SYNOPSIS OF THE THESIS

FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE SELECT WORKS OF HENRY JAMES

The purpose of this research study is to show the feminist consciousness in the select works of Henry James. Henry James's career was one of the longest and most productive and of course influential in American literature. He was a master of prose fiction and in about half a century had written novels, tales, plays, several volumes of travel and criticism and a great deal of literary journalism. He had recognized, very early in his life, the American abroad the encounter of the new world with the old- and incorporated this myth in the Feminist consciousness novel" of which he was the master and W.D. Howells himself had praised him for inventing the novel of Feminist consciousness contrasts which formed the basis of his fiction.

First Chapter Introduction of this thesis presented the Meaning and types of Feminist Consciousness in Henry James works. Henry James the greatest literary figure to appear during the nineteenth and early Twentieth Century was born in New York City in 1843 and died in London in 1916 as an Englishman. He had invented the novel of feminist consciousness contrasts where he exhibited both the socially correct Europeans and less cultivated Americans. His spheres was the novel of manners and he was concerned with a limited class, the rich and leisured, highly civilized, over sophisticated, feminist consciousness 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 e Americans of his period, and
especially their vulnerability when exposed to the European experience, but at the same
time he also foresaw American's future greatness. Henry James was one of the most
prolific writers of his times and is best known in the novels and stories dealing with e
feminist consciousness scene. He wrote novels, short stories, plays, several books of
criticism and several books of travel literature, a notebook, and thousands of letters. He
was the first writer to give the feminist consciousness 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. The Feminist consciousness theme
implying confrontation and contrast between the two worlds assumes major importance
in James's fiction. The present thesis studies the different aspects of the feminist
consciousness theme through the successive phases of his career as a novelist. I have
referred to James’s novels and tables as a whole but my focus is mainly on his six major
novels: *Roderick Hudson*, ‘*The American*’, ‘*The Portrait of a lady*’, *The Ambassadors*,
*The Wings of the Dove* and* The Golden Bowl*. My emphasis has been on the evidence
of James's letters, notebooks, prefaces, reviews and finally on an analysis of the novels
themselves. James was a great artist and had received acclaim from his contemporaries
like W.D. Howells, Jose Ph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford. He had received recognition
during his life time but more criticism was to follow after his death. There are many
critical studies on him but an exhaustive exploration of his subtle and multifaceted treatment of the feminist consciousness theme is yet to be undertaken in India. My attempt, therefore, has been to make a comprehensive study and evaluation of Henry James as an explorer of the feminist consciousness theme in all its complex and diverse aspects. I argue that given his initial predilection for realism, the social and cultural reality of America, and the peculiar circumstances of his upbringing, James's choice of the feminist consciousness subject as his major preoccupation was inevitable. His first tale ‘A Tragedy of Error’ was in the romance mode, and in a few subsequent stories he experimented with American themes before turning to the feminist consciousness theme in his first really successful novel The American and Tale Daisy Miller. He felt that the feminist consciousness was his best medium and had once again returned to it, after his dramatic debacle, in his later novels like ‘The Ambassadors’, The wings of the Dove’ and The Golden Bowl’.

He was a realist and though his novels portray the contrast between innocent and democratic Americans experienced and aristocratic Europeans, he does not fail to highlight the flaws of both the words. His realism prevents him from idealizing either the Americans or the Europeans. He also had a symbolic vision and his later novels indicate that he was able to analyze the whole situation objectively. The background of the fiction also has an impact on the feminist consciousness theme and his American characters feel the change as soon as they enter te precincts of France, Italy or England. He emerges as a novelist of manners and the feminist consciousness theme with which he
was so concerned comes to an end on a note of reconciliation and harmony. Henry James is undoubtedly a great writer and there can be no question of anything like a final appreciation of his work. The richness and beauty of his novels and stories can only be appreciated by endless readings and he will definitely be remembered in the times to come. I hope that my humbles contribution will be able to arouse a deep interest in the works of Henry James who had become a great artist by abandoning his country and making use of his talents not in Boston or New York but in Paris and Florence.

Second Chapter of this thesis presented the feminist consciousness in his novel The Ambassadors refers to the game of strategy that is central to the story's plot. The ambassadors are Lambert Strether and Sarah Pocock, namely. Though other characters play auxiliary roles (Jim and Mamie Pocock, Waymarsh), these two have been expressly assigned to the task of recovering Chad Newsome from the dangers of Parisian bohemia. In Mrs. Newsome's service, both Strether and Sarah must use strategy if they are to succeed. Strether fails and Sarah succeeds. Setting aside the questions of idealism and motive, the argument remains that Strether fails for lack of strategy - he fails to do Mrs. Newsome's bidding and then, when he has decided to advocate for the opposition, as it were, Strether fails again. When Strether argues for Woollett, Chad wants to remain in Paris. When Strether comes around and begins arguing for Paris, Chad is hesitant and cautious, eventually returning home despite Strether's advice. Sarah arrived in Paris determined to return home with her brother, Chad. While Strether dabbled in French high society and enjoyed his time with Chad's new friends, Sarah took
the strategic position referred to as partipris (an obstinate position based upon a prejudgment). Sarah refused to compromise; she would not budge; her position was fixed and her demeanor was hard and crystalline. Her demeanor matched her determination. Strether, on the other hand, thought that he might out-charm the charmers. He might perform so well in Parisian society that his newfound popularity and influence would allow him to press upon Chad. Instead, Strether was charmed and easily won over. Bilham and Miss Barrace were successful in their strategy: Strether anticipated a positive change in Chad having been told that, in his time in Paris, Chad had changed for the better.

Third Chapter of this thesis entitled Daisy Miller is the real presentation of American and other European countries feminist consciousness. Henry James presented his character with the consciousness of that time. Daisy became seriously ill with fever. Winterbourne visited regularly. Mrs. Miller was surprisingly an efficient nurse. She told Winterbourne how Daisy asked her mother three times to tell him that she was not engaged. Mrs. Miller was pleased since Giovanelli had not bothered to visit during Daisy's illness. Shortly after, Daisy died. Many more visitors attended her grave than expected. Giovanelli told Winterbourne that Daisy was the most innocent. Winterbourne was hurt. Why did Giovanelli take her to the fatal night spot? Giovanelli answered meekly. He also told Winterbourne that Daisy never would have married him. Winterbourne visited his aunt in Vevey the next summer and mentioned to her that he had done Daisy an injustice. He had been too long out of America. Nonetheless, he returned to live in Geneva. During
Henry James's youth, James came into contact with many of the literary greats of the time due to his family's prominence. When he was a young boy, Ralph Waldo Emerson visited often and he once was introduced to William Thackeray. As he grew older, he became acquainted with Henry Adams, Henry Cabot Lodge, Oliver Wendell Holmes, John La Farge, and Thomas Sergeant Perry. After the Civil War, he furthered a friendship with William Dean Howells, an editor of the Atlantic Monthly. They would frequently meet to discuss new realism. In Europe, he became acquainted with many of Europe's best writers ranging from Ivan Turgenev to Emile Zola to George Eliot and Matthew Arnold. Due to the experience gained by this wide literary scope, the groundwork was laid for James's thematic curiosity of cross continental comparisons and subsequent literary achievement.

James was first published in 1864 at twenty-one when his first story, *A Tragedy of Error*, was printed in Continental Monthly. Other stories and reviews were published over the years and then several of his books were published. These included *A Passionate Pilgrim*, and *Other Tales* and *Transatlantic Sketches* in 1875 and *Roderick Hudson* in 1876. James moved to London in late 1876. He quickly fit into the London social scene, joining the Reform Club and befriending Lord Houghton, the biographer of Keats. Houghton invited him to one of his famous breakfasts for prestigious political and literary professionals. Shortly, James was regularly attending dinners for London celebrities, such as William Gladstone and Alfred Lord Tennyson. James gained much esteem. In February of 1878, a collection of his essays, French Poets and Novelists, was published.
by Macmillan. In September of the same year, Macmillan published The Europeans, a short but rather indistinct novel of James which had previously been serialized in the Atlantic Monthly. However, regardless of James's apparent success, he was celebrated little beyond the exclusive literary circles of London plus an even smaller circle of friends, such as Howells, in the United States.

*Daisy Miller* was the first work James published which brought about a greater recognition of his witty writing style and narrator obstructed character development. The novella was the closest to instant success which James enjoyed during his lifetime although at one point he joked to Macmillan that his essays would be “the beginning of my appearance before the British Public as the novelist of the future, destined to extract?. A colossal fortune.” (89) His style in the early years, especially, was almost Dickensian. It was casual and ironic, almost comical. His characters before Daisy Miller tended to be obvious symbolic representations which were slightly too predictable and superficial. However, Daisy transcended this problem of James, holding symbolic significance but also having a life and substance. In Rome during the autumn of 1877, James ran into a friend, Alice Bartlett, who informed him of some gossip concerning an uncultivated young American girl who had visited Rome the previous winter. The young lady had " 'picked up' by the wayside, with the best conscience in the world, a good-looking Roman, of vague identity, astonished at his luck, yet? all innocently, all serenely exhibited and introduced: this at least till the occurrence of some small social check.” (105) These simple words of gossip led James to his creation of the innocent, yet
dangerously flirtatious young Daisy Miller. James writing technique has gained comparison to Nathaniel Hawthorne's, as observed in the journals left by Hawthorne. Yet as Hawthorne would create a plot and place characters into it, James would generally find a theme or idea he liked, create characters to explore that theme, and then discover the story as it developed. In this manner, he took to writing Daisy Miller during the winter of 1877-1878 in London, where a note he left after jotting down the gossip from Ms. Bartlett told him to "Dramatize, dramatize!" (65)

After finishing the short novel, James sent the story to Lippincott's magazine in Philadelphia. He likely assumed that since he had success with his friend's journal Atlantic Monthly that being published in another American literary magazine would not be difficult. However, American editors saw the story as "an affront to American womanhood", a "satiric attack on the heroine as a representative ill-mannered American girl." (66) He was quickly rejected. Instead of sending the novella on to his friend Howells, James gave the piece to a friend in London, Leslie Stephen, an editor of Cornhill Magazine, who readily published the work in the June-July 1878 edition. This publication brought James recognition in London but lost him the money he would have earned by publishing in America. Once the story was acquired in the States, it was immediately published in a number of locations for free because of the absence of copyright laws. A copy of the story was printed by Littell's Living Age in Boston and Home Journal in New York. A book form was published by Harper's late in 1878 and, according to Leon Edel, sold 20,000 copies in a matter of weeks. The book form came out in
England by Macmillan in 1879. Ironically, James felt that his lesser story was getting the credit that Roderick Hudson should have received but the test of time has shown Daisy Miller to be one of James's classics whereas Hudson is less acclaimed.

Fourth Chapter of this thesis is the real picture of American society. *The Portrait of a Lady* is a conventional one about courtship and marriage, but only at first sight. Beyond following traditional patterns of literary conventions of his time, James also included a range of novelistic features into his work or reworked some of the traditional material to an extent that a clear break can be registered.

The literary classification of *The Portrait of a Lady* by examining and analyzing which conventional features James makes use of or breaks with and which novelties he introduces. In terms of these literary novelties, special attention will be given to the treatment of narrative perspective, since Henry James transferred this mode of presentation in the course of the story from the narrator to a center of consciousness" within the story. *The Portrait of a Lady* cannot yet be considered as a masterpiece of the stream of consciousness technique; however, the novel already exhibits features which indicate that Henry James will devote himself to this narratological technique in his succeeding works. The study of Henry James’s *The Portrait of a Lady* will be a close reading of the novel in which the reader comes across “a young girl affronting her destiny.” (29) Henry James’s choice of a female protagonist will be a crucial aspect of examination before giving a detailed characterization of the American Girl Isabel Archer, the young woman whom James considered worth making “the subject in the novel.” (35)
By identifying her most characteristic traits, it will become clear why they are of great importance to the advancement of *The Portrait of a Lady* and to what extent these characteristics influence the relations that this young heroine entertains or develops. James further put a number of other female characters by Isabel Archer's side. They each serve as representatives of different types of femininity, and also a matter of examination in this thesis will be why he employed such a multi-faceted range of female characters against the backdrop of the heroine's own character. Further, I will present the protagonist in relation to several of these female characters and also to the male ones in the novel. It is most of all through these relations that Isabel Archer unfolds her nature to her readership, and, in addition, especially the presentation of this heroine through her male acquaintances is likewise decisive as it is largely determined by gender.

As a last aspect, I will focus on the central question which runs through the entire novel. The questions of what will Isabel Archer do with herself? Engages all parties involved: the narrator, the other characters in the novel, and, similarly, the reader. In the course of the novel, this quintessential question changes slightly into, “Why does Isabel Archer marry Gilbert Osmond?” and “Why does she return to an unhappy marriage?” Since the latter question has drawn particular attention to generations of scholars and literary critics, a number of varying positions will be displayed and compared in the analysis of Isabel Archer’s motivations, and therewith, also cultural and historical contexts have to be taken into account. Henry James's novel *The Portrait of a Lady* is a work of literature which unifies a range of traditional as well as popular literary elements.
With regard to the title, which reflects the attempt to convey a portrait of the heroine, an immediate expectation is aroused that this story will present a process of development. The Bildungsroman, exhibiting elements of a biography, traditionally deals with the development of a hero or heroine. The developmental process is mostly understood in educational terms, thus often starting in the hero’s or heroine’s youth and covering a time span of several years. It further depicts this development in relation to the determining surroundings that the hero or heroine confronts.

According to literary scholar Sigi Jöttkandt, the elementary structure of the Bildungsroman is that it involves a developmental narrative during which the heroine undergoes a series of (usually painful) experiences that teach her about herself and the world, resulting in an ethically charged change in consciousness at the end." (29) In a letter written to his elder brother, William, in 1878, novelist Henry James wrote: "I don’t at all despair yet of doing something fat," meaning a substantial novel a work of art that would satisfy the stern critic in his brother, who expected nothing less than greatness from his younger sibling.(38) When James drafted this letter to his brother, he was thirty-five years old and had published three novels, one book of essays, and numerous short stories and book reviews. That same year, his short novel Daisy Miller had been serialized in English and American magazines and had proved to be both an enormous critical and financial success for its author. That novel, along with his tale The Turn of the Screw (1898), were among the most popular and remunerative works of his long career. While he was composing The Portrait of a Lady, James knew that he was producing
something masterful a novel so richly complex and aesthetically perfected that it would guarantee his place in the literary pantheon. In letters to his family comparing the scope of this novel with that of his previous efforts, he referred to it as his “wine unto water” book when it was published in November 1881.

_The Portrait of a Lady_ was met with an overwhelming critical response. Reviewers compared James's artistry to that of George Eliot, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Ivan Turgenev. In The Nation, one critic wrote: "The Portrait of a Lady is an important work, the most important Mr. James has thus far written, and worthy of far more than mere perusal worthy of study." The reviewer went on to add of James that "his powers of observation are not only remarkably keen but sleepless as well," echoing James's own advice to writers in his essay _The Art of Fiction_ (1884): "Try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost."(42) With its story of a young American woman asserting her independence and, in the words of the author, affronting her destiny, _The Portrait of a Lady_ is as timeless today as when it was published. It continues and expands upon a favorite theme of James, that of the American abroad; and in its heroine, Isabel Archer, James has created one of the most memorable characters in American literature.

Fifth chapter presented the feminist consciousness in Henry James famous novel _The Golden Bowl_. This novel is regarded as the summit of his achievement. He had once again returned to his early theme of the American in Europe but this time with an enlarged vision. This vision of James had helped him to analyze the situation objectively
and them with which he was so concerned comes to end on a note of harmony and reconciliation.

Sixth Chapter which presented the human achievement with the feminist consciousness in his novel ‘Roderick Hudson and Tum of The Screw. Roderick and Rowland Mallett, his patron, are at leisure in a large garden talking about art and the artist's life and its Roman scene evokes the golden air of Italy: One warm, still day, late in the Roman autumn, our two young men were seated beneath one of the high stemmed pines of the Villa Ludovisi. They had been spending an hour in the mouldy little garden house, where the colossal mask of the famous Juno looks out with the blank eyes from that dusky corner which must seem to her the last possible stage of a lapse from Olympus.

Seventh Chapter of this thesis entitled Summing Up presented essence of this research study. In the fiction of James however, the Feminist Consciousness theme as a supreme importance and he in his later novels pleads for mellowness, tolerance, harmony, cosmopolitanism and charity. He is also aware of the complexity of values in both the old and the New World which alike present a mixed web of merits and demerits and sympathetic understanding of each other's cultural standards. His Feminist Consciousness theme had acquired a great interest and success at his hands and its treatment in the novels is marked by James's insight, realism, breadth of vision and subtlety. The theme is singularly free from partisanship and parochialism.
CHAPTER-ONE Introduction
Meaning and Types of Consciousness
Life and Works of Henry James

CHAPTER-TWO: The Ambassadors

CHAPTER -THREE: Daisy Miller

CHAPTER-FOUR: The Portrait of a Lady

CHAPTER-FIVE: The Golden Bowl

CHAPTER SIX: Roderick Hudson And The Turn of The Screw

CHAPTER SEVEN: The Summing Up
Selected Bibliography

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SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES:

Novels and Other Works:


**SECONDARY SOURCES:**


