'The Ambassadors' (1903), and 'The Golden Bowl' (1904) - though

dealing with the theme of confrontation of Europe and America, have a greater depth and scope of his internationalism which is scarce in the earlier novels. A lifetime of international experience had enriched and mellowed the insight of Henry James and these novels were the product of this experience and are included in the finest writing America has produced. In short, it can be said that the international theme was what his education had led to and it forms the corner stone of nearly all the major novels and a few of the short stories written by him.

The grandfather of Henry James was a Protestant Irishman and he had emigrated to America in the year 1789. He settled himself in Albany by the year 1793 when he was only twenty-two years old. He started his career as a clerk and later became an independent businessman with a large estate. When he died in 1832, he left three million dollars which was one of the largest fortunes in New York State at that time.

Henry James the elder - the second son of his father's third marriage to Catherine Barber, the Scottish - Irish daughter of a judge - discovered quite early that he had little interest in business. He was very lively and throughout his life took keen interest in energetic activities. He brought up a family, travelled
extensively and wrote copiously. He also became a religious professor and later found a great deal of satisfaction in the theological doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg. F.W. Dupee in his famous book describes that Henry James, Senior "was a stout, kindly-looking, large-faced man, bearded, spectacled, and bald to the ears; a wit as well as a visionary, a genial fanatic and a man of the world." He further says that he was "a religious mystic in a time of secular mysticism, an intellectual with money, a self-confessed city man among writers who were so often confirmed rustics ... was indeed a special case."

In the year 1840 Henry James, Sr., married Mary Robertson Walsh who came of an orthodox New York family. The first child of the couple was William James (1842-1910), the philosopher and psychologist. Henry James, the novelist, was born on April 15, 1843 and was followed by Garth Wilkinson (1845-1883), Robertson (1846-1910) and Alice (1848-1892). Harry T. Moore in his pictorial biography observes that "throughout childhood, they all travelled extensively, often in Europe whose glamour attracted the second son so much that at last he settled there." The elder Henry James wanted to give the best possible education to his children and was all the time hunting for better

5. Ibid., p. 13.
teachers and governesses for them. He was quite partial
to European education as he explained to his friend Ralph
Waldo Emerson in a letter written in 1849:

... looking upon our four stout boys, who have
no play-room within, and import shocking bad
manners from the street, with much pity, we
gravely ponder whether it would not be better
to go abroad for a few years with them, allowing
them to absorb French and German and get a bett-
er sensuous education than they are likely to get
here.

The family shifted to Europe when young Henry James
was only six months old. They were in England and France
for two years and James was to recall his first European
memory in his autobiographical volume 'A Small Boy and
Others':

I had been there (in Europe) for a short time in
the second year of my life, and I was to commu-
nicate to my parents later on that as a baby in
long clothes, seated opposite to them in a carr-
riage on the lap of another person, I had been
impressed with the view, framed by the clear
window of the vehicle as we passed, of a great
stately square surrounded with high-roofed houses
and having in its centre a tall and glorious
column. I had naturally caused them to marvel,
but I had also, under cross-questioning, forced
them to compare notes, as it were, and reconsti-
tute the miracle. They knew what my observation
of monumental squares had been - and alas hadn't;
neither New York nor Albany could have offered
me the splendid perspective, and, for that matter,
neither could London, which moreover I had known
at a younger age still. Conveyed along the Rue
St. Honoré while I waggled my small feet, as I
definitely remember doing, under my flowing robe,
I had crossed the Rue de Castiglione and taken
in, for all my time, the admirable aspect of the

7. Henry James, Senior, Henry James, Senior: A Selection
of his Writings, ed. Giles Gunn (Chicago: American
Place and the Colonne Vendome.

Henry James, Senior, had agreed to give some kind of formal training to his children and therefore Henry and William began to attend schools, first in Albany and then in the New York City. In the New York City only they went from one tutor to the other and likewise from one school to another. Henry met notable persons like Emerson, Washington Irving and General Wilfield Scott. Thackeray too was a visitor in their home. He had also developed a habit of reading and read a bit of Charles Dickens. He even saw Shakespeare on the stage.

The family went abroad again in the year 1855 and the young Henry who was only twelve years old, was eagerly ready for the trip. His readings, his visiting the operas, his receptivity to painting and sculpture and his father's brilliant visitors from abroad had quickened his desire to cross the sea and revisit the Paris which he had seen earlier. By turns in London, Paris, Geneva, Boulogne and Bonn they set up temporary residences and engaged themselves in educational ventures. They had several tutors and visited various theatres and museums and such important places as the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey and the National Gallery. In Paris, the Louvre impressed

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the younger James very much, though he had visited other notable places also. He describes his experiences in the Louvre in his autobiographical volume 'A Small Boy and Others':

I had looked at pictures, looked and looked again, at the vast Veronna, at Murillo's moonborne Madonna, at Leonardo's almost unholy dame with the folded hands, treasures of the Salon Carre as that display was then composed; but I had also looked at France and looked at Europe, looked even at America as Europe itself might be conceived so to look, looked at history, as a still felt past and a complacently personal future, at society, manners, type, characters, possibilities and prodigies and mysteries of fifty sorts....

Henry James' father again announced that American schools were better than European and the family returned to the United States and settled at Newport, Rhode Island in the year 1858. Henry and William soon acquired many friends among whom John La Farge - "the most interesting person" and Thomas Sergeant Perry, later a critic and editor, were the most notable.

Again in 1859 the elder James was discouraged about American education and took his children to Europe. They went to Germany and Switzerland staying once more at Geneva. Henry James, describing the place, wrote a letter to Thomas Sergeant Perry on March 27, 1860:

10. Ibid., p. 287.
I like it (Geneva) best of all that I have been in— it has no Galleries or Museums or Churches but it is nevertheless very interesting. Such dingy old streets and courts and alleys, black with age some of them are, steep and dirty, such quaint old houses, high and sombre are very picturesque. 11

The family once more sailed for America in September 1860 and went to the Rhode Island seaside town. William, as a painter, wanted to be a student of William Morris Hunt. Henry had little interest in painting but as a writer had translated plays by Alfred de Musset and tales of Prosper Merimée which were not published. At Newport, Henry encountered his cousin Mary (Minny) Temple, a girl who liked parties and serious conversations and whom he later described as "the heroine of the scene." 12

The Civil War burst out in the spring of 1861 and there were many young men who volunteered but William went to a scientific school at Harvard while Henry stayed at home. Actually in October 1861, Henry had suffered what he later called "a horrid even if an obscure hurt." 13 and this was the reason that stopped him to follow his younger brothers and friends to the Union Army. He was very much conscious of the fact and the only account of the injury he suffered from can be found in his autobiographical volume, 'Notes of a Son and Brother':

13. Ibid., p. 415.
Scarce at all to be stated, to begin with, the queer fusion or confusion established in my consciousness during the soft spring of '61 by the firing on Fort Sumter, Mr. Lincoln's instant first call for volunteers and a physical mishap, already referred to as overtaken me at the same dark hour, and the effects of which were to draw themselves out incalculably and intolerably.... I must have felt in some befuddled way in presence of a crisis - the smoke of Charleston Bay still so acrid in the air - at which the likely young should be up and doing or, as familiarly put, lend a hand much wanted; the willing youths, all round, were mostly starting to their feet, and to have trumped up a lameness at such a juncture could be made to pass in no light for graceful. Jammed into the acute angle between two high fences, where the rhythmic play of my arms, in tune with that of several other pairs, but at a dire disadvantage of position, induced a rural, a rusty, a quasi-externorised old engine to work and a saving stream to flow, I had done myself, in face of a shabby conflagration, a horrid even if an obscure hurt;

In 1852 Henry undertook the study of law at Harvard but this little interested him and he realized, at this moment, that he would become a full time writer. He was a born artist and even in Geneva, when he was about sixteen years old, could not relish the study of mathematics and other sciences as he had found himself that "no subject there seemed savoury"15, and wrote a letter to Thomas Sergeant Perry on November 18, 1859 saying that, "the school is intended for preparing such boys as wish to be engineers, architects, machinists, 'and the like' for other higher schools, and I am the only one who is not destined for either of the useful arts or sciences, although I am I hope for the art of being useful in some way."16

15. Ibid., p. 240.
The family moved to Boston in 1864 and the young Henry James fully acquainted himself with New England.

Thus we see that during these formative years the mind of Henry James was refreshed and he had felt the magnetism of foreign lands. He had travelled extensively and had seen and known many things not only in his own country but in European countries as well. He had a keen desire to go deep into the realms of Europe which was a shrine for him where he had gone to pay his devotions without any fear of being deceived. He even wrote a letter to Thomas Sergeant Perry from Cambridge on September 20, 1867, expressing his interest in English Letters:

Our great literature and literary history is to most of us an unexplored field — especially when we compare it to what the French is to the French. Deep in the timorous recesses of my being is a vague desire to do for our dear old English letters and writers something of what St. Beuve and the best French critics have done for their. ... I should hold it invaluable to spend two or three years on English soil — face to face with the English landscape, English monument and English men and women. — At the thought of a study of this kind... my eyes fill with heavenly tears and my heart throbs with a divine courage....

It is by this constant exchange and comparison, by the wear and tear of living and talking and observing that works of art shape themselves into completeness; and as artists and workers, we owe most to those who bring to us most of human life. ... we young Americans are ... men of the future. ... We are Americans born ... I look upon it as a great blessing; and I think that to be an American is an excellent preparation for culture. We have exquisite qualities as a race, and it seems to me that we are ahead of the European races in the fact that more than either of them we can deal freely with forms of civilization.
not our own, can pick and choose and assimilate and in short... claim our property wherever we find it.\textsuperscript{17}

Henry James, observes C.H. Grattan, "saw both continents (America and Europe) analytically and assessed their inadequacies, according to his lights, with marvelous precision, shadowing forth over and above both a vision of a higher and better civilization to which man could aspire."\textsuperscript{18}

This was the time when he attained majority and turned out to be a dedicated artist. It was all due to his 1855-60 visit to Europe which was the most important of all because his taste in the arts underwent refinement. Again, it was at this time that he learned languages and manners of many systems of formal education, and even more important was the fact that these years of exposure had invaluable effects upon him. The sights and sounds and tones of the other regions made a great impact upon his career and there is no doubt that it is on account of this that we have been able to have a treasure of novels and stories which deal with the international theme.

Henry James was only eighteen years old when he got a portrait made by John La Farge and the result was,

\textsuperscript{17} James, Letters, I, 76-77.

"a handsome world-weary youth with an elegant large nose, full lips and a brooding shadow around his eyes, he might already be the well known author of a distinguished tragedy in verse, preferably in French alexandrines.... he gives the impression ... of an abundant vitality."

He was not to visit Europe again till the year 1869 and it was in America that he took the first and foremost serious steps as regards becoming a writer. He started devoting most of his time to writing. His first story to be published, 'A Tragedy of Error', appeared anonymously in 'The Continental Monthly' of February, 1864. The 'North American Review' which appeared in October, 1864 had the first of his book-reviews and the 'Atlantic Monthly' came out with the first of his stories in March, 1865. Further, it was the 'Atlantic Monthly' which published about a dozen tales of different length and character. These stories, written from the year 1865 to 1870 or so, are really important and have considerable reference to his later work. 'The Story of a Year' which had come out in March, 1865, illustrated that the American Civil War seemed to have been fought for the convenience of novelists who wanted a plausible reason for separating their fictional lovers. On the contrary, 'A Passionate Pilgrim', published in 1871.

was one of the tales which reflect his discovery of Europe. It is the story of an American abroad pointing towards James's later use of the international theme. Thus we see that it was only in the year 1869-70 that he began writing stories and novels in which the hero's pursuit of his manhood became associated with his discovery of Europe.

These writings of James had led him to the acquaintance and friendship of James Russell Lowell and Charles Eliot Norton of the 'North American Review', William Dean Howells and James T. Field of the 'Atlantic Monthly', and E.L. Godkin of 'The Nation'. His introduction to prominent figures of the literary world was extended during his fourteen-month trip to Europe in 1869-70. He had met persons like Ruskin, Dickens, William Morris and George Eliot. He had been to London which was "very splendid,"20 to Florence - "a city which took my fancy so fully and speedily"21, but Rome seemed to have surpassed all as he expressed in a letter written to William James on October 30, 1869:

Here I am then in the Eternal City....At last- for the first time- I live... It makes Venice - Florence-Oxford-London- seemlike little cities of pasteboard. I went reeling and moaning thro' the streets, in a fever of enjoyment. In the course of four or five hours I traversed almost the whole of Rome and got a glimpse of everything-

20. James, Letters, I, 90.
21. Ibid., I, 149.
the Forum, the Coliseum... the Pantheon, the Capitol, St. Peter's, the Column of Trajan, the Castle of St. Angelo—all the Piazzas and ruins and monuments. The effect is something indescribable. For the first time I know what the picturesque is.... Even if I should leave Rome tonight I should feel that I have caught the keynote of its operation on the senses... In fine I've seen Rome, and I shall go to bed a wiser man than I last rose.  

The visits of Henry James to George Eliot and to Italy were undertaken partly to satisfy Mary (Minny) Temple who was to come from America and join him in Italy. She could never come as she died of tuberculosis on March 8, 1870, and James was to describe this event, almost fifty years later, as "the end of our (William and Henry) youth."  

Henry James even wrote a letter to William James on March 29, 1870, which reflects our novelist's great shock on her death:

She was a case of pure generosity.... My own personal relations with her were always of the happiest. Everyone was supposed I believe to be more or less in love with her.... But here I am, plucking all the sweetest fruits of this Europe which was a dream among her many dreams—while she has 'gone abroad' in another sense! Every thought of her is a singular mixture of pleasure and pain.... I had imagined many a happy talk with her in years to come—many a cunning device for cheering and consoling her illness—many a feast on the ripened fruits of our friendship; but this on the whole surpasses anything I had conceived.... She has gone where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage: no illusions and no disillusion—no sleepless nights and no

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22. James, Letters, I, 159-161.
ebbing strength.... There she may bloom into a beauty more radiant than our dull eyes will avail to contemplate. 24

America had a better and challenging soil for a writer but James found much pleasure and better company abroad. He had exiled himself because he believed that he will be able to get a better atmosphere for his writings and undoubtedly his achievements prove this. He had come back home in the spring of 1870 and later wrote a letter to Charles Eliot Norton from Cambridge on January 16, 1871 expressing the fact that he could not be at ease in his own country:

Looking about for myself, I conclude that the face of nature and civilization in this our country is to a certain point a very sufficient literary field. But it will yield its secrets only to a really grasping imagination. This I think Howells lacks. (Of course I don't!) To write well and worthily of American things one needs even more than elsewhere to be a master. But unfortunately one is less. 25

He expressed similar feelings about America when he said in his Notebooks later that the United States is,

a country without a sovereign, without a court, without a nobility, without an army, without a church or a clergy, without a diplomatic service, without a picturesque peasantry, without palaces or castles, or country seats or ruins, without a literature, without novels, without an Oxford or a Cambridge, without cathedrals or ivied churches, without latticed cottages or village ale-houses, without political society, without sport, without fox-hunting or country gentlemen,

25. Ibid., I, 252.
without an Epsom or an Ascot, an Eton or a Rugby... !

He again went to Europe in May, 1872 for a year and a half and was well enough established as a writer. He even had an agreement with 'The Nation' to write travel essays which were later published in book form as 'Transatlantic Sketches' in the year 1875. He spent much time in London, Paris, Rome and Florence — places which not only delighted but also satisfied him. He wrote 'The Madonna of the Future' and a part of 'Roderick Hudson' both of which dealt with the American artist in Europe. This was the proper time to have written such stories, dealing with the American in Europe, because the mind of Henry James himself was being nourished — at this juncture — on the antithesis of America and Europe. He had not yet decided on permanent exile and again when he came back to America in the autumn of 1874, it became a matter of family discussion and he expressed his feelings in a letter to Robertson James which he wrote from Cambridge on October 13, 1874: "My arrival is now a month old, first impressions are losing their edge and Europe is fading away into a pleasant dream. But I confess I have become very much Europeanized in feeling, and I mean to keep a firm hold of the old world in some way or other." 27

27. James, Letters, I, 466-467.
This was the time when he was wrestling with the problem whether to remain in America or to take up residence in Europe where he was certainly more at ease. His reading of Balzac, the charm of George Eliot, his interest in Flaubert and the effect of the education he had received during the formative years were the factors which determined him to make the choice of expatriation to Europe.

He was thirty-two years old, when by the middle of November, 1875, he settled himself in Paris, though England was to be his final residence. During his stay at Paris he wrote letters to the New York 'Tribune' of 1875 and 1876 - his only newspaper writing in the course of half a century devoted to the art of writing. He was to describe, later in his autobiographical volume 'A Small Boy and Others', how he was taken by his father to the 'Tribune' offices, "a wonderful world indeed, with strange steepness and machineries and noises and hurrying bare-armed, bright eyed men, and amid the agitation clever, easy, kindly, jocular, partly undressed gentlemen ... some of whom I knew at home, taking it all as if it were the most natural place in the world." 28 His letters to the 'Tribune' reflect the Paris of the 1870's and describe the vividness of the city. They also

describe the salons, the art galleries, the theatres and
the personalities as seen by him.

Henry James remained a scant year in Paris where
he had the opportunity of meeting Ivan Turgenev and other
literary men like Flaubert, Maupassant, Edmund de Goun-
court, Zola, Daudet and others. He had finally made his
choice and took "possession of the old world"\(^29\) as he
wrote back in one of his letters to his family. He moved
to England in December 1876 and leaving apart a few
American trips he had decided to spend the rest of his
life in Europe.

Thus the choice was made and he really had "no time
to waste"\(^30\) as he said later in his Notebooks. He was
now seriously concerned with his international theme and
was ready to write his novels in which it was very diff-
cult to know whether he was an American writing with
knowledge about English people or an Englishman writing
with knowledge about Americans. The international theme
was one of his most favorite themes and he continued to
dwell on it for the larger part of his life. F.W. Dupee
very rightly observes that "the American in contact with
Europeans was his fine unique theme; and he rode it hard,
treating it now briefly, now at length, now seriously —
acting in short, the experimentalist that his family

\(^{29}\) James, *Letters*, I, 484.

\(^{30}\) James, *Notebooks*, p. 23.
training and present independence of mind prescribed."

The international, thus, was the subject James was best qualified to convert into fiction. The 'Atlantic Monthly' had published his early short stories which depicted the problems of human behaviour in the American scene, but this, on the other hand, also demanded of the expatriate James similar stories about Americans in European surroundings. Besides, the "inalienably American soul" of James resolved to debunk the warped delineation of the Americans as uncouth provincials by contemporary French fiction and drama and to vindicate the superiority of the moral values of Americans. He also tried to highlight the sophistication and elegance of European culture which was the result of his cosmopolitan and catholic spirit. The international was James's persistent choice and he is best known for the fiction dealing with the international theme which represents his major and most perfect achievement.

His first novel, 'Watch and Ward' (1871), was set in America and was, undoubtedly, a poor product but 'Roderick Hudson' (1875) not only pleased James but also attracted a lot of critics to comment on it mainly because

31. Dupee, Henry James, p. 96.
it was set in Europe. This was followed by 'The American' (1877) where we find a full-length treatment of the international theme. He became so popular with the publication of 'The American' that he wrote to Howells in the year 1879: "My fame indeed seems to do very well everywhere – the proportions it has acquired here are a constant surprise to me..."33. The 'Daisy Miller', with its appearance in 1878, secured the position of James as a man of letters. People in both England and America responded to this tale of the independent little American girl who is destroyed by the antiquity of Europe. 'The American' and 'Daisy Miller' were proof enough that the international was James's true element.

James had already made London his home in 1876 and had noted that, despite its ugliness, the city had an abundant variety of life and was fit enough for the writer of fiction. Besides, England was a place from where he could continuously observe his material; the American in Europe. His first eight years in London can be called the international period when we were gifted with 'Daisy Miller', 'An International Episode', 'A Bundle of Letters', 'The Point of View' and several other international tales. But the most important was 'The Portrait of a Lady' (1881) which can very well be called his first literary masterpiece. His literary

productivity in these years is truly amazing when one considers that he was also pursuing an exciting social life, meeting, as we have seen, many of the most important literary figures of his time.

The publication of 'The Portrait of a Lady' marks the end of the first period of James's career. He returned to America in the autumn of 1881, revisited Newport and met the famous Oscar Wilde in Washington. He was even struck by the death of his mother who "was our life, she was the house, she was the keystone of the arch" and "held us all together, and without her we are scattered reeds." 34 His father also died and his brother Wilky too followed his parents to the grave. He was conscious of the best place for him to live and before regaining his London home in the autumn of 1883, he had put down in a notebook his deepest thoughts about his choice:

My choice is the old world - my choice, my need, my life.... My work lies there.... No European writer is called upon to assume that terrible burden, and it seems hard that I should be. The burden is necessarily greater for an American - for he must deal, more or less ... with Europe; whereas no European is obliged to deal in the least with America. No one dreams of calling him less complete for not doing so .... The painter of manners who neglects America is not thereby incomplete as yet, but a hundred years hence - fifty years hence perhaps - he will doubtless be accounted so. My impressions of America ... I know too well what they are. In many ways they are extremely pleasant; but Heaven forgive me! I feel as if my time were terribly wasted here 35

34. James, Notebooks, p. 40.
35. Ibid., pp. 23-24.
James settled himself more firmly than ever before amidst English life but between 'The Portrait of a Lady' (1881) and 'The Ambassadors' (1903) his treatment of the international theme was much less frequent and only in tales and novellas. He wrote novels - 'The Princess Casamassima' (1886), 'The Tragic Muse' (1890), and 'The Awkward Age' (1899), which dealt with English subjects. 'The Bostonians' (1886), as the title suggests, had a purely American theme. The reason for this shift is either the fact that James had exhausted his material or as Leon Edel remarks, James "had also come to see that perhaps the faults and virtues of the Americans and the English were simply different chapters of the same general subject."\(^{36}\). But this does not mean that James did not produce anything worth mentioning as towards the latter half of the eighties he wrote quite a number of international stories like 'Lady Barberina', 'The Seize of London' and 'A Modern Warning'. These were also the years in which he made new and lasting friendships with Alphonse Daudet, Stevenson, and the painter John Singer Sargent, with Edmund Gosse, George du Maurier, Humphry Wards and finally Paul Bourget, "the sole exception"\(^{37}\) among his close French friends.

James again turned himself, in the late nineties,

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37. Ibid., p. 268.
to write novels which dealt with the international theme on a larger scale. He had established his reputation with the publication of 'The Portrait of a Lady' but was unable to produce even a single novel matching the deep vision and superb craftsmanship of the 'Portrait'. He was even a failure at the theatre and the dramatization of 'Guy Domville' in 1895 was not received well by either public or critics. His failure as a dramatist had a good effect on his career and he made his decision and committed it to his Notebook: "I take up my own old pen again - the pen of all my old unforgettable efforts and sacred struggles. To myself - today - I need say no more. Large and full and high the future still opens. It is now indeed that I may do the work of my life. And I will."\(^{38}\).

He further talked of his "large and confident action - splendid and supreme creation"\(^{39}\) - a creation, which he knew, was possible only if he worked on his international theme. He, therefore, again turned to the international which he thought to be the most natural instrument through which he could project his view of the world. The last three novels - 'The Wings of the Dove' (1902), 'The Ambassadors' (1903) and 'The Golden

\(^{38}\) James, *Notebooks*, p. 179.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 187.
Bowl (1904) — deal with the theme with which he was involved so often in the past — the confrontation of Europe and America. James even observed in his Preface to 'The Reverberator' that "the 'international' light lay thick, from period to period, on the general sense of my observation ... everything that possibly could, at any rate, managed at that time... to be international for me, which was an immense resource and a happy circumstance from many points of view." The international became his ideal and not unlike Joseph Conrad for whom the sea was the medium, and Thomas Hardy who required his Wessex, James too had the international as the best medium of expression of his vision.

James had been writing for more than three decades and the work he had produced was, undoubtedly, impressive. He had superbly and wisely turned to the international which suited his purpose as the best medium. He had not abandoned his country as he is often accused of doing but was fortunate in the circumstances that led him to become a great novelist. He had even found "American life good but monotonous; in French and English life, on the other hand, he discovered the infinitely various fascinations of wickedness" and wrote fiction on the international theme "on which he was to ring the

40. James, The Art of the Novel, p. 186.
changes throughout his career, from 'The American' to 'The Golden Bowl'. "41

He died on February 28, 1916, but before his death, concentrated himself on criticism and even wrote the prefaces which are of great literary value. He also did some autobiographical writing and became a British subject in 1915, and was awarded the Order of Merit on January 1, 1916, one month before his death.