ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE SELECT WORKS OF
HENRY JAMES

Henry James was born on April 15, 1843, to Henry James, Sr., and his wife Mary Walsh Robertson. His older brother William was born in 1842, and younger siblings Garth Wilkinson, Robertson, and Alice were born in 1845, 1846, and 1848, respectively. Henry Sr., the son of an Irish immigrant, was one of thirteen children, born in Albany, New York. By the time his own children were born, he had inherited a great deal in wealth from his father, and the James family, at the time of Henry Junior.'s birth, lived in New York City, where Henry Sr. devoted his time to the study of theology, philosophy, and mysticism, rejecting his father's Presbyterian Church to follow the teachings of Swedish Christian mystic Emanuel Swedenborg.

The James children were educated in a variety of often unorthodox circumstances. Sometimes at schools sometimes with private tutors, always with access to books and new experiences, The feminist consciousness related to American panorama is really presented in Henry James work's theme of enigma and more often than not enigmatic womanhood, is linked in the late Jamesian fictions to omniscience. As has been widely documented, James abandoned what has come to be seen as the nineteenth-century technique of a central intelligence which reports directly to the reader: that is, he abandoned the omniscient narrator. Instead, he opted for a narrative technique of the radically situated narrative, the “point-of-view” technique which he is conceivably more famous for outside specialist circles than any other aspect of his writing. However, it is a curious fact that as the omniscient narrator is phased out in the late novels; a new breed of character emerges: the (almost) omniscient character.

In the three late novels, the enigmatic aspect of female all-knowingness comes to expression in ancient metaphors of omniscience. In The Golden Bowl, for example, figures such as the Sphinx and its deadly riddles appear at various points although
James usually gives them an ironic function. Likewise, in *The Ambassadors* we meet various versions of the oracle of Delphos another figure of female all-knowingness and enigma and in this novel, too, this ancient figure functions both ironically and menacingly. Several short stories enact the theme of (female) menacing but impenetrable omniscience, chief among them *The Beast in the Jungle* and *The Bench of Desolation*. The real shift, then, between an earlier narrative technique relying on omniscience and James’s modern conception of it is that the Jamesian version engenders a somewhat ambiguous suspicion towards it. Although the god’s-eye-view is still yearned for in James’s fictional universe as it was in Victorian novels the enigmatic, godlike presences in the late novels are rarely benign and in any case rarely deciphered easily. The violent God of Revelation, the threat of violence from Oedipus’s Sphinx, the mysterious Oracle of Delphos all these presences in James’s fiction signals a new-found modern, skeptical (perhaps even paranoid) attitude to all-knowingness.

To return to the questions which Sargent’s portrait gives rise to, we can say that the contrast between felt life and relegated otherness which his painting (unwittingly) exemplifies is central to the understanding of many of James’s female characters. And in fact, James explicitly compares his own method of word-based portraiture to Sargent’s painting style. Writing in his notebook in Venice in 1894, James notes that:

“The formula for the presentation of The Coxon Fund in 20,000 words is to make it an *Impression* as one of Sargent’s pictures is an impression. That is, I must do it from my own point of view that of an imagined observer, participator and chronicler. I must picture it, summarize it, impressionize it, in a word compress and confine it by making it the picture of what I see.”

(95)

There is another level to the shift from seriousness to ironic mimicking of lighter genres. While ‘confessing’ to the desire to possess as Osmond does, James lets the irony of the melodrama undercut the very thing he is confessing to (if we accept that veiled, thrice-removed metaphor of the wary dealer as a kind of confession). In that
sense, James's irony functions here as yet another layer, another barrier between himself and the wayward desire he is acting out. The function of irony is unique because it allows a position to be undercut and yet remain. Or to put it more precisely in this context, although James satirises his authorial power that is, his own desire for dominance irony allows a trace of the original desire for freedom to remain.

In other words, what James's persistent irony accomplishes is to undermine a view while presenting it thus opening up the possibility of other, conflicting, critical perspectives of the same phenomenon. James is able to present a phenomenon with persuasive clarity and nonetheless suggest other possible views, views not accessible to the reader or, perhaps, to anyone. Thus James's impression (and here it differs clearly from Sargent's) is the metaphor of the 'house of fiction', able to present to view a phenomenon as well as the limitations inherent in the perceptions of it.

The colonisation of consciousness is also the theme of The Golden Bowl, in which the theme of love is used to examine precisely this theme of our inherent right to remain free versus the desire to possess. Is it possible to give oneself in love, in such a proportion that we still remain free? And what is the cost of giving in, making oneself knowable to another? The following passage occurs in the early parts of the novel. Charlotte Stant and Amerigo, the Italian prince, meet again after years of separation. They were lovers once but now the Prince is marrying Charlotte's childhood friend, American heiress Maggie Verver. The unexpected sight of his former lover makes the Prince lapse into a sort of portraiture of her:

Making use then of clumsy terms of excess, the face was too narrow and too long, the eyes not large, and the mouth on the other hand by no means small, with substance in its lips and a slight, the very slightest, tendency to protrusion in the solid teeth, otherwise indeed well arrayed and flashingly white. But it was, strangely, as a cluster of possessions of his own that these things in Charlotte Stant now affected him; items in a full list, items recognised, each of them, as if, for the long interval, they had been 'stored' wrapped up, numbered, put away in a cabinet. While she faced Mrs. Assingham the door
of the cabinet had opened of itself; he took the relics out one by one, and it was more and more each instant as if she were giving him time. He saw again that her thick hair was, vulgarly speaking, brown, but that there was a shade of tawny autumn leaf in it for ‘appreciation’ a colour indescribable and of which he had known no other case, something that gave her at moments the sylvan head of a huntress. He saw the sleeves of her jacket drawn to her wrists, but he again made out the free arms within them to be of the completely rounded, the polished slimness that Florentine sculptors in the great time had loved and of which the apparent firmness is expressed in their old silver and old bronze. He knew her narrow hands; he knew her long fingers and the shape and colour of her finger-nails, he knew her special beauty of movement and line when she turned her back, and the perfect working of all her main attachments, that of some wonderful finished instrument, something intently made for exhibition, for a prize. (37-38)

Here again we find the cabinet in which impressions or ideas can be kept under lock and key which is possible because we are talking about the impression of someone, not the person herself precisely as James’s imagination in the guise of an antique dealer can handle the idea of Isabel Archer fondly before selling her to his readers. The mind is a sort of laboratory of fantasies, then a space of complete freedom from the usual responsibilities and requirements of respect for otherness. The Prince’s list starts off rather ‘objectively’, cataloguing Charlotte’s physiognomy, but it quickly establishes its real purpose: to trace the way in which the Prince is affected by Charlotte’s physical qualities, in so far as they (or at least the impressions of them the sentence is ambiguous) belong(ed) to him. What starts off as a Renaissance suitor’s blazon, or poetic appraisal of a loved one's beauty in metaphorical terms, quickly pushes the boundaries of that genre.

Consciousness is the quality or state of being aware of an external object or something within oneself. It has been defined as: sentience, awareness, subjectivity, the
ability to experience or to feel, wakefulness, having a sense of selfhood, and the executive control system of the mind. Despite the difficulty in definition, many philosophers believe that there is a broadly shared underlying intuition about what consciousness is. (20) As Max Velmans and Susan Schneider wrote in The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness: "Anything that we are aware of at a given moment forms part of our consciousness, making conscious experience at once the most familiar and most mysterious aspect of our lives."(26)

Philosophers since the time of Descartes and Locke have struggled to comprehend the nature of consciousness and pin down its essential properties. Issues of concern in the philosophy of consciousness include whether the concept is fundamentally valid; whether consciousness can ever be explained mechanistically; whether non-human consciousness exists and if so how it can be recognized; how consciousness relates to language; whether consciousness can be understood in a way that does not require a dualistic distinction between mental and physical states or properties; and whether it may ever be possible for computers or robots to be conscious. At one time consciousness was viewed with skepticism by many scientists, but in recent years it has become a significant topic of research in psychology and neuroscience. The primary focus is on understanding what it means biologically and psychologically for information to be present in consciousness that is, on determining the neural and psychological correlates of consciousness. The majority of experimental studies assess consciousness by asking human subjects for a verbal report of their experiences. Issues of interest include phenomena such as subliminal perception, blind sight, denial of impairment, and altered states of consciousness produced by psychoactive drugs or spiritual or meditative techniques.

In medicine, consciousness is assessed by observing a patient's arousal and responsiveness, and can be seen as a continuum of states ranging from full alertness and comprehension, through disorientation, delirium, loss of meaningful communication, and finally loss of movement in response to painful stimuli. Issues of practical concern
include how the presence of consciousness can be assessed in severely ill, comatose, or anesthetized people, and how to treat conditions in which consciousness is impaired or disrupted. (67) The origin of the modern concept of consciousness is often attributed to John Locke’s Essay Concerning Human Understanding, published in 1690. (68) Locke defined consciousness as “the perception of what passes in a man's own mind.”(90) His essay influenced the 18th-century view of consciousness, and his definition appeared in Samuel Johnson’s celebrated Dictionary (1755). The earliest English language uses of conscious and consciousness date back, however, to the 1500s. The English word "conscious" originally derived from the Latin conscius (con- "together" + scio "to know"), but the Latin word did not have the same meaning as our word it meant knowing with, in other words having joint or common knowledge with another. (36) There were, however, many occurrences in Latin writings of the phrase conscientia, which primarily means moral conscience. In the literal sense, conscientia means knowledge-with, that is, shared knowledge. The word first appears in Latin juridical texts by writers such as Cicero. (45) Here, conscientia is the knowledge that a witness has of the deed of someone else. René Descartes (1596–1650) is generally taken to be the first philosopher to use conscientia in a way that
does not fit this traditional meaning. Descartes used conscientia the way modern speakers would use conscience. In *Search after Truth* he says conscience or internal testimony (*conscientia vel interno testimonio*). (48) Many philosophers have argued that consciousness is a unitary concept that is understood intuitively by the majority of people in spite of the difficulty in defining it.[21] Others, though, have argued that the level of disagreement about the meaning of the word indicates that it either means different things to different people (for instance, the objective versus subjective aspects of consciousness), or else is an umbrella term encompassing a variety of distinct meanings with no simple element in common.

Ned Block proposed a distinction between two types of consciousness that he called *phenomenal* (P-consciousness) and *access* (A-consciousness). P-consciousness, according to Block, is simply raw experience: it is moving, colored forms, sounds, sensations, emotions and feelings with our bodies and responses at the center. These experiences, considered independently of any impact on behavior, are called *qualia*. A-consciousness, on the other hand, is the phenomenon whereby information in our minds is accessible for verbal report, reasoning, and the control of behavior. So, when we perceive, information about what we perceive is access conscious; when we introspect, information about our thoughts is access conscious; when we remember, information about the past is access conscious, and so on. Although some philosophers, such as Daniel Dennett, have disputed the validity of this distinction,[24] others have broadly accepted it. David Chalmers has argued that A-consciousness can in principle be understood in mechanistic terms, but that understanding P-consciousness is much more challenging: he calls this the *hard problem of consciousness*. Some philosophers believe that Block’s two types of consciousness are not the end of the story. William Lycan, for example, argued in his book *Consciousness and Experience* that at least eight clearly distinct types of consciousness can be identified (organism consciousness; control consciousness; consciousness of; state/event consciousness; reportability; introspective
consciousness; subjective consciousness; self-consciousness) and that even this list omits several more obscure forms.

The first influential philosopher to discuss this question specifically was Descartes and the answer he gave is known as Cartesian dualism. Descartes proposed that consciousness resides within an immaterial domain he called res cogitans (the realm of thought), in contrast to the domain of material things which he called res extensa (the realm of extension). He suggested that the interaction between these two domains occurs inside the brain, perhaps in a small midline structure called the pineal gland.

Although it is widely accepted that Descartes explained the problem cogently, few later philosophers have been happy with his solution, and his ideas about the pineal gland have especially been ridiculed. Alternative solutions, however, have been very diverse. They can be divided broadly into two categories: dualist solutions that maintain Descartes' rigid distinction between the realm of consciousness and the realm of matter but give different answers for how the two realms relate to each other; and monist solutions that maintain that there is really only one realm of being, of which consciousness and matter are both aspects. Each of these categories itself contains numerous variants. The two main types of dualism are substance dualism (which holds that the mind is formed of a distinct type of substance not governed by the laws of physics) and property dualism (which holds that the laws of physics are universally valid but cannot be used to explain the mind). The three main types of monism are physicalism (which holds that the mind consists of matter organized in a particular way), idealism (which holds that only thought truly exists and matter is merely an illusion), and neutral monism (which holds that both mind and matter are aspects of a distinct essence that is itself identical to neither of them). There are also, however, a large number of idiosyncratic theories that cannot cleanly be assigned to any of these camps.

Since the dawn of Newtonian science with its vision of simple mechanical principles governing the entire universe, some philosophers have been tempted by the idea that consciousness could be explained in purely physical terms. The first influential
writer to propose such an idea explicitly was Julien Offray de La Mettrie, in his book Man a Machine (L'homme machine). His arguments, however, were very abstract the most influential modern physical theories of consciousness are based on psychology and neuroscience. Theories proposed by neuroscientists such as Gerald Edelman and Antonio Damasio, and by philosophers such as Daniel Dennett, seek to explain consciousness in terms of neural events occurring within the brain. Many other neuroscientists, such as Christof Koch, have explored the neural basis of consciousness without attempting to frame all-encompassing global theories. At the same time, computer scientists working in the field of Artificial Intelligence have pursued the goal of creating digital computer programs that can simulate or embody consciousness. A few theoretical physicists have argued that classical physics is intrinsically incapable of explaining the holistic aspects of consciousness, but that quantum theory provides the missing ingredients. Several theorists have therefore proposed quantum mind (QM) theories of consciousness. Notable theories falling into this category include the Holonomic brain theory of Karl Pribram and David Bohm, and the Orch-OR theory formulated by Stuart Hameroff and Roger Penrose. Some of these QM theories offer descriptions of phenomenal consciousness, as well as QM interpretations of access consciousness. None of the quantum mechanical theories has been confirmed by experiment. Recent papers by Guerreshi, G., Cia, J., Popescu, S. and Briegel, H. could falsify proposals such as those of Hameroff which rely on quantum entanglement in protein. At the present time many scientists and philosophers consider the arguments for an important role of quantum phenomena to be unconvincing.

Apart from the general question of the hard problem of consciousness, roughly speaking, the question of how mental experience arises from a physical basis, a more specialized question is how to square the subjective notion that we are in control of our decisions (at least in some small measure) with the customary view of causality that subsequent events are caused by prior events. The topic of free will is the philosophical and scientific examination of this conundrum. To the large body of criticism on James's
female characters the first two of these books add feminist perspectives. Their theoretical assumptions are similar, but they cite different philosophical sources and differ greatly in the quality of their argumentation. Elizabeth Allen proceeds from the premise “that women actually learn their sense of self in a way different from men: that society demand of them always to be potential signs, carriers of meaning . . . simply because they are women.” (105) The result is a conflict “fundamental to the experience of the female self between being “other” and being subject. Now to be both subject and object is of course part of the human condition, a burden of consciousness, and as a result men as well as women can feel oppressed by roles imposed by the world or even by themselves. But granting that the nature of our society has made “the schizophrenic recognition of yourself as object for yourself” (108) a burden more peculiar to women, one must ask what follows when the critic approaches her author with this perception foremost in her mind. What follows here is first an intriguing opening: “the importance of central female consciousness in James's novels lies in the development of the conflict of the women as sign and as self,”(110) and in the body of her book Allen aims to fill in the details. A short chapter on The Scarlet Letter presents the transformation of Hester's badge of shame into a manifestation of her "conscious subject hood" as the paradigm of a development in James's fiction from Daisy Miller to The Golden Bowl. Although James found Hawthorne's symbolism too obvious and insistent, Allen tells us, figuratively speaking the scarlet letter is present in James. In his early work:

"We see the letter more clearly than the woman. . . . in the later novels . . . the conscious woman, reflecting and internally questioning . . . gradually emerges to be the subject of the text as much as the sign value she carries." (265)

A nice perception, or at least a new way of phrasing an old one but what follows is disappointing because, instead of making theory her tool and servant, Allen is overwhelmed by it.Her treatment of the fiction Daisy Miller, The Portrait of a Lady, The
Bostonians, The Spoils of Poynton, What Maisie Knew, The Awkward Age, The Wings of the Dove, and The Golden Bowl produces truisms obscured by jargon. Allen notes, for instance, that Winterbourne first sees Daisy Miller as a typical American girl ("How pretty they are!") and is puzzled by her freedoms. Nothing could be clearer. But now obfuscation overtakes James's limpid text. Here is an example:

“Daisy is what Winterbourne sees, it is up to him, the conscious subject, to accord Daisy some social place and some function as sign. Our attention is inevitably directed towards the tension between Daisy’s signification as free and active, and her passive dependency on a subject, masculine response. Her freedom . . . is denied by a society which decrees that young girls do not exist for themselves, and by a fictional presentation as a blank surface, a reflection for the consciousness of Winterbourne . . . Once she is cut dead by everyone, she ceases to exist. . . . Daisy as self exists only as an objectification of selfhood for those already occupying a social position. . . .”(108)

The linking of Daisy's death by malaria to human causes, to social malaria, is shrewd, but the cant obscures even the critic's own insights. And when one penetrates the verbiage of this passage, one discovers what seem to be protests not only against society's cruel snobbery or Winterbourne's wintry stupidity but against Daisy's feeling for Winterbourne and apparently against James's "fictional presentation" for participating in the denial of her freedom. But what does the implication of James's method in her fate signify? Is it an example of the medium being the message? The treatment of Daisy Miller must serve as example of Allen's method and style. Her best chapters deal with The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl.

In April 1894, a middle-aged gentleman, bearing a load of dresses, was rowed to the deepest part of the Venetian lagoon. A strange scene followed: he began to drown the dresses, one by one. There were a good many, well-made, tasteful, and all dark,
suggesting a lady of quiet habits and some reserve. The gondolier's pole would have been useful for pushing them under the still water. But the dresses refused to drown. One by one they rose to the surface, their busts and sleeves swelling like black balloons. Purposefully, the gentleman pushed them under, but silent, reproachful, they rose before his eyes.

The dresses belonged to a writer, widely read at that time, called Constance Fenimore Woolson. She was a great-niece of James Fenimore Cooper, author of *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) and other frontier tales, and the first American writer to achieve worldwide fame. `Fenimore', as she was known to choice friends, had combined Western vigour with the quiet manner of a patrician family strongly rooted in the New World. In 1879 she had settled in Europe, and a few months later met a fellow-expatriate, the distinguished but less popular novelist Henry James. The course of their long friendship was rudely broken when, on the night of 24 January 1894, Fenimore, aged fifty-three, had fallen to her death from her bedroom window in Venice. A mystery has always surrounded this death, but James believed it was no accident. It was suicide. He, alone, was certain. What exactly it was that James knew of Fenimore which convinced him, remains obscure, blurred by his claims that Fenimore, contrary to appearance, had been mad beyond help. The very urgency of his repeated denials of responsibility calls attention to their tie. So does his attempt to drown her clothes. Henry James was a bachelor of fifty-one at this time, with a high forehead, accentuated by receding hair and a high nose with the faintest bend to it. He had a mobile, sensitive mouth, with a fuller lower lip, firm, not petulant. It was exceptionally wide; parallel to the edge of his eyes. In repose, it would have shown a long line, slicing through the lower half of his face, had it not been hidden by a brown beard a natural-looking growth, neither unruly nor too clipped. He dressed in English clothes with too much care to be an Englishman. Some thought he looked like a Russian count; others, a bishop. What friends noticed first were the eyes: light grey and extraordinarily keen (when they were not veiled by his lids), looking at them with complicit amusement or with scorching intensity as though he could
see into their secret selves. He was known for explorations of the inward life: the unvoiced exchange and the drama of hidden motives. These were his skills, as well as a power, beyond that of any other man, to plumb the unknown potentialities of women. Two women, in particular, provoked his attention a creative attention which claimed them through their untimely deaths.

Fenimore was the second of these two women. The first was his cousin Mary Temple, known as Minny, who had died in 1870 at the early age of twenty-four. Where Fenimore was part of his middle years in Europe, Minny had been the real-life `heroine' of his youth in Newport, Rhode Island. James saw her as a free spirit, `a plant of pure American growth', amongst the polished ladies of their time. The very air of Newport was `vocal with her accents, alive with her movements'. Fenimore was free in a different way: a solitary, mature woman who pursued her ambitions with an intentness that matched his own. In her, James encountered the kind of writer with whom he might share, now and then, the privacy of the artist.

The freedoms of these two women went masked, as most nineteenth-century women were masked (whether they knew it or not) by the demands of social consensus: publicly, they fitted themselves to approved models of womanhood. Fenimore appeared to everyone as the needy gentlewoman she in fact was, and this helped to establish her in her career. Her need did her no harm with editors, who found they could combine profit with gallantry towards a lady with a widowed mother and broken-down brother. She disarmed editors and fellow-writers with modest, self-deprecating letters which go out of their way to stress how inferior was the fortune of a single woman who must write for her living to that of a cherished wife. It is uncertain to what extent she actually believed this in the loneliness she certainly endured, but her best stories subvert contemporary pieties about wifehood and womanly dependence. For herself, Fenimore was strong, serious, and determined to put her work first. She published fifty-eight stories (amongst them her best work), five novels, poems, and travel-writing. Where the freedoms of Fenimore passed scrutiny in the guise of retiring gentlewoman, the freedoms of Mary Temple were
acceptable in the guise of vivacious young girl. Intelligent men, all destined for public
distinction, surround her in the woods of New Hampshire or on Newport verandahs. Their
eyes follow her advance in her buttoned, high-necked dress. She holds her slight form
erect as she hugs her arms. Her eagerness for ideas, her directness, and wide laugh
showing all her teeth, seemed to Henry James the embodiment of innocence and untried
youth. Yet, with others — his brother, the future psychologist William James, and a law
graduate, John Chipman Gray she was different: less playful, more troubled.
Overwhelming questions about human possibility in the face of fate disturb her letters to
these men. Why was she less serious towards Henry James? Why did she make fewer
demands on her favourite, her `dearest Harry', who was the fittest to gauge her depth?
Mary Temple left behind the mystery of those with promise who die young. An unfinished
life cries out for form: this challenge took hold of James with Isabel Archer in The Portrait
of a Lady (1881), Milly Theale in The Wings of the Dove (1902), and in a memoir he
published in 1914. There was something uncategorisable in Minny. Like his brother
William and other gifted men, he saw an uncommon spirit behind the girlish vivacity; but
the uncommon was, of course, unwelcome to guardians of gender. Henry's mother small-
minded Mrs James, the ruling angel in the James house — deplored the expanse of
Minny's laugh, while Henry's sister, Alice, seething with correct repression, scorned her
eager response to every idea. Given the obscurity and brevity of her existence, it is hard
to find the woman behind the fictions. Barring access is the safe label of girlish charm or
the unsafe label of `aggressive': one implies that Mary Temple knew her place as a
woman; the other that she did not. Yet her questions a dying plea to James or query
about the purpose of living — open up an order of existence not to be defined in
reductive ways.

Fenimore began to publish in 1870, the year of Minny's death. Though she
differed in many ways from Minny, she provided a second model of independence. Her
looks displeased her, or so she said, but photographs reveal delicate features, curly hair,
and a classic profile, set off by a narrow velvet band about her throat. As a 'local colorist'
of the latter half of the nineteenth century, Constance Fenimore Woolson did participate in a genre going out of fashion at the time of her death, yet as a watcher of women's lives the single woman, the exile, the artist she now invites renewed attention. Her innovative fables of artists precede those of Henry James. This biography will draw out these two women in their own terms, marking the points at which they intersect with the shaping consciousness of Henry James. It is easy to see how he put his stamp on them, and made them ‘Jamesian’. The mystery is why he kept them under wraps: his reasons for doing so, and for the weird behaviour which the circumstances of Fenimore’s death provoked, remain to be uncovered. He did not forget them; on the contrary, they return obsessively in his works.

James is the most elusive and unwilling of subjects. He rejected the prospect of biography, not only to protect his privacy, but also, we might guess, because he was so much a biographer himself he well knew the excitements and dangers of biographic power. He drew out others with intent curiosity. In his attaching way, he ‘preyed … upon living beings’, as T. S. Eliot recognised. His experiments in human chemistry, ‘those curious precipitates and explosive gases which are suddenly formed by the contact of mind with mind’, have in them ‘something terrible, as disconcerting as quicksand’, which make the character he comes to know, ‘uneasily the victim of a merciless clairvoyance’. His awareness of buried possibilities, the gifts of the obscure, and gaps between the facts, invites the infinite challenge of his own life.

To approach James at precisely the points he screened raises the issue of the biographer's right to know. Questionable as this is, it does grant access to a more compelling and dangerous character, as well as a new reading of the major novels and a host of puzzling tales. James was a man of secrets, sunk from sight a hundred years ago. Why did he lock away his photograph of Minny Temple? Why, when ten and a half thousand letters of Henry James were allowed to survive, did he make a pact with Fenimore to destroy their correspondence? No other such pact is known. And why, when Fenimore died, did he travel all the way to Venice to ensure secrecy in April 1894?
Sinking her dresses at that time was not, I believe, a casual act, but sign of a strange bond which James guarded with discretion, and which suicide almost exposed.

At the height of their relationship, in 1887, they shared a house on the hill of Bellosguardo near Florence. Few knew of this arrangement, and it didn't last one reason being the scope for scandal. Two other stays abroad were kept wholly secret, as were many short visits. And we might wonder, too, why James, as an old man, forty-four years after Mary Temple’s death, destroyed a batch of her letters philosophic letters, written with undimmed spirit in the face of death after he had used what he wanted for his memoir.

Researchers are increasingly aware ‘that interpretation has already been built into the documents allowed to survive’. Yet some residue of an alternative story does remain: amongst the leavings, four letters from Mary Temple to Henry James, and a large batch of her letters to John Chipman Gray, the ones James destroyed but Mrs William James had the forethought to copy before handing them over. Her copy is amongst the James papers at Harvard together with an unnoticed batch of letters from James to Minny's niece Bay Emmet, which bear on the closest fictional re-creation of Minny in The Wings of the Dove. In Ohio, there are two records of Fenimore's last days where facts fit with revealing clarity. Four letters from Fenimore to James in the early 1880s fell through the net, while many letters from Fenimore to others lie buried amongst the papers of various men of some importance in their day.

James's own letters are, for the most part, too public, too busy and too fulsome to give much away. Now and then, he cast off this social being with raging impatience. The crowded engagements, the comedies of manners in his letters and their effusions of fondness, were a façade for the private action of this most private of lives. His fables of a writer's life instruct us to start with the work. 'My dear sir, the best interviewer's the best reader' is the message of a literary lion for a pleading journalist. 'This last book ... is full of revelations.' 'The only kind that count it tells you with a perfection that seems to me quite final all the author thinks ...James tells us that he understood women almost better
than we understood ourselves. ‘You see what I am,’ says the Jamesian woman to the Jamesian man who befriends her in one of the novels. (109) Minny and Fenimore, and in a sicker way his brilliant sister, Alice, allowed James to see their frustration, their fund of unused life, their alertness to the unspoken, and unanswered, passions as though they had agreed to participate in the form he gave to the potent shadow in which women of the past lived; as though he understood, with them, that what is distinctive in women's lives is precisely what is hidden, not only from the glare of publicity, but from the daylight aspect which women present for their protection or, it may be, for the protection of those who can't face what they are. James was irresistible to women because he met authenticity without fear, possessed himself of it, and put it out to play on the stage of his imagination. His knowing, supremely intelligent, ageless, and yes irresistible, is what makes James increasingly pertinent.

It was necessary to his purpose to engage certain women in ways which remain to be defined. The man who did so is not the socialite James, who is exhaustively documented, nor the aesthete, nor the detached observer, nor the Anglicised expatriate all faces of the legendary Master. Instead, we shall follow an inchoate, troubled man who remained in the making to the end of his life. As such he had two rules: art must have passion, and it must be hard as nails, ‘hard as the heart of the writer’. This James is not passive; he is willful, even ruthless, and stranger than he appeared respectably clothed under an umbrella of benevolence. The real James remained an American: a visionary moralist, he did not indulge in the European vogue for decadence. He was not a cynic. With him, virtue is seen to hold in a period when art-for-art's sake debunks Victorian morality, and Modernism with its array of ineffectual men Prufrock, Petrushka, Chaplin's little tramp takes the stage.

The vision of James has outlived the disillusion of the twentieth century; as the Moderns move farther into the past, he is with us, more than ever our contemporary. Only now do we approach the kinds of manhood and womanhood he proposed, not viable in his own age, but possible essential in ours. A reinvention of manhood began
with Civil War tales where wounded, dying men discover a higher form of manhood than may be found on the battlefield or in the drawing-room. He marked the capacity of men and women to transcend themselves in the face of mortality. The otherness of women made them a focus for an alternative to the pressure of wartime ideals of masculinity: this alternative manhood could take on qualities traditionally assigned to women. James looked beyond the Woman Question, as it was framed in his time, the question of the vote and education in the nineteenth century, the question of professional advance in the twentieth century. When Isabel Archer "affronts her destiny", she approaches the evolutionary frontier with the question of woman's nature, yet to be addressed. The depths of her nature are "a very out-of-the-way place, between which and the surface, communication was interrupted'. James wished to promote the power of innocence, a conscious innocence without ignorance or naivety. The Twentieth Century favoured *The Turn of the Screw* which toys with perversions of innocence, but his extraordinary women, Isabel Archer and Milly Theale, await a farther future Milly's wings bear her beyond her lifetime. The women who adored James and whom he came to know in his special way were not submissive, not the helpless muse.

**Second Chapter** presented the feminist consciousness in Henry James famous novel *The Ambassadors*. The very title of the novel *The Ambassadors* refers to the game of strategy that is central to the story's plot. The irony of the strategic outcome is that the Countess de Vionnet has lost despite her 'home-court advantage.' Even with the Francophile and bohemian Americans to help her, even with Strether at her side (a man most thoroughly intoxicated with the idea (l'idee) of Paris, de Vionnet cannot win. When Sarah Pocock arrives, she is relatively unfamiliar with Paris but she has been to Paris before. Sarah is not charmed by the place, nor does she perceive a change for the better in Chad, nor does she intend to be unnerved by the fact of the Countess being a countess. In contrast to the Countess, Mrs. Newsome is essentially an invalid, stranded at home in Woollett, Mass. She has to send ambassadors because she cannot come to Paris herself. And when one considers that Mrs. Newsome has sent Mamie, Jim, Sarah,
and Strether to fetch Chad one sees that Mrs. Newsome is extremely vulnerable. For all her strength, she remains alone on one side of the ocean. In a sense, Mrs. Newsome has made quite a gamble, but then, Mrs. Newsome insists upon having what she wants? In Henry James' fiction, the ideas of youth and age are often developed within the context of the New World vs. the Old World. This remains true of The Ambassadors, where we find a contrast between the Parisian scenes (Old World) and the American town back home (New World). The young Americans in Paris Chad, Bilham, Miss Barrace, and Mamie Pocock are in danger of being "spoiled" by Europe and Europeans. Worldliness, leisure, aristocracy, bohemianism, and in a subtle sense, Catholicism, are among the most potent social forces that threaten to undo the good work of American towns like Woollett, Mass. Chad's rejection of Madame de Vionnet is a rejection of an older woman, a rejection of Paris and the Old World. Chad returns home to become a man of business. The business model flourishing in Woollett, Mass. is modern in comparison to the feudal and aristocratic vestiges of Parisian high society. For Strether, a man in his late middle age, Paris is rejuvenating. Strether recalls his earlier trip to Paris as a young man. His time in Paris is a time of nostalgia and reflection. Strether looks at his own history, senses regret, and hopes to intervene in Chad's life. The older man does not want to see the young man become a man of business and remain unfulfilled in Woollett. Woollett is the New World but it does not promise eternal youth. Paris is archaic, but still capable of inspiring or rejuvenating the disillusioned or jaded. Chad and Strether undergo a major reversal. By the end of the novel, it is Strether who has articulated and acted upon youthful and principles. Chad has gone in on his own for a future in business. Indeed, the very fact of youth, the very fact that Chad has a longer life ahead of him causes him to behave conservatively. With a long life behind him (including a deceased wife and a buried son), Strether gives up the possibility of a wealthy future as Chad's stepfather-in-law. With little left to lose, Strether is able to play his hand more freely. Having arrived on scene to rescue Chad, Strether remains in Paris - somewhat stranded at the end of the novel.
Strether's full name is Lewis Lambert Strether. When he introduces himself to Maria Gostrey, she makes the connection between Strether's name and the title character of Balzac's novel Louis Lambert. Balzac's Louis Lambert was a "mystical thinker" who suffers a cataleptic fit. (Catalepsy is defined by "muscular rigidity, lack of awareness of environment, and lack of response to external stimuli"). When Balzac's protagonist awakens he has lost all sense of reality and to be honest, he is downright insane. Numerous literary critics discuss the similarities between Lewis Lambert Strether and Louis Lambert. Strether sees beauty where it does not exist. Like a mystic, Strether directs his mental energies towards the creation and enjoyment of an ideal. He romanticizes Paris as he is walking through the city.

Third Chapter presented the female situation in American and European country. Henry James famous novel Daisy Miller an unsuccessful play version was even published, first privately in England in 1882 and then in Atlantic Monthly in 1883. In 1909, "James conscientiously attempted to supply for the definitive edition the psychological depth and nuances which he felt were lacking in the 1878 version?" (106) Yet editors since, such as Geoffrey Moore, have felt that the 1909 edition clouds over the fine work of the original and tend today to print the version of 1878.

Fourth chapter of this thesis presented the reality of American society. The Portrait of a Lady is a novel by Henry James, first published as a serial in The Atlantic Monthly and Macmillan's Magazine in 1880–81 and then as a book in 1881. It is one of James's most popular long novels, and is regarded by critics as one of his finest. The Portrait of a Lady is the story of a spirited young American woman, Isabel Archer, who affronts her destiny and finds it overwhelming. She inherits a large amount of money and subsequently becomes the victim of Machiavellian scheming by two American expatriates. Like many of James's novels, it is set in Europe, mostly England and Italy. Generally regarded as the masterpiece of James's early period, this novel reflects James's continuing interest in the differences between the New World and the Old, often
to the detriment of the former. It also treats in a profound way the themes of personal freedom, responsibility, and betrayal.

Isabel Archer, originally from Albany, New York, is invited by her maternal aunt, Lydia Touchett, to visit Lydia's rich husband Daniel at his estate near London, following the death of Isabel's father. There, she meets her cousin Ralph Touchett, her friendly invalid uncle, and the Touchetts' robust neighbor, Lord Warburton. Isabel later declines Warburton's sudden proposal of marriage. She also rejects the hand of Caspar Goodwood, the charismatic son and heir of a wealthy Boston mill owner. Although Isabel is drawn to Caspar, her commitment to her independence precludes such a marriage, which she feels would demand the sacrifice of her freedom. The elder Touchett grows ill and, at the request of his son, leaves much of his estate to Isabel upon his death.

Henry James's first idea for The Portrait of a Lady was simple: a young American woman confronting her destiny, whatever it might be. Only then did he begin to form a plot to bring out the character of his central figure. This was the uncompromising story of the free-spirited Isabel losing her freedom despite (or because of) suddenly coming into a great deal of money and getting "ground in the very mill of the conventional."(25) It is a rather existentialist novel, as Isabel is very committed to living with the consequences of her choice with integrity but also a sort of stubbornness. The richness of The Portrait is hardly exhausted by a review of Isabel's character. The novel exhibits a huge panorama of trans-Atlantic life, a far larger canvas than any James had previously painted.

Fifth Chapter of this thesis is the real presented by Henry James novel entitled Roderick Hudson. Originally this novel published in 1875 as a serial in The Atlantic Monthly, it is a bildungsroman that traces the development of the title character, a sculptor. Rowland Mallet, a wealthy Bostonian bachelor and art connoisseur, visits his cousin Cecilia in Northampton, Massachusetts, before leaving for Europe. There he sees a Grecian figure he thinks a remarkable work of art. Cecilia introduces him to the local sculptor, Roderick Hudson, a young law student who sculpts in his spare time. Mallet who loves art but is without artistic talent himself sees an opportunity to contribute: he
offers to advance Roderick a sum of money against future works which will allow Roderick to join him in moving to Italy for two years. In Rome, Mallet believes Roderick will be exposed to the kind of artistic influences which will allow his natural talent to fully mature. Roderick is galvanized by the offer, but he fears his highly protective mother's disapproval and urges Mallet to meet with and reassure her. Mallet does so, eventually overcoming the woman's doubts. At the meeting, Mallet is also introduced to Mary Garland, a distant poor cousin of the Hudsons who has been living with them as a companion to Mrs. Hudson.

Sixth Chapter entitled The Golden Bowl presented the feminist consciousness in American society. In The Golden Bowl, Fanny Assingham makes the following dry-eyed observation about morality: “But stupidity pushed to a certain point is, you know, immorality. Just so what is morality but high intelligence?” (135) In Washington Square (1880), in response to his sister's question as to whether he would prefer goodness to cleverness in his daughter, Dr. Sloper answers sharply: “You are good for nothing unless you are clever.” In The Ambassadors, Maria Gostrey comments with measured disdain on the distortion of Mrs. Newson's picture of Chad's Parisian situation by insisting that:

“She imagined stupidly. Stupidly? Dh! said Strether. But she insisted. She imagined meanly. He had it, however, better. It couldn't but be ignorantly. Well, intensity with ignorance what do you want worse?”(36)

In The Art of Fiction, James seems to take a similar view of morality:

“There is one point at which the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very near together; that is in the light of the very obvious truth that the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer.... No good novel will ever proceed from a superficial mind; that seems to be an axiom which, for the artist in fiction, will cover all needful moral ground.” (235)
Both James and Fanny Assingham express views of the moral which are closely related to the condition of the mind. In the passage from *The Art of Fiction*, James draws an antithesis between a moral and a superficial mind, inferring an equation between moral and perceptive depth. There is a categorical moral imperative embedded in the Jamesian world which demands that the characters be as fully conscious as they possibly can. Fullest consciousness means maximum ability to do well; undeveloped consciousness means maximum ability to do evil. The moral question in James is reserved for those characters who can develop their consciousnesses. An examination of a few novels written in different phases of James's career will help to apply these considerations. To be considered are *Washington Square* (1880), *The Bostonians* (1886), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), and *The Awkward Age* (1899).

In *Washington Square*, Dr. Sloper is contemptuously aware of his daughter Catherine's limited powers of perception: "What she could not know, of course, was that she disappointed him, though on three or four occasions the Doctor had almost been frank about it. She grew up peacefully and prosperously; but at the age of eighteen Mrs. Penniman had not made a clever woman of her." (105) It is difficult to imagine how Mrs. Penniman could have made a clever woman out of anyone, but it is true that she had not made one out of Catherine Sloper. Catherine is a good person in the ordinary sense, possessing a moral outlook of a fairly rudimentary though not altogether helpful kind: "Where my father is concerned, you must not be sure. He is full of goodness," she tells a somewhat skeptical Townsend (73). Dr. Sloper is aesthetically oriented, and his struggle with Catherine marks yet another encounter between the two major kinds of consciousness. Morris Townsend is an inferior practitioner in the world of aesthetic forms, an appropriate subject for the Doctor's scalpel: "He is not what I call a gentleman; he has not the soul of one. He is extremely insinuating; but it's a vulgar nature. I saw through it in a minute. He is altogether too familiar I hate familiarity. He is a plausible coxcomb" (59). Although Townsend's strategy to woo control of Catherine's money is quite transparent to Dr. Sloper and to the reader, the girl doesn't catch on:
"Ah, we must be prepared," Morris rejoined; "you especially because for you it must come hardest. Do you know the first thing your father will say to you?" "No, Morris; please tell me." "He will tell you I am mercenary."(17-18).

In telling her father of her engagement to Townsend Catherine reflects: "I feel very old - and very wise" (p. 82). She is, of course, neither, and her father's response is prophetic: "I am afraid that before long you will feel older and wiser yet" (p. 82). When her father strengthens his opposition by threatening to disinherit her if she marries Townsend, Townsend himself suddenly cools in his affection, and agrees to her going off to Europe with her father. There are two major blows which Catherine suffers.

**Seventh Chapter** is the essence of this thesis which presents the feminist consciousness themes in Henry James select works. Henry James had turned to the Feminist Consciousness theme because of a conjunction of several factors: his unique personal experience, his preference, at the beginning of his career for the novel of manners and the particular historical moment when he began writing fiction. But above all, however, was his impulse reaching far back in the history of the nation to define and express the identity of the American. From Washington Irving onwards, literary writers like James Fenimore Cooper had sought to identify the American by planting him in American wilderness. Mark Twain had recognized the American as Huckleberry Finn and dramatized, in his journey down the river of American society, his innocence, his maturing and his moral independence.

His Americans were crude like Christopher Newan and elegant like Isabel Archer; they were morally stupid like George Flack and extremely orthodox like way marsh, but they were also morally sensitive and liberal in outlook like Lambert Stretcher. In sum, he created a vast and richly varied gallery of American characters and set them to reveal their essential characteristics in diverse situations in Europe. His Feminist Consciousness theme yielded rich results and James came to be regarded as one of the
greatest writers of Feminist Consciousness fiction. The treatment of the Feminist
Consciousness theme in James's fiction is wide ranging and multifaceted and includes
both the comic and the tragic aspects of the contact of the old and the new world. For
instance in 'Daisy Miller" the story of the passive American mother in search of a proper
match for her daughter, Daisy, has comic undercurrent. On the other hand in The Portrait
of a Lady' and The Wings of the Dove, the agony of the American girls in pursuit of
intellectual sophistication, elegance and experience assumes poignant and tragic
proportions.

WORKS CITED

__________. The Art of the Novel, Critical Prefaces. Ed. R.P. Blackmur, New York:
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962.
__________. The Complete Tales of Henry James, ED. Leon Edel. Vol. II. London :
__________. French Poets and Novelists, ED. Leon Edel. New York: Grosset and
Dunlap, 1964.


Snow, Lotus. *The Pattern of Innocence through Experience in the Characters of Henry James*. University of Toronto Quarterly. 22 (April 1953)