CHAPTER

2
MAJOR WORKS AND INFLUENCES

The fiction of Henry James, if read in a chronological order reveal him as the historian, the psychologist, the moralist and the civilized mind. At the beginning there is a camera like sharpness, all focus and clear image; at the end it becomes "impressionistic"; no hard lines are tolerated, and the great phrases and images reverberate like a tolling bell. Henry James’ fictions belong to a greater age of leisure than ours. He develops them without any hurry. He takes his reader step by step into the given situation. There is a fascination in watching him go about his business: he is always precise, always master of his materials, always ready to clear the way and confront his audience. Then he brushes in the detail and the picture is painted. In every stroke of his brush he paints a different observation that could be seen in the detailed study of his major works. His works touches each and every aspect of life that kept him free from the illusions of life. He felt that –

"Life is, in fact a battle. On this point optimists and pessimists agree. Evil is insolvent and strong; beauty, enchanting and rare; goodness, very apt to be weak........." ¹
He always kept this fact in his subconscious mind while he engrossed himself to fiction writing.

James’ first story, ‘A Tragedy of Error,’ was published in February 1864, anonymously in continental monthly. He later appeared as an anonymous book reviewer for the North American review. Although James T. Fields, the ‘Atlantic Monthly’ editor, was not entirely enthusiastic about James’ affinity for unhappy endings, yet he published James’ civil war story, ‘The story of a year’. It was the first published tale under his name. During this time he was associated with ‘The Nation’ and published nine reviews on French literature, Modern British and American fiction and essays. In 1866 Henry published his first story about artists, ‘A Landscape Painter.’ It was his second story to appear in ‘The Atlantic Monthly’. The Atlantic monthly serialized James’ first novel, ‘Watch and Ward’ in 1871. This was not published as a book for another seven years. In 1875 ‘Roderick Hudson’ was published in Boston that was also serialized in ‘The Atlantic’. This was Henry’s first novel to be published in a book form. In the same year ‘A Passionate Pilgrim’ and few transatlantic sketches were also published.

During the spring of 1876, in Paris, Henry started working on ‘The American’ that was serialized in ‘The Atlantic Monthly’ that further received popularity in book form. During this time he started
developing interest in theater and in 1875 his yet another novel 'The European' was published. In this novel, James confronts the conflict inherent in an American's choice to live in England over America, and the insufficiency the character faces in both of these options. He also ran his pen to write 'Daisy Miller' that was his major popular success of the time. It gained fame when it was published in the British, 'The Corn Hill Magazine'. Further in 1880 James started working on 'The Portrait of Lady' and in 1881 serialized it in 'Macmillan's' magazine and 'The Atlantic monthly'. The characters in 'The Portrait of a Lady' are heavily influenced by James' personal relationships: Isabel reflects his cousin Minnie Temple; Gilbert Osmond, Francis Boott; and Pansy, Boott's daughter and James' friend Lizzie. Then in the year 1882, eager for theatrical success, James tried his luck with the story of 'Daisy Miller' that meets with a cool reception from the public, James' collection of travel writing, 'A little Tour of France' is serialized in 'The Atlantic' and was published as a book in 1885 but before that in 1884 James wrote 'The Bostonian'. The relationship of Verena Tarrant and Olive chancellor was based on that of his sister's with Katherine Loring. James calls it

"a study of one of those friendships between women which are so common in New England." 2
During this time he also completed two of his novels ‘The Bostonians’ and ‘The Princess Cassamasima.’

Then after, inspired by his visit to Italy in 1888, James wrote the novel ‘The Reverberator’. During this year he also completed the short novel ‘The Aspern papers.’ This proved to be a profitable year for him for he started earning 9000$ from his writings. He then completed his next novel ‘The Tragic Muse’ and planned to dramatize ‘The American’ for which he was paid an advance of £250. James then made yet another attempt to capture the London stage by presenting ‘Guy Domville’ in the year 1894; that turned out to be a huge failure. James spent the first half of the decade in writing plays. James returned to novel writing with ‘The Spoils of Poynton’ which was serialized and then published in 1897. Then came another masterpiece ‘The Awkward Age’ followed by two short stories ‘The Figure in the Carpet’ and ‘The Turn of the Screw’. At the end of 19th century he wrote another novel ‘What Maisie Knew’. This fiction, with a strong female protagonist, was more lucid and morally complicated than much of his later works.

Another flawed heroine’s struggle with money and marriage, ‘The Wings of the Dove’ marked the beginning of his last great burst of productivity. This fiction was the second of his three dictated novels. ‘The Ambassadors’ tackles James’ life long concern with the international theme. James thinks this novel ‘the most perfect’ of his
works. Henry’s last major novel, ‘The Golden Bowl’ was published in 1904 and its subject was once again the American European cultural conflict. ‘The Golden Bowl’ is considered by many critics to be his most sophisticated fiction.

In the year 1904 Henry and William James were elected to the American Academy of Arts and letters. Henry then compiled memory of the recollections of his recent trip to the states in "The American Scene". In 1908 the novels and tales of Henry James was published in ‘The New York Edition’ in America with a series of new introduction for which he received initial royalties that amounts to 211$. Henry received an honorary degree in literature from Oxford University in the year 1912 and the very next year he started writing an autobiography ‘A small Boy and Others’. During the writing of it Henry became terribly ill and was unable to work well for months, yet first part of the autobiography was published in 1913. Henry published another installment of his autobiography ‘Notes of a Son and Brother’ where he focused largely on the impact of the civil war on his family. Henry died in 1914 and ‘The Middle Years’ which was the third volume of James’ autobiography was left unfinished along with two other fiction ‘The Ivory Tower’ and ‘The sense of the Past’. In 1918 a collection of James’s essays about the war was published posthumously in a journal ‘Within the Rim’.
His works end as an episode of life ends and we remain with the sense of the life still going on and even the presence of the dead is felt in the silence that comes upon when the last sentence of the fiction is read. He is always precise, always master of his materials, always ready to clear the way and confront his audience. And whether he wears the mask of comedy or of tragedy, the readers are aware that he is summarizing life, capturing some fragment of it, seeking its essence and this is what makes him a literary genius.

Henry James, the largest literary figure of America during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, was alone among major American writers in never seeking any other employment. He was devoted to his art and his productivity. He believed that a fiction writer is a historian of that part of life which is never found in history books; that is the private life going beyond the walls of dwelling and at the same time being a part of the society in which he lived. All his virtuosity was addressed in his fiction for discovering how to capture in words the subjective and the reflective side of man. Henry James wrote so much and experimented so widely and was such a complex literary figure that critics found him difficult to be analyzed as a whole. His complexity could be felt by the statements made by him, like –

“I’ve always been interested in people, but I’ve never liked them.”

3
It is well said that personality immerses out of the family constellation. Individual identity is forged not in isolation but in context of relationship. Family relationship are the template for how one is going to act with everyone else later on and here Henry James is an exception.

The first major influence on James was his father, Henry James senior, who certainly had unusual ideas. A non-church going Christian of harmless but vigorous views; the elder James converted his wife entirely to his own way of thinking. Henry James senior published a whole series of books with titles like 'Morality and Christianity of Society: The Redeemed form of Man', which was very little regarded in America. The contents however were known to his son, Henry James junior. The book is all about God, as a saving agent at work within the passions of universal man and America, the New World, was the home of this universal man. This man is freed from the individual peculiarities and this characteristic absorbed the interest of the European novelists, Dickens, towards the book. According to James' father the main obstacle to the realization of this version of the American dream lay in the national tendency of moralism, or self-righteousness. Much of this satiric attack on moralism and the benign faith in civilized harmony, rubbed off on the son and Henry James junior started giving a shape to his thoughts under this influence. But
Henry James Senior's genial principles found its most practical outlet in the liberal and wandering education of his children.

Henry James' mother, Marry Robertson Walsh was a stout, patient, and dependable women from a well to do New York family, who completely subsumed her considerable personality under that of her husband, so as to become indistinguishable from him. It was she, who took care of the kids and the whole household. Then there was William, the oldest of the James sibling, who was weary and high-strung. Henry came next was a poet, gentle, and more docile then William. Henry, his mother's favorite, was always politely reserved with everyone. He bonded closely with William but eventually became most protective for his sister Alice. With her friend Catherine Loring, he attended Alice on her death bed and this attachment of Henry with William and Alice always peeps in his fiction. But one of the most outstanding influence on James was the unorthodox way in which he was educated. The James sibling travels extensively in Europe tour the museums, sat with tutor, slogged through provincial schools and become multilingual at an early age. As the boys grew up, they learned that not to question and to have no opinion was to shrink not only once intellectual duty but ones moral responsibility. As a result, both Henry and William learned to observe things, people and art that influenced Henry greatly in his literary career. Moving about on two
continents, threw Henry and William closely together as they were growing up. Their life fused and they became dependent on each other emotionally. Their letter often shows an endearing affection. Both were constantly concerned with each other's welfare. Henry found it dismally unsatisfactory and difficult to write to William without knowing every detail about his health and well being. Henry, for his part, would give a running commentary if his own ups and downs, describe in vivid terms a depression or a moving drama. As the aged, William was concerned about Henry's loneliness, partly brought on by the nature of his vacation. One of the biggest successes was that both William and Henry were always ready to give the most candid and unvarnished opinion of the others work as soon as each new piece was published. They took each other's comments seriously and made adjustment accordingly in subsequent publications. In this way William helped to shape Henry's view over his entire career. In the early 1890's, in the middle of writing 'Princess Cassamassima' in which his style perceptibly changed, Henry switched from scratching with his own pen to dictating. This made him not only more diffused, but led him into a convoluted stream of consciousness style all his own. William began writing late and did not find his voice for sometime. In the late 1860's, when he was just beginning to publish he sent his first piece of writing through younger Henry to edit out the more windy parts and
submit them for him. This practice of Henrys gave him a wider spectrum to judge and analyze a text that influences him a lot in his own literary career.

Henry James Junior was most impressive in French, in which he conversed and corresponded at ease with experts like Daudet and Flaubert. At the same time he was also very much at ease in Italian. Thus he was influenced by all the classics of English, American and French literature as well as the best known German and Russian translations. He learnt a great deal about art from Ruskin. Music appealed to him much less rather it appeared to him even boring. It was artists and actors whose acquaintance he sought rather than that of composers and singers. During his childhood he read poets like Mathew Arnold and T. S. Eliot whom he admired a lot but gradually he developed interest in reading novels and considered it as the dominant literary form. He devoted all his reading to that.

James was thus not brought up to write novels, he did it entirely off his own bat. The cumulative impressions of foreign travel were probably a powerful stimulus to James' first literary efforts. James had a long apprenticeship of touring; at the age of six months he was taken to live near Windsor Castle in England and from there in the following year to Paris. For a formative period from 1855 to 1858 he was abroad with the family, living in Geneva, London, Paris and
Bologna. His early impressions of European scenes and characters were so that he never forgot. After a year in Newport, Rhode Island, he returned to Europe with his family in 1859 and 1860, staying at Geneva and Boston. The tours of different places provided him with a new experience in life and these experiences he felt -

"......... is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider - web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness and catching every air - borne particle in its tissue." 4

From 1860 to 1864, they were again staying at Newport. It was the period of the American Civil War, but James, owing to a back injury sustained while he was helping to fight a fire, took no part in the conflict. By the time he was twenty-one, approximately one-third of James’s life had been spent in foreign countries and virtually the whole of it in reading and in learning languages, including Latin. He was thus in many ways an untypical American, a privileged, cultured, cosmopolitan accustomed to compare life in different countries. He thus enjoyed his comparative freedom.

Newport played an important part in James' development, not only in providing him with scenes for some of the most memorable episodes in his stories, but also because of his artistic fraternity. It
was a young Newport artist, John La Farge, whose friendly encouragement gave a definite direction to James' literary ambitions in the 1860s. La Farge had personal contact with French writers like Faubert, the Goncourts and Balzac and thus introduced James to them and also made James read Browning. Influenced by all of them James submitted his first work for publication that was a translation of a German tale to French. Play going and reviewing suited James more than his studies at Harvard and when he left college prematurely he took back to Newport with him certain manuscripts that were not law notes but were small sickly seed of fiction. The seed took the shape of a plant when he offered a short story, "A Tragedy of Error" to the short lived Continental Monthly of New York and it was accepted and published, anonymously in February 1864.

It reveals that Henry, at the threshold of his manhood, already possessed a vigorous grasp of certain story telling techniques which were to guide him in all his work and culminate in the remarkable architecture of his final novels. Immediately after its first appearance in print, James moved with the family up to Boston, the center of New England culture. Here his literary contacts multiplied. James T. Fields, editor of the Atlantic Monthly invited him to literary salons, where he met Longfellow, J. R. Lowell, Mrs. H. B. Stowe and others. James was now well placed to take advantage of the increased activity then
occurring in the world of literary periodicals. In 1865 E. L. Godkin, with the support of Henry James senior, started the monthly "Nation", for the first volume of which James wrote nine reviews. The most influential admirers of his stores, W. D. Howells, joined the Nation's editorial staff in 1866. Thus these reviews led James into a habit of writing and publishing.

His second tale dealt with life on the civilian front of the civil war and was accepted by the Atlantic Monthly in 1865 when he was 22. The North American review and the newly founded 'Nation' accepted his book reviews and when William Dean Howells began to work for 'The Atlantic' he gave Henry encouragement and editorial support, recognizing his extra-ordinary talent. Shortly Henry became skillful writer of American fiction. The stories of his early period dealt entirely with American scenes and show the leisurely existence of well-to-do families in Newport, Boston and New York. James' writing was influenced by the works of French novelists as Balzac and George Sand.

During this time, his writing was also influenced by the writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne. There is a touch of Hawthorne in 'The Romance of Certain Old Clothes', his first ghostly tale. This was followed by various other upcoming stories such as 'A Landscape Painter', 'A Day of Days'. James now believed that the heroic age of
New England innocence, with its struggle against slavery and its effort
to transcend evil by setting up more natural modes of living, was past.
The need was now to look back from the frontier towards Europe, to
acquire a more self-critical civilization through international contacts
and cross fertilization in the human arts.

"I think that to be an American, is an excellent
preparation for culture"  

James wrote in 1867, to pick and assimilate forms of civilization
and to contribute to the American moral consciousness; the literature
of the future should be produced by the fused national tendencies of
the world. In this mood James determined to revisit Europe to
observe again those national tendencies with the eyes of a man of
Lewis, Frederic Harrison, Ruskin, Rossetti and Moris. His long letters
home gave his impressions of Venice, Florence, Rome, Geneva, Paris
etc. James was thus gradually becoming aware of workable themes
for his fiction. This visit gave rise to several new tales with European
settings, notably "A Passionate Pilgrim", the story which gave its title
to James' first book. The effective structuring of "A Passionate Pilgrim"
reveals the influence of Mathew Arnold's ideas on Henry James. The
balanced comparison of cultures is an Arnoldian perception.
At the mean time, when he was in his youth, the unexpected death of his cousin Minny Temple in 1870 shocked him deeply and seemed to close the door on the possibility of love, because James not only admire her intellectual grace but also enjoy her company and respond to her unraveled American open-mindedness. He felt that Milly's death marked a close to his youth, but he kept certain of her qualities in mind when constructing his favorite female characters. Henry James made Minny Temple immortal through the American Heroines of 'The Portrait of a Lady' and 'The Wings of the Dove'. Henry James thus transported her image into the timeless sphere. He translated a personal wish and memory into the affirmation of a creative writer. Here is a pledge to subsidize her into a lasting reality, by the force of the imaginative impact of the felt experience associated with her:

"I could shed tears of joy far more copious than any tears of sorrow when I think of her feverish earthly lot exchanged for this serene promotion into pure fellowship with our memories, thoughts and fancies...... The more I think of her the more perfectly satisfied I am to have her translated from this charging realm of fact to the steady realm of thought. There she may bloom into a beauty more
radiant than our dull eyes will avail to contemplate.”

Instead of losing her presence, Minny Temple gained in finer essence and intensity of being. She has been transformed into an immortal flame of life. James made her image find its aesthetic salvation eventually in Isabel Archer and Milly Theale. Finally by focusing upon the American nature of Milly Temple and her predicament in an English setting, Henry James foretells the peculiar dilemma of American Heroines like Isabel Archer and Milly Theale and states in a capsulated form the inherent conflict of his international theme –

“Every time that I have been out during the last three days, the aspect of things has perpetually seemed to enforce her image by simple contrast and difference. The landscape assents stolidly enough to her death; it would have ministered by scantily to her life. She was a breathing protest against English grossness, English compromises and conventions – a plant of pure American growth.”

Thus the image of Minny Temple, Henry James’ Albany Cousin, with whom he renewed her relationship in about her 17th year and continued it on an intense emotional plane till she died at the age of
twenty four, is richly and deeply embedded in his memory and consciousness as a man and creative artist.

With a timely avoidance of the Franco-Prussian war, James returned to Boston in 1870, looking now to America to provide him with the subject of his first novel. But during this time he saw America increasingly as a cultural backwater, comparatively boring and arid. In this mood he predictably came up with a thin theme for the novel, which he could stretch to only eleven chapters and thus marked the beginning of his career in fiction with "Watch and Ward".

In 1872, in search of more promising material, he persuaded his father to finance a new trip to Europe, the cost of which he hoped to settle by contributing travel pieces to 'The Nation'. On this tour James was at first accompanied by his sister and aunt, but when they returned in the autumn of 1872 he stayed on, remaining till 1874. It was at this period that James' principal subject took shape in his mind. The European scene provided him with a historically and visually fascinating backcloth for his studies of semi-permanent American exiles. The output of these influences in his life was in the form of his next fiction "Roderick Hudson", though did not gain importance among his readers but two of the men James most respected in the world, Ivan Turgenev and Matthew Arnold said they liked it and that was James' greatest satisfaction.
This was the year when he settled down at Paris and met the Russian novelist Ivan Turgenev. He helped James to see that the novel need not be a haphazard story, but one in which characters live out their natures. Then by the end of 1876 he settled in London and became famous in both America and England as the author of 'Daisy Miller'. With the success of 'Daisy Miller' James recognized that people liked his Americano-European stories and particularly his tales of International marriages and of bright young American girls discovering Europe. From this time Henry started playing on this particular theme with certain variations, for example, stories of the self-made girl, who arranges life for her fiancé so she may make a splendid marriage; stories of English noblewoman who marry Americans but despise them and certain other stories of Americans who are unable to grasp the guile and duplicity of Europeans. This was the time when James played with the national sensibilities where Americans and Europeans enjoyed laughing at each other forgetting their own loop and holes.

James' reputation then started advancing. In November 1875 James settled in Europe. He was most interested in cultivating the friendship of celebrated French novelists such as Flaubert, Daudet, Zola and Maupassant. The influence of the French ways is thus observed in "The American". The pattern of living which he now established for himself consisted of three practices, keeping rented
rooms in London, visiting friend in various parts of Britain and spending extended summers in the continent especially in Italy. As a result of all these experiences James got enough substance to work on "The Europeans", "Washington Square", "The Portrait of a Lady" and "Daisy Miller". In Daisy Miller, the boldness of American woman is at issue. This fiction afforded him a fashionable prominence at parties, theatre-boxes and political weekends. There was even a vogue for "Daisy Miller" hats that placed Henry to a remarkable position not only among the readers but also in the society. James once said –

"I think a position in society is a legitimate object of ambition."  

After these influences and a wide range of experience James was now forty and was about to enter a period of uncertainty and disappointment. During the early phase of this period he wrote masterpieces like "The Bostonians", followed by "The Princess Casamassima" and "The Tragic Muse". James' career at this time was sagging under the weight of naturalism to which he was not suited and which no longer suited the times. The age of democracy had begun in Britain, the growth of mass culture was visible, the pace of life was quickening and the three-decker novel, especially if pervaded by a refined, tentative awareness like James', hardly fitted the frill. Britain's position in world leadership was under threat, a subject which
fascinated James. He saw himself more and more as the explorer of the refined conscience and intelligent imagination in a domestic, commercialized, and sporadically violent and media oriented society. Thus such topics as divorce, psychological illness, adolescent awareness, the conscience of the artist, the guilt of the rich, the invasion of privacy, paranormal experience and nervous obsession offered themselves to the fascinated James as themes for new fiction. These visions cut right across international boundaries, so that James' existing role as a wanderer between two worlds became a distinct advantage. James reacted to this crisis of change by altering fiction itself in as experimental or modernist direction. This new concentration on economy, form and technique marks the recovery of purpose in James' career and inaugurates his spell as the most formidable writer of his day with the most demanding output.

In the later life when James moved to the Lamb House he did not seem inhospitable to new machinery, either in his home or in his prose; he accepted electric light and the telephone, used telegrams, tried out the cinema, took up cycling, went motoring and even used an European motor. But applied science was never an enthusiasm to James. During the summer of 1900 at Lamb House James began writing the first of the three long novels which were to crown his success. The pattern of older and younger American adults who are in
Europe for one season or another is common to "The Ambassadors", "The Wings of the Dove" and "The Golden Bowl". The social and political influences of the time thus made James work on the old international theme with new methods.

After he made a considerable fortune, writing on the International theme, he entered the, 2nd period of his writings. It was marked by his decision to attempt new subject leaving the 'International theme' apart. With extra-ordinary energy he wrote two long novels i.e. 'The Bostonians' and 'The Princess Cassamassima'; these novels are, in a sense, tales of two cities- Boston and London. They are brilliantly “social” in their painting of certain scenes of urban life and they are a calculated attempt by James to write a “naturalistic” novel. During this time he visited Paris and there he had long talks with Zola, Edmond de Goncourt and Daudet and was deeply impressed by them. While James was under their influence, he failed to measure the interest of his readers who awaited more tales from him about helpless and bright Americans in Europe and wondering foreigners in the United States. Instead James offered his readers a realistic and minutely painted picture of Bostonian and London life. Thus James alienated his limited but appreciative public. These novels were thus flat failures.
He then made one more attempt. This time he wrote of the world of art and tried to record the problems confronting young politician-painter and an actress. ‘The Tragic Muse’ ran for many months in the Atlantic Monthly yet it did not gain success though James was brilliant in his picture portrayal. ‘The Princess Cassamassima’ then anticipated James’ major theme of the 20th century - the young man who seeks to overthrow the very society in which he in reality also seeks acceptance. When he was writing these novels he continued to turn out a brilliant series of tales; some of them were of short novel length. One such story is ‘The Aspern Papers’ which is a narrative masterpiece reflecting the life of a dying old lady, trying to keep from a privacy invading age, the love letters written to her more than half a century before by a great poet. The story moves with a rhythmic pace and tension of a superb mystery story. Thus James fashioned a narrative that belongs to the golden age of storytelling.

In 1889 Henry James faced the fact that he was a finer artist even, he had a sense of destiny, but he had written three novels which were destined for posterity rather than for his time. The income from his writings had been reduced to a low point and he realized that vigorous measures were necessary. He accordingly sought to receive his fortunes by turning to the theater. Thus during the next five years,
from 1890 to 1895, he wrote seven plays. Two of them reached the stage; 'The American' which had a modest run and 'Guy Domville' a carefully written costume play. This was booed by an ill tempered audience that vented its anger on James. Repudiated once again by his public, and this time in an open and violent fashion made James turn his back to the theater and resume to his writing of fiction. In a sense he turned his back on his public altogether. He withdrew from London, after years of city life, living first in a rented house and later purchasing Lamb House, in Rye, Sussex. It was an old house and had walled garden. This became his permanent abode. It was in Lamb House, that his final works were written and he partially resolved the deep feeling of frustration and failure engendered by public indifference to his art.

During these unsuccessful years he wrote ghostly tales, and it was in between the haunted period of 1895-1900 that he set down his series of stories of ravaged childhood and adolescence. The most popular novel of this sort i.e. with tormented childhood and the ghostly element is 'The Turn of the Screw' where he has experimented on the theory that a nightmare is most frightening to the person who dreams it. Among his other stories of troubled childhood were 'What Maisie Knew' the story of a little girl who lives alternately with each of her divorced parents and is flung from one to the other as if she was a
tennis ball and the way she tries to live in both different worlds; 'In
the Cage', the tale of a girl in late adolescence, who works in a branch
post office and seeks to construct in her imagination the fashionable
world whose telegrams pass through her hands; and 'The Awkward
Age', a fiction concerned with the female adolescent who reaches the
time when he can join her elders in the drawing room. A kind of
childish curiosity is at the centre of these stories. A curiosity about sex
and manners and the ways of the adult World dominate these stories.

In this phase of melancholy came the final period of his life the
years from 1900 to the first world war which are now spoken of as
constituting his 'major phase' and was influenced by his matured
thinking. Between, 1900-1904 he wrote three novels thus returned to
his international subjects and this time his subjects were presented
with a greater maturity. James' Psychological drama 'The
Ambassadors', the tragedy in 'The Wings of the Dove' and James' supreme novel of manners,' The Golden Bowl' remains the reflection of
his grown up thoughts. It is the same time when Balzac had tried to
create certain novels which would serve also as philosophical studies
within the frame of human comedy. The novels of Balzac proved to be
the poor ones but James was greatly influenced by them and looked at
them attentively. And in James' later novels one can find an implied
homage to these novels, or to their intention. Thus James named the
hero of 'The Ambassadors' as Lewis Lambert Strether after Balzac's Louis Lambert. Not only this, James' 'The Wings of the Dove' has a profound relationship with Balzac's Swedenborgian fiction 'Serafita' where both the fiction tells of a woman who enacts the sacrifice of Christ. James' another fiction 'The Golden Bowl' reveals him breaking new ground when he chooses a triangle of husband, wife and the mistress- but the twist this time is that he marries off the mistress to the father of the wife, makes her the step mother of the betrayed heroine. But 'The Golden Bowl' was not serialized and he was free to handle his subject without any reservation. The novel is, for once, the record of an innocent American girl who really does grow up: in the end she has not only won back her husband, but has emerged from her all- but- fatal attachment to her father. She sends the father back to America with his young wife and remains in Europe to work out her own future; her marriage is restored on the firm foundation of maturity. This time in James, the marriages are not failures: the alliances between Europeans and Americans are made strong and durable. This was the time when he was trying his pen on stories like 'The Soft Sides', 'The Better Sort' and 'The Finer Grain'.

At the end of 'The Golden Bowl' he decided to return back to America. He had been away during all his middle years i.e.; from his
was called to lecture and share his Impressions and after a strenuous year in America, he had captured a whole new aspect of the United States. Here he wrote ‘The American scene’ where he analyzed things as they were in America, and as he could visualize things as an impressionist painter. He says that he had known Old New York and confronted the skyscrapers; he had known, a tight parochial Boston; he now saw a sprawling city. While he was in The United States he reached an agreement with his publisher to assemble his novels and tales into a definitive edition. Thus for three years after his return to Lamb House, he labored on this task and harmonized his stories and novels and named it as “New York Edition”. James’ productivity during his final years was remarkable. He issued a final collection of essays on the eve of the war. In addition, he worked on two remarkable volumes of reminiscence ‘A Small Boy and Other’ and ‘Notes of a Son and a Brother’; looking back at his own past. A third volume of reminiscence, destined to deal with his years in London and Paris, was left a mere fragment, and was published as ‘The Middle Years’ after James’ death.

With the outbreak of the war James threw himself into various activities; he visited hospitals, aided refugees. He finally decided to yield the American citizenship in 1915 but a stroke three or four
months later was followed by pneumonia and finally he died on 28th Feb '1916.

James had been a constant letter-writer from the first. His letters are the surplus production of a writer who, having done his day's work, is unable to stop and writes on with a free flow and an easy play of imagination. More than ten thousand letters survive, among which majority of them are unpublished. His professional letters are no less than informal letters that are filled with remarkable observation of the people and places of his time.

James gathered great success in his fictions and spent rest of his life in writing pieces of criticism and letters and few unfinished tales were left behind him. Not only his writings even his friendship was numerous and the influences of his friends were quite evident in his works. He moved everywhere in the literary and art world and crossed the path of nearly all the leading writers of his day He increasingly dominates the literature of America for his contribution from the romantic to the modern art of the twentieth century.
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