CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

MEANING AND TYPES OF CONSCIOUSNESS:

In 1888, Henry James’s friend John Singer Sargent painted a portrait of Boston millionaire and art collector Isabella Stewart Gardner. In accordance with contemporary ideas about women, he named it Woman, an enigma. It was an immediate success and remains to this day a celebrated picture. In this paper, I would like to examine some questions which portraiture gives rise to, questions which seemed to have concerned James to a much larger extent than Sargent, although James professed himself inspired by Sargent’s impressionist working method. Portraiture for James is a form of representation of the most difficult as well as the most exciting kind because, however sensitive and nuanced, it objectifies the unobjectifiable: consciousness. For our purposes, Woman, an enigma is perhaps particularly interesting as a study in contrasts. Gardner was, by all accounts, impulsive, flamboyant and unconcerned about public opinion (Hughes 230). She spent unheard of sums on single pieces of art from Europe and gathered a mixed circle of wealthy and artistic friends (including, occasionally, James himself) around her in, among other places, the Palazzo Barbaro in Venice. Woman, an enigma is a tribute to Gardner’s taste and abilities: she is depicted in front of a lush golden brocade with a visible pattern shaping itself around her head (suggestive to readers
of James, perhaps, of the “old velvet brocade” which Fleda Vetch “could recognise, would have recognised among a thousand” (91). The fabric figures as an attestation of wealth, beauty, culture and taste, all in one. Cleverly, it forms the backdrop to her personal appearance and the painting is thus saved from any cruder symbolism of her holding or standing next to objects from her collection. The fabric infuses the whole of the painting with a golden glow. Collecting art, the portrait seems to imply, means aspiring to an Eden of the senses in which glorious mildness signals the absence of conflict and crudity. This almost religious quality we might call it a parallel religiosity is highlighted by the way the patterns in the fabric form what looks like an Eastern inspired halo around Gardner's head, topped by the distinct figure of a crown. She is dressed entirely in black like the monastic and hitherto inveterate black of Milly Theale's garments from The Wings of the Dove (310) and adorned only, like Milly, with strings of pearls. Perfectly still, she faces the viewer squarely in a somewhat stylised pose, her arms and clasped hands forming a semi-circle which echoes that of the crowned halo. Repeating the circular motif are her three strings of white pearls, two of which frame her waist and the third her neck.

“I have called the work a study in contrasts and, in a traditional way, Sargent seems to want his consciously produced dualisms to merge into a higher unity; the halo and the crown, the white pearls and the black dress, the semi-religiosity and her curvaceous, feminine body; each of these juxtapositions contributes to Sargent's artistic vision (one which, as it happened, was not at all bad for business) of merging the worldly and the pure, the commercial and the true. This, however, is the point at which another contrast comes into view (and we can
only speculate about whether or not this was intended). To portray a woman and one as animated and impulsive as Gardner, as a gentle Madonna of the arts cannot avoid shifting the emphasis from the person represented to the mode of representation itself, perhaps more specifically to prevalent ideas about the representation of women in the nineteenth century." (35)

The original title captures the crux of the paradox: it displays the contemporary rise of interest in female consciousness and experience while relegating it to the sphere of the unknowable. The expression on Gardner's face adds to this impression. Although very still, she looks somewhat puzzled or querying. She herself is a question; she is put to us, as a task for understanding.

Coincidentally, Venice itself, which Gardner loved, had been assigned a similar place in the collective imagination of the painters and writers who sought inspiration there in the final decades of the nineteenth century: it, too, was loved for its enigmatic elusiveness, for its difference from the known (in the case of Venice, its difference from the rest of Western Europe's great cities). Its links with the East marked it as particularly 'Other', as did the decay which contrasted so with the Western ideals of (cultural and material) progress. James himself observes that "[t]he place is as changeable as a nervous woman": It seems to personify itself, to become human and sentient, and conscious of your affection. You desire to embrace it, to caress it, to possess it; and finally, a soft sense of possession grows up, and your visit becomes a perpetual love-affair. (6)
Here, too then, we are presented with the opposing poles of otherness (unpredictable changeability) and the recognizable; and here, too, the latter is couched in terms of the observer’s gain or possession. With James as with Sargent’s portrait, we feel the curiosity but also the defensiveness behind such a trope – behind the movement from incomprehensible other to subsumed visual or linguistic metaphor in a greater, already established and ordered system of tropes.

The 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, sceptical (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)
Not only whole stories but also characters are impressionized in James's fiction and in his New York Edition preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, James describes the odd process of finding Isabel Archer in his imagination, fully formed, but without a context yet. He talks about his "grasp of a single character" (6) and his being “in complete possession of it” (7). These metaphors might seem innocent enough until James's imagination takes a familiar turn:

“Thus I had my vivid individual – vivid, so strangely, in spite of being still at large, not confined by the conditions, not engaged in the tangle, to which we look for much of the impress that constitutes an identity […] The figure has to that extent, as you see, been placed – placed in the imagination that detains it, preserves, protects, enjoys it, conscious of its presence in the dusky, crowded, heterogeneous back-shop of the mind very much as a wary dealer in precious odds and ends, competent to make an ‘advance’ on rare objects confided to him, is conscious of the rare little ‘piece’ left in deposit by the reduced, mysterious lady of title or the speculative amateur, and which is already there to disclose its merit afresh as soon as a key shall have clicked in a cupboard-door.” (6-7)

What this passage does is allow James to mimic or embody a sort of forbidden desire that in the novel cannot be identified as the author's. To clarify what this desire is, and what suggests that it is forbidden or transgressive by James’s own standards, a closer examination of the passage is necessary. Although the figure or idea of Isabel Archer has been placed in James's imagination, that faculty is not merely passive, as the image might suggest: the imagination “detains […],
preserves, protects, enjoys” (24) the figure placed in it. In other words, it ensures that Isabel Archer’s character does not escape, does not change, is kept safe, and that it produces pleasure for its keeper. Imagination has become a sentient (and possessive) being. But it does not stop there – it develops a life of its own: his imagination, we are told, acts like a “wary dealer in precious odds and ends”. (9) And while James is not saying that he treats Isabel Archer like a precious object, keeping her under lock and key he himself is many times removed from responsibility since not he but a parallel to his imagination (the wary dealer) is guarding, not Isabel Archer but a parallel to her (the precious object) we cannot avoid reading this as some form of such a relation between Isabel Archer and her maker. In short, at some level James’s imagination takes hold of this idea/woman/antique object of art, shielding it and getting pleasure from the fact that its value is his possession. This sort of desire, of course, is what in the novel makes Osmond the most thoroughly predatory character of all James’s male or female abusers, the most marked difference being that he lacks James’s humour and irony as well as the guilty pleasure derived from what he is doing. In other words, in this passage James allows himself to be Osmond-like and to indulge in Osmond’s possessiveness, while writing himself out of a direct link to this desire.

In a trademark Jamesian twist, however, the seriousness of the debate on freedom versus the urge to power and possession is lessened by the almost flippant tone introduced towards the end of the passage. Mimicking the melodrama of the mystery or penny I infer a guilty pleasure from number of layers James puts between
himself and the actual possession novel (while, it seems, enjoying it immensely), James introduces a reduced, mysterious lady of title. In this passage, the further James moves from abstract ideas (such as the rights of individuals) and into particularity (the fate of this particular character/woman/antique) the freer his imagery becomes freer in the sense of making free with it. Imagination (and the immediate pleasure of make-believe) takes over and serious reflection gives way to playfully evolving, high camp metaphor. These sorts of shifts make James hard to place in the high brow/low brow literary debates and have puzzled readers for over a century.

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', (5) 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 fingernails, 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. The *blazon*, as practised by Spenser, Sidney and Shakespeare, for example, is characterised by the way in which it lists female attributes, finding parallels in nature or art (not to mention by the pleasure it takes in its own conceits, its creative construction of a world of similarities which transgress the world we know).

The Prince's list, however, does not stop simply at recording Charlotte's attributes. First, he twists the genre (well within its conventions) by reflecting that no single aspect of her looks is conventionally beautiful it is only together that they produce the look so subject to appreciation. Then he proceeds to exaggerate the notion of the list the real transgression of the genre by imagining each item as a parcel, wrapped up, numbered, put away in a cabinet. Although we are triply removed from Charlotte herself (the parcels are the impressions of the attributes of Charlotte) and despite the fact that these parcels are not literal, metaphor is a powerfully transformative method and the mind reels at the thought of Charlotte cut up, wrapped, numbered and stored for the Prince. By emphasising the aspect of the genre most subject to criticism from a modern reader the construction of the female in a combination of poetic and exacting, disembodying terms the passage makes the genre a caricature of itself. It is a brilliant reversal: in a genre which traditionally celebrates life and love, we are suddenly able to distinguish morbidity, a distinct sense of death. As has been discussed above, in James's work to be enigmatic is to be potentially terrifying (cf. James's use of classical symbols such as the Sphinx and
the oracle of Delphos) while to be knowable is idealistic and defeatable. To survive and be content in survival, in James’s universe, is to manage this very precarious balance right a fate only allowed very few characters in his large authorship. To be precise, it is a fate allowed one character, namely the last female protagonist in a novel, Maggie Verver. Only she is allowed to gain just a degree of inscrutability, of unknowability. Importantly, she is the only character in a James novel with any real hope for her sex life and marriage.

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 conscius sibi, which translates literally as knowing with oneself, or in other words sharing knowledge with oneself about something. This phrase had the figurative meaning of knowing that one knows, as the modern English word “conscious” does. In its earliest uses in the 1500s, the English word conscious retained the meaning of the Latin conscius. For example Thomas Hobbes in Leviathan wrote: "Where two, or more men, know of one and the same fact, they are said to be Conscious of it one to another."

(39) The Latin phrase conscius sibi, whose meaning was more closely related to the current concept of consciousness, was rendered in English as conscious to oneself or conscious unto oneself. For example, Archbishop Ussher wrote in 1613 of "being so conscious unto myself of my great weakness." (42) Locke’s definition from 1690 illustrates that a gradual shift in meaning had taken place.

A related word was 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,[40] 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 recreation 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, Petroushka, 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.

Minny and Fenimore had the strength not to relinquish their sense of being. Minny was freer, more familiar with James than anyone would be again. And Fenimore undertook a dialogue with him in stories that re-create him as a beguiling authority who proves a destroyer. Their friction fed on gender reinforced by the antagonisms of popular and high art. Alone, it seems, Mary Temple and Constance Fenimore Woolson were bold enough to cross the uncrossable boundary of that private life.

Somewhere lies the clue to what they gave him. Henry James was not shielding some form of love; he was fading out the ghostly companions of his art. And this may have been necessary because he did not acknowledge them, openly and visibly, as they perhaps wished and certainly deserved. If there was love, it was not the usual love of men and women but an intuitive closeness that remained unspoken. We approach, here, ties more intimate than sex, closer than those of family and friends. Genius appears to soar above such ties, a lone phenomenon, but this is romantic myth, perpetuated by James himself in the rarefied solitude of a writer in ‘The Private Life’. Genius, though, cannot emerge in a void. Here is a starting point: to challenge the myth of the artist with a truer story of what we might
call, for want of a better word, collaboration. To some extent, of course, James invented himself, but he could not have written as he did without partner's female partners, posthumous partners in that unseen space in which life is transformed into art.

**LIFE AND 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, Margaret Fuller, Washington Irving, William Makepeace Thackeray, and George Ripley visited to the James home during Henry Jr.'s boyhood. In 1855, the James family embarked on a three year-long trip to Geneva, London, and Paris an experience that influenced Henry Junior's decision, as an adult, to live and write in Europe rather than his native America. Upon their return from Europe, Henry Sr. moved the family to Cambridge, allowing for continued
contact with prominent writers and thinkers, including nearby Concord's Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Bronson Alcott. Henry Jr. was a voracious reader and spent his teenage years divided between Cambridge, Europe, and Newport, Rhode Island, where he studied for a time with painter William Morris Hunt. His brother William was found to be a more adept artist, and Henry soon discontinued his lessons, turning instead to writing. At the breakout of the Civil War, brothers Robertson and Garth Wilkinson, enlisted in the army, where both led all-black regiments. Neither Henry, who suffered a back injury, nor William, who was studying at Harvard, entered the war. After the war "Bob" and "Wilky" both attempted ultimately unsuccessful agricultural enterprises in Florida. Wilky died in his late thirties from physical maladies stemming from his war injuries, and Robertson, an alcoholic and sometime writer, lived until his early sixties with little literary success.

Only sister Alice James lived a life of fragile physical and mental health and was often bedridden. She is known to have frequently contemplated suicide and near the end of her life, wrote to her brother William, the psychologist, "When I am gone, pray don't think of me simply as a creature who might have been something else, had neurotic science been born." (235) She spent the last ten years of her life, before her death of cancer at age forty-three in 1892, in Europe, near her brother Henry and her close friend Katharine Peabody Loring. An avid and brilliant diarist, Alice kept a journal which her brothers published posthumously. William James turned away from his adolescent talent for art and instead studied medicine at Harvard. He spent the majority of his professional life there, first as a professor of
physiology and later in the new field of psychology. His landmark Principles of Psychology and public lectures led to fame in both America and Europe. He ultimately died of heart failure at age sixty-eight in 1910. Henry's experience with Harvard far briefer than his brother's. He attended Harvard Law School from 1862 to 1863 but withdrew to concentrate on his writing, and was later awarded an honorary degree in 1911. Unlike William, who married and fathered five children, Henry remained a bachelor his entire life.

Though lacking in definitive evidence, some critics theorize that he was a homosexual, pointing to what they perceive as homoeroticism in relationships such as that of Pemberton and Morgan Moreen in his story The Pupil and Peter Quint and Miles in The Turn of the Screw or to James's facility with female voices in his writing - an ability that may reflect a capacity for empathy rather than evidence of his sexuality. Others suggest his cousin Mary "Minny" Temple as the object of his affection and posit her death from tuberculosis at age twenty-four in 1870 as the reason for James's celibacy. James had spent time with her in Newport and based several of his heroines on her. Still others suggest that the injury which had prevented his service in the Civil War had rendered him impotent. James published his first story, A Tragedy of Error, in the Continental Monthly in 1864 when he was only twenty. In it, a wife's plan to have her husband murdered results in the death of her lover. James's interest in ghosts, which would resurface in The Turn of the Screw, was apparent in his 1868 story, The Romance of Certain Old Clothes, in which a man's second wife is killed by the ghost of his first wife. Ultimately, James
wrote twenty novels and in excess of one hundred short stories and novellas, as well as literary criticism, plays, travelogues, and reviews more than any other great American writer. To define James as an American writer, however, is not entirely accurate. James lived and wrote in England - and sometimes France, Switzerland, and Italy - for the majority of his adult life and became a British subject in 1915, a year before his death at age seventy-three. Among James's most famous literary works are 1878's The Europeans, 1878's commercial success Daisy Miller, 1880's critically acclaimed Washington Square, 1886's The Bostonians, and 1898's The Turn of the Screw. James met and corresponded with a number of American and European literary figures of his day. Among them, Ivan Turgenov, Joseph Conrad, Oscar Wilde, Robert Lewis Stevenson, Edith Wharton and Stephen Crane influenced his literary style and his beliefs.

*The Turn of the Screw* was written in 1897, three years after the suicide of James's close friend Constance Fenimore Woolson, five years after Alice's death, at a time when James suffered from crippling gout. For several years, his books had been selling poorly, and his plays, including Guy Domville in 1895, were considered too "talky" and intellectual to be profitable on the London stage. After its mixed reaction by audience and critics, James chose to take up my own pen rather than please others' expectations and wrote *The Turn of the Screw*. The novel, typed by James's secretary William McAlpine on the newly-invented typewriter, because James suffered from Repetitive Strain Injury, was published in installments in Collier's weekly magazine between January and April 1898. It became the most
widely read of all James's works of fiction and remains famous because of the critical controversies it continues to inspire.

The subject matter of *The Turn of the Screw* stems from a nineteenth-century fascination with ghosts, with which James was quite familiar. Henry James, Senior., had been a praised by the Society for Psychical Research for his observations of spirit phenomena. William was president of the society from 1894 to 1896 and devoted time to the research of spiritual phenomena. James's notebooks record a visit in 1895 to his friend, Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury, who told him the tale young children corrupted by the ghosts of depraved servants, and another friend, Edward Gurney, published an account of woman and child living in a house haunted by a wicked male servant and a female ghost dressed in black. Though *The Turn of the Screw* may be considered a ghost story, it is a ghost story written for a world in which ghosts were considered by many to be real, dangerous, scientifically-observed phenomena.

**THE AMBASSADERS:**

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.
The friends and acquaintances that Gloriani has collected mingle with each other, interspersed among the statues of men. As a sculptor, collector, and celebrated social pillar, Gloriani typifies a social structure in which people can be easily labeled as types. Madame de Vionnet and Maria Gostrey are both renowned collectors of sculptural art and in a similar way both figures form others (Chad, Strether) according to a perceived type. The word type derives from the Greek word typus which means impression. The difference between Lambert Strether and characters like de Vionnet, Gostrey and Gloriani is that Strether does not have enough force, enough muscle behind his myth to really make an impression. The other characters force their impressions upon others, they create types out of men like Chad a man formed to please and Strether, whom Gostrey led forth into the world despite his late middle age. These characters use persuasion to create truth from beauty.

**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.
THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY:

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. This moneyed world appears charming and leisurely but proves to be plagued with treachery, deceit, and suffering.

**RODERICK HUDSON:**

*Roderick Hudson* is a novel by Henry James. Originally 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. Mallet finds himself unexpectedly attracted to the young woman—to her simplicity, her lack of affectation, her honesty.

**Washington Square:**

First serialized in Harper's Magazine in 1880, Washington Square is one of Henry James' most famous (and most accessible) novels. In 1881, *Washington Square* was published in novel form the same year that *Portrait of a Lady* was published. Unlike much of Henry James' work this novel takes place in the Manhattan neighborhood of *Washington Square* in the mid-nineteenth century. *Washington Square* begins with a portrait of Dr. Austin Sloper, a respectable physician. His wife, Catherine, gives birth to a son who dies at the age of three. Two years later, Catherine gives birth to a daughter named Catherine - but the childbirth is difficulty and the mother dies. The daughter, Catherine, is the heroine of the novel. Dr. Sloper is almost immediately disappointed in Catherine. From the start, he views
his daughter as a strange genetic twist of fate: she is not a boy; she is not beautiful like her mother; she is not clever like her father. Dr. Sloper has two sisters, both younger and both very different from each other. Dr. Sloper’s favorite is Elizabeth who has married a merchant named Almond. Mrs. Almond is prudent and kind and throughout the novel she gives Dr. Sloper some good advice that he unfortunately discards. The other sister is Lavinia, a widow once married to an impoverished clergyman named Penniman. When Catherine is a few years old, Aunt Penniman comes to live in the Sloper household. Dr. Sloper finds his sister Lavinia to be excessively imaginative, unrealistic, and melodramatic. Nonetheless, Dr. Sloper thinks that Lavinia as she is the girl’s aunt would be a good surrogate mother for Catherine. Quickly, the novel moves forward to Catherine’s late adolescence and early adulthood. Dr. Sloper remains decidedly disappointed in his dull, boring, plain-faced daughter. Though Sloper never explicitly says this to Catherine. Sloper’s dismissive and sarcastic air really stunts Catherine’s intellectual and emotional growth. Sloper expects little form Catherine and, for the most part, this is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Marian, one of Aunt Almond’s daughters, has become engaged to a man named Arthur Townsend. At Marian’s engagement party, Catherine meets Morris Townsend, a smooth-talking and very good looking young man. He is a far-flung cousin of Arthur’s, and has been traveling the world. Hence, Morris is a stranger in polite New York society. At this same party, Morris meets aunt Lavinia and, seizing the opportunity, he tells her that he very much enjoyed his conversation with Catherine. In the days that follow, Aunt Lavinia plays the role of a meddling
middleman. In his successive visits to the Sloper home, Morris becomes a cause of concern for Dr. Sloper. The doctor sees through Morris: a lazy charmer who has identified Catherine as the source of his fortune. At the same time, Aunt Lavinia does such a good job of sparking up a romance between Catherine and Morris that Catherine comes to believe that Morris does love her. Though Morris' primary motivation is economic, he is kind to Catherine and he treats her with far more love and consideration than Dr. Sloper does. Consequently, Dr. Sloper finds it difficult to pry Catherine away from Morris.
WORKS CITED


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