

IDENTITY IN THREE NOVELS OF HENRY JAMES

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Summary

Henry James' treatment of self and society, depiction of characters from different cultural backgrounds, his portrayal of various personas, and displaying of complex relationships between characters in his novels, overtly or covertly, reveal 'identity' as being a main theme of his fiction. Though James may not have realized that he used the concept of identity in the way modern scholars think it, identity is explicit in his writings because it plays a vital role in the development of plot. Similarly, a thorough analysis of identity also indicates identity is used ranging from the traditional dictionary definition of terms such as 'individuality' or 'personality' to the kinds of explanations of identity given by modern scholars, such as, identity being a 'product' that comes from the interaction between 'self and society'.

This study, which is divided into five main chapters, addresses Henry James' three major novels: *The American* (1877), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), and *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), respectively, to examine the issues of identity carefully. For the novel, *The American* (1877), the discussion focuses on the issues of difference and identity. It deals with the question of how different perspectives construct an identity. Similarly, on the next part, the discussion focuses on how identity is formed through self-reflection and realization with the discussion of *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881). Furthermore, in *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) identity related to society and human relationships is explored.

In sum, the study investigates how 'identity' in James' fictions is a more complex concept than what it might seem on the surface. A critical assessment scrutinizes selected narratives of James to show the vastness of his concept of identity, as it ranges from one's

performance and representation in society to self-reflection/self-awareness, and one's relationship to other persons. This allows us to us to discover that identity in James' fictions is, for the most part, of great relevance to contemporary thought and discourse and is mostly related to experience and perception. Finally, an exploration of concept of identity in James' fiction provides a broader view of 'self', 'society' and 'culture'. The experiences and observations James has poured from the imaginative ink of his thoughts clearly expresses that without the study of identity issues in novels of James, the analysis of his novels never be completed. The conflict that rises from the cloud of social conventions deriving from tradition and personal human feelings could be analysed from different perspectives.

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Chapter I

1. Introduction

This chapter gives a general overview of the historical background and context of the concepts of ‘identity’ and ‘self’, where the discussion centers on the development of the various notions connected with identity, with its dictionary definitions and scholarly explanations. Moreover, the chapter contains the thesis statement of this study along with the significance and outline of this study.

1.1 Framework of Study: Background and Historical Context

Humans are always curious to know about themselves and their relation to the world around them. As an animal species, they possess a possibly genetically determined curiosity as to wanting to know who they are and why they become the way they are as well as why they are different from each other. In other words, one is eager to know what is their ‘self’ or ‘identity’ and how it is formed because knowing one’s ‘self’ or ‘identity’ gives a better understanding of one’s society, one’s relationship with others, and oneself. However, there are many questions that come to mind when we think about the concepts of ‘self’ and ‘identity’. For instance: Is ‘self’ the product of one’s consciousness, experience, impressions, or thought? Or is ‘self’ the construction of one’s society, of where one lives and grows up? Is ‘identity’ a fixed entity or an unstable subject that keeps evolving and changing?

These are complicated questions because the discourse of ‘self’ and ‘identity’ involves different schools of thought such as philosophy, psychology, and sociology; and

each has their own perspectives on the notions of self. So, it is important to note that the interpretation of the concepts of 'self' and 'identity' varies depending upon the field of study we choose. That is to say, the discussion of issues related to 'self' and 'identity' depends on the how we approach it. Especially in the context of America and Europe, from where modern literary theories and schools of criticism started, the notions should be examined carefully because there are innumerable problems concerning self and identity as the concepts are associated with the issues of ethnicity, gender, kinship, language, national, politics, race, religious, sexuality, and territory. Thus, even in the context of an individual writer (in this case, Henry James), when discussing the concepts of 'self' or 'identity', we must first explore the historical development and relevant theories and offer an overview of the historical context of the notions of 'self' and 'identity' to help us understand its underlying meaning and its significance to this study.

Prior to the discussion of the concepts of 'self' and 'identity, let us be clear about distinguishing the use of the terms 'self' and 'identity' and be aware of their differences as well as their underlying connections. Although both terms look similar, in both meaning and concept, there are some functional differences but, at the same time, they are interconnected and interrelated. The 'self' mainly deals with the inner realm of individuals, everything from 'consciousness and one's belonging'¹ to 'one's performance in society'²; which are the major components that helps in forming one's identity. For this reason, 'self' can be considered as the part or a component that gives to an identity its structure. On the other hand, 'identity', along with its affiliations and social roles is that

¹ William James describes that "a man's self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, [...] his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank-account" (*The Principles of Psychology*, 1950, 291).

² Erving Goffman asserts that 'self' as "a performed character and not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die" (*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1959, 252-53).

collection of experiences, feelings, impressions, and perceptions that give shape to the ‘self’. In this sense, both terms are closely related; and it is the reason that this study uses the term ‘self’ or ‘identity’ synonymously as far as they deal with the ‘subjectivity of an individual,’³ while recognizing that in certain circumstances that differences do exist.

Since there are many theories of ‘self’ and ‘identity’ that have been developed in the course of history, it is very crucial to select the relevant concepts that justifies the purpose of this critical assessment. Therefore, for this study, it was found useful to take into account several notions of identity as being relevant to further discussion of the topic as it affects Henry James. However, it is needless to say that there might be different approaches for the exploration of the fiction of Henry James on the issues of identity, but priority has been given to intertextual analysis, combined with other primary sources of literary criticism of his works. Some other sources which have been referred to for the general concepts of self and identity are: 1) *Oxford English Dictionary Online*⁴, hereafter *OED Online*, for terminological definitions and examples. The reason for using *OED Online* is because it is one of the commonly used dictionaries showing the origin and historical development of the vocabulary items it describes; and because it is also regularly updated. 2) Anthony Elliott’s *Concepts of the Self* (2014) and 3) Steph Lawler’s *Identity: Sociological Perspectives* (2014). These two works (2 and 3) were found to be helpful in understanding the basic concepts of the self and identity. Likewise, 4) *Rewriting the Self: Histories from Renaissance to the Present* (1997), a collection of essays on the historical development of ‘concepts of self’ edited by Roy Porter is

³ Anthony Elliot while discussing the use of various terms such as self, identity, subject, by social scientist and theorists, in the study of selfhood, claims that “these terminological differences are not always especially significant, primarily because these terms can all be said to denote a concern with the subjectivity of the individual” (*Concepts of the Self*, 2014, 14).

⁴ For this study, two terms, ‘identity’ and ‘self’ are explained and example sentences are taken from *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, hereafter *OED Online*, (accessed on July 31, 2016).

informative in comprehending the historical context of notions of self and identity. Moreover, 5) Samuel P. Huntington's *Who are we? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (2005) may be considered a practical guide for analyzing issues of national identity and, in particular, American identity. Then, 6) Arnold H. Buss's, *Self-Consciousness and Social Anxiety* (1980) may be taken for being worthwhile for its exploration of self-consciousness and self-identity. Likewise, 7) Stuart Hall's 'The Question of Cultural Identity' (1996), is found to be of great importance for the comparative analysis of the different phases of identity as they developed in the course of history. As mentioned above, all these works have been taken into account to establish the general notions of self and identity. They are not the criticisms of Henry James' work but are used as a tool to discuss 'identity' in James' works. Let us first begin with the exploration of historical context of identity—how discourse has evolved among scholars and how it has remained a much discussed topic in academia until today.

Throughout history, philosophers and social scientists have been looking for the explanation to this fundamental question, 'who am I?', which Roy Porter⁵, insightfully summarizes as:

The Greeks believed they were the playthings of fate, Christians saw themselves as miserable sinners, Descartes thought that man was a thinker, liberals stressed self-determination, Romantics self-expression, while Freud invited you to go and lie upon the couch. The fundamental issue of identity has been endlessly posed by philosophers, poets, psychiatrists, and people at large. But if the question has

⁵ Roy Porter, an editor of the *Rewriting the Self: Histories from Renaissance to the Present*, hereafter *Rewriting the Self*, outlines on the historical search of identity as "the fundamental issue of identity has been endlessly explored by philosophers, poets, priests, psychologists, and men and women generally" (*Rewriting the Self*, 1997, 1).

stayed the same, the answers have changed over time.⁶

As Porter explained above, the question of ‘self’ or ‘identity’ has come through a long history because such discoveries will not only describe who one is and why one behaves or thinks the way one does, but also defines why others think of one the way they do. Besides, it helps people to see how one’s identities are constructed and how the socio-cultural environment and inner desires affect the formation of one’s self. This would be the reason why it is an actively discussed issue for scholars from past to present, though the approaches have been different in each era. Porter, on the history of self, further argues that the story of ‘self’ can be traced to an era called ‘the dawn of consciousness’, the era when Greek philosophers began to explore the human mind and behavior in terms of ‘consciousness’ in the background of traditional values and beliefs.⁷ The inner self, though, remained there for discussion until the seventeenth century, when scholars, like René Descartes⁸, began to explore different approaches for defining the ‘it’.⁹ As Porter elaborates that the question of who we were from that point on focused on how our thinking processes worked and thus identity became a matter of intellect.¹⁰ He refers to philosophers, such as John Locke, and examines how Locke explained the nature of the mind and viewed the mind as not like a furnished flat which is pre-stocked with innate ideas, but as a home that is gradually put together from scratch out of ceaseless mental acquisitions.

⁶ Ibid., 1997, 1.

⁷ Porter elaborates that “philosophers like Socrates began to give expression to ideals of inner goodness and conscience”, which “proved so threatening to traditional values” (*Rewriting the Self*, 1997, 2).

⁸ René Descartes is a 17th century philosopher, who proposes the idea that “I think, therefore I am” and because of his contribution to modern philosophy, he is described as the ‘father of modern philosophy’ (*The Philosophy Book*, 2011, 118-23).

⁹ Porter, 1997, 4.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1997, 4.

This gave a new viewpoint of selfhood as the outcome of experience and education; and as we are what we become. The new approach of envisioning a self-determining individual began to appear afterwards, an approach which posits the belief that man is both ‘the producer but also as the product of social development and the civilizing process’.¹¹ Thus, during that era, scholars saw life as a journey of self-discovery. Interestingly, ‘self-discovery’ became a very popular metaphor among Romanticists until the ‘discovery of the unconscious’.¹² This view challenged the old perspective of ‘ultimate self’.¹³

Moreover, it opened up new pathways in the discourse of self, influencing trends in literature and art. With regard to the historical development of self, it has been pointed out that although it seems that people have been obsessed with personal matters in the modern era, the ‘concepts of self’ or the interest on the subject of the ‘self’ as a topic for intellectual discussion began in the seventeenth century with a prominent writer in the field declaring that people in the present day world tend to focus on things that concern themselves, “personal feelings, personal wealth, personal fulfilment, personal health, personal privacy and much else ‘personal’ besides”.¹⁴ As a result, this might account for the content of such human sciences, such as sociology and psychology, in recent times. In the seventeenth century, however, one can observe a significant increase in an awareness of self in connection with new developments in natural philosophy as well as moral philosophy, both with regard to society and, even more so, with regard to the culture of the times. Nor is this an isolated opinion. Other critics agree that ‘the notions of self’

¹¹ Ibid., 1997, 7.

¹² Ibid., 1997, 7.

¹³ Ibid., 1997, 7.

¹⁴ Roger Smith, in *Rewriting the Self*, 1997, 49.

came into the spotlight during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when ‘the uniqueness and complexity of individual character came under unprecedented scrutiny, and the rights and values of the individual were accorded a new importance’.¹⁵

In line with this, the *OED Online* states, concerning its etymology, the term ‘self’ originated from Proto-Germanic, and means as a philosophical term that, “a person is really and intrinsically *he* (in contradistinction to what is adventitious); the ego (often identified with the soul or mind as opposed to the body); a permanent subject of successive and varying states of consciousness”.¹⁶ The *OED Online*, furthermore, in two of its examples, proceeds to give example sentences containing the definition of ‘self’ which was accorded to the word by John Locke, a largely seventeenth century philosopher and originator of the concept of self as consciousness. The first example is: “Self is that conscious thinking thing, whatever Substance, made up of Spiritual, or Material, Simple, or Compounded, it matters not, which is sensible, or conscious of Pleasure and Pain and so is concerned for its self, as far as that consciousness extends”.¹⁷ Similarly, the second example: “Since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and ‘tis that, that makes every one be, what he calls self”.¹⁸ In both examples, self is referred to as ‘consciousness’. Likewise, another two definitions of ‘self’ show the most commonly discussed definition of the modern notion of self, as, (a) “What one is at a particular time or in a particular aspect or relation; one's nature, character, or (sometimes) physical constitution or appearance, considered as different at different times” and (b) “An assemblage of characteristics and dispositions which may be conceived as

¹⁵ Carolyn Williams, in *Rewriting the Self*, 1997, 97.

¹⁶ ‘Self,’ *OED Online*.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, *OED Online*.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, *OED Online*.

constituting one of various conflicting personalities within a human being”.¹⁹ These examples show that the concept of self has travelled a long journey to arrive at its present state of discourse, where we relate it to the essential entity of self-identity.

For scholars during that time, the concept of stream of consciousness first emerged in psychology and then in literature. From this, we can see that the continuous development of notions of self suggests that the expressions of ‘self-consciousness’ in literature is not a recent phenomenon, but rather a historically revolutionary project, where writers ‘are interested not only in the person but also in the ‘persona’, the mask which the individual wears in public, the role which he or she is playing.’²⁰

In his discussion of the historical development of self, Peter Burke claims, “the ideas of self-consciousness, self-expression, self-presentation and self-fashioning do not exhaust the conceptual problems awaiting a historian of the Renaissance self, or better, of the variety of ‘Renaissance selves’”.²¹ The other aspects that Burke thinks we need to consider are: self-knowledge, self-confidence, self-cultivation, self-examination, and self-reliance, as well as ‘self-respect’, in terms of ‘honor, and self-control’.²² He states that ‘renaissance humanists were much concerned with self-knowledge or know thyself’ and deals with ‘the presentation of self to others’.²³ This is the reason that the central theme of the most famous books in Renaissance Italy was ‘giving a good impression of oneself’.²⁴ To put it in other words, ‘the uniqueness of the individual was a concern at

¹⁹ Ibid., *OED Online*.

²⁰ Burke Peter, in *Rewriting the Self*, 1997, 18.

²¹ Ibid., 1997, 18-19.

²² Ibid., 1997, 19.

²³ Ibid., 1997, 19.

²⁴ Ibid., 1997, 19.

this time'.²⁵ If a person thinks, for example, of the Middle ages, mankind, seen individually, was then only conscious of himself or herself as a member of some general category. However, when one comes to the Renaissance, a sense of the individual will be seen to have developed. Thus, over time, we see this leading to the development of the literary genre of 'autobiography', which might be considered as 'ego-documents', that helped in 'revealing the self' of the authors.²⁶ The reason for the eventual evolution of this kind of genre, Burke argues, is because of the urbanization of the sixteenth century, when people became more easily capable of travelling, this giving them a 'sense of individual choice'.²⁷ Similarly, a 'letter writing' culture was also developed during this era which treated letters as a literary genre, thus giving people another means of literary self-presentation. As Burke explains, "The private letter is perhaps the personal document *par excellence*, expressing the thoughts and emotions of the moment at the moment, rather than recollecting them in tranquility in autobiographies and journals".²⁸

From the discussion above, one thing becomes clear: there has already been a concept of diverse *selves* since the Renaissance era. The evolution of art, literature and culture during that time not only created a distinct view of self but also other identities. Burke asserts:

We need to free ourselves from the Western, Burckhardtian²⁹ assumption that self-consciousness arose in a particular place, such as Italy, at a particular time, perhaps the fourteenth century. It is better to think in terms of a variety of

²⁵ Ibid., 1997, 1

²⁶ Ibid., 1997, 21.

²⁷ Ibid., 1977, 21.

²⁸ Ibid., 1997, 23.

²⁹ Burckhardtian relating to Jacob Burckhardt (1818–1897), historian of art and culture. He was a Swiss historian of art and culture and an influential figure in the historiography of both fields. He is known as one of the major progenitors of cultural history (Ibid., 1997, 17).

categories of the person or conceptions of the self (more or less unified, bounded and so on) in different cultures, categories and conceptions which underlie a variety of style of self-presentation or self-fashioning.³⁰

Consequently, the ‘concept of self’ is something that one can notice emerging as a topic for discussion in the context of the intellectual discourse of the seventeenth century, this being apparent in the concepts of the well-known philosopher, René Descartes, who argued as being axiomatic that thinking was the essence of being with the famous phrase, ‘I think, therefore I am’.³¹ For him, thinking was vital for having a ‘self’ because thinking involves reasoning. On the other hand, John Locke, developed other notions of ‘self’, suggesting that knowledge of everything, including the idea of self or identity, comes from the ‘experience’,³² which rejects the ‘theory of innate ideas’ proposed by rationalists like René Descartes. Locke, in his major work, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) also used the term ‘personal identity’, which he explains as:

This begins premised, to find wherein personal identity consists we must consider what person stands for: which, I think, is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness, which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it: it being impossible for any one to perceive without perceiving that he does perceive. When we see, hear, smell, taste, feel, meditate, or will

³⁰ Ibid., 1997, 28.

³¹ Descartes’ main argument was that in order to know we exist we need to think, which means without thinking we do not exist. René Descartes, *A Discourse on the Method*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/59/59-h/59-h.htm>. Accessed on 5 Sept. 2016.

³² John Locke is a 17th century philosopher from Britain, who believed that “human mind is a blank canvas, or tabula rasa, at birth, which gets gradually filled up by the experience” (*The Philosophy Book*, 2011, 130-33).

anything, we know that we do so. Thus it is always as to our present sensations and perceptions: and by this, every one is to himself that, which he calls self: - it not being considered, in this case, whether the same self be continued in the same or divers substances. For, since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes every one to be what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists personal identity, i.e. the sameness of a rational being: and as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now it was then; and it is by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it, that that action was done.³³

His view, thus, was that experiences—knowledge gained through our senses—forms our personal identity or self. The same as Locke, David Hume, an 18th philosopher, believed that ‘impressions’ and ‘ideas’ were a foundation for knowledge and the formation of personal identity, in contrast to the viewpoint that humans are born with ‘innate ideas’.³⁴

In relation to the ideas of ‘individual’ and ‘identity’, Hume states:

Our impressions give rise to their correspondent ideas; and these ideas in their turn produce other impressions [...] as the same individual republic may not only change its members, but also its laws and constitutions; in likely manner

³³ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, www.enlightenment.supersaturated.com/johnlocke/BookIIChapterXXVII.html. Accessed 5 Sept. 2016.

³⁴ David Hume is an 18th century philosopher, who argues that ‘impressions’ are the key of our knowledge; and also, emphasis the “role of belief and custom in our lives” (*The Philosophy Book*, 2011, 150-53).

the same person may vary his character and disposition, as well as his impressions and ideas, without losing his identity.³⁵

From the discussion above, 17th and 18th century philosophers such as Descartes, Locke, and Hume, viewed ‘self’ or ‘identity’ as an essential aspect of human knowledge which, as we have seen, was based on the notions of ‘thinking’, ‘experience’, and ‘impressions’. The discourse of ‘self’ or ‘identity’ continued in the modern era (the 20th and 21st centuries) as well, where it (‘self’ or ‘identity’) becomes more complex and ambiguous. As Zygmunt Bauman (2006) argues, “In our fluid world, committing oneself to a single identity for life, or even for less than a whole life but for a very long time to come, is a risk business. Identities are for wearing and showing, not for storing and keeping.”³⁶ The reason behind this attitude is that modern society saw rapid development with regard to different aspects of society which transforms the traditional viewpoints of theory and discourse. Moreover, the influence of global culture on local cultures in this era is rapidly leading to a change in societies around the world. Identities are becoming ambiguous and complex because of these developments. This becomes clearer if we discuss recent views in the field of cultural theory, as it concerns the historical development of identity. Let us begin with the definition of the term.

The *OED Online* defines the word as coming from a post-classical, fourth century Latin term *identat-*, *identitas*, which means *sameness*. The first definition of ‘identity’ in the *OED Online* describes it as a “quality or condition of being the same; or absolute or essential sameness.”³⁷ The following sentence, which is given as an example in the *OED*

³⁵ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4705/4705-h/4705-h.h>. Accessed on 5 Sept. 2016.

³⁶ Bauman, 2006, 89.

³⁷ ‘Identity,’ *OED Online*.

Online by H. Fawcett in 1863, is “There is no identity of interests between employers and employed,” and might serve to make this meaning clearer. The term, likewise, is defined in the *OED Online* as being the individuality or personality of a person. Yet another definition of identity in *OED Online* places the emphasis on a ‘sense of self’, being given in the *OED Online* as “who or what a person or thing is; a distinct impression of a single person or thing presented to or perceived by others; a set of characteristics or a description that distinguishes a person or thing from others.”³⁸ Of the definitions given, this would seem to be the one which is the more relevant to the contemporary world as well. The following sentences, taken from the examples given in the *OED Online*, will further clarify the meaning. For instance, we have: “Everything indicated that he had been ready for flight and probably had some hiding place, either in town or out, where the rest of his loot was cached and where he had slipped into disguising clothes and a new identity” (1926 *People’s Home Journal* Feb. 33/1).³⁹ Furthermore, the possibility of people having multiple identities is indicated in “She has so many different identities, from trouble-soothing head teacher, to spiritual hippy chick, to glamorous property tycoon’s wife, to country-bumpkin earth mother” (2005, K. Harrison *Starter Marriage* 127).⁴⁰

A phrase related to identity, “identity crisis,” is defined in *OED Online* as a condition where people have difficulties in fixing a character or personality, thus leading to uncertainty and confusion. Nor is identity crisis the only compound word with identity as a component which appears in the *OED Online*. Other compound words related to identity appearing in the *OED Online* are identity politics, identity theft, identity theory,

³⁸ Ibid., *OED Online*.

³⁹ Ibid., *OED Online*.

⁴⁰ Ibid., *OED Online*.

etc. It is obvious that no one *OED Online* definition is enough to understand in full the concept of identity. As the term involves cultural, personal and social aspects, one must seek further explanations when discussing different concepts of identity.

Steph Lawler (2014) in her book entitled *Identity: Sociological Perspectives* argues that identity needs to be understood not as belonging ‘within’ the individual person, but as produced between persons and within social relations.⁴¹ Her idea is that the meaning of identity changes along with the situation, so rather than looking for a single definition, one should seek out the context and look for a definition there. She maintains that it means the meaning of identity depends on how we connect the term to different situations. She then goes on to propose a concept of identity that takes in account the ideas of *sameness and uniqueness*.⁴² In other words, she states that while, on the one hand, people share some common identities such as gender, nationality, and race that, on the other hand, everyone has unique characteristics that work to make him or her different from others and which should be considered as a factor in creating identity.

Lawler’s main focus is on the formation of the ‘identity’ from a sociological point of view rather than from the dictionary definition of the word ‘identity’. She explores the question of whether identity is made up of both sameness and uniqueness, of how one becomes unique. She views identity as being produced through social relations and rejects Western ideas of identity as an individual and personal process. She claims that identity is an ongoing process rather than a fixed concept. In this light, she claims that what we ‘become’ is what we know ourselves to be. For example, though classifications such as ‘men’, ‘women’, ‘children’, ‘British people’ and so on cannot sum up or contain

⁴¹ Lawler, 2014, 19.

⁴² Ibid., 2014, 10.

the person, people may nevertheless use such classifications, and their behavior and responses may well have an effect on how the classification changes in the future⁴³.

Samuel P. Huntington (2005), in his book *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* explains how identity, in particular American, is shaped by various factors or components. His main argument is that the construction of modern American identity is founded in a background of culture, ethnicity, ideology, race, and religion of seventeenth-and eighteenth-century immigrants from the British Isles.⁴⁴

Huntington also explains that the key points concerning the national identity of America until the nineteenth century were race, ethnicity, culture and religion, of which ethnicity and race more or less disappeared (because of the civil rights movements and immigration act of 1965) in the late twentieth century. According to his explanation, national identity did not always include a territorial element, and that it can consist of cultural, political and racial issues. Hence, although the American identity is known by mainly two components in recent years, immigration and the Creed⁴⁵, Huntington says, it's only a half-truth because there are other components that are reshaping the American identity.⁴⁶ The American identity is changing because of its cosmopolitan nature, which embraces other cultures; imperial power, which dominates other cultures; and supranational empire, which influences the cultures of the world.⁴⁷

Another scholar to be considered, Anthony Elliott (2014) in his work *Concepts of the Self* describes identity relating it to the social aspects and the experiences of self-identity,

⁴³ Ibid., 2014, 18.

⁴⁴ Huntington, 2005, 38.

⁴⁵ Huntington argues that the American Creed means, “the political principles of liberty, equality, democracy, individualism, human rights, the rule of law, and private property” (*Who Are WE?*, 2005, 46).

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2005, 37-58.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 2005, 362-66.

selfhood and personal identity.⁴⁸ He considers that, while individuals are engaging in everyday life, they are also creating their identities, and that this is what gives structure to their identities.

Elliott, further, argues that there is a difference between traditional and sociological perspectives regarding the concept of identity. He says that, traditionally, self is generally portrayed as a part of one's private domain, the inner realm of personal thoughts, desires, emotions, strivings, and values which is in contrast to the viewpoint of sociologists. Providing more clarification, Elliott explains that 'self' works as a medium between our inner essence and social context that helps us to create our identity. He, furthermore, posits the view that such role playing is an element in the formation of an identity in childhood.⁴⁹

Finally, he puts emphasis on the idea of 'staging of role performance' or 'skilled social performance' in the formation of self-identity. Additionally, he describes how morality is part of the process of the production of the self. Elliott argues that morality is not just a matter of social norms and custom but also a complex way of expressing ideas in which an individual interacts daily with what that person's identity produces.⁵⁰

In *Self-Consciousness and Social Anxiety* (1980), hereafter *Self-Consciousness*, Arnold H. Buss defines two aspects of self: private and public. He explains that the private aspect of self consists of memory, motives and self-reflections.⁵¹ They are personal experiences because they can be experienced directly only by himself or herself. Childhood memory, therefore, is a perfect example of its kind because it is impossible for

⁴⁸ Anthony Elliott, 2014, 24.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 2014, 32-37.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 2014, 32-37.

⁵¹ Arnold Buss, 1980, 10-13.

one to reflect on his or her childhood experiences via others. The private self, therefore, is undisclosed until a person expresses it. Meanwhile, the opposite of the private self is the public self, which consists of one's appearance and style or overt behaviour.⁵² People in society easily notice these aspects of self because they are visible to all. People's ways of talking, dressing, and acting are some of their public self's activities. They might produce for us the view that the public self and private self are completely different entities. However, Buss points out that it is very difficult to draw a clear line between these two aspects of self because they are interconnected.⁵³ It should be noted, though, that they both are equally essential in the creation of one's self-identity.

Regarding different perspectives on self, Buss states that the sociological approach focuses on 'how individuals fit into the aggregates and institutions that make up society', however, the psychologists 'seek to discover the cognitive and affective processes of an individual'.⁵⁴

Stuart Hall (1996), cultural theorist and sociologist, examines the historical development of identity, dividing it into three parts or in terms of three 'subjects': a) the Enlightenment subject, b) the sociological subject, and c) the post-modern subject.⁵⁵ Hall begins his argument by stating that during the enlightenment identities were considered to be stable and undivided and considers that this would have been because the 18th century was an age of reasoning, where scholars sought a unified view. Thus, identity also was considered unchangeable. As Hall explains:

⁵² Ibid., 1980, 25-28.

⁵³ Ibid., 1980, 114-15.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 1980, 81.

⁵⁵ Hall, 1996, 597.

The Enlightenment subject was based on a conception of the human person as a fully centered, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness, and action, whose “center” consisted of an inner core which first emerged when the subject was born, and unfolded with it, while remaining essentially the same-continuous or “identical” with itself—throughout the individual’s existence. The essential center of the self was a person's identity.⁵⁶

But this viewpoint has been challenged in the modern era, being called by Hall (1996) the sociological subject, because identity in the modern era is no longer a stable matter. Indeed, identity may be said to have become a more complex issue because of many sociological developments. Sociologists, thus, tends to view identity in terms of “interaction” between self and society. For this reason, the formation of identity can be considered to depend not only on inner traits, but also to rely on social circumstances. As Hall (1996) states, “The subject still has an inner core or essence that is ‘the real me,’ but this is formed and modified in a continuous dialogue with the cultural worlds ‘outside’ and the identities which they offer”.⁵⁷ This aspect of identity is thought to connect the personal and public worlds one faces. The internalization of values and traditions of society, or of the outer world, by the subject or an individual is, therefore, seen as a kind of bridging of the outer and inner world.

Furthermore, in postmodern societies, identities are said to become fragmented, unstable, and sometimes contradictory or unresolved. Hall (1996) views that the development of various theories (on class, ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, and

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1996, 597.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1996, 597.

sexuality) in the late twentieth century has led to a fragmentation of our vision of identity.⁵⁸ As a result, the postmodern subject is thought to have no fixed, essential, or permanent identity because identities are capable of being formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the context of the cultural systems which surround us.⁵⁹ Consequently, identities, in the modern era, are not always seen as being fully unified, complete, secure, and coherent; and, if someone accepts this theoretical stance and, thus, according to this way of thinking, if someone says that he/she has a unified identity from birth to death, it would be a fallacy.⁶⁰ In sum, Hall's analysis is capable of providing one of various possible overall views of the development of identity, of how it transformed historically from an Enlightenment subject, where identity was a fixed and stable concept, to a postmodern subject, which is conceptually fragmented, unstable, and fluid.

We find it suggested that the notion of identity deals with our sense of self or perception that distinguishes us from other persons or communities. Nonetheless, identity is not something to be limited to the personal or individual realm. If consideration is given to the fact that academic discourse as to what identity represents is a recent one among contemporary academic disciplines, we would have a rather more extensive concept in contrast to the more limited dictionary definition of identity in terms of personal characteristics. In other words, it will become entirely possible to consider that identity covers a whole range of issues, such as the language we speak, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the institutions we belong to, the beliefs we have, and the ideals we possess.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1996, 597.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1996, 598.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1996, 598.

We will also find that there are many possible sources of identity, for instance, ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, and sexuality. Even so, identity can be broadly categorized into two aspects: personal and social. The ‘social identity’ refers to a designation or status attributed by social institutions to an individual. It is a ‘set of characteristics’ commonly shared by people in the context of the groups they belong to. On the other hand, ‘personal identity’ is involved with subjectivity or selfhood, and might be thought of as being made up of such matters as, personal characteristics and behaviour, experiences, desires, memories, and so on. It shows the link between ‘personal identity’ and ‘individual traits’ as John Edwards (2009) claims:

Personal identity—or personality—is essentially the summary statement of all our individual traits, characteristics and dispositions; it defines the uniqueness of each human being. But it is important to realize that individuality does not arise through the possession of psychological components not to be found in anyone else.⁶¹

Personal identity, thus, becomes a ‘set of characteristics’—beliefs, memories, personality, physical appearance, and principles, —of an individual through which he or she can distinguish himself or herself from others. But memory and ideas might not always be enough to produce much of a sense of identity. It would also seem that human relationships and social roles or performance are needed. It is, however, difficult to draw a line between these two aspects of identity (personal and social), because they may be thought of as interconnected and because both equally help in the building of one’s identity. Edwards (2009), in this connection, adds, “The uniqueness of the individual comes about, then through the particular combination or weighting of building blocks

⁶¹ John Edwards, 2009, 19.

drawn from a common human store. To accept this is to accept that no rigid distinction can in fact be made between personality and social identity".⁶² The involvement of many factors in constructing our identity, thus, makes it difficult to distinguish identity as being solely something personal or private. Moreover, personal identity, quite obviously, is something over which the society to which we belong to must have an influence. For this reason, one would expect the existence of certain socio-cultural elements within the personal identity of individuals, something which Edwards (2009) explains as:

Our personal characteristics derive from our socialization within the group (or, rather, groups) to which we belong; one's particular social context defines that part of the larger human pool of potential from which a personal identity can be constructed. Thus, individual identities will be both components and reflections of particular social (or cultural) ones, and the latter will always be, to some extent at least, stereotypic in nature because of their necessary generality across the individual components.⁶³

From the above quotation, it can be seen that there are numerous factors that must be considered as playing a part in determining one's identity. According to this mode of thinking, one cannot limit oneself to defining identity only in terms of the consciousness of the self but must also take into account social and cultural belongings and experiences. Thus, for instance, language would become one of the most vital elements of one's identity, that, in the study of identity, one cannot safely exclude language because it is seen as an inseparable part of what would be labelled as identity. This is so seen because language discloses one's membership to a group (ethnic, national, speech community, and

⁶² Ibid., 2009, 20.

⁶³ Ibid., 2009, 20.

social classes), being a prime marker of at least what others would think of as one's identity.

Thus, 'what is identity' depends on how *it* is thought about. As, it is possible one might consider that, though he or she belongs to a certain ethnic group, it does not necessarily form and may not think it plays an important role in determining his or her identity.

1.2 Research Question and Purpose of the Study

There have been many studies on Henry James' novels (both earlier and later) in regard to notions of identity or self.⁶⁴ Besides, there are also the critical works that discuss Henry James' fiction focusing on the themes of consciousness, culture, race, and sexuality⁶⁵—the issues which we consider as the different aspects of identity or self. This is a point the discussion of identity and self in the introduction part above has sought to clarify. Additionally, the biographies and family history of Henry James, especially those written by Leon Edel and F.O. Matthiessen, show that it is not only his (Henry James') fiction but also his personal life that is concerned with the problems of identity. With all these references, this study aims to examine Henry James' three novels *The American* (1877), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), and *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) to see

⁶⁴ See Philip Sicker's, *Love and Quest for Identity in the Fiction of Henry James* (1980), where the discussion is mainly on the theme of 'love' and the quest of identity. Moreover, Donna Przybylowicz's *Desire and Repression: The Dialectic of Self and Other in the Late Works of Henry James* (1986), is the study of James' later novels that are concerned with the complicated psychological problems related to the self-identity. The author uses the literary theories—post-structuralism and Marxist—to explore those issues.

⁶⁵ See Dorothea Krook's, *The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James* (1968) for the analysis of consciousness; Brian Lee's *The Novels of Henry James: A Study of Culture and Consciousness* (1978), for the discussion of culture and consciousness; Alwyn Berland's, *Culture and Conduct in the Novels of Henry James* (1981), for the discussion of culture, where the author has described culture as civilization; Sara Blair's, *Henry James and the Writing of Race and Nation* (1996), for the analysis of issues of race and nation; and Hugh Stevens' *Henry James and Sexuality* (1998), for the study of sexuality in James' novels.

what aspect of identity or self has been depicted in them. For this, I would like to first establish my thesis statement with the discussion of the certain common points in these novels—as they are significant for this study—and then go on exploring the depiction of characters and their disposition in the novels to discuss the issues of identity and self.

The three novels, *The American* (1877), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), and *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), which we will be discussed in the Chapter III in detail, have certain common points. One of these is that the protagonists of these novels—namely Christopher Newman, Isabel Archer, and Milly Theale—are from America, or the ‘New World’. They all go to Europe or the ‘Old World’, on a quest. Newman goes for pursuing the best, Isabel wants to see life, and Milly seeks for happiness. Unfortunately, they all have tragic endings. Newman fails to get married to his beloved Madame de Cintré; Isabel returns to Rome despite her problematic relation with her husband Gilbert Osmond; and Milly dies without being enabled to achieve the love of Merton Densher. The open ending disappoints the reader. As Donna Przybylowicz, asserts that in James’ work:

The concluding point of the novel usually frustrates closure, for the future of the hero or heroine is perceived as open, uncertain, and often ambiguous, even though there is an idealistic rendering of the self in that otherness is expelled. These works of James suggest that the individual’s stream of experience will cease only with death. At the end, the character has acquired some understanding of his world, has made an agonizing moral decision that in some way influences his future actions, and has also manifested some sort of growth from innocence to a disturbing kind of knowledge. However, although the latter process, which mainly

involves an existential/psychological change rather than a social/political one, indicates a temporal structure in which the individual moves very self-consciously and purposively from one mode of being to another, the final pages rarely offer any prospective solutions or certainties. Therefore, the endings of these novels and stories provide no catharsis for the reader, who is left with an uncomfortable and unfulfilled sensation since the character is not projected in to a definite future but is shown indecisively confronting this ambiguous crossroads in this life.⁶⁶

Here, the isolated and pathetic condition of the protagonists who are confronting their destiny in a challenging situation trigger a big issue: an identity crisis.

The protagonists reveal their unique identity through their actions or deeds that make them different from others. Being American, they are already different (in terms of nationality) from their European counterparts; and also differ in the standards of conduct they employ in deciding on what deeds to carry out and what not to. Thus, the question becomes one of what makes them different and unique. Is it their national traits, or their personality? Is it their inner thoughts or their social circumstances? To put it more concretely: “Is it true that the Marquise de Bellegarde is simply a European version of Christopher Newman; who sits upon her aristocratic sanctity with the same tough possessiveness and assurance that Newman sits on his pile of dollars?”⁶⁷ Another way of looking at things is “Why does Isabel Archer return to Italy at the end of the novel—to an unhappy marriage, an evil husband, an ambiguous, uncathartic resolution of history?”⁶⁸ Similarly, “Is she [Milly] Mrs. Stringham’s ‘princess’, Kate’s ‘dove’, the Psalmist’s dove, Densher’s American girl, Lord Mark’s woman in the Bronzino portrait;

⁶⁶ Przybylowicz, 1986, 36.

⁶⁷ Edel, 1977, 472.

⁶⁸ Berland, 1981, 90.

or is she at different times either her own independent composition, or her own assimilation of these roles?"⁶⁹

The main question, hence, is do they (the protagonists) lose their identity along with their accomplishments or should we have another perspective on looking at their identities. For instance, despite the possibility, by means of their knowledge of the truth behind their having been betrayed, they have in revenging themselves on those who have done them wrong, the protagonists all do something good at the end that prevents them from becoming the victims of their respective situations. Newman forgives the Bellegardes by burning the evidence to be found in the letter containing the proof of their complicity of Madame de Bellegarde in the death of her husband, the former Marquis de Bellegarde. Isabel returns to Rome, although having other options, as she was free, having already broken off her relationship with Osmond by disobeying his command. Milly wills her money to Densher despite her knowledge of the fact that Kate, who loves Densher, planned the plot to get her money. To put it in other words, Christopher Newman does not change at the end of the novel, he simply just comes to a realization of the difference between America and Europe. He becomes aware of the fact that his marriage proposal was rejected not because of his disability or weakness but because of the 'difference'. The 'wall' that divides him and his beloved was not one created by his personality but by differences in cultural expectations. The disposition of Newman described at the end of the novel is clarified as:

Everything was over, and he too at last could rest. He walked down through narrow, winding streets to the edge of the Seine again, and there he saw, close

⁶⁹ Hutchinson, 1982, 93.

above him, the soft, vast towers of Notre Dame.⁷⁰ He crossed one of the bridges and stood a moment in the empty place before the great cathedral; then he went in beneath the grossly-imagined portals. He wandered some distance up the nave and sat down in the splendid dimness. [...] he was very tired; this was the best place he could be in. He said no prayers; he had no prayers to say. He had nothing to be thankful for, and he had nothing to ask; nothing to ask, because now he must take care of himself. [...] he leaned his head for a long time on the chair in front of him; when he took it up he felt that he was himself again. Somewhere in his mind, a tight knot seemed to have loosened. He thought of the Bellegardes; he had almost forgotten them. He remembered them as people he had meant to do something to. He gave a groan as he remembered what he had meant to do; he was annoyed at having meant to do it; the bottom, suddenly, had fallen out of his revenge. Whether it was Christian charity or unregenerate good nature—what it was, in the background of his soul—I [narrator] don't pretend to say; but Newman's last thought was that of course he would let the Bellegardes go. [...] he was ashamed of having wanted to hurt them. They had hurt him, but such things were really not his game.⁷¹

Nevertheless, the ending of the novel was not accepted by many contemporary readers, who hoped for a happy ending. In defense of this criticism and considering the situation of Newman, James defends himself, writing that “they would have been an impossible couple”.⁷² James further states that “they would have no place to live: Claire de Cintré would have hated New York, and Newman could not dwell in France. Leaving out Asia

⁷⁰ The cathedral located on an island between the Left Bank and the Right Bank in Paris, France.

⁷¹ James, *The American*, 1986, 445-46.

⁷² Edel, 1977, 473.

and Africa, there would be ‘nothing left but a farm out West’. Newman was confronted by an insuperable difficulty from which the only issue, as far as James could see, was forfeiture”.⁷³ Isabel, on the other hand, through self-reflection, which made her consider whether her past actions had paved the way for her present, came to understand the social realities of her situation and, in doing so, how she had become the victim of her own decisions, being trapped in a plot of Madame Merle and Osmond. Isabel’s self-reflection has been described as:

Isabel’s cheek burned when she asked herself if she had really married on a factitious theory, on order to do something finely appreciable with her money. But she was able to answer quickly enough that this was only half the story. It was because a certain ardor took possession of her—a sense of the earnestness of his affection and a delight in his personal qualities. He was better than any one else. This supreme conviction had filled her life for months, and enough of it still remained to prove to her that she could not have done otherwise. [...] she had not been mistaken about the beauty of his mind, she knew that organ perfectly now. She had lived with it, she had lived in it almost—it appeared to have become her habitation. [...] a mind more ingenious, more pliant, more cultivated, more trained to admirable exercise, she had not encouraged; and it was this exquisite instrument she had now to recon with. She lost herself in infinite dismay when she thought of the magnitude of *his* deception.⁷⁴

⁷³ Ibid., 1977, 473.

⁷⁴ James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, 1995, 358-59.

Everyone admires Isabel's independent nature but at the end she seems to accept that she is bound by social conventions. She might have chosen the other path but she returns to Rome as a part of her identity.

Similarly, in *The Wings of the Dove*, Milly, in Europe, reaches a level of understanding about herself and the society in which she finds herself that enables her to transcend her limitations at times. This, though, had not always been the case. Before her visit to Europe, Milly was directionless and needed something that fulfilled her life. Milly's longing for Europe, recounted below, is revealed as:

The girl [Milly] brought it out in right as she might have brought a huge confession, something she admitted herself shy about and that would seem to show her as frivolous; it had rolled over her that what she wanted of Europe was *people*, so far as they were to be had, and that, if her friend really wished to know, the vision of this same equivocal quantity was what had haunted her during their previous days, in museums and churches, and what was again spoiling for her the pure taste of scenery. She was all for scenery—yes; but she wanted it human and personal, and all she could say was that there would be in London—wouldn't there? —more of that kind than anywhere else.⁷⁵

So, although being a victim of Kate and struggling with illness, she finds the strength of will within her to redeem Densher.

It is possible, therefore, to understand that the main focus of these novels, *The American*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, and *The Wings of the Dove*, is to, on the one hand, show the difference between Americans and Europeans by creating identities based on national and cultural traits; but, on the other hand, at a deeper level to reveal the secrets

⁷⁵ James, *The Wings of the Dove*, 1986, 141.

of the human mind, the construction of self through the consciousness of characters and their social circumstances. In other words, we come to understand through these novels that identity is ‘located at the core of the individual and yet also at the core of his or her communal culture’.⁷⁶

This study, hence, scrutinizes the way that James develops his concept of identity in his fiction in the light of different aspects of self and identity as discussed in contemporary discourse. The present research views self and identity in terms of difference, self-reflection, and human relationships.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is an attempt to make a contribution to the understanding of identity in Henry James’ fiction from the context of relating it to contemporary study of the problems of identity. It is also believed that a critical approach to Henry James’ fictions from the point of view of identity also gives more understanding of the present-day state of human society and mind-sets because identity addresses the shared and unshared aspects of individuality and society. Here, one might ask, what is the significance of analyzing fictional characters, in particular, from the novels of Henry James who lived more than a century ago, through the lenses of an identity study? The answer is that any writer, or shall we say any artist, observes society differently and often more meaningfully than a normal person does, and that, consequently, we often find in literature a great source of knowledge for explaining and discovering a greater meaning to our own lives and society. In this sense, the study of the fiction of Henry James contributes to finding an answer to the question of the relationship between identity and

⁷⁶ Erikson, 1994, 22.

self. Of course, identities change with the passage of time, but the kind of identity that a person chooses will change his or her life and destiny.

A person should always be able to find his or her own path of choice. Nobody should be able to determine another's identity. What a person does should be his or her own choice, his or her own decision. One should be free to create one's own identity by oneself. This, plus the factor that very few scholars have attempted to examine James' vision of identity through his fiction, was what prompted the research that went into this dissertation.

The works selected were chosen, not only because they represent three phases of James' literary career, but also because they represent different aspects of identity. There is, moreover, a problem in each novel which involves the issue of identity. Other novels, like *Daisy Miller*, *The Ambassadors*, and *The Bostonians*, also raise the issues of identity but they are not included in the discussion because their approach is different, making direct comparison problematic. This study, for instance, might have chosen *What Maisie Knew* or *The Golden Bowl*, but they were not also included because in *The American*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, and *The Wings of the Dove* a greater range of issues may be found dealing more explicitly with matters concerning difference, self-awareness, and human relationships.

1.4 The Outline of the Study

The first chapter deals with the background and historical context of the study and strives to provide the reader with the framework of this research. In this chapter, the historical development of the concept of the self will be found to have been discussed in

detail. This chapter also concerns itself with the objective of the study, the research question and the significance of the research undertaken. The second chapter then discusses the definition and contemporary theories of identity (or the concept of identity) and their application to the criticism of literature written by Henry James. The views of a certain number of prominent scholars are reviewed as a means of gaining a clearer understanding of self and identity. This chapter goes on to discuss James' view of identity and its use in his fiction. Likewise, James' human relationships and his concept of identity are explored. In the third chapter will be found a thorough analysis of the three novels already mentioned, as they each relate to different aspects of identity. The reasons for their choice have also already been given. Finally, in the concluding chapter, the main issues of identity connected to aspects of James' fiction will be presented and summarized. It is here that it is hoped that the significance of this study will become obvious.

Chapter II

2. Henry James and Identity

This chapter makes an attempt to establish the relationship between Henry James and identity with the discussion of: how the term ‘identity’ and ‘self’ been used in his novels, how his theory of the novel shapes the course of his writing, and how his own identity has been constructed. First, the definition of the term ‘identity’ and ‘self’ used in his novels was examined. Then, an in-depth analysis of the James’ theory of novel was explored. Finally, an examination of James’ personal life and human relations was carried out to show how he developed this idea in his fiction over the years and how he was concerned with his own identity.

2.1 On the Usages of the Term ‘Identity’

A study of the concept of ‘identity’ in James’ novels was made with the first step being to discuss what this term meant to Henry James as a vocabulary item, as the terms ‘identity’ and ‘self’, need not have been the same for him as what scholars today would see as belonging to those concepts. This section will explore what James himself probably meant when he used the words ‘identity’ and ‘self’. The analysis made also examined if ‘identity’ and ‘self’ retained the same range of meaning for Henry James throughout his career and, if they did not do so, then when his terminology changed. In order to do so, all appearances of ‘identity’ and ‘self’ in his major writings have been examined. It was initially expected that the meanings of ‘identity’ and ‘self’ as

vocabulary items within Henry James' fiction will not reveal the same breath as the ideas covered by those term in the 21st century.

For this research, a concordance has been made of the texts available online of his major texts: *The American* (1877), *The Europeans* (1878), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903), *The Golden Bowl* (1904), and *The American Scene* (1907). This was done simply by downloading the concerned texts and combining them into one long file. The resulting text was then processed using the corpus linguistics software, AntConc,⁷⁷ to search for the terms, 'identity' and 'self'. AntConc detected altogether 59 appearances of the term 'identity' and 190 appearances of the term 'self'.

Then, all examples were listed up in context. At this point, each appearance was checked against its larger circumstances in order to understand what word or phrase might best paraphrase the meaning of 'identity' and 'self' in each case. The paraphrases were then listed in order⁷⁸ to show how Henry James' concept of identity developed over the years and how this may or may not be reflected in the descriptions of identity observed in the *OED Online* and other dictionaries.

The first example is from the novel *The American* (1877). An analysis of the text suggests that the term 'identity' is used in terms of uniqueness or being something special. It is accepted that the earlier novels of James reflect an international theme referring to the cultural conflict between Americans and Europeans. *The American*, one of the earliest novels, likewise deals with a similar subject matter. It revolves around the protagonist, Christopher Newman, an American who is wandering through Europe. Thus,

⁷⁷ AntConc, a freeware concordance program developed by Laurence Anthony, Faculty of Science and Engineering, Waseda University, Japan, April 10, 2012.

⁷⁸ See Appendix I for the lists in detail.

the characterization of Newman may be thought of as one suggested by the following representative quotation “The cut of his gentleman’s moustache, with the two premature wrinkles in the cheek above it, and the fashion of his garments, in which an exposed shirt-front and a cerulean cravat played perhaps an obtrusive part, completed the conditions of his identity”⁷⁹ would indicate that he is somehow uniquely special.

In *The Europeans* (1878), where the differences between European and American character are illustrated, identity seems to be used in the sense of who or what one is. As we have, “He had not heard her coming, and he lay motionless, flat on his back, with his hands clasped under his head, staring up at the sky; so that the Baroness was able to reflect, at her leisure, upon the question of his identity”,⁸⁰ suggesting the one’s individuality or self.

In *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), one can see that James using the word “identity” as a term indicating social status. Thus, the following quote asserts, “She made this last announcement as if she were referring to a person of tolerably distinct identity. For Isabel, however, it represented little; she could only continue to feel that Madame Merle had as charming a manner as any she had ever encountered”.⁸¹ Here it would seem that the word ‘identity’ is used for social ranking.

When we move further along in our observation of Henry James’ career as a writer, we can see increasing variety in his use of the term ‘identity’. This shows its fullest development in *The Wings of the Dove* (1902). Here, there is not only an unusual variety

⁷⁹ Henry James, *The American*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/177/pg177.txt> (accessed 8 May 2015).

⁸⁰ Henry James, *The Europeans*. <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/179/pg179.txt> (accessed 8 May 2015).

⁸¹ Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/2833/pg2833.txt> (accessed 8 May 2015).

in his usage, but also a large number of appearances, 14 in total. Identity is used as a means of indicating identification as individuals, identity in terms of personality, identity in the sense of having points or things in common, identity as one's persona, sameness, and as people might see themselves. This later novel of James shows that, at least in his later years, his use of the term identity is not limited to a single meaning.

'Identity' in *The Ambassadors* (1903) is also used more complexly and more frequently than in any of his novels written at the end of the nineteenth century. The eleven usages of identity in this novel include identity in the sense of an identifying quality, identity as an identifiable social position, identity as social interaction, as an image, as who a person might be, and as personality. The emphasis, as a whole, seems to be on a description of personal attributes.

Similarly, the term identity in *The Golden Bowl* (1904) appears six times, but with six different shades of meaning. It is used to indicate a sense of sameness, to refer to social position, to a common outlook, a reason for doing something, an existence, and as an indicator of equality.

Finally, in the last major work of Henry James, *The American Scene* (1907), he uses the word identity a total of 19 times to indicate people, recognition, and differentness. The travelogue clearly shows that the term identity continued to develop for James as a concept in the later years of his life.

The analysis above, suggests that James mostly employed the word identity in terms of personality, uniqueness, or something special in the earlier phase of his writing. However, the use of the linguistic item in later works suggests that the lexical item refers to not only to sameness or identicalness, but also to a variety of meaning such as, persona,

points in common, and so on. James has also used the term ‘self’ to a great extent⁸², which we need to discuss here due to the reason that the term is related to ‘identity’.

Identity, in the sense that it is currently used, is a relatively recent historical phenomenon.⁸³ In the past, *self*, being related to the concept of identity as we see it today, may be seen in use, when today the term identity would normally be expected to appear. In fact, it would seem that with regard to William James, the famous psychologist and brother of Henry James, identity, unlike self, is something people see and is somehow more obvious than self.⁸⁴ However, the possibility of self being interchangeable with identity in the writings of Henry James made it desirable to examine the term self as it appears in a select group of Henry James’s literary output. And, in fact, this concern would seem justified by the existence of a phrase that appears in James literary output (“One never knows one’s self”) where one would appear justified in assuming that self carries within it at least one of the meanings of identity employed by Henry James. This is why all examples of *self* appearing in a selected number of the works of Henry James (*The Europeans*, *Portrait of a Lady*, *The American*, *Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors*, *The Golden Bowl*, and *The American Scene*) are listed in Appendix II.

All tokens of the word “self” appearing in Appendix II were analysed as an indication of Henry James’ ideas concerning identity. Multiple appearances of self (with the respective number of appearances in brackets) are: one’s self (75), self-consciousness (16), herself (12), self-possession (11), self-control (8), self-defense (6), myself (6), yourself (3), stiffer self (3), single self (3), self-effacement (2), second self (2), and

⁸² See Appendix II for the list in detail.

⁸³ Porter, *Rewriting the Self*, 1997, 2.

⁸⁴ James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 1950, 291-92.

wretched self (2). Though appearing only one time each, other usages of self are: self-inspection, self-gratulation, self-abandonment, self-control, his self, self-indulgence, remarkable self, self-persuasion, self-reproach, self-command, itself, self-respect, self-revelation, himself, self-criticism, self-esteem, unworthy self, particular self, self-conscious, interesting self, self-sufficiency, sentient self, our self, unselfishness, better self, seeming self, self-sufficient, self-sufficing, self-unspotted, self-knowledge, self-objecting, self-respect, self-analysis, and self-contradictory.

Out of the 190 tokens of “self” retrieved from the 177 text samples appearing in Appendix II, by far the most common use of the word is in the phrase “one’s self” (75 tokens), which is consistent with James’ interest in generic statements or principles of living that should apply to all individuals. The second most commonly occurring phrase is “self-consciousness” (16 tokens), which is consistent with James’ belief that it is both possible and desirable for an individual to consciously examine their own existence. The third most common phrase is “self-possession” (11 tokens) which can be used for a character seemingly following the dictates of their deeper self (or in Freudian terms, their super-ego). “Self-defense” (6 tokens) may indicate defending one’s identity as much as their physical body. Reflexive pronouns such as “herself”, “myself”, “yourself” can be ignored on the basis that they are more often used out of grammatical necessity than as any signal of meaning regarding identity in Henry James.

At the low-frequency end, it is possible to identify some meaningful sets of phrases such as mental actions performed consciously by an individual on their own mind, such as “self-gratulation”, “self-persuasion, self-effacement”, “self-abandonment”, “self-indulgence”, “self-knowledge”, “self-reproach”, and “self-analysis”. We can,

furthermore, try and make definitions of some of the tokens of “self” that may be unclear. Thus, self-gratulation seems to be used in the sense of inner happiness. Stiffer self might be thought of as one’s personal stonewall. Self-mistrust, though the meaning is obvious, might possibly signal something about James’s system of beliefs. Desultory self-inspection might indicate an unfocused attempt at making an analysis of oneself. Self-reproach, though the meaning is not doubtful, might also signal something about James’s system of beliefs, as does self-mistrust. Wretched self might signal the existence of self-pity. And, lastly, the “sin of self-esteem” might signal that, according to James’s system of beliefs, there exists an obligation for a person to question themselves, thus making unquestioned self-esteem somehow less than fully moral.

In philosophy, an opinion exists that self does not actually exist as an objective reality, but rather that it is merely a concept. We don’t know if Henry James was either aware of or believed in such possibility. But, other than very occasionally, apparently, for James, a person’s self was not used in the same context as a person’s identity. As has already been discussed in this dissertation, identity in the works of Henry James has a wide range of meanings. Nevertheless, as the discussion to be found in this dissertation shows, there would seem to be almost no indication of overlap. As *self*, as an English lexical item, can carry within it even now a sense of personal uniqueness in terms of identity, this almost complete lack of overlap is surprising and indicates yet again the precision with which James wrote his fiction.

2.2 On the Theory of Novel, James’ view of America and Europe, and Identity

James had a distinct vision of what a novel should be. In ‘The Art of Fiction’⁸⁵,

⁸⁵ ‘The Art of Fiction’ is James’ critical theory of fiction, written on 1884 in response to Walter Besant.

James argues for his own theory of fiction. This essay was written in a rejoinder to a certain Walter Besant's⁸⁶ who published a lecture on the 'art of fiction'. James found himself in partial disagreement with Besant's ideas about fiction. As such, James proposes a theory of fiction which professes that a novel or other works of fiction belong to an artistic genre making it like other forms of art such as music, poetry, painting, and architecture. He, therefore, maintains that fiction should not only be seen as comparable to the other artforms, but that it was only fiction's due that it be respected as such. He not only argues at length that novels should depict reality and should attempt to depict life, but also that a writer should be free to write without any restrictions in terms of form and content. In addition, James also discusses whether a novel should contain a moral purpose or not, about the distinction between the ideal of what a novel should be and of readers' choices, and how each element of a novel is equally important to make it an organic whole. In this sense, the discussion of James' theory of the novel guides us in understanding his vision of identity.

James begins his essay by mentioning that contemporary, late 19th century critics assume that the English novel lacks 'a theory, a conviction, a consciousness of itself behind it-of being the expression of an artistic faith'.⁸⁷ Then he explains that this discourse should be discussed, with the sharing of ideas, the giving of suggestions and experimentation encouraged in order to formulate theories on it. James further rejects the assertion of 'fiction being wicked' and being just a sort of 'make believe'. Instead, he asserts that a novel does 'attempt to represent life' like other visual arts, such as

⁸⁶ Walter Besant (1836-1901), a British novelist and historian of the late 19th century.

⁸⁷ Henry James, 'The Art of Fiction,' 1984, 345. Hereafter, AoF will be used for 'The Art of Fiction'.

painting.⁸⁸ James makes an analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the novelist and says they both are complete, that ‘their inspiration is the same, their process is the same, their success is the same’.⁸⁹ Hence, whether is it writing a novel or creating a painting, artistic creation depicts life. Then, James compares a picture with reality and a novel with history. Similar to historians, novelists also should narrate reality and represent life. To consider the novel only as a make believe is, James avers ‘a terrible crime’ because it will make the reader assume that the novel consists of less than full truth.⁹⁰ Thus, a novelist should have an interest in truth because, in this point, he or she shares a common purpose with the philosopher and the painter, and should believe that art must be based on truth.

James then partly agrees with Besant’s claim that ‘fiction is one of the fine arts, deserving all the honors and emoluments that have hitherto been reserved for the successful profession of music, poetry, painting, architecture’.⁹¹ This statement appears because, in the past, Protestant communities, in particular, had opposed novels, saying they had a negative impact on people because they contained immoral subject matter. They assumed that novels were ‘too frivolous’ and could infect moral human beings so that they become bad. They recognized that there are good novels but that there should be a discussion on what a good novel is. Concerning this, James wrote that, “they would argue, of course, that a novel ought to be ‘good’, but this term would vary considerably from one critic to another. One would say that being good means, representing virtuous and aspiring characters, another would say that it depends for a ‘happy ending,’ on a

⁸⁸ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 346.

⁸⁹ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 346.

⁹⁰ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 347.

⁹¹ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 347.

distribution at the last of prizes, pensions, husbands, wives, babies, millions, appended paragraphs, and cheerful remarks.”⁹² Henry James admits that there are, of course, bad novels that are written about trivial subject matter and do not contain reality but he also believes that they do not harm the good ones. In this light, James claims that the novel is “as free and as serious a branch of literature as any other”.⁹³ James further argues that “a novel is in its broadest definition a personal impression of life [...] there will be no intensity at all, and therefore no value, unless there is freedom to feel and say.”⁹⁴ In other words, James emphasizes that a writer should, first of all, assert his or her freedom of expression, and that a novel should be interesting enough to capture the mind of its readers. His major claim is that in order to reproduce life in freedom of expression is the most important prerequisite and that a writer should write what he deserves to write in any literary style without any hesitation because there is no prescribed format for writing a novel. He, furthermore, states that, just as the painter who learns by observing the works of others, so does the writer.

In this series of arguments, James accepts some of Besant’s ideas, but at the same time, finds it very difficult to agree with him in other cases. For instance, James counteracts Besant’s idea of the ‘depiction of real characters in novels’ by saying it is very difficult to define reality. There is no recipe to represent a sense of reality or, in James’ words, “the measure of reality is very difficult to fix” because “Humanity is immense and reality has a myriad forms; the most one can affirm is that some of the flowers of fiction have the odor of it, and others have not”.⁹⁵ For James:

⁹² Ibid., AoF, 1984, 348.

⁹³ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 349.

⁹⁴ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 350.

⁹⁵ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 351.

Experience is never limited and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every airborne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative—much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius—it takes to itself the faintest hints of life; it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations.⁹⁶

Experience which consists of impressions, James argues, is similar ‘just as (have we not seen it?) they are the very air we breathe’.⁹⁷ It indicates that the impressions we get by observing things can indicate experiences and thus become an essential element of a fiction. James also states that, in order to achieve exactness or reality in a novel, one must write in detail. Mastering details gives a novel a degree of art similar to painting. The one point James has no problem with agreeing with Besant is on the importance of ‘taking notes’.

Continuing his focus on the idea of the novel competing with life, James then moves to the idea that “a novel is a living thing, all one and continuous as it lives will it be found, I think, that in each of the parts there is something of each of the other parts”.⁹⁸ James’ point is that a novel cannot be composed by putting different plots together; rather, there must be coherence and coexistence. Each element should be interconnected as each part is equally important to form a good work of art. The novel, thus, is an organic whole, not an arrangement of parts. For James, the distinction to be found between novels of incidents (actions) and novels of characters is not something of

⁹⁶ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 351-52.

⁹⁷ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 352.

⁹⁸ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 353.

significance. Rather, James believes that one should classify novels in terms of whether the incidents have life or not.

James argues that “the novel and the romance, the novel of incident and that of character—these separations appear to me to have been made by critics and reader for their own convenience”.⁹⁹ In his view, a writer does not classify his work when he writes. In the same way, there is no meaning in saying ‘modern English novel’ because there is no exact measure to classify novels, only the imperative that a writer be given the complete freedom to produce an unexpectedly good work of art. James’ views on readers is that different people have different choices as to likes and dislikes. He, himself, strongly rejects the idea that a writer should restrict his writing based on the likes and dislikes of critics or of readers, or that the writer should be limited by such opinions. Similarly, James argues that a whole novel is a ‘story’, unlike Besant. James defines ‘a story represents the subject, the idea, the *donnée* [a subject or theme of a narrative] of a novel’; and they function as an ‘organic whole’.¹⁰⁰ He, therefore, argues that “the story and the novel, the idea and the form, are the needle and thread, and I never heard of a guild of tailors who recommended the use of the thread without the needle or the needle without the thread”.¹⁰¹

Finally, James opines that the novel is ‘the most magnificent form of art’.¹⁰² Then he turns his attention to the novel’s moral purpose. He asserts that it is good to have moral purpose but if writers censor themselves so that they do not write down their feelings and emotions, it only spreads a negative message to society. For instance, “In the English

⁹⁹ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 354.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 358.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 358.

¹⁰² Ibid., AoF, 1984, 360.

novel (by which I [Henry James] mean the American as well), more than in any other, there is a traditional difference between that which people know and which they agree to admit that they know, that which they see and that which they speak of, that which they feel to be a part of life and that which they allow to enter into literature. There is a great difference, in short, between what they talk of in conversation and what they talk of in print".¹⁰³

James argues that "No good novel will ever proceed from a superficial mind".¹⁰⁴ If the mind is deep and rich, any work of art will have quality or morality. Once again returning to the theme of freedom, he maintains that the artist should be free, should depict reality and should give details in his work in order to excel as art. The most essential thing is that the writer should enjoy what he is doing or, as James writes, "enjoy it as it deserves".¹⁰⁵ Thus, James' view is that novel is an artistic genre with many opportunities and possibilities, with fewer restrictions than other art forms enjoy, and that a novelist should enjoy being a novelist and be able to catch the color of life.

Hence, James can be seen as the originator of a new theory in novelistic discourse in the Anglo-American world and a critic who developed a new way for analyzing the novel. James' thoughts gave the novel a new level of respect as a literary genre and promoted a theoretical understanding, which became the foundation for modernist fiction writers (stream-of-consciousness writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, etc.) and literary criticism.¹⁰⁶ It also established the fact that fiction is a form of life where characters' lives are expressed as verbal works of art and not as mere make believe or

¹⁰³ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 361.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 361.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., AoF, 1984, 362.

¹⁰⁶ High, 1997, 91.

imagination. The characters of his novels are, for this reason, to be thought of more as observations of life than as the manifestations of actions or events. The consciousness of the characters play a crucial role in the development of the stories in his novels, in which consciousness 'became his very subject'.¹⁰⁷ The exploration of a character's mind and the presenting of it in different social contexts was, to James, as dramatic as the outside world.¹⁰⁸ We can thus see a clash of personalities and cultures more than actions and events in most of his novels, especially as his novels often depict an aristocratic society of Europe where social values and family reputation are more important than personal freedom or independence. In the later part of his career, James did not make his characters act, rather he only narrates the situations in which they find themselves through an exploration of their minds.¹⁰⁹

At this point, it is advisable to make a somewhat lengthy digression as to Henry James' view of America, his native land, to determine how he sees the issues of identity in relation to national identity. This can be done through an examination of *The American Scene* (1907)¹¹⁰ which was written when Henry James returned to his native land, America, after an absence of more than 20 years. *The American Scene* is of interest because it explicitly deals with the issues of the formation of national identity. Although most of the novels of Henry James concerned themselves with the theme of cultural conflict between America and Europe, this travelogue is connected with the impact of alien cultures on the shaping of American society. The impressions of James about his own nation raise questions such as how should we define our national identity.

¹⁰⁷ Wegelin, in *Tales of Henry James*, 1984, 344.

¹⁰⁸ High, 1997, 92.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 1997, 93.

¹¹⁰ For this study, we are using *The American Scene*, Penguin Books Publication, 1994.

When James returned to America, it was in the midst of a great wave of immigration, the second of three major waves of immigration in American history, a time when people were coming from all over the world representing many cultures, races and religious affiliations that were in the process of making American society far more complex than it had been when he was a young man. First the British, Germans and Irish came. Then the influx of Italians, the Jews and other ethnic groups from Austria-Hungary and Russia, as well as Asians made the community more diverse and complex.¹¹¹ This raises the question of what American identity means. James is looking for the same answer in *The American Scene*. America was the land for immigrants who were an important source of labor and whose labor provided the means for making America a prosperous nation with a rapidly expanding economy. In the book, he raises the issue of the immigrant because of the vital role played by the immigrant in making American society dynamic and democratic. For a short time in its history during the 19th century, in the spirit of democracy, America opened itself up for mass immigration from other societies. Especially during James' lifetime, many people from Europe moved to America. James was not pleasantly surprised to see such a large number of alien people in his birth place and he felt compelled to criticize alien culture as a major cause of the degradation of American culture and morality. However, in spite of that, he remained positive towards the democracy and freedom that characterized American society as he saw it.

Nevertheless, immigrants were also seen as threatening not only the social order and the living standards of the people already settled there but also as endangering the formation of a national identity based on its historical origins in colonial America.

¹¹¹ Huntington, *Who We Are?*, 2005, 42-46..

Needless to say, James found himself shocked by this problem of identity facing America as a nation.

Whether one accepts this definition or not, it would seem clear that the very notion of nation is problematic as it will always be related to many issues of both the past and present. In a similar manner, one's socio-cultural context, family upbringing, and the educational institutions one attends also play a vital role in shaping the mind of an individual and can take on the status of tradition and, in this way, tradition becomes incorporated into the individual's understanding of the self. Moreover, when these traditions that make up part of their self-conception are shared by other individuals as a part of their self-conception, one becomes then both related to those other individuals, and aware of the relationship that is shared.

It is obvious that James tried to redefine for himself his concept of national identity in *The American Scene*, which also explores the formation of racial and ethnic identities depending upon the social and cultural changes of particular elements of the American nation. He also strives to explain how cultural transformation takes place in such a diverse society as America.

The American Scene, itself, is divided into fourteen chapters and describes many parts of America, going into great detail about its people, manners, and the social change that James could see after his long absence. As a result, his views are often very subjective and he can be found to be constantly comparing the present situation of America at the time of his visit to his past memories of America during his youth. James, as a whole, seems to be very much impressed by the rise of commerce and the democratic system of government he finds. He also exhibits great concern about the impact of free immigration

on American culture and the American national identity. This is especially evident in the third chapter, entitled “New York and The Hudson: A Spring Impression” which deals mainly with the changing social and cultural atmosphere of New York caused by immigrants.

At the beginning of the chapter on New York, James describes New York as a vast hot pot where lots of things could happen simultaneously. James could also see a certain fusion in New York society because of the many immigrants which lived there together. He describes this as “The fusion, as of elements in solution in a vast hot pot, is always going on, and one stage of the process is as typical or as vivid as another.”¹¹² Under these conditions, James could write both that New York “deeply languishes and palpitates” or “vibrates and flourishes”.¹¹³ James goes further to describe the innumerable immigrant workers in New York as being groups of diggers and ditchers. Moreover, he was quick to notice that the typical nature of these workers exhibited “the lack of communication between them.”¹¹⁴ James showed a considerable surprise by the cold nature of people living in New York at the time of his visit. James finds memorable an example of a young man who brags about being an American, though, in reality he was no more than an alien in an alien land and concludes by writing that “there is no claim to brotherhood with aliens in the first grossness of their alienism.”¹¹⁵

James then moves on to the question of “who and what is an alien”¹¹⁶ and perceives that for some period of time they will remain alien but that they cannot remain in this condition for a long time. James writes that this is because “The great fact about his

¹¹² James, *The American Scene* (hereafter *TAS*), 1994, 118.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, *TAS*, 1994, 118.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, *TAS*, 1994, 118.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, *TAS*, 1994, 120.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, *TAS*, 1994, 124.

companions was that, foreign as they might be, newly inducted as they might be, they were at home, really more at home, at the end of their few weeks or months or their year or two, than they had ever in their lives been before; and he was at home too, quite with the same intensity.”¹¹⁷ However, the fact was that there were many groups of foreigners in New York, especially Italians, blacks, and Chinese who represented special challenges at assimilation, causing James to feel that was why people do not see American values in New York at first sight.¹¹⁸

In contrast to New York City, James also describes the natural beauty of the countryside he found during his visit there. In that setting he could feel more romantic, as he enjoyed himself among the beautiful landscape. He was impressed by the great scenery, but even in New York City, itself, he was able to find certain areas showing an old civilization and established manners.

Nevertheless, James recognized that America was a nation of immigrants and that immigrants played a vital role in the formation of the United States. Nor does James exhibit a consistently negative attitude toward aliens, arguing that they have become essential elements of American society and how they are attached to it but also how they enjoy their own identity. James wrote, “the denizens of the New York Ghetto, heaped as thick as the splinters on the table of a glass-blower, had each, like the fine glass particle, his or her individual share of the whole hard glitter of Israel.”¹¹⁹ James then mentions that there is a certain criticism of New York for having a dirty and poor environment compared to other parts of the United States¹²⁰.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., *TAS*, 1994, 125.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., *TAS*, 1994, 125.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., *TAS*, 1994, 132.

¹²⁰ Ibid., *TAS*, 1994, 144.

The question is, thus, how did long-term residence in the United Kingdom affect his view of identity as described in *The American Scene*. In short, was Henry James really writing as an American or as an Englishman in American clothing?

James lived most of his life abroad (Europe), and we see this influence on his writings. His long-term stay in Europe not only give him a literary career but also might have shaped his identity.¹²¹ Another perspective on living abroad for a prolonged time might be that “mid-Victorian London and Second Empire Paris were bound to make a greater impression on a sensitive small boy than their contemporary New York and Boston. The future novelist very sensibly adapted himself to the circumstances of his wandering life and became an ardent sightseer.”¹²² But his journey was not easy. He faced complications living in Europe and writing on the subject of the conflict between Europe and America. James admitted that “it’s a complex fate, being an American, and one of the responsibilities it entails is fighting against a superstitious valuation of Europe.”¹²³ The decision of living abroad was made by James himself so that he could work there as a writer.¹²⁴ Meanwhile, James was also accused of being too much concerned with art and literature; and being less interested in practical life. His unwillingness to marry also supports this conclusion. In a letter to Grace Norton, one of his acquaintances, he reveals some queerness in his personality, admitting, “I am unlikely to ever to marry [...]. One’s attitude toward marriage is a fact—the most characteristic part doubtless of one’s general attitude toward life. [...] If I were to marry I should be

¹²¹ Auchincloss, 1975, 3.

¹²² Ibid., 1975, 3-4.

¹²³ James quoted in Matthiessen, 1948, 290.

¹²⁴ James notes down, “I have made my choice, and God knows that I have now no time to waste. My choice is the old world—my choice, my need, my life” (James quoted in Matthiessen, 1948, 296).

guilty in my own eyes of inconsistency—I should pretend to think quite a little better of life and I really do.”¹²⁵

James’ portrait of cultural differences and social consciousness in the novel also comes from his sense of responsibility. It is not only related to his personal quality of being a good spectator of life and society or him being a painter of life but also represents the burden he felt in living in Europe. James reveals:

My impressions here are exactly what I expected they would be, and I scarcely see the place and feel the manners, the race, the tone of things, now that I am on the spot, more vividly than I did while I was still in Europe. My work lies there—and with this vast new world, *je n’ai que faire* [I do not have to do]. One can’t do both—one must choose. No European writer is called upon to assume that terrible burden, and it seems hard that I should be. The burden is necessarily greater for an American—for he *must* deal, more or less, even if only by implication, with Europe; whereas no European is obliged to deal in the least with America. No one dreams of calling him less competent for not doing so.¹²⁶

Through this, James gradually assumes himself to be a cosmopolitan who belongs to nowhere and whose country is where he lives. This might be the cause that in most of James’ novels there is the reflection of cosmopolitanism in different aspects: in the settings, characters, and themes. Most of his novels are set in different cities of Europe such as Venice, Paris, and London, which in the late nineteenth century was the largest and most cosmopolitan city in the world. At one point, James admits that he fell in love with London and expresses a feeling of belonging to this city. He states:

I take very kindly indeed to London, and am immensely contented at having come here. I must be a born Londoner for the place to stand the very severe test to

¹²⁵ Ibid., 1948, 294.

¹²⁶ James quoted in Matthiessen, 1948, 296.

which I am putting it: leaving Paris and its brilliancies and familiarities, its easy resources and the abundant society I had there, to plunge into darkness, solitude and sleet, in mid-winter, to say nothing of the sooty, wooly desolation of a London lodging—to do this, and to like this murky Babylon really all the better, is to feel that one is likely to get on here. I like the place, I like feeling in the midst of the English world, however lost in it I may be. I find it interesting, inspiring, even exhilarating.¹²⁷

Similarly, the characters of Henry James' fiction can speak different languages and are from various nationalities, which are also a part of being cosmopolitan. James, however, did not copy or follow literary traditions or models; rather, he creates his own notion of fiction which can be seen in the discussion of 'The Art of Fiction.' His being faithful to the realities of life as it actually exists shows him to have a different viewpoint of cosmopolitanism than might be expected. James' method involved the transformation of his international theme which did not apply to the somewhat greater provincialism of Americans at the end of the century. Post-Jamesian modern literature, however, seems to have moved on, dealing in more recent times with ever more violent subject matter, with murder, physical brutality, and pain, themes which it is hard to imagine James embracing. But though James wrote about different, less violent subject matter, he became a pioneer for modernist literature and there have been many writers who follow the literary tradition Henry James advocated and practiced.

2.3 Personal life, Human Relations, and Identity

This section discusses Henry James' personal life and human relations to see the

¹²⁷ Ibid., 1948, 295.

construction of his identity. We have already mentioned above that the major theme of James' fiction consists of the quest of identity, but the question is whether this discourse is related to the real life of James or not. For this we would like to make reference of his autobiography and biographical works as well as his personal letters through which he corresponded with his family, friends and acquaintances most of the time. This would help us understand how James looked up for a distinct identity for himself in the background of his family, his human relations, and changing sociocultural context.

One way of looking at the people's personal life is their narratives of everyday events or actions, which we also called autobiography. However, autobiography is not merely an account of every day actions rather it exhibits how someone becomes the way he/she is. From this, it seems that narratives of every day actions and impressions reveal identity. Nevertheless, on the relationship between autobiography and identity, Steph Lawler adds, "[it] is not that autobiography (the telling of a life) *reflects* a pre-given identity: rather, identities are *produced* through the autobiographical work in which all of us engage every day, even though few of us will formally write an 'autobiography'".¹²⁸

In Henry James case, too, his *Autobiography* (1956), where he narrates his life story, discussing his relationship with his family and his view of society, should be taken as a narrative that unveils his self-consciousness because, as Peter Burke claims, "this type of writing (autobiography) became popular during the 16th century, in the Western context, because they became helpful in revealing their [scholars'] self-consciousness".¹²⁹ The illustration of childhood memories, experiences, views on art, literature, and culture; dilemma of having an emotional attachment to two different countries; feelings and

¹²⁸ Lawler, 2014, 26.

¹²⁹ Burke in *Rewriting the Self*, 1997, 20-24.

perceptions toward the world at large; and becoming a great novelist from a shy, powerless, and naïve boy, in the *Autobiography* suggest James' identity involves many aspects. James' autobiography, in this sense, is not only a collection of his life episodes but also an account of his development of self. Frederik W. Dupee, the editor of the *Autobiography*, states in the introduction of the edition that the conditions James faced during his early life had alternately favored and threatened his free development, but that, as a close observer of society and human relationships, he ultimately became a great writer.¹³⁰ Dupee's comments indicate that there is a link between James' impressions of life and his writings. For instance, the 'international theme' (the conflict between American and European characters in terms of values, tradition, and culture), which is depicted in the many novels, including *The American* (1877), *The Europeans* (1878), *Daisy Miller* (1879), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), and *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), could be connected to the experience of his having lived in two different continents, in Europe and America, time and again. Concerning the link between James' real life and its articulation in his fiction, Dupee states:

[...] in a general way, his [James'] own story was that of the protagonists of many of his more ambitious works of fiction. The search for a self among the pressures exerted by other and stronger selves, by conditions of time and place, by received ideas and established manners—this was James's search just as it is that of the child heroine of *What Maisie Knew*, of the young woman who is the heroine of *The Portrait of a Lady*, and of the aging man who is the hero of *The Ambassadors*. The growth of a mind from a state of relative moral

¹³⁰ Dupee in *Autobiography*, 1956, xii.

servitude to a state of relative moral freedom was James's subject in his autobiography as in much of his fiction.¹³¹

The protagonists of James' novels, in most cases, go on a journey seeking for a new sense of self or at least for the development of their 'selves' as Dupee claimed and exemplifies above. Leon Edel, one of the principal critics of Henry James, also supports this idea of James' concern for self by asserting that James, all his life, was concerned about his identity. Edel insists, 'throughout his life, James volubly protested against the parental failure to let him have a distinctive name and (by the same token) an identity of his own'.¹³² Leon Edel was referring to the same name the son and father possessed, 'Henry James'. The inheritance of the same name as his father, Edel argues, became a humiliation for James for a long time. The frustrations James expressed for lacking a distinct name in the *Autobiography* shows how he was preoccupied with the problem of his own identity. Edel mentions that James was also dissatisfied with Henry James Sr. (his father) for not having a distinct social identity, because he had problems identifying his father to his classmates. Edel adds, "it was a matter of concern to the little Henry that he could not give his father a parental identity that conformed with the identity of other fathers".¹³³ This demonstrates how James' problematic relationship with his father and his life struggles shaped his thoughts and feelings, and finally his identity. This was something which is incisively reflected in his writings and which shows that James was a very sensitive and contemplative person, who took relationships and human behavior seriously. For example, the female characters in his fiction seem strong and independent, yet suffer as a result of the decisions they take and on account of their being too innocent

¹³¹ Ibid., *Autobiography*, 1956, xiii-xiv.

¹³² Edel, *The Life of Henry James*, 1977, 50.

¹³³ Ibid., 1977, 46.

of the world by nature. This can be linked to his impressions of the female members of his family, such as his grandmother who was an enthusiastic reader of novels written by female novelists; of Mary James, the mother of James, who was characterized as being a strong-willed woman; and her mother's cousin Helen, as a lady with an iron hand. Edel adds:

At some stage the thought came to him [James] that men derive strength from the women they marry, and that conversely women can deprive men both of strength and life. [...] The reason behind it is also related to his family background, in the James family annals there seemed to be answers: women were strong and survived their men, or if they did not, then somehow the man could not continue to live. The man seemed doomed.¹³⁴

There are numerous issues concerning relationships like that in James' fiction, which can be linked to his personal impressions and observations.

James, being one of the greatest observers of society, gives us a different perspective of his community and of human relationships, as we see, "From *Roderick Hudson* to *The Ambassadors* and in the tales the permutations and combinations of this situation are played out: the observer is obsessed by the relationship between people, as if the little Henry, looking at his father and mother, and the ever-present Aunt Kate, never quite grasped what occurred between them".¹³⁵ In most of his novels, there is an observer, who knows everything, who comments, suggests, and warns the characters in different situations. The omnipotent narrator is no other than James himself, who in the form of the observer tells us impressive stories of life, love, and relationships. In his hands, the art of

¹³⁴ Ibid., 1977, 47-48.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 1977, 49.

writing becomes a powerful tool. It can be used as a weapon to defeat weakness and to take care of problems as they occur. James also used the art of writing as a means of overcoming his fear and the problems that faced him. Again, Edel asserts:

There was one difference between the dream and the facts of his life. In the wishful dream his conquest was achieved by direct counterattack, by pursuit. In his life it was he who fled; his conquests were by persistence, indirection, secrecy. Napoleon had used the sword. Henry James had used the subtle pen. James left his homeland; his real home was the Galerie d'Apollon¹³⁶. By the power of created art, James achieved a victory over the 'appalling' of life.¹³⁷

The influence of contemporary tradition should be relevant for an exploration of his writing, of how he connects his ideas of identity to create a situation and disposition of characters. James was born in the aftermath of the social revolutions of the mid-nineteenth century in Albany, New York. He was caught between a Victorian mind-set and the changing situation of American society. America at that time was just emerging from the Civil War, while Europe was suffering from economic crisis and revolutions. In the mid-nineteenth century, America was experiencing misgovernment, civil violence, the growth of industry, and migration. On the other hand, in Europe, Britain was expanding its colonies and other European countries were experiencing social problems. In literature, America saw the dawn of the realism where writers tended to depict real-life characters and societies in their works. They wrote about the poor and their sufferings, attacking the excesses of American capitalism. They also imagined a utopia, where one could find justice and where there would be enough happiness to escape from the

¹³⁶ Galerie d'Apollon is a part of Louvre, which is a museum and art gallery located in Paris, France.

¹³⁷ Edel, 1977, 65.

problems of society. In the 1880s and 1890s, realists gradually turned towards naturalists, who asserted the maxim that human life is not free. In this way, writers continued to write about the changing nature of American society: poor people's sufferings, discrimination, exploitation and materialistic development. They tried to show capitalism, for good but more often for bad, as a factor of social change. The literature of the time, therefore, became a very strong tool for social protest.¹³⁸ Yet, James' fiction, however, reveals that he was much more interested in the psychological condition of his characters than in the political or economic situation of society. Although he was interested in realism, his view of depicting characters was significantly different, as Matthiessen posits, "He [James] could possess the external world only through recording his images, arranging them in scenes, and framing them with the permanent form of art".¹³⁹ Matthiessen further adds that James "rarely used fiction to dramatize his own problems".¹⁴⁰ We would understand this in the context of James' relationship with his family and the contemporary writers of his time.

The following section focuses on the human relations network of Henry James, on the assumption that a knowledge of this can shed light on Henry James' formation of self as a writer. This would serve to prove that Henry James's public identity (and very likely private identity, too) was as a writer, that he was a writer because he was predisposed to be a writer and that, even if he had tried, it would have been a destiny he could not have escaped.

¹³⁸ Some examples of the literature of that time are: Harriet Beecher Stowe's (1811-1896), *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), which is about slavery; Mark Twain's (1835-1910), *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), which is about racism and slavery; Stephen Crane's (1871-1900), *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), which is about poverty (High, *An Outline of American Literature*, 1997, 69-96).

¹³⁹ Matthiessen, *The James Family*, 1948, 244.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1948, 244.

James was the second son in his family, with an elder brother, William James, a well-known philosopher and psychologist, whose works on psychology and pragmatism lay the foundation for much of modern psychology and philosophy. Particularly, William James' theories on human consciousness, one of which he calls, 'stream of consciousness',¹⁴¹ proved to be very popular among the contemporary critics and laid the theoretical foundations of a particular literary genre. James' relationship with his elder brother William James, is remarkable because they both grew up together and had a great influence on each other's life and career despite their opposite personalities. On the difference between the two brothers, Henry James and William James, Matthiessen notes, "The impossibility of representing HJ [Henry James] through any similar arrangement of formulations points out the fundamental contrast between the two brother's minds and talents. It might be put as the contrast between the subjective and the objective in viewing life. If truth for WJ [William James] was something a man must create for himself, for HJ it was something to be absorbed".¹⁴² Henry James, himself, was well aware of his differences with William, differences which he saw as existing from his childhood. He mentions, "we were never in the same schoolroom, in the same game, scarce even in step together or in the same phase at the same time; when our phases overlapped, that is, it was only for a moment – he was clean out before I had got well in".¹⁴³ His sensitive and shy nature in contrast to his brother's 'vividly bright' one was also a matter of concern for him.¹⁴⁴ Henry James' relationship with his brother William James in this sense is significant. They both are influential to each other in their career as well as in life.

¹⁴¹ James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 1950, 224-290.

¹⁴² Matthiessen, 1948, 243.

¹⁴³ James, 1956, 8.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1956, 11.

Since childhood, James had a chance to visit Europe several times. His schooling also made him passionate about European culture because he was influenced by tales of Europe from his tutors, mostly European in origin.¹⁴⁵ He sojourned in England and France from 1855 to 1858, and then, after an interlude at Newport, in Switzerland and Germany during 1859 and 1860. After that, he studied at the Harvard Law school in 1862.¹⁴⁶ The exposure to Europe provided him with a certain knowledge of the international situation, which Matthiessen calls an “education experiment in Europe”.¹⁴⁷ The trips to Europe also became a point of departure for James to begin his journey as a novelist, who dealt with the ‘international theme’ (the conflict between American and European characters in terms of values, tradition, and culture). Edel clarifies it as “James was determined from the first to be an American artist, determined to discover what his native land could offer his art. [...] “He did not attempt to write of Europe until he could see it with adult eyes. His first thirteen tales—those to which he signed his name – deal exclusively with his homeland. He confined himself to the people of his particular world in America, those who lived the leisured cultivated life of Newport and Boston. His characters were either rich young men, dilettantes, artists, doctors, lawyers, unhappy Civil War Veterans from the middle class, young heiresses, and in one instance a young gentleman farmer. He believed then, as he did all his life, that the writer must create out of ‘lived’ experience. He was to be accused in a later era of journalism of ‘turning his back’ upon whole areas of American life.” [James] did not attempt to write of Europe until he could see it with adult eyes.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Edel, 1977, 96.

¹⁴⁶ Matthiessen, 1948, 69.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 1948, 69.

¹⁴⁸ Edel, 1977, 220-221.

James kept getting motivated on the issues of cultural difference (mostly between America and Europe) and the stimulation of meeting many literary persons and artists. He mentions in his *Autobiography* how Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), a friend of his father and a poet/essayist/lecturer who founded the Transcendental Club in 1836, frequently visited their house.¹⁴⁹ When the James family moved from Albany to Newport (US) in 1860, he became acquainted with the works of Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850),¹⁵⁰ who influenced James' literary career to a significant extent. James' admired Balzac very much and also adopted some of his techniques in his fiction.¹⁵¹

Likewise, James became friends with William Dean Howells (1837- 1920), an American realist novelist, literary critic and an editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* (a literary magazine), during his years in Cambridge (US). Born and raised in Ohio, at 23 William Dean Howells was already a published poet when he visited Boston in 1860 where he became personal friends with Henry James, William James, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (a lifelong friend of Henry James) and Henry Adams (a correspondent of Henry James, at least in his latter years). It was also during this period that Howells got to know other writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson (a friend of Henry James's father), James Thomas Fields, Nathaniel Hawthorn, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., John Russell Lowell and Henry David Thoreau. As a reward for writing a biography of Abraham Lincoln that was published in connection with the presidential campaign of that year, Howells was given a position in the State Department and sent to Venice as the American Consul General.

¹⁴⁹ James, 1956, 7.

¹⁵⁰ Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), French novelist and playwright and one of the founders of realism in European literature. Edel mentions that during James visit to Newport (US) in 1960, a painter named John La Farge, "introduced him [James] to the world of Honoré de Balzac. Balzac was then but ten years dead, and Henry read him with such attention that years later [...]" (Edel, 1977, 135).

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1977, 610.

Howells married his wife Elinor Mead in Paris in 1862. One of her brothers was a well known sculptor and another was an equally well known architect. On returning to America in 1865, Howells began an association with *The Atlantic Monthly*, an important magazine which James also later wrote for. From 1866, Howells became assistant editor of the magazine under the supervision of James Thomas Fields and, from 1871, editor, a position he kept until 1881. In 1869, Howells met Mark Twain and soon became friends. Howells published his first novel in 1872 and continued writing novels in the 1880s and 90s. Howells became an advocate of literary realism, a point he had in common with Henry James, and which was something that influenced other writers such as Abraham Cahan, Stephen Crane, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Harold Frederic, Hamlin Garland, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Frank Norris. He was a Christian socialist and an anti-imperialist who was against America making the Philippines a colony after the Spanish-American War. In addition to his novels, he continued to write poetry. As a critic, he wrote about Benito Perez Galdos, Henrik Ibsen, Leo Tolstoy, Giovanni Verga and Émile Zola. He wrote favorable reviews of Abraham Cahan, Madison Cawein, Charles W. Chestnutt, Stephen Crane, Emily Dickinson, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, and Frank Norris, among others. In 1904 he became one of the first seven members of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and its president. The other six members were Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain), Edmund Clarence Stedman, and John Hay, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, John La Farge, Edward MacDowell, individuals who were chose to represent literature, art, and music. In 1907, he was instrumental in the admitting of the poet Julia Ward Howe as the Academy's first female member. His wife died in 1910 and he passed away in his sleep in 1920.

Howells was the one who came to ‘take him [James] seriously as a writer of fiction and to see that he had a future.’¹⁵² His association with Howells lasted throughout his life and they supported each other in their profession. The meeting of renowned figures such as John Ruskin (1819-1900) an English art critic, Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) an English poet and cultural critic, William Morris, and George Eliot (1819-1880) an English novelist and poet; all took place during sojourn in Europe from 1869 to 1870. Through this he became more familiar with English (European) traditions and society. Similarly, in 1875, he met Émile Zola (1840-1902), a French novelist and playwright and Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883) a Russian novelist and poet, among others in Europe. These meetings, which he had been longing for, made him stay in Europe, until he returned to America. In a letter to his mother, James had expressed how he desired to be with literary society in Europe. He writes:

If you knew any one in England I should be tempted to go there for a year, for there I could work to advantage—i.e. get hold of new books to review. But I can’t face, as it is, a year of British solitude. What I desire now more than anything else, and what would do me more good, is a *régal* of intelligent and suggestive society, especially male. But I don’t know how or where to find it. I chiefly desire it because it would, I am sure, increase my powers of work.¹⁵³

Additionally, Henry James formed friendships during the early 1860s with Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., a future member of the Supreme Court of the United States, and with James and Annie Fields. James Fields (1817-1881) was the owner of *The Atlantic*. Annie Fields was not only the wife of James Fields, but also a writer. Both took an interest in

¹⁵² Ibid., 1977, 223.

¹⁵³ James quoted in Matthiessen, 1948, 290.

Henry James and promoted his career as a writer.

Over the long term, however, the friendship that was as enduring as that of Howells was that of Charles Eliot Norton. He died before James at the age of 80 in 1908. Like Howells, he was a liberal activist who was strongly interested in social reform. He was a writer and a professor of art. Norton's father was a professor of Harvard, his cousin one of Harvard's presidents and he, himself, was a Harvard graduate (1846) who engaged in business until 1851 when he left business for the sake of literature and art. Together with James Russell Lowell, he became the editor of *North American Review*, a prominent magazine, from 1864 to 1868. He helped Henry Wadsworth Longfellow with his translation of Dante. Much of his time between 1855 and 1874 was taken up by traveling around Europe where he made friends with Thomas Carlyle, Edward FitzGerald, John Lockwood Kipling (the father of Rudyard Kipling), John Ruskin, and Leslie Stephen (the father of Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf). He began teaching at Harvard in 1874 and in 1875 was given a position as a professor of art history, a position he kept until 1898 when he retired. From 1882 he focused his research efforts on Dante. He edited many books concerning his literary friends and was admired for his scholarship.

Henry James' relationship with Alice James, the sister of Henry, and Grace Norton, the sister of Charles Eliot Norton is also notable. Alice James is now known as a writer. Grace, like her brother, was a scholar. Both, being women, were marginalized in comparison with their more famous brothers. Alice, being the more sensitive of the two, became insane. The remaining three individuals corresponded with Henry James from at least 1882 to 1903. They are Edmund Gosse, Antonio de Navarro, and Henrietta Reubell.

Of these three, Antonio de Navaro is the most obscure. He was an American Catholic

who practiced law in London and who was married to Mary Anderson (1859-1940) in 1890, the most celebrated American Shakespearian actress of her era. She is said to have been the object of the erotically directed attentions of King Edward VII when he was Prince of Wales. It appears that de Navarro's chief desire was to live the life of an English gentleman in the English countryside and that he and his wife spent put a good bit of effort into entertaining de Navarro's friends, which included Edward Elgar, Henry James, and various eminent ecclesiastics.

Henrietta Ruebell is equally obscure, but appears to have been of far more importance to Henry James. He is said to have written her 119 letters which have survived. Interestingly, no letter she wrote to him has so far been found, suggesting that their content might have been too embarrassing for Henry James to keep in his permanent possession. Henrietta was an American, living in Paris from her childhood with an inheritance from her wealthy parents that gave her independence and allowed her to do what she wanted when she wanted. She was not known as a beauty, was neither a writer, artist, or businesswoman, but she had what has been termed "dynamic cross-connectivity". She devoted herself to her salon, where she entertained one of the most extensive networks of famous (and infamous) writers, artists, and musicians of her time, and where sexual minorities were treated with non-judgmental charm. Her friends included not only Henry James, but also Stéphane Mallarmé, John Singer Sargent, Edith Wharton, Charles Whistler, and Oscar Wilde, among many others.

Sir Edmund Gosse (1849-1928) was the most "public" of the three individuals found to correspond with Henry James in the three time periods making up the years 1882 to 1903. Both his mother and stepmother were writers, as was Gosse himself. He is

noteworthy for promoting the use of medieval French verse forms in 19th century English. He was a close friend of Hamo Thornycroft, a famous Victorian era sculptor. He also promoted the careers of W. B. Yeats and James Joyce and also, by means of his translation translations, the success of Ibsen as a playwright in England. Moreover, he wrote articles (some of which were quite influential) for the Cornhill Magazine and, even though he lacked the traditional qualifications for such a position, worked at Cambridge University as a lecturer from 1884 to 1890, where he taught English literature.

This discussion reveals that James was influenced both by his relationship with his family and by the literary canon of his day. His identity and his concept of identity were, therefore, shaped by these relationships and by various developments in the literary field.

Chapter-III

3. Discussion of Henry James' three novels and Identity

This chapter discusses Henry' three novels, *The American*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, and *The Wings of the Dove*, respectively, in relation to the issues of identity. As it has been noticed in Chapter I that difference, self-reflection, and social relationships being essential aspects of identity, let us explore how these notions have been an explicit role to play in each novel.

3.1 Difference and Identity in *The American*

The American (1877), which was serialized in the *Atlantic Monthly*¹⁵⁴ between June 1876 and May 1877 and was published later in 1877 as a book, is one of the major earlier novels of Henry James after *Roderick Hudson* (1875). When the novel was first published, it received mixed reviews. It was praised for good character choice, original story, and style. The *Atlantic Monthly* reviewer describes three points on how *The American* is more successful than the former novel *Roderick Hudson*: “The characters are better chosen, the hero and heroine and Madame de Bellegarde having far more intrinsic interest than any corresponding persons in *Roderick Hudson*; the movement, the grouping, and final disposition of all the persons contain more of that symbolic quality essential to the best artistic successes; and lastly, the author’s treatment has gained perceptibly in approaching nearer to an air of simple human fellowship.”¹⁵⁵ In *The Galaxy*, a New York

¹⁵⁴ The *Atlantic Monthly* is an American literary magazine founded in 1857, which published many literary articles and pieces back then, including works by Henry James.

¹⁵⁵ *The Atlantic Monthly* reviewer quoted in Hayes, 2010, 31.

based literary magazine founded in 1866, a reviewer asserts that “the plot of “*The American*” has the great merit of originality, and it is well constructed.”¹⁵⁶ Similarly, in *Scribner’s Monthly*, an illustrative literary magazine founded in 1870, a reviewer claims that “with occasional awkward lapses, Mr. James’s style is very good indeed, and a good style is essential to a good novel; so is good dress essential to the completeness of a well mannered and charming person.”¹⁵⁷ However, there were dissatisfactions over the ending of the novel. *The Galaxy* was very critical on the issues as the reviewer states: “A story ought to have a manifest and impressive end, just as much as a house ought to have a manifest and characteristic entrance. [...] Mr. James’s story is like some pieces of orchestral music which really end, although in no very marked way, some time before they stop, but which go on afterward, an on, about nothing very important, and at last give out rather than come to a decent end.”¹⁵⁸ The novel begins with the introduction of the hero, Christopher Newman, the American, in the Louvre Museum in Paris, France, where he meets his old acquaintance, Mr. Tristram. Through the introduction of Mr. Tristram’s wife, Mrs. Tristram, Newman becomes friend with Mme. Claire de Cintré, the only daughter of the Bellegarde family. He proposes to Mme. de Cintré, asking her to marry him, which the latter accepts, but her family rejects on the grounds that Newman was not from a noble family but had a commercial background. Meanwhile, Valentine, who is Mme. de Cintré’s brother, on his deathbed gives Newman a secret of treachery the Bellegarde family has committed. The novel ends with Mme. de Cintré going to the convent of the Carmelites, and Newman forgiving the Bellegardes (without avenging them) by burning the evidence he has got. In this way, the hero has been portrayed as a

¹⁵⁶ quoted in Hayes, 2010, 33.

¹⁵⁷ quoted in Hayes, 2010, 40.

¹⁵⁸ quoted in Hayes, 2010, 35.

good American with regard to European society, though critics say the conduct of the characters is not so convincing. Carl Van Doren, elaborates:

Christopher Newman, intensely self-made and American, is in love with the widowed daughter of the ancient French Bellegarde family. Though the daughter loves him in return, the mother snubs him, snatches the lady from him, and drives her into a convent. Then, though Newman has found out that her mother and brother murdered her father, the American, making his large gesture, refuses to let the ax descend. Claire de Cintré, lovely as she is made out, belongs with the heroines who are too limp for life though not for romantic tragedy; the mother and brother, James himself admitted, in real life would have been remarkably careful to get hold of Newman's money—through marrying Mme. de Cintré to him if need be—before showing him too much scorn. Nor is Newman excessively convincing; “before the American businessman, as I have been prompt to declare, I was absolutely and irredeemably helpless, with no fiber of my intelligence responding to his mystery.” Yet these imperfect elements are tangled in a fine net of charm. Though the style is sparer, sharper than James' style was to become, its texture is here firm with adroit allusions and observant wit, while the background of Paris abundantly though unobtrusively fills the picture.¹⁵⁹

As mentioned above, the novel is criticized for its unhappy ending “not because it is painful, but because it mars the conception which he [James] has been led to form of the two principal characters in the story; because it seems incongruous with what has gone before; and because it is manifestly the result, not of spontaneously-acting natural causes,

¹⁵⁹ Van Doren, *The American Novel*, 1921, 197-98.

but of a pre-existent social theory in the author's mind."¹⁶⁰ Now the question is: What is the cause of the termination of marriage between Newman and Mme. de Cintré? Is it because, James has designed the story on purpose to illustrate the difference between the sophistication of the Old World (Europe) and innocence of the New World (America)? Henry James in his preface to *The American* recalls on how he has imagined the story of *The American* as:

I was seated in an American "horse-car" when I found myself, of a sudden, considering with enthusiasm, as the theme of a "story," the situation, in another country and an aristocratic society, of some robust but insidiously beguiled and betrayed, some cruelly wronged, compatriot: the point being in especial that he should suffer at the hands of persons pretending to represent the highest possible civilization [sic] and to be of an order in every way superior to his own. What would he "do" in that predicament, how would he right himself, or how, failing a remedy, would he conduct self under his wrong? [...] He would hold his revenge and cherish it and feel its sweetness, and then in the very act of forcing it home would sacrifice it in disgust. He would let them go, in short, his haughty contemner [sic], even while feeling them, with joy, in his power, and he would obey, in so doing, one of the large and easy impulses *generally* characteristic of his type. [...] All he would have at the end would be therefore just the moral convenience, indeed the moral necessity, of his practical, but quite unappreciated, magnanimity; and one's last view of him would be that of a strong man indifferent to his strength and too wrapped in fine, too wrapped above all

¹⁶⁰ *Eclectic Magazine* reviewer quoted in Hayes, 2010, 44.

in *other* and intenser, reflexions for the assertion of his *rights*.”¹⁶¹

Another question is there a problem in the representation of Newman as the American, which is also the title of the novel? The reviewer of *The Galaxy* asserts:

Mr. Christopher Newman is certainly a fair representative of a certain sort, and a very respectable sort, of American; but he is not such a man that Mr. James, himself an American living in Europe, is warranted in setting him up before the world as “*The American*”. Men like Newman are already too commonly regarded as the best product, of two hundred and fifty years of American life, and a hundred of republican institutions. But let us argue a little *ad hominem*, and ask Mr. James if Christopher Newman fairly represents the larger number of his associates when he is at home.”¹⁶²

Or shall we see Christopher Newman not in conflict with the Old world (Europe) but as a bridge between two worlds (American and Europe), creating a new identity with his good manners?

First, looking at the notion of *difference* that signifies the theme of this novel. James was surely aware of the fact that the hero of the novel has to confront an aristocratic society, as he mentions in the preface. Newman, thus, is destined to suffer abroad because of his misconception about Europe, which he sees only as an old world with rich traditions. It is certain that he does not have deep understanding of the history, cultural roots and traditions of Europe and observes things only from the viewpoint of an outsider. That is why, from the beginning, we can perceive his inferiority against the rich cultural heritage of Europe. His difficulty in grasping the greatest arts of Europe proves his

¹⁶¹ James, ‘Preface to *The American*,’ *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces*, 2011, 21-22.

¹⁶² quoted in Hayes, 35.

innocence. Thus, although:

He [Newman] was evidently not a man to whom fatigue was familiar; long, lean, and muscular, he suggested the sort of vigour that is commonly known as ‘toughness’. But his exertions on this particular day have been of an unwonted sort, and he had often performed great physical feats which left him less jaded than his tranquil stroll through the Louvre. He had looked out all the pictures to which an asterisk was affixed in those formidable pages of fine print in his Baedeker; his attention had been strained and his eyes dazzled, and he had sat down with an aesthetic headache.¹⁶³

The ‘aesthetic headache’ he experienced from the art in the museum made him doubt himself when he sees more artwork of the greatest artists, as we see “Raphael and Titian and Rubens were a new kind of arithmetic, and they inspired our friend [Newman], for the first time in his life, with a vague self-mistrust”.¹⁶⁴

Despite this ‘self-mistrust’, Newman is described as a ‘powerful specimen of an American’ and we are told that Newman is a ‘good-natured American’.¹⁶⁵ But the problem lies in the vagueness of his personality which James describes as, “frigid yet friendly, frank yet cautious, shrewd yet credulous, positive yet sceptical, confident yet shy, extremely intelligent and extremely good humoured, there was something vaguely defiant in its concessions, and something profoundly reassuring in its reserve.”¹⁶⁶ This characteristic of Newman portrayed in this way is difficult to grasp. However, this

¹⁶³ Henry James, *The American* (hereafter *TA*), 1986, 33.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, *TA*, 1986, 34.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, *TA*, 1986, 34.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, *TA*, 1986, 35.

uniqueness might be one of the aspects of identity James wanted to convey through his novel because “it is important to recognize that people are not simply cultural or social dupes, slotting neatly into assigned roles and places. The social world is messier than this, and part of the messiness derives from the messiness of the unconscious.”¹⁶⁷

However, Newman considers himself a simple fellow, which we see in his talking with Madame de Cintr , as he reveals about himself:

[...] there is no great mystery about me; you see what I am. Your brother told me that my antecedents and occupations were against me; that your family stands somehow on a higher level than I do. That is an idea which, of course, I don’t understand and don’t accept. But you don’t care anything about that. I can assure you that I am very solid fellow, and that if I give my mind to it I can arrange things so that in a very few years I shall not need to waste time in explaining who I am and what I am.¹⁶⁸

Newman tries to assure Madame de Cintr  that he is not complicated. But his desire is for pleasure and longing for the best kind of entertainment in Europe rather than a wish for knowing its art and culture, made him a different type of American. The desire for amusement is what drives Newman to Europe. In fact, the hero visits Europe to see the best of what the old world could offer. He wants to show off his money, which he had gained from his business. This desire of his is sometimes linked to his name, Christopher Newman, as well as his being a ‘Christopher Columbus’¹⁶⁹, coming to Europe to discover a new world. Here, we should note that ‘desire’ is one of the causes of confrontation as Elliott asserts, “desire is at the root of the complex ways in which the individual and

¹⁶⁷ Lawler, 2014, 114.

¹⁶⁸ James, *TA*, 1986, 168.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, *TA*, 1986, 39.

society interpenetrate”¹⁷⁰ and goes on to make clear the view that an imbalance in the inner world of the self brings conflict among us.

For an American, Europe seems to be a place where a person can get whatever he desires. We see this in Newman’s desire, as he states, “I have come abroad to amuse myself, but I doubt whether I know how [...]. I have come to see Europe, to get the best out of it I can. I want to see all the great things, and do what the clever people do”¹⁷¹. But it is not easy and sometimes it might make him feel childish. Newman admits to Tristram, “I must confess that here I don’t feel at all smart. My remarkable talents seem of no use. I feel as simple as a little child, and a little child might take me by the hand and lead me about”¹⁷². This might be because what he imagines Europe should be and its reality differ significantly. Newman wants “the biggest kind of entertainment a man can get. People, places, art, nature, everything! [...] the tallest mountains, and the bluest lakes, and the finest pictures, and the handsomest churches, and the most celebrated men, and the most beautiful women”¹⁷³; but he doesn’t know how to achieve his goal. The reason is connected with his emphasis on ‘happiness’ and ‘freedom’, the major components of American identity which are in conflict with European conventions and traditions. On the subject of marriage, too, Newman takes it too easy, while the Bellegarde family sees it as a family matter. The idea that describes why he wants to marry a great woman is annoying to us, but it might be true to type for a nineteenth century American businessman:

What else have I toiled and struggled for all these years? I have succeeded, and

¹⁷⁰ Elliott, 2014, 54.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 1986, 54-55

¹⁷² Ibid., 1986, 55.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 1986, 58.

now what am I to do with my success? To make it perfect, as I see it, there must be a beautiful woman perched on the pile, like a statue on a monument. She must be as good as she is beautiful, and as clever as she is good. [...] I want to possess, in a word, the best article in the market.¹⁷⁴

This view of Newman is surprising, his comparison of a woman with a commodity. He is also a man with considerable self-esteem, as he claims he had known himself for a long time. His vision of a beautiful wife is a straightforward one and, being overly self-confident, he declares:

I made up my mind tolerably early in life that a beautiful wife was the thing best worth having, here below. It is the greatest victory over circumstances. When I say beautiful, I mean beautiful in mind and in manners, as well as in person. It is a thing every man had an equal right to; he may get it if he can. [...] He needs to be a man. Then he needs only to use his will, and such wits as he has, and to try.¹⁷⁵

Examples like these display that James skilfully brings the subject of *difference* to the fore in *The American*. The first difference we saw was a social one, due to cultural and social conventions. Another difference we should note is a difference in ideology. There are many episodes that refer to Newman advocating freedom and happiness; while the Bellegarde family's urge was for family duty and social convention. The ideological difference is seen more in the dialogue between Newman and Mr. and Mrs Tristram. The latter [Mrs. Tristram] argues, "In France, you must never say nay [sic] to your mother, whatever she requires of you. She may be the most abominable old woman in the world, and make your life a purgatory; but after all she is *ma mère* [my mother], and you have

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 1986, 71

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 1986, 72.

no right to judge her. You have simply to obey.”¹⁷⁶ But again, Newman’s interest is pleasure, his *self* doesn’t grow on account of his company with Mr. and Mrs. Tristram. He once more admits it in following dialogue:

Newman: “I want to be amused; I came to Europe for that.”

Mrs. Tristram: “But you can be amused in America, too.”

Newman: “I could not; I was always at work. But, after all, that was my amusement.”¹⁷⁷

In other words, there is a clash between cultural inferiority and moral superiority. Newman’s encounter with Babcock on his tour to Europe is another example of it. We see that Babcock, Newman’s countryman, has a totally different view of Europe. He hated it as a corrupted, strange Europe and “mistrusted the European temperament, he suffered from the European climate, he hated the European dinner-hour; European life seemed to him unscrupulous and impure”.¹⁷⁸

The relationship between Valentin and Newman also reveals contradiction. Valentin always says that Newman is a successful man and himself a failure. He envies the success that comes with his independence. As in this conversation with Newman, Valentin says that he, evidently, is a success. He posits:

[...] we are very different, I’m sure; I don’t believe there is a subject on which we think or feel alike. But I rather think we shall get on, for there is such a thing, you know, as being too different to quarrel [...]. What I envy you is your liberty, your wide range, your freedom to come and go, you are not having a lot of people, who take themselves awfully seriously, expecting something from you. I

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 1986, 120.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 1986, 137.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 1986, 106.

live beneath the eyes of my admirable mother.¹⁷⁹

Indeed, there is a variation of being an American and Parisian. Americans are ever changing and they are not same, as Valentin explains, “Being an American, it was impossible you should remain what you were born, and being born poor—do I understand it? –it was therefore inevitable that you should become rich.”¹⁸⁰ From another perspective, Newman goes on to say, “I do nothing! I am supposed to amuse myself, and, to tell the truth, I have amused myself. One can, if one knows how. But you can’t keep it up for ever. I am good for another five years, perhaps, but I foresee that after that I shall lose my appetite.”¹⁸¹ Here, the most important thing that James wants to show is the ‘way they live’ through Newman and Valentin, as the later says that “[...] you have got something that I should have like to have. It is not money, it is not even brains—though no doubt yours are excellent. It is not your six feet of height, though I should have rather liked to be a couple of inches taller. It’s a sort of air you have of being thoroughly at home in the world.”¹⁸² But for Newman, Valentin was the ideal Frenchman, the Frenchman of tradition and romance.

This proves that James portrays Neman as a self-made man, who is naïve and good hearted but vulnerable in a sense that he is incapable of understanding ‘deeper human values’. Edel comments on Newman, “he was ‘nice’ in many ways. But there was in him a strong and vulgar streak of materialistic self-satisfaction which James had understood from the first and to which many American readers preferred to close their eyes. Constance Rourke long ago pointed James’s synthesis of an American ‘type’: his naiveté,

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 1986, 138-40.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 1986, 140.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 1986, 141.

¹⁸² Ibid., 1986, 141.

his boastfulness, his impatience. There is also his failure to grasp deeper human values.”

¹⁸³ Hence the *difference* lies not only between characters, but also within their individuality. So, on the one hand, the idea of America or American values represented through Newman itself is an example of difference as it differs from the rest of the world.¹⁸⁴ The characters’ psychological conflicts, on the other hand, uncover the hidden aspects of the characters’ unconscious minds.

James has, on many occasions, portrayed characters ambiguously. The description of Madame de Cintré reveals it: “She was so tall and yet so light, so active and yet so still, so elegant and yet so simple, so frank and yet so mysterious! It was the mystery—it was what she was off the stage, as it were—that interested Newman most of all.”¹⁸⁵ Madame de Cintré herself both doubts herself and yet admits that she is a mystery.

Moreover, Valentin’s comment on his sister clarifies it more, as he states: “She [Madame de Cintré] is half a *grande dame* and half an angel; a mixture of pride and humility, of the eagle and dove.”¹⁸⁶ She is simply a nice woman but under the firm control of her family; she is not free. Her independence is in the hand of her family, which boasts itself of having an impressive tradition with a long history. Valentin at one point warns Newman that he might have to know how to cope with the Bellegarde family in the future. Valentin says:

I told you, you remember, that we were very strange people, I give you warning again. We are! My mother is strange, my brother is strange, and I verily believe that I am stranger than either. You will even find my sister a little strange. Old

¹⁸³ Edel, 1977, 470.

¹⁸⁴ Spengemann, 1986, 17.

¹⁸⁵ James, *TA*, 1986, 147.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1986, 151.

trees have crooked branches, old houses have queer cracks, old races have old secrets. Remember that we are eight hundred years old!¹⁸⁷

In response Newman, being very naïve, adds, “Very good. That’s the sort of thing I came to Europe for. You come into my program.”¹⁸⁸ Newman thinks that “Paris is a very good place for idle people or it is a very good place if your family has been settled here for a long time, and you have made acquaintances and got your relations round you; or if you have got a big house like this, and a wife and children and mother and sister, and everything comfortable.”¹⁸⁹ He states that he does not like that way of living all in rooms next door to each other. But he also claims that he is also not an idler. He says he has tried to be, but can’t manage it; that it goes against the grain because his business habits are too deeply embedded. He moves on to say about his family:

I haven’t any house to call my own, or anything in the way of a family. My sisters are five thousand miles away, my mother died when I was a youngster, and I haven’t any wife; I wish I had! So, you see, I don’t exactly know what to do with myself. I am not fond of books, as you are, sir, and I get tired of dining out and going to the opera. I miss my business activity.¹⁹⁰

This apparently shows that he is a businessman. He has no home. He has no identity and thus he is searching for it. At one point Madame de Cintré accepts the difference Newman possesses: “You are being so different, which at first seemed a difficulty, a trouble, began one day to seem to me a pleasure, a great pleasure. I was glad you were different. And yet, if I had said so, no one would have understood me; I don’t mean

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 1986, 162-63.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 1986, 163.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 1986, 186.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 1986, 186.

simply to my family.”¹⁹¹ But the truth comes to the surface as she tells Newman that she has an understanding of their problematic relationship. She adds: “They would have said I could never be happy with you—you were too different; and I would have said it was just because you were so different that I might be happy. But they would have given better reasons than I.”¹⁹² For this situation, Valentin has already warned Mr. Newman if he was not afraid of making a mistake of an international marriage—an American man of business to marry a French countess.¹⁹³ The novel maintains that, for the French nobility, following their family tradition was their pride and custom. It is also a point of honour for them. But Newman thinks that it is *stupidity*.

The Bellegardes react by using their authority to cancel the agreed-on marriage between Newman and Madame Cintré. This serves to prove that there is no freedom, independence or free will. As a consequence, Newman begins to reflect on his deeds, whether he has done something wrong. He asks to Madame Cintré, “Have I given you reason to change your opinion? Have you found out anything against me?”¹⁹⁴ Here they provide a clear answer to Newman: “It is not your disposition that we object to, it is your antecedents. We really cannot reconcile ourselves to a commercial person. We fancied in an evil hour that we could; it was a great misfortune.”¹⁹⁵ Newman did not believe that he was rejected. He consistently says that the Marquise de Bellegarde has done something wrong to her daughter. Newman says:

I want to know what you did to her. It is all very easy talking about authority and saying you commanded her. She didn’t accept me blindly, and she wouldn’t have

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 1986, 243.

¹⁹² Ibid., 1986, 243.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 1986, 267.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 1986, 318.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 1986, 318.

given me up blindly. Not that I believe yet she has really given me up; she will talk it over with me. But you have frightened her, you have bullied her, you have *hurt* her. What was it you did to her?¹⁹⁶

On the other hand, Newman also asks why it is not all right for a commercial person to marry a French aristocrat. Newman clarifies himself by saying, “I will be any sort of person you want. I never talk to you about business. Let her go, and I will ask no questions.”¹⁹⁷ Newman was not happy with the sudden change. He reflects, “What was the meaning of the change? Of what infernal potion had she tasted?”¹⁹⁸ Newman had a terrible apprehension that she had really changed, as we notice “his very admiration for her attached the idea of force and weight to her rupture. But he did not rail at her as false, for he was sure she was unhappy.”¹⁹⁹ On the rejection of the marriage Tristram argues that it is Newman’s ‘commercial quality that the Bellegardes, being aristocratic, couldn’t swallow’.²⁰⁰ Later, Madame de Cintré confesses to Newman: “It is a selfish pleasure, but it is one of the last I shall have. I know how I have deceived and injured you, I know how cruel and cowardly I have been. I see it as vividly as you do—I feel it to the ends of my fingers.”²⁰¹

However, she thinks that Newman will understand nothing even if she explains the reasons for giving up him. She has a feeling that there is a curse upon her family. She expresses her frustration:

I don’t know what—I don’t know why—don’t ask me. We must all bear it. I have

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 1986, 319.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 1986, 321.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 1986, 321.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 1986, 322.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 1986, 323-24.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 1986, 349.

been too selfish; I wanted to escape from it. It seemed good to change completely, to break, to go away. And then I admired you. But I can't—it has overtaken and come back to me. [...] Why do such dreadful things happened to us—why is my brother Valentin killed, like a beast, in the midst of his youth and his gaiety and his brightness and all that we loved him for? Why are there things I can't ask about—that I am afraid to know? Why are there places I can't look at, sounds I can't hear? Why is it given to me to choose, to decide, in a case so hard and so terrible as this? I am not meant for that—I am not made for boldness and defiance. I was made to be happy in a quiet natural way.²⁰²

Newman, on the other hand, “[...] saw himself trustful, generous, liberal, patient, easy, pocketing frequent irritation and furnishing unlimited modesty.”²⁰³ He is also described as less careful about the situation around him. He was more concerned about what he wants and why he couldn't achieve what he longed for. At one point, Newman became aware of the harsh reality and the need for self-control because:

Suddenly there arose from the depths of the chapel, from behind the inexorable grating, a sound which drew his attention from the altar—the sound of a strange lugubrious chant uttered by women's voices. It began softly, but it persistently grew louder, and as it increased it became more of a wail and a dirge. It was the chant of the Carmelite nuns, their only human utterance. It was their dirge over their buried affections and over the vanity of earthly desires. At first Newman was bewildered—almost stunned—by the strangeness of the sound; then, as he comprehended its meaning, he listened intently and his heart began to throb. He

²⁰² Ibid., 1986, 353-54.

²⁰³ Ibid., 1986, 358.

listened for Madame de Cintré's voice, and in the very heart of the tuneless harmony he imagined he made it out.²⁰⁴

The novel then recounts that, after realizing his destiny and listening to his inner voice, Newman was very willing to get away from Paris, for “the brilliant streets he had walked through in his happier hours, and which then seemed to wear a higher brilliancy in honour of his happiness, appeared now to be in the secret of his defeat and to look down upon it in shining mockery.”²⁰⁵ Moreover, Newman had to face the reality of his situation, that “[...] after such reveries, with a somewhat muffled shock; he had begun to feel the need of accepting the unchangeable. He asked himself, in his quieter hours, whether perhaps, after all, he *was* more commercial than was pleasant.”²⁰⁶ In regard to this, the novel relates:

He had come out to pick up aesthetic entertainment in Europe; it may therefore be understood that he was able to conceive that a man might be too commercial. He reflected with sober placidity that at least there were no monuments of his “meanness” scattered about the world. If there was any reason in the nature of things why his connection with business should have cast a shadow upon a connection—even a connection broken—with a woman justly proud, he was willing to sponge it out of his life forever.²⁰⁷

He came to feel a sense of hopelessness, of being unable to control his fate, that “he had nothing to do, his occupation was gone, and it seemed to him that he should never find it again. He had nothing to do *here*, he sometimes said to himself; but there was something

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 1986, 404.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 1986, 429.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 1986, 439.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 1986, 439.

beyond the ocean that he was still to do; something that he had left undone experimentally and speculatively, to see if it could content itself to remain undone.”²⁰⁸

What finally brought closure to Newman was “finding himself in a part of Paris which he little knew. Dead walls and traversed by few wayfarers. A dull plain edifice, with a high shouldered blank wall all round it. But there revealed no symptoms of human life; the place looked dumb, deaf, inanimate. The pale, dead, discoloured wall stretched beneath it far down the empty side street—a vista without a human figure.”²⁰⁹ It was then that he had a sort of epiphany for him:

This seemed the goal of his journey; it was what he had come for. It was a strange satisfaction, and yet it was a satisfaction; the barren stillness of the place seemed to be his own release from ineffectual longing. It told him that the woman within was lost beyond recall, and that the days and years of the future would pile themselves above her like the huge immovable slab of tomb.²¹⁰

Newman found the ‘wall’ as a division between him and Madame de Cintré. While, “there are other walls of separation between the New World protagonist and the Old World he wants to enter, predominantly comic in tone, beginning with the first chapter and running throughout. The “walls which fatally divide us, Americans and Europeans, is what this novel is about.”²¹¹

The difference between American values represented by Newman’s morality and European social conviction characterized by Bellegarde’s consciousness is in the harsh reality with which the Bellegarde's see life. In representing them, James might have

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 1986, 442.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 1986, 444-45.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 1986, 445.

²¹¹ Anderson, 1977, 42.

exaggerated certain autobiographical connections for his description of such temperament. By referring to his name, one might argue like in a critical essay where Oscar Cargill states, “Newman is so exemplary of the American type that he lacks something as an individual.”²¹² Christopher Newman represents American, his native land, but lacks a self-identity. In this representation of Newman’s unique personality, James attempts to represent the self as distinct and changeable. It suggests Newman’s identity is not stable; rather, it is complex and incomplete. He could have taken revenge by announcing the misdeed of the Bellegarde family. Instead, he destroys the evidence and returns to America, because, in the end, Newman realizes that it is not good to engage in trivial things in a place where he intends to live only temporarily.

Finally, the novel reveals that societies built on something besides money are better. James presents this thought as recognition of the extremely complex forms of human desire. The American desire for wealth in the person of Newman is ultimately a desire for pleasure. His return to America is for his pursuit of happiness.

It displays that James exhibits the complex nature of identity in *The American*. The representation of identity through American and European characters shows that characters share multiple identities with others, on the basis of social, cultural, and biological characteristics, as well as shared values, personal histories, and interests. However, *The American* also demonstrates that identity is revealed from *difference* and *self-realization*. Similarly, the conflict of individual characters, including moral and psychological, shows the struggle between personal life and society. In the process of socializing himself in a different society, Newman, the protagonist, not only reflects his country’s image, but also proves that a sense of self is produced through the interplay

²¹² Cargill, 1961, 48.

between the individual and the society. Newman, thus, “gives up” the revenge he could have taken on the old Bellegarde family, who have caused him trouble, and have ruined his life and that of his beloved. Moreover, this appears to be motivated by a reflection on what might be the right thing to do. Newman has much trouble deciding what to do with the evidence against the Bellegardes and finds himself in a moral dilemma, but eventually decides not to take revenge.

3.2 Self-reflection and Identity in *The Portrait of a Lady*

In *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), Isabel Archer, the heroine of the novel, goes on a journey from her hometown, Albany (New York) to Europe. Her travel, at first, seems to be a search for freedom but eventually, it becomes her quest for self-identity. The book’s first description of her gives us the impression that she is an independent, self-educated, and imaginative girl. But after coming to Europe and becoming the wife of Gilbert Osmond, we see Isabel’s *self* gradually overshadowed by her husband’s. Now the question is whether she develops a new *sense of self* after her marriage or she will discover her identity through self-realization. Is her conflict with Osmond, just a husband-wife dispute or does it have a connection with the inner struggle between personal and social self, in other words, the private and the public self? Does it indicate that we need to discover our real *self* by deepening our vision and broadening our perspectives? With these issues, the process of how Isabel discovers her self-identity will be examined. As Arnold Buss²¹³ indicates, the most important feature of private self is self-reflection. We will, therefore, delve into the inner consciousness of characters

²¹³ Arnold H. Buss (1924 - present) is a Professor emeritus of Psychology and author of many books on social psychology including *Self-consciousness and Social Anxiety* (1980), where he discusses private and public aspects of self along with the various kinds of social anxiety.

through intertextual analysis to achieve our goals.

In the succeeding discussion which focuses on the aspects of private and public self, the position of Arnold H. Buss will be largely followed. In *Self-Consciousness and Social Anxiety* (1924), he defines two aspects of self: private and public. He explains that the private aspect of self consists of memory, motives and self-reflections. They are inner experiences, because they can be experienced directly only by oneself. Childhood memory is a perfect example because it is impossible to reflect one's childhood experiences through others. The private self, therefore, is undisclosed until a person expresses it. Meanwhile, the opposite of the private self is the public self, which consists of one's social role, physical appearance, and public behaviour. People in society easily notice these aspects because they are open to all. People's ways of talking, dressing, and acting are some of one's public self's activities. This gives us the view that the public self and private self are completely different entities. But Buss points out that it is very difficult to draw a clear line between these two aspects because of their ambiguous nature. It should be noted that they both are equally essential in formulating our self-identity.

Buss points out that memory, feelings, and emotions are some aspects of private self-identity. He further insists that the most important feature of the private self is self-reflection. He asserts that it not only guides one to inspect one's inner consciousness, but also helps us to bring out the unshared aspect of one's 'inner self'. In a way, it gives one a chance to know oneself better. An attempt will, following the above-mentioned points, be made to examine how Isabel discovers her own self through self-reflection in *The Portrait of a Lady*.

In order to know the characters' true identities, we need to look at both their public and private aspects. Their public self-identities are easily revealed through their appearance and behaviour. Another aspect of public self-identity is how others define us in society and how we present ourselves according to those attributions. The question here is whether self is shaped by society or it is a balance of inner self and social self.

Let us begin our discussion with the background of the novel. Robert Bamberg, an editor of the Norton critical edition of *The Portrait of a Lady*, in the preface to the novel, explains, "In the background of this portrait of a young woman seeking both freedom and fulfilment James had sketched a social picture is as immediate for our times as it was a century ago"²¹⁴, reminding us that the novel presents a realistic journey of a lady who seeks to find her identity through independence. As we observe, the novel deals with a lady who has to face the harsh reality of life because of her independent nature. James himself describes it in the preface of the novel as, James clarifies in his Preface on the main subject of the novel as: "Millions of presumptuous girls, intelligent or not intelligent, daily affront their destiny, and what it is open to their destiny to *be*, at the most, that we should make an ado about it? The novel is of its very nature an 'ado', an ado about something, and the larger the form it takes the greater course of the ado. Therefore, consciously, that was what one was in for—for positively organising an ado about Isabel Archer."²¹⁵

Isabel's destiny is not the forceful projection of others, but results from her own actions which guides her. James emphasises that the novel is about Isabel's 'ado'.

The novel opens with description of an afternoon tea-time situation on the lawn of an

²¹⁴ Bamberg, 1995, viii.

²¹⁵ James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (hereafter *TPoaL*), 1995, 8.

old English country-house. It displays the well-ordered upper class European scene where life seems pleasant and luxurious. Towards the opening of the novel, we find:

Upon certain circumstances there are few hours in life more agreeable than hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea. There are circumstances in which, whether you partake of the tea or not—some people of course never do, — the situation is in itself delightful.²¹⁶

This suggests how tranquil the place near London is where the story begins. Moreover, the gradual waning of the afternoon makes the situation more enjoyable than ever. But, it is noted that “the persons concerned in it were taking their pleasure quietly, and they were not of the sex which is supposed to furnish the regular votaries of the ceremony.”²¹⁷ As described above, the identity of the persons supposed to be at the tea ceremony were different. The identity seems to have changed for those who had come to the Old World long before from the New World. The ambiguity that the character displays regarding representativeness and success, was James’ dilemma of identity, too, as the following lines suggest:

It was evidently a face in which the range of representation was not large, so that the air of contented shrewdness was all the more of a merit. It seemed to tell that he had been successful in life, yet it seemed to tell also that his success had not been exclusive and invidious, but had had much of the inoffensiveness of failure.²¹⁸

James sketches two different characters that of an English gentleman and an American man, reflects his notion of how he views the characters of the Old World (Europe) and

²¹⁶ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 17.

²¹⁷ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 17.

²¹⁸ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 19.

New World (America). The former has “a noticeably handsome face, fresh coloured, fair and frank, with firm, straight features, a lively grey eye and the rich adornment of a chestnut beard. This person had a certain fortunate, brilliant exceptional look—the air of a happy temperament fertilized by a high civilization—which would have made almost any observer envy him at a venture.”²¹⁹ While the latter was a “person of quite a different pattern, who, although he might have excited grave curiosity, would not, like the other, have provoked you to wish yourself, almost blindly, in his place. Tall, lean, loosely and feebly put together, he had an ugly, sickly, witty, charming face, furnished, but by no means decorated, with a straggling moustache and whisker. He looks clever and ill—a combination by no means felicitous; and he wore a brown velvet jacket.”²²⁰ The two descriptions are the two examples of specimens that represent two different identities.

Another character came into the scene with a different individuality, who “likes to do everything for herself and has no belief in any one’s power to help her.”²²¹ As expected, she is Isabel Archer, the protagonist, an independent American girl from Albany, New York. Upon her arrival at Gardencourt, in the vicinity of London, she is described as an independent young lady and a high-spirited girl by her cousin Ralph and her cousin’s friend Lord Warburton, respectively. The difference created by her *self* comes into the spotlight in this new land. But she had something else in mind while others were thinking many things about her. As we observe, “she had been looking all around her again—at the lawn, the great trees, the reedy, silvery Thames, the beautiful old house; and while

²¹⁹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 19.

²²⁰ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 19.

²²¹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 24-25.

engaged in this survey she had made room in it for her companions; a comprehensiveness of observation easily conceivable on the part of a young woman who was evidently both intelligent and excited.”²²²

From the outside, Isabel is an independent young girl who is very fond of her liberty. However, if we look at her childhood, she is seen to have developed an imaginative nature through reading, as she laid her “foundation of her knowledge in the idleness of grandmother’s house, whereas most of the other inmates were not reading people.”²²³ She did not like the school to which she had been sent. Her desire for knowledge and her curiosity about life seem to have always driven her to discover new things and “her imagination was by habit ridiculously active.”²²⁴ As to Isabel’s nature, it is described with the words:

She had a great desire for knowledge, but she really preferred any source of information to the printed page; she had an immense curiosity about life and was constantly starting and wondering. She carried within herself a great fund of life, and her deepest enjoyment was to feel the continuity between the movements of her own soul and the agitations of the world.²²⁵As for Isabel’s good points, it is written that “she had had everything a girl could have: kindness, admiration, bonbons, bouquets [...]”²²⁶

She has an interest in knowledge which led her to have many ideas in her mind. Being imaginative, she also values her self-esteem greatly. It has been described as:

It may be affirmed without delay that Isabel was probably very liable to the sin of

²²² Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 28.

²²³ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 33.

²²⁴ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 39.

²²⁵ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 41.

²²⁶ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 41.

self-esteem; she often surveyed with complacency the field of her own nature; she was in the habit of taking for granted, on scanty evidence, that she was right; she treated herself to occasions of homage. [She is a woman, who had] an unquenchable desire to think well of herself. She had a theory that it was only under this provision olive was worth living; that one should be one of the best, should be conscious of a fine organization, should move in a realm of light, of natural wisdom, of happy impulse, of inspiration gracefully chronic. It was almost as unnecessary to cultivate doubt of one's self as to cultivate doubt of one's best friend: one should try to be one's own best friend and to give one's self, in this manner, distinguished company."²²⁷

In this sense, Isabel's weakness is that she could give herself completely to another, if someone impresses her. This might have consequences because it might lead to being an easy victim of deception.

Additionally, she believes that she thinks too much about herself. Her theory is that a young woman whom after all everyone thought clever should begin by getting a general impression of life.²²⁸ Indeed, Isabel is innocent and new to the world, she is not afraid of trying adventures in Europe. In Gardencourt, Isabel has no idea that staying alone with boys would be a problem in Europe. The relevant dialogue explains:

Isabel considered. "I'm not vexed, but I'm surprised—and a good deal mystified. Wasn't it proper I should remain in the drawing-room?"

"Not in the least. Young girls here—in decent houses—don't sit alone with the gentlemen late at night."

²²⁷ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 53.

²²⁸ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 56.

“You were very right to tell me then,” said Isabel. “I don’t understand it, but I’m very glad to know it.”

“I shall always tell you,” her aunt answered, “whenever I see you taking what seems to me too much liberty”.²²⁹

There are questions when Isabel rejects the marriage proposal of Lord Warburton.²³⁰ They began to ask, “what a young lady does who won’t marry Lord Warburton.”²³¹ But Isabel has an answer, she does not want to lose her identity, so she affirms, “I don’t want to begin life by marrying. There are other things a woman can do.”²³² Isabel has a passion for life and wants to see Europe for herself. Seeing, or observing or feeling Europe is what determines her *self*.

She is not ready to marry and so declares “I shall probably never do it—no, never. I’ve a perfect right to feel that way, and it’s no kindness to a woman to press her so hard, to urge her against her will.”²³³ Personal independence is what she has valued most in her life and has been rejecting the idea of marriage. And she assumes that she has right to do what she likes:

I am not in my first youth—I can do what I choose—I belong quite to the independent class. I’ve neither father nor mother; I’m poor and of a serious disposition; I’m not pretty. I therefore am not bound to be timid and conventional; indeed I can’t afford such luxuries. Besides, I try to judge things for myself; to judge wrong, I think, is more honourable than not to judge at all. I don’t wish to be a mere sheep in the flock; I wish to choose my fate and know something of

²²⁹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 67.

²³⁰ Lord Warburton, upper-class European, who is a friend of Ralph Touchett, the latter is Isabel’s cousin.

²³¹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 133.

²³² Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 133.

²³³ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 139.

human affairs beyond what other people think it compatible with propriety to tell me.²³⁴

She seeks to be distinct and choose her fate by herself. The coming and going of Casper Goodwood²³⁵ is significant because his stalking of her reminds Isabel of her identity. Her self-esteem remains still until she meets Madame Merle:

There was no doubt she had great merits—she was charming, sympathetic, intelligent, cultivated. More than this (for it had not been Isabel’s ill-fortune to go through life without meeting in her own sex several persons of whom no less could fairly be said), she was rare, superior and preeminent. There are many amiable people in the world, and Madame Merle was far from being vulgarly good-natured and restlessly witty. She knew how to think—an accomplishment rare in women; and she had thought to very good purpose. Of course, too, she knew how to feel; Isabel couldn’t have spent a week with her without being sure of that. This was indeed Madame Merle’s great talent, her most perfect gift.²³⁶

Isabel thinks of Madame Merle as a great lady, who presents herself well, being “in a word too perfectly the social animal that man and woman were supposed to have been intended to be.”²³⁷ Isabel found it difficult to think of her detached, for she existed only in her relations, direct or indirect, with her fellow mortals. To Isabel it never occurred that Madame Merle was weaving a plot. She never thought evil of Madame Merle, and never thought that she was abusing her because Isabel believed that Madame Merle was a person who had intimacy with one’s self, that she was a lady who was born before the

²³⁴ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 143.

²³⁵ Casper Goodwood, who is an American, is Isabel’s first lover and fiancée,

²³⁶ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 163-164.

²³⁷ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 167.

French Revolution, that she belonged to the old world but did not have an interest in it. She reflects on what an expatriate should do, “you should live in your own land; whatever it may be you have your natural place there. If we’re not good Americans we’re certainly poor Europeans; we’ve no natural place here. We’re mere parasites, crawling over the surface; we haven’t our feet in the soil”.²³⁸

Madame Merle gives a good lecture on crawling and talks about her view of identity. She gives an example of Ralph in the process of questioning Isabel:

What sort of a figure do you call that? [...] he has a consumption [...] and besides his career, who would he be, what would he represent? ‘Mr. Ralph Touchett: an American who lives in Europe.’ That signifies absolutely nothing—it’s impossible anything should signify less. [...] With the poor old father it’s different; he has his identity, and it’s rather a massive one. He represents a great financial house, and that, in our day, is as good as anything else. For an American, at any rate, that will do very well.²³⁹

For Madame Merle, an identity is one’s social status or the property that one shows to society. Then she talks about Gilbert Osmond whom she describes as a man who has “no career, no name, no position, no fortune, no past, no future, no anything.”²⁴⁰ This nothingness attracts Isabel to Osmond as she has no fear of giving up her independence. For Isabel, success is “to see the dream come true of one’s youth.”²⁴¹

In a discussion of success and dreams, they come to what the nature of *self* is. Madame Merle thinks that girls should take into account a man’s status or property—his

²³⁸ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 171.

²³⁹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 171.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 172.

²⁴¹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 174.

shell—if someone has dreamt of him. The shell she means is a ‘whole envelope of circumstances’. She states:

There’s no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we’re each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our ‘self’? Where does it begin? Where does it ends? It overflows into everything that belongs to us—and then it flows back again. I know a large part of myself is in the clothes I choose to wear. I’ve a great respect for *things*! One’s self—for other people—is one’s expression of one’s self; and one’s house, one’s furniture, one’s garment, the books one reads, the company one keeps — these things are all expressive.²⁴²

With regard to this, Isabel had difficulty in understanding the ideas, as Isabel was “fond of metaphysics, but was unable to accompany her friend into this bold analysis of the human personality.”²⁴³ Isabel disagrees with Madame Merle and says that she thinks another way about the *self*, declaring “I know that nothing expresses me. Nothing that belongs to me is any measure of me; everything’s on the contrary a limit, a barrier, and a perfectly arbitrary one. Certainly, the clothes which, as you say, I choose to wear, don’t express me; and heaven forbid they should.”²⁴⁴ She doesn’t like to be judged by her dress, her outlook because she thinks they don’t express her as she sees herself. Her view is that wearing dress is “not her own choice; they are imposed upon her by society.”²⁴⁵

When Isabel takes freedom to marry Gilbert Osmond, many of her good acquaintances advise her not to do so. Mrs. Touchett warns Isabel many times and also says, “you’re completely your own mistress and are as free as the bird on the bough. I

²⁴² Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 175.

²⁴³ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 175.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 175.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 175.

don't mean you were not as before, but you're at present on a different footing—property erects a kind of barrier. You can do a great many things if you're rich which would be severely criticized if you were poor.”²⁴⁶ But Isabel doesn't listen to her and she finds herself in a trap, especially after her marriage with Osmond. Soon she finds a contrast between her imaginative mind and Osmond's ideology, guided by the social and moral values of Europe that repress freedom.

At this point, let us see how Osmond's self has been formed. One part of Osmond's identity has been formed in Italy, which Osmond explains has both satisfactions and drawbacks. We see written about him that “Italy, all the same, had spoiled a great many people, he was even fatuous enough to believe at times that he himself might have been a better man if he had spent less of his life there. It made one idle and dilettantish and second-rate; it had no discipline for the character didn't cultivate in you, otherwise expressed, the successful social and other “check” that flourished in Paris and London.”²⁴⁷

He developed his unique identity growing up in Italy, and Isabel contemplated that “he resembled no one she had ever seen.”²⁴⁸ There some are other people whom she knows who are, “original—original, as one might say, by courtesy”—such as Mr. Goodwood, as her cousin Ralph, as Henrietta Stackpole, as Lord Warburton, as Madame Merle. But she thinks, “these individuals belong to types already present to her mind.” For Osmond, “her mind contained no class offering a natural place” because she thinks that he is “a specimen apart.”²⁴⁹ When she first meets Osmond, she is tantalized by his uniqueness,

²⁴⁶ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 190.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 221.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 224.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 224.

because “he was an original without being an eccentric.”²⁵⁰ The narrator goes on to add:

She had never met a person of so fine a grain. The peculiarity was physical, to begin with, and it extended to impalpabilities. His dense, delicate hair, his overdrawn, retouched features, his clear complexion, ripe without being coarse, the very evenness of the growth of his bread, and that light, smooth slenderness of structure which made the movement of a single one of his fingers produce the effect of an expressive gesture—these personal; points struck our sensitive young woman as signs of quality, of intensity, somehow as promises of interest. He was certainly fastidious and critical; he was probably irritable. His sensibility had governed him—possibly governed him too much; it had made him impatient of vulgar troubles and had led him to live by himself, in a sorted, sifted, arranged world, thinking about art and beauty and history. He had consulted his taste in everything—his taste alone perhaps, as a sick man consciously incurable consults at last only his lawyer; that was what made him so different from everyone else.²⁵¹

The impressions of Osmond to Isabel were only superficial. If we examine the other two versions of him, one is provided by his sister, the Countess, and another by Madame Merle. They both discuss the marriage of Osmond and Isabel. The Countess says to Madame Merle about his brother: “Who is he, if you please? What has he ever done? If there had been anything particularly grand in his origin—if he were made of some superior clay—I presume I should have got some inkling of it. [...] there is nothing, nothing, nothing.”²⁵² She sees nothing significant in her brother. In reply, Madame Merle exaggerates, “You Osmonds are fine race—your blood must flow from some very pure

²⁵⁰ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 224.

²⁵¹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 224-25.

²⁵² Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 233.

source.”²⁵³

Mrs. Touchett is suspicious as to why Isabel has rejected the American Casper Goodwood and the Englishman Lord Warburton, but accepts a “middle-aged widower with an uncanny child and an ambiguous income.”²⁵⁴ She is liberal but cautious about Isabel’s choice. Mrs. Touchett says, “there’s nothing in life to prevent her marrying Mr. Osmond if she only looks at him in a certain way. That’s all very well; no one approves more than I do of one’s pleasing one’s self.”²⁵⁵ But Ralph has the sharp view and declares, “she’ll [Isabel] please herself, of course; but she’ll do so by studying human nature at close quarters and yet retaining her liberty” and goes on to say that “she has started on an exploring expedition, and I don’t think she’ll change her course, at the outset, at a signal from Gilbert Osmond.”²⁵⁶

Regarding the nature of women, Ralph tells Isabel, “Women—when they are very, very good—sometimes pity men after they’ve hurt them; that’s their great way of showing kindness.”²⁵⁷ The narrator further reflects that “Grave she found herself, and positively more weighted, as by the experience of the lapse of the year she had spent in seeing the world. She had ranged, she would have said, through space and surveyed much of mankind, and was therefore now, in her own eyes, a very different person from the frivolous young woman from Albany who had begun to take the measure of Europe on the lawn at Gardencourt a couple of years before. She flattered herself [sic] she had harvested wisdom and learned a great deal more of life than this light-minded creature

²⁵³ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 233.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 234.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 235.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 235.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 256.

had even suspected.”²⁵⁸

Isabel never thinks that her independence will be challenged. She is also aware of the consequences she will face if she does not listen to her husband. That is why she insists that she is afraid not of her husband, nor his displeasure, but rather of herself and her self-centered decisions. This vision is revealed in the reflections of Isabel, which help us to see her private self-identity more effectively. It also conveys the idea that she has an intimate connection with herself. James especially emphasizes the aspects of Isabel’s self-reflection of the process of her realization that she is in fundamental disagreement with her husband. She contemplates every situation in which this has manifested itself because she starts to feel pressure from her surroundings.

Isabel becomes very distressed because she believes that Osmond hates her. As hatred deals with human emotion, she thinks it is not a crime, nor cruel and violent. It reveals her concern about her present and future identity, as Buss proposes that self-reflection is one aspect of private self where one evaluates oneself and estimates some level of self-esteem. If we analyse the past, it should be clear that Isabel’s self-esteem is responsible for her choosing Osmond as her husband. She marries Osmond because she thinks of him as a unique character who does not resemble any others, and as, “her mind contained no class offering a natural place to Mr. Osmond.”²⁵⁹ It is also said that she finds her mirror image in Osmond, which means, she finds her self falsely reflected in Osmond, as an image, which is not real, but is reflected in a mirror.

In this connection, Edel indicates that Isabel finds some aspects of her *self* in him. Edel further argues that egotism is the common point for both of them, which can be

²⁵⁸ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 270.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 224.

clearly seen in this explanation by the narrator about Isabel's choice. This makes us think that Isabel's identity has two aspects. One is her own *self*, the inner self, guided by her mind, while another is *egotism*, which means she is right whatever she does.²⁶⁰

Marriage plays a vital role in revealing the inner self identity of Isabel as well as Osmond. Before their marriage, they are not aware about each other's real *selves* because they only know each other's public self-identity. The hidden aspect of private self-identity is revealed after the marriage. Once they come to know each other's private self-identity, many problems arise between them.

Isabel does not know about Osmond's hidden motives nor sees his real face until she begins to live with him. Isabel chooses Osmond because she thinks that he is independent and has a unique individuality. She once explains to Ralph that Mr. Osmond is the finest person she had ever found: he is good, interesting and clever enough for her. Despite Ralph's suggestion that Osmond is not an ideal person to marry, Isabel, guided by her ignorance, marries him. At this point, she totally ignores her private self-identity, and also her spirit of independence and her liberty. She makes a false assumption that Osmond is everything, that he makes no mistakes, knows everything and understands everything; has the kindest, gentlest, highest spirit.²⁶¹

She tells Ralph that she had seen life in a year or two and that she was already tired, not of the act of living, but of that of observing. Driven by her pleasure, she views that Osmond is a very cultivated and very honest man. However, after marriage, both become aware that they had kept their real selves hidden. Once they are revealed, the spouses both feel hostile toward each other. Isabel thinks that she lives in a house of darkness, a

²⁶⁰ Edel, 1977, 619.

²⁶¹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 293.

house of silence, a house of suffocation where “Osmond’s beautiful mind gives neither light nor air; rather, Osmond’s beautiful mind peeps down from a small high window and mocks her.”²⁶²

From Osmond’s point of view, Isabel changes in many ways after marriage (which is not true). Osmond once expressed to Madame Merle that Isabel had one fault, having too many ideas, which he thought must be sacrificed. He finds Isabel different because she is not what he believed she would be. He expects many things from Isabel which she cannot fulfil. He thinks that at first, he can change her, and she, on her part, would do her best to be what he would like. But she was herself from the beginning.

In Isabel’s view, she has only seen one aspect of Osmond’s identity before marriage. As the narrator explains, “He was not changed; he had not disguised himself, during the year of his courtship, any more than she. But she had seen only half of his nature then, as one saw the disk of the moon when it was partly masked by the shadow of the earth. She saw the full moon now—she saw the whole man.”²⁶³ This is also related to egotism because Osmond was from the beginning driven by it. The following lines explain more about it, “under all his culture, his cleverness, his amenity, under his good-nature, his facility, his knowledge of life, his egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers.”²⁶⁴ She lost herself when she thought of Osmond’s deception, but through self-reflection she discovers her true self.

In this novel, it seems that most of the characters define each other. For example, Ralph informs Warburton that Isabel is an independent girl before her arrival at Gardencourt from America. James’ description supports the fact that she is independent

²⁶² Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 360.

²⁶³ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 357.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 360.

and has a very good public self-identity because everyone can observe him as a handsome, highly civilized man. In contrast, another character, Ralph, as has been previously mentioned, is described in an almost opposite manner. In Ralph's case, his appearance seems not affirmative. He is ill and weak. That is his public self-identity. At this point, we only know of their physical appearance and personality, which means we just know only half of their self-identity.

The main concern here is to explore whether she will be able to keep her self-identity until the end of the novel or not. At this point, we only know that she is looking for an ideal personality, where she disagrees with Madame Merle about the concept of self. Madame Merle emphasizes the social aspects of self, whereas Isabel thinks that her clothes, house, lifestyle, do not express what she is. Driven by her own decisions, she confronts her destiny and shapes her self-identity. In the beginning, Isabel relies on Madame Merle to learn about herself and to ascertain the situation around her. In the end, she no longer depends on her, for, as the narrator reveals, Madame Merle might have been pretending to know Isabel better than Isabel knew herself.

As an American girl, she pursues happiness and freedom, not social tradition or conventions, as we see:

Although Isabel Archer belongs in the charming line of those American girls whom James subtly traces through their European adventures, she is more important than any who had gone before her. She is but incidentally American, made so for the convenience of a creator who chose to display her as moving across a scene already lighted by his imagination and familiarized by his art. James saw in her the type of youth advancing toward knowledge of life; of youth

at first shy and slight in its innocence but flowering under the sun of experience to the fullest hues and dimensions of a complexity which might under different circumstances have lain dormant; of youth growing irresistibly to meet the destiny which growth compels.²⁶⁵

Some aspects of Osmond's public self influence Isabel. She is attracted to his public self. From this perspective, Isabel evaluates Osmond from only one aspect of self, his public self, in the beginning. At this point, Madame Merle moves like a catalyst to establish a relationship between them. Mrs. Touchett and Ralph know that marrying Osmond will be a great mistake for Isabel. They both assume that Isabel is guided by a one-sided vision she has at the moment. Mrs. Touchett views that Isabel will marry Osmond despite their warnings and indicates that Isabel is guided by egotism in her choice of a marriage partner.²⁶⁶ Isabel is concerned about pleasing her self. She does not listen to the advice offered by Mrs. Touchett and Ralph. They know that Isabel is not going to be happy with Osmond because they know the true character of Madame Merle and Osmond. Mrs. Touchett clearly knows the intentions of Madame Merle and her reasons for manipulating Isabel to marry Osmond. She is surprised by her double identity, as she comments on Madame Merle's social role, "She can do anything; that's what I've always liked her for. I knew she could play any part; but I understood that she played them one by one. I didn't understand that she would play two at the same time."²⁶⁷ For Isabel, Madame Merle is honest, kind and devoted, but Mrs. Touchett knows that she is deceiving Isabel.

She marries Osmond only to discover finally that she had been coldly deceived into

²⁶⁵ Carl Van Doren, 1921, 203.

²⁶⁶ James, *TPoaL*, 1995, 235.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, *TPoaL*, 1995, 283.

the marriage by Madame Merle, whom Isabel has thought her best friend when the woman is in reality Osmond's mistress anxious to get money for their illegitimate child. Something in the intricate, never quite penetrable fibre of the heroine sends her in the end back to her husband, possibly to escape being stalked by Goodwood and Warburton, possibly for the sake of her stepdaughter, thinking, it seems, that she thereby will encounter her destiny more nobly than in any previous chapter of it.

In addition, Ralph, who observes Isabel's activities closely, suggests that Isabel, if she marries Osmond, is 'going to be put in a cage'. It is at this point, too, that Isabel prioritizes her *self*, her *ego*. In her reply to Ralph's question as to whether she has changed immensely because she does not value her liberty as in the past, she says, she has seen life enough, as may be observed in the following dialogue between Ralph and Isabel:

I think I've hardly got over my surprise," he went on at last. "You were the last person I expected to see caught."

"I don't know why you call it caught."

"Because you're going to be put into a cage."

"If I like my cage, that needn't trouble you," she answered.

"That's what I wonder at; that's what I've been thinking of."

"If you've been thinking you may imagine how I've thought! I'm satisfied that I'm doing well."

"You must have changed immensely. A year ago you valued your liberty beyond everything. You wanted only to see life."

"I've seen it," said Isabel. "It doesn't look to me now, I admit, such an inviting

expanse.”²⁶⁸

As time passes, Isabel realizes that she has been only pretending to live. Her theory of life has been to live by enthusiasm for adventures. But after marriage she does *nothing*. On her changing self, the narrator explains, “Isabel now saw more of her than she had done since her marriage; but by this time Isabel’s needs and inclinations had considerably changed. It was not at present to Madame Merle that she would have applied for instruction; she had lost the desire to know this lady’s clever trick. If she had troubles she must keep them to herself, and if life was difficult it would not make it easier to confess herself beaten.”²⁶⁹ This makes Isabel confused with herself, with the feelings of regret and the complication of fears.

As she gradually discovers the true face of Osmond, she realizes, Osmond has not changed, nor have his motives. It is her fault that she did not perceive his full image:

Had James belonged to another school he might have preferred a young man for protagonist; as it was he preferred to watch the more subterranean alchemies which, with the fewest possible external incidents, gradually enrich this sort of woman to maturity. The methods of his narrative were suggested by his theme. He would scrupulously keep the centre of his subject within Isabel’s consciousness, careful not to make her an egoist but equally careful to reveal her qualities by his notation of the delicate refraction which the scenes and personages of her career undergo in passing through her.²⁷⁰

Isabel places emphasis on a self-consciousness that involves thoughts and feelings centred on oneself. Her attempt is to reflect on herself rather than being self-aware in

²⁶⁸ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 288.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 338.

²⁷⁰ Carl Van Doren, 1921, 206.

public so that she can examine her own self and understand her present and future identity. From her viewpoint, it becomes clear that one's true identity is revealed from self-reflection. Isabel's new role in society also suggests that self-identity is not stable, as it changes in a new environment. Isabel also realizes that she has greatly changed during her stay in Europe, that "she flattered herself she had harvested wisdom and learned a great deal more of life than this light-minded creature had even suspected."²⁷¹

Osmond, in this context, can be considered as the mirror which reveals to Isabel her true identity. In the absence of that mirror (Osmond) Isabel would not have realized her true self. Isabel's private self-consciousness, being thus awakened by the presence of Osmond, leads her to focus on her behaviour and belief. Private self-awareness enhances self-knowledge of both ongoing personal events and residual concerns from the past. It may, therefore, be said that private self-awareness should intensify anger, thereby causing a higher level of aggressive behaviour. Isabel's not listening to Osmond is the result of her private self-awareness, which elevates her anger level, and leads her to a deeper knowledge of her *self*. In sum, Isabel's search for inner consciousness leads her to experience a real self that has been covered by delusions. When Isabel refers to her actions, which aspect of self is involved, private or public? For any action, the self as a whole is relevant, not specifically private or public. According to Buss, the state of private self-awareness is defined as paying attention specifically to the unshared aspects of oneself. Such attention results in clearer self-knowledge of a person's present status: body, thoughts, fantasies, and memories. The narrowing of attention to only the private aspect of yourself should produce a more accurate perception of what a person is experiencing right now, as well as a true account of any memories a person attempts to

²⁷¹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 270.

recover.²⁷² Privately aware subjects should know themselves better, but Buss suggests that publicly aware subjects do not know their private selves better.

Both private and public self-consciousness, being determinants of how people behave in situations involving self-awareness, affect behaviour in different ways. The private-public distinction is relevant to the way people regard their bodies and what they are willing to disclose about themselves, their identity, self-esteem, and morality. These matters properly belong under the heading of the self.

Now the character of Osmond should be seen as a mirror that allows Isabel to focus on her behaviour and beliefs. Private self-awareness enhances self-knowledge of both ongoing personal events and residuals of the past, thus intensifying anger, thereby causing a higher level of aggressive behaviour. Isabel's not listening to Osmond constitutes the result of her private self-awareness. However, private self-awareness also elevates anger levels, as it does with Isabel, and polarises mood. Private self-awareness intensifies anxiety. Private self-awareness leads to better knowledge of oneself (dispositions, beliefs, and bodily reactions) as well as to the intensification of effect and motivation (anger, mood, fear, and discomfort).

Here the question is does self-esteem become lower when people see their own faces, that when one is observed, one is more likely to present oneself as a reasonable person. Why should attention to themselves cause people to focus on a social standard rather than a personal one? This might be because attention is normally given to the public aspects of self, of how one is seen or heard by others. Thus, attention to oneself as a social object directs one to social standards rather than one's own. Moreover, if private self-awareness

²⁷² Buss, 1980, 65.

were induced by a small mirror, self-consciousness theory predicts that one would use one's personal standards rather than one's social standards.

Isabel and Osmond both were unable to determine each other's true identity at the beginning. It is natural to have different perspectives about life, but a crisis will begin if one of them assumes his partner's point of view as a personal offence. The public-self of Osmond being, as far as Isabel understood, that of an honest man and gentleman who has no superstitions and prejudices, seems to be only superficial.

Henry James describes Isabel Archer as having a nature that would make her an easy victim of deception, because deep in her soul there was a belief that, if something touched her heart, she could give herself completely to it. She always plans, has desires, and hopes for progress. Isabel always insists that she will never be happy by separating herself from the world. However, she finds a contrast between her imaginative mind, which she developed in America, and the social system and moral values of Europe. As an American girl, she aspires for freedom. But, in Europe, she finds herself in a complex situation especially after her marriage with Osmond. On the one hand, she has to maintain her self-esteem and on the other, she has to follow the tradition of obeying her husband's ideas and beliefs.

Osmond wants Isabel to follow whatever he tells her to do. His selfish behaviour makes her contemplate herself, which leads her to explore her own private self-identity. Here, private self-identity should be related to Buss's idea of private self-consciousness, which he defines as "a more specific tendency to reflect only about oneself—not about all thoughts, ideas, and feelings but only those that center on oneself."²⁷³

Through self-analysis, Isabel decides whether she should follow her husband or her

²⁷³ Arnold Buss, 1980, 80.

inner self. In other words, she realizes that she has her own vision of life and private self. Isabel never thinks of her independence as a state of solitude or singleness; rather, she takes it as her strength. But she is also aware of the consequences she will face if she does not listen to her husband. That is why she insists that she is afraid not of her husband nor his hatred or displeasure, rather of herself and her self-centered decisions. The novel is full of the reflections of Isabel, which help us to perceive her private self-identity more effectively. It also reflects the idea that she has an intimate connection with herself.

Isabel's self-reflection begins at Osmond's house. She contemplates every situation because she starts experiencing pressure from her surroundings. The narrator describes how Osmond's presence in her life gradually shadows her *self-identity*:

It was not till the first year of their life together, so admirably intimate at first, had closed that she had taken the alarm. Then the shadows had begun to gather; it was as if Osmond deliberately, almost malignantly, had put the lights out one by one. The dusk at first was vague and thin, and she could still see her way in it. But it steadily deepened, and if now and again it had occasionally lifted there were certain corners of her prospect that were impenetrably black.²⁷⁴

Her inner self is injured because she believes that Osmond hates her. As hatred deals with human emotion, she thinks that it is not a crime nor that it is cruel or violent. Her self-reflection is an example of her concern about her present and future identity, as Buss proposes that self-reflection is one aspect of private self where one evaluates oneself and estimates some level of self-esteem.²⁷⁵ In other words, Isabel assumes herself to be worth

²⁷⁴ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 356.

²⁷⁵ Buss, 1980, 12.

more than the others and also accepts that she is bound to suffer.

As has already been observed, she chooses Osmond as her husband because she thinks him to be a unique character and because she finds ‘her mirror image in him.’²⁷⁶ Thus, Isabel’s decision to marry Osmond may be seen as an example of how Isabel was driven by her ego. This is apparent in Chapter VI, where the reader comes to know that she often feels content when others admire her and treat her as being superior. We can speculate that a certain narcissistic nature leads her down a difficult path. As the narrator explains, “It may be affirmed without delay that Isabel was probably very liable to the sin of self-esteem; she often surveyed with compliancy the field of her own nature; she was in the habit of taking for granted, on scanty evidence, that she was right; she treated herself to occasions of homage.”²⁷⁷ This makes a person think that Isabel’s identity has two aspects. One is her own imagination of herself, believing that she is right whatever she does; and another is her *egotism* as defined by people surrounding her.

Up to this point, one might see how Isabel develops her self-identity driven by herself. In fact, at this particular point in the story, the reader can only know that she is looking for an ideal personality, and this is precisely the point about which she disagrees with Madame Merle concerning the concept of *self*. One can already presume that Isabel will suffer because of her own self-centered acts. We observe that her egotism, which is her private self-identity, leads her to a trouble filled destiny. Driven by her own decisions, she affronts her destiny and shapes her self-identity.

However, it is still not at all clear as to how self-analysis can reveal Isabel’s private self-identity. After her marriage, Isabel begins to reflect about herself and her goal in life,

²⁷⁶ Edel, 1977, 619.

²⁷⁷ James, *TPoaL*, 1995, 53.

something the narrator explains that she does when the world looks bleak. Isabel thinks that she was different when she was younger, that she was more enthusiastic and adventurous, that she took things very positively, and that the world was a very interesting place. But later, after she is influenced by Madame Merle's ideas, she has no interest in anything, (or, more concretely) "she had become aware more than before of the advantage of being like that—of having made one's self a firm surface"²⁷⁸ and she felt the change in her *self*.

The narrator elaborates, "Isabel now saw more of her than she had done since her marriage; but by this time Isabel's needs and inclinations had considerably changed."²⁷⁹ As the story evolves, we see how self-reflections made her realize that she should listen to herself rather than to others and, at one point, she reflects, "Whatever happens to me let me not be unjust, let me bear my burdens myself and not shift them upon others."²⁸⁰ These kinds of thoughts make her more confused about herself and thus create more difficulty for her in explaining her situation. In the past, Isabel would have relied on Madame Merle to know about herself and to know about the situation around her. However, she no longer depends on her as the narrator reveals that Madame Merle might have been pretending to know Isabel better than Isabel knew herself.

Her well-wishers, Ralph and her aunt, do not hope Isabel will marry Osmond, but Isabel chooses as her *ego* directs when selecting a husband. Later, in her reflections she realizes that she learned a lot in her life through her experiences in Europe and she finds herself a new person there. The free, keen girl becomes another person, a fine lady who is supposed to represent something.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 337.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 337.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., *TPoaL*, 1995, 340.

When she once explains to Ralph that Mr. Osmond is the finest person she has ever found, Ralph suggests that Osmond is not an ideal person to marry.²⁸¹ At this point, she totally ignores her real self-identity, her spirit of independence and her liberty. She maintains the false assumption that Osmond is everything.²⁸² Driven by her expectations of pleasure, she views that Osmond is a superior individual. As it was, Isabel came to reflect on this bitterly with the narrator stating that she realised the truth.

Concerning public self-identity Buss has suggested several aspects such as appearance, personality, and social behaviour. There are several examples where these aspects can be attributed to characters in *The Portrait of a Lady*. Describing his characters' physical appearance in detail, James, at the beginning of the novel, portrays Lord Warburton at Gardencourt as being handsome and highly civilized, contrasting him with Ralph who is described in physical terms rather negatively. These might be considered as examples of one aspect of public self-identity because, at that particular point in the novel, the only things related to us by the novelist are the characters' physical appearance and personality, which means that knowledge of only half of their self-identity has been provided. In order to know their true identities, it will be necessary to look for the private aspects of identity and not only those public ones.

Though certain aspects of public self-identity are easily revealed through the appearance and behaviour of an individual, another aspect of public self-identity can be seen by how others define a person in society and how a person presents oneself according to those attributions. The question here is whether self is shaped by society or it is a balance of inner self and social self.

²⁸¹ Ibid., TPoaL, 1995, 290.

²⁸² Ibid., TPoaL, 1995, 293.

Stuart Hutchinson's analysis of the tradition of reality and American self-obsession and self-creation in *The Portrait of a Lady* suggests Europe as a place where people give more priority to tradition than self.²⁸³ Isabel is also supposed to follow tradition while she is in Europe, similarly to other traditional heroines of the nineteenth century which is as one would expect due to the fact that in every society there are commonly accepted moral values which people are supposed to follow. As an American, Isabel is, therefore, supposed to be created by herself and to act in pursuit of her freedom and independence.

The conclusion, on various grounds, does not satisfy, but it consistently enough rounds out Isabel's chronicle. Praise can hardly exaggerate the skill with which James at first warily investigates her, relating the spirit of the fresh young girl, gradually transferring the action to her consciousness, and thenceforth with almost no appearance of art, he reduces his story to a description of her facing the realization of her fate. One sees that, in something of this same delaying fashion, life does often dawn upon its victims.

Isabel gives emphasis to a self-consciousness that involves thoughts and feelings centered on herself. Her attempt is to reflect on herself rather than being self-aware in public so that she can examine her own *self* and understand her present and future identity. In her view, it becomes clear that she seeks her true identity through self-reflection. Isabel's new role in society also suggests that self-identity is not stable, as it changes according to changes in one's environment. The heroine's voluntary search for fuller consciousness leads her, acting under the illusion of perfect freedom, to choose only the best in experience, which in the end reaps negative consequences for her; but it is this that, by providing insight through suffering and guilt, also provides access to life

²⁸³ Hutchinson, *Henry James: An American as Modernist*, 1982, 25.

for her—to the fructification of consciousness which consists of a knowledge of human bondedness.

3.3 Social Relationship and Identity in *The Wings of the Dove*

In this section, identity that concerns itself with social relationships and consciousness will be discussed in the relationships of Milly Theale, Merton Densher, and Kate Croy. Through the analysis of the link between the self and society we will explore how Milly's identity is shaped in relation with Kate and Densher. In other words, we will see, in this novel, the self-consciousness of Milly and her identity is the struggle she endures on account of living in a different society.

On the publication of the novel in 1902, *The Wings of the Dove*, there were different views from the critics and reviewers. At least one reviewer described James as being too much obsessed with human psychology and criticized him for portraying characters that had no human appearance. The reviewer of *Guardian* asserts, "He [James] has of course always found his main interest in human character. But it may be questioned whether the characters which he now describes always appear as humans."²⁸⁴ The novel, as we noticed, is not about events that flow one from the other, but about 'attitudes'—their 'own pose'. James always considered fiction as an art, and this novel is a perfect example of it, a case where he has applied his artistic technique in full. Many contemporary critics describe themselves as focusing on the technical aspects of the novel. One such critic, J. P. Mowbray, states that:

We cling absolutely to the faith that there is a story stalled somewhere in the labyrinth of Mr. James's bottles and pumps, and that it would lumber on somehow

²⁸⁴ *Guardian* reviewer quoted in Hayes, 2010, 367.

if he would only consent to stop pumping and move a little out of the way. But that he never does. How indeed can he, when he is himself the story and has come to believe that the constructive or coordinating ability to deal with material is of less account than the exhibition of a superb dexterity in keeping the material in the air.²⁸⁵

The description of Milly, in the novel, reveals that she knows herself and, at same time, people around her know her better than she herself. The opening paragraph of Book III, where Milly is introduced, describes Mrs. Stringham's knowledge of Milly, narrating that "She was in the position, as she believed, of knowing much more about Milly Theale than Milly herself knew, and yet of having to darken her knowledge as well as make it active".²⁸⁶ It seems that her identity depends not merely upon her consciousness but is also related to the society and the people among whom she lives. James has placed Milly into such circumstances that it makes us assume that "identity is a constructed phenomenon".²⁸⁷ Another point is that making her different from Kate, James sharply delineates the identity of Milly. In this light, Jeremy Tambling explains, "Like *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Wings of the Dove* looks at the American heiress, and writes the 'international theme', contrasting 'the distinctively American and the distinctively European outlook' as cross-cut with emotional issues, with sexuality, and with differences between English and American women.²⁸⁸

However, the description of Kate and Milly not only manifests itself in terms of differences, but also in terms of sameness. They both are disturbed creatures. Kate's

²⁸⁵ Mowbray quoted in Hayes, 2010, 376.

²⁸⁶ Henry James, *The Wings of the Dove* (hereafter *WoD*), 1986, 121.

²⁸⁷ Elliott, 2014, 53.

²⁸⁸ Tambling, 2000, 144.

distress arises from the complicated European social and cultural nexus in which she must exist, as she seeks security through money, love, and status in society. Her disposition is portrayed as:

She had almost liked, in these weeks, what had created her suspense and her stress: the loss of her mother, the submersion of her father, the discomfort of her sister, and confirmation of their shrunken prospects, the certainty, in especial, of her having to recognize that should she behave, as she called it, decently—that is still do something for others—she would be herself wholly without supplies. She held that she had a right to sadness and stillness; she nursed them for their postponing power.²⁸⁹

Whereas Milly, despite being rich and good is distressed because she feels that something is lacking in her life. The following dialogue between Mrs. Stringham and Milly clarifies the situation below. James describes Milly as a conscious being but, at the same, indicated clearly that she is missing something in her life that she very much wants. The description of Milly seems as:

Mrs. Stringham at this flared into sympathy. ‘Are you in trouble—in pain?’

‘Not the least little bit. But I sometimes wonder—!’

‘Yes’—she pressed: ‘wonder what?’

‘Well, if I shall have much of it.’

Mrs. Stringham stared. ‘Much of what? Not of pain?’

‘Of everything. Of everything I have.’

Anxiously again, tenderly, our friend cast about. ‘You “have” everything; so that when you say “much” of it—’

²⁸⁹ James, *WoD*, 1986, 73.

‘I only mean,’ the girl broke in, ‘shall I have it for long? That is if I *have* got it.’²⁹⁰

Each in her own way, both Milly and Kate, reflect on their inner selves and their desire for something. Here, this study focuses more on Milly because her identity seems more unclear and unstable and because “James makes Milly more problematic and inscrutable”.²⁹¹ Moreover, we also see that “Milly is observed and reflected upon or discussed by all the other characters: by Susan, Kate, Densher, Mrs. Lowder, Lord Mark, Sir Luke. Their problem with Milly is James’ own problem, with which we have seen him wrestle repeatedly in other novels, the problem of defining human individuality in relation to its living acts and visible aspects.”²⁹² Another facet of Milly’s identity is that she goes to Europe to look for people and to experience the culture, for what “she wanted of Europe was *people*”.²⁹³ It seems that Milly’s experience in Europe is similar to that of James, or, as Tambling puts it: “Milly Theale interprets London in terms of an earlier nineteenth—century literature. She is like James who, in *The Middle Years*, records his first visit to London in 1869.”²⁹⁴

The Wings of The Dove also displays the innocence of the young American girl Milly. As Bell analyses it, “*The Wings of the Dove* is generally discussed as though it centers exclusively upon the “dove” of the title, Milly Theale, another in James’s succession of young American women who crave freedom—sometimes thought to be characteristically American—from the restrictions of destiny”.²⁹⁵ Milly is treated in London as an innocent creature, as she is unaware of society in a foreign land. Several dialogues between Lord

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 1986, 139.

²⁹¹ Millicent Bell, *Meaning in Henry James*, 1991, 314.

²⁹² Bell, 1991, 314.

²⁹³ James, *WoD*, 1986, 141.

²⁹⁴ Tambling, 2000, 151.

²⁹⁵ Bell, 1991, 289.

Mark and Milly show the evidence that Milly is not conscious about people in Europe in the beginning. For instance, the author describes how Milly comes to know about herself from Lord Mark, that “Milly had practically just learned from him, had made out, as it were, from her rumbling compartment, that he gave her the highest place among their friend’s actual properties. She was a success, that was what it came to, he presently assured her, and this was what it was to be a success; it always happened before one could know it. One’s ignorance was in fact often the greatest part of it”.²⁹⁶ This shows how someone realizes oneself in new social circumstances and how his/her identities are created along from the descriptions of others. Similarly, Lord Marks states that in European society, “nobody here, you know, does anything for nothing”.²⁹⁷ Another aspect Milly reveals about her identity is that Americans have imagination, as she says to Lord Mark, “You’re blasé, but you’re not enlightened. You’re familiar with everything, but conscious really of nothing. What I mean is that you’ve no imagination.”²⁹⁸

Another subject *The Wings of the Dove* displays is that of the consciousness and the social construction of the self. In the description of Kate’s consciousness, James elaborates:

She[Kate] was dressed together in black, which gave an even tone, by contrast, to her clear face and made her hair more harmoniously dark. Outside, on the balcony, her eyes showed as blue; within, at the mirror, they showed almost as black. She was handsome, but the degree of it was not sustained by items and aids; a circumstance moreover playing its part at almost any time in the

²⁹⁶ James, *WoD*, 1986, 155.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1986, 157.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1986, 158.

impression she produced.²⁹⁹

This description is notable as it gives the appropriate example of mental temperament of an illusive self. Henry James also comments on the preface of the novel that the main idea behind the story is to display “that of a young person conscious of a great capacity for life, but early stricken and doomed, condemned to die under short respite, while also enamoured of the world; aware moreover of the condemnation and passionately desiring to ‘put in’ before extinction as many of the finer vibrations as possible, and so achieve, however briefly and brokenly, the sense of having lived.”³⁰⁰ This view of the relationship between consciousness and the formation of self is also explained by Elliott, who argues that although the self is often portrayed as primarily a private domain, an inner realm of perineal thoughts, values, strivings, emotions, and desires. It, however, is constructed by the impact of other people, the wider society, as well as cultural forms and moral norms, in the making of the self.³⁰¹ This is to say that the identity is formed through the conflict between personal desires and social obligations, which in the novel is illustrated by the characters Milly, Kate, and Densher. On the theme of the novel, John Bayley argues:

In the earlier fiction James had often openly contrasted American manners and assumptions with European ones, American innocence and strength with European worldliness and experience. Now the war has gone underground, so to speak, and in these two novels takes a form at once more brutal and more subtle, more humorous and more dramatic. Milly—and it is the most touching thing about her—is the solitary American champion, demonstrating among other things James’s own obscure loyalty to the tradition and the country in which he had been

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 1986, 56.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 1986, 35.

³⁰¹ Elliott, 2014, 30.

born and bred. She is hedged about by English intrigue and deceit, and—much more dangerously—by that, in one sense perfectly genuine, loving and cherishing which makes people coo over her as ‘the Dove’.³⁰²

Here the use of ‘dove’ is likewise significant. As a symbol, it can be linked to the angels and also to the holy spirit. The use of ‘dove’ as a symbol of peace, love, and a messenger in daily life, as well as in literature, is a very common image. It is easy to assume that such images of the dove are taken from *The Holy Bible*, in which one can see the line “the Spirit of God descending like a dove”³⁰³ and similarly “after forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark and sent out a raven [...] then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. [...] the dove returned to him in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf!”³⁰⁴

These statements of the Bible reveal that the ‘dove’ is a symbol of divinity, like god, and also represents that which is angelic, sacred, and devotional, all that is related to the divine. Among many references to the Dove in the Bible, the following lines from Psalms 55: 6 read: “I said, Oh, that I had the wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest—I would flee far away and stay in the desert [...]”³⁰⁵ and Psalm 68: 13 states: “the wings of my dove are sheathed with silver, its feathers with shining gold”³⁰⁶, a passage which might have influenced James significantly in *The Wings of the Dove*. In this connection, Bell argues:

This association and other images connected with Milly suggest that religious tradition is being invoked – but there is no need to see allegory in the novel. Milly

³⁰² Bayley, 1986, 24.

³⁰³ *The Holy Bible*, Matthew 3:16, 1990, 1489.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Genesis 8: 6 -12, 1990, 11

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Psalm, 1990, 878.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Psalm, 1990, 889.

is not Christ, but James wanted to introduce the powerful vocabulary of the tradition which insists on the immeasurable value of the spirit and the ethic of generous love in the place of the modernism exemplified by Kate and Densher.³⁰⁷

It is not only the title of novel, *The Wings of the Dove*, which is probably taken from the Psalms quoted above but also the portrayal of Milly, the main protagonist, which indicates that James has used the ‘dove’ symbol in terms of innocence, freedom, and sacrifice. As Bell again states, “She is dovelike in name, and still more dovelike in nature—gentle, lovely, and pure. People might feel uneasiness, nervous, depressed after knowing one has the deadliest illness, or one is dying. But Milly did not lose herself; she lives by her freedom like a dove.”³⁰⁸ It explains that her illness does not stop Milly living her life to its fullest. She is rich and gentle, loveable and strange, and shows herself as being more lively than the other characters. Milly states that she wants to do something in her life and she wants “the power to resist the bliss of what she has.”³⁰⁹

The association and image of the ‘dovelike’ character of Milly, a young American lady who goes to Europe to experience the world and who, as we see in the beginning, is barely aware of the essence of European society, its culture and its society might, at first, seem contradictory to James’ intention in writing the novel. Not only is she also not conscious, in the beginning, of the conspiracy of her dearest friend, Kate and Densher, but she is also beguiled by the desire to love. As a result, she becomes a victim of the material world of Europe until at the very end of her life when she asserts herself by forgiving Kate and Densher and, thereby, doing something that clearly indicates that she refuses to remain a victim of her circumstances.

³⁰⁷ Bell, 1991, 294.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 1991, 294.

³⁰⁹ James, *WoD*, 1986, 140.

This concentrates on the view of the seeming innocence of a young American girl, who has great freedom but who is unaware of the conspiracies taking place around her. Milly is treated in London as an innocent creature, as she is unaware of society, and in a foreign land. However, as Milly becomes more and more conscious about herself and society, that she is seen by others around her as a 'dove' and that European society is more sophisticated than that of America and a place where one may become the object of a conspiracy engineered by one's most trusted friends, she reacts doing the unexpected and by, therefore, fundamentally changing the future course of the lives of the conspirators.

Kate is the first one who calls Milly a 'Dove', because Kate thinks that Milly is free and innocent. When Kate says, "you're a dove", Milly feels it was "like an inspiration: she found herself accepting as the right one, which she caught her breath with relief, the name so given her."³¹⁰ It seems that Milly became aware of her reality, her true self with this revelation, but, significantly, that she did not see this attribution as necessarily being a sign of weakness. The narrator continues to explain, "She met it on the instant as she would have met revealed truth; it lights up the strange dusk in which she lately had walked. That was what the matter with her was. She was a dove. Oh, wasn't she?"³¹¹ Everybody sees Milly as a princess and as an independent woman. But in Europe, people are bound by society. Kate tells Milly that "you can do anything—you can do, I mean, lots that we can't. You're an outsider, independent and standing by yourself".³¹²

Kate, on the other hand, believes that her life is not independent. She is forced to live with many obligations, because there are many expectations from society. One is that she

³¹⁰ Ibid., 1986, 236.

³¹¹ Ibid., 1986, 236.

³¹² Ibid., 1986, 235.

cannot marry whomever she might wish because of her lack of money. This expectation of society that Kate internalized and accepted reflects a commercial society and its effects on private life in Europe, whereas in Milly's case, due to her great wealth, society gave her freedom and allowed her to remain innocent with regard to the evil around her. It also shows, more or less, that Milly is defined by other characters and that, in the end, she realizes her identity by accepting others' perceptions of her and then by doing the unexpected. This ability of Milly to believe that she has a dovelike character, means "she should have to be clear as to how a dove would act"³¹³ and this, in turn, gives her the ability to see the dove's capacity to act decisively and to exhibit great strength of will in her refusal victimhood, to obtain revenge in a positive sense by means of her forgiving others.

Moreover, the development of the novel suggests that it is Densher who loses his identity in the end. He wanders aimlessly and cannot decide what to do with the money and his love, Kate. There is also a consciousness of morality that shapes the identity of both these individuals. This situation is easily understood if one understands Elliott's description of personal identity:

The relationship between self and society here is one of conflict, tension and ambivalence, but not simply because of impinging social or historical forces. Instead, emotional dislocation and sexual contradiction are treated as inherent to problems of the self. In this view, desire is at the root of the complex ways in which the individual and society interpenetrate.³¹⁴

Kate sometimes reflects upon herself in ways that belie the quite different analysis made

³¹³ Ibid., 1986, 237.

³¹⁴ Elliott, 2014, 54.

of her by others. She has wishes and obligations, but her mind is often in a state of mental conflict. There are social requirements but also desires.

With regard to both Kate and Densher, the interaction between self and society is present in the novel. Dramatic performances define their identities. In the Preface of the novel, James describes the consciousness of Densher and Kate, that “what they have most to tell us is that, all unconsciously and with the best faith in the world, all by mere force of the terms of their superior passion combined with their superior diplomacy, they are laying a trap for the great innocence to come”.³¹⁵ By superior passion, James means, Kate’s desires to become rich. The childhood suppression, pain and struggle because of the lack of love and money are clearly seen in the description of Kate in the first chapter of the novel. Kate also does not want her marriage to fail like her sister’s and her parents. She wants security and social status in society. She does not wish to suffer like her sister, Marian. She does not have a good relationship with her father. Thus, *The Wings of the Dove* focuses on people’s identity as a reaction to their social circumstances. They have to create their own identities according to their social roles. The novel concludes with uncertainty and this uncertainty represents the individual’s confrontation with a world that often does not react as one would hope it might.

Now if one assumes that destiny is also a product of self-consciousness, then it equals to identity. Merle A. Williams in her essay ‘The Wings of the Dove: Self and Society’ has voiced a similar view in stating that “Kate Croy, Milly Theale and Merton Densher must work out their destinies. Each must seek to compose his or her own identity in response to a series of taxing social encounters, to find an appropriate accommodation between the

³¹⁵ Henry James, in ‘Preface’ of *WoD*, 1986, 48.

intimate sense of selfhood and the demands imposed by a range of public roles”.³¹⁶

In the novel, the major characters find themselves involved in constructing their identities in the different social contexts they face. Kate is disturbed by her situation. Her mind is not stable because her mother has died, her father rejects her and she could not fulfil her desire of marrying her lover Densher. Her disposition seems fuzzy and this fuzziness may be seen reflected in her being described as finding a perverse sort of comfort in the weeks following her mother’s death in the very suspense of not knowing what would happen to her, in the stress not only of death, itself, but of her father isolating himself from her, her sister’s desperate situation, and the sure knowledge that her future opportunities had become limited. Also, there was stress for her in the knowledge that she would have to conform to the expectations of society, if she were not to be completely cast off without any hope for material support from others. For her at this point in her life, she found strength from her right to indulge in her grief and to do nothing. She saw this as a source of power, enabling her to postpone having to face the events unfolding around her.³¹⁷ Depicting Kate in such a manner suggests that James was trying to show the nature of identity being moulded by the imperatives of the social context in which one finds oneself. It also makes clear to us that self is created through conflict between society and self, something which has been asserted by Williams as “The opening pages of *The Wings of the Dove* embody the novel’s central concern: the individual’s confrontation with the world in which he moves. The slow uncoiling of the very first sentence, ‘She waited, Kate Croy [...]’ points at once to James’s preoccupation with the

³¹⁶ Merle Williams, 1993, 90.

³¹⁷ James, *WoD*, 1986, 73.

issue of identity.”³¹⁸ Hence, the portrayal of Kate is also a reflection of the European mind-set where they want money, love and status in society. And in order to fulfil their desires, they can conspire against their dear ones as they plot against the innocent Milly. The desires of Kate become rich, the childhood suppression, pain and her struggle because of the lack of love and money is clearly seen in the description of Kate in the first chapter of the novel. Kate also does not wish her marriage fail. She does not want to suffer like her sister Marian. In this way, Kate constructs her identity as Elliott describes, “through the adoption of, and adherence to social roles and their validation by social institutions, but the individual is the creative and reflective agent who decides—and in doing so constitutes self-identity—on how to carry out such roles as well as the staging of role performances.”³¹⁹ Densher, on the other hand, is described as:

A longish, leanish, fairish young Englishman, not unamenable, on certain sides, to classification—as for instance by being a gentleman, by being rather specifically one of the educated, one of the generally sound and generally civil; yet thought to that degree neither extraordinary nor abnormal, he would have failed to play straight into an observer’s hands. [...] the difficulty with Densher was that he looked vague without looking weak—idle without looking empty.³²⁰

This ambiguity is related to his identity because it reveals that he has no self-esteem or will or goal in life. He was always moved by others’ wishes. As Millicent Bell comments, “Densher’s problem is that stories are written for him by others—by the three women who have their own ideas for him. In Venice, he finally asks himself if he has any longer a will of his own. He had done everything Kate wanted and she had done nothing he

³¹⁸ Williams, 1993, 91.

³¹⁹ Elliott, 2014, 38.

³²⁰ James, *WoD*, 1986, 85-86.

did.”³²¹

The identity of Milly Theale, thus, involves the link between the self, how she sees herself, consciously or unconsciously, and the social, how others perceive her. In admitting this, the resulting analysis will show how Milly’s identity is shaped by her inner essence and sociocultural difference, if, by inner essence, one takes it as meaning the self-consciousness of Milly and if one accepts that sociocultural difference refers to the struggle Milly makes for living her life in a different society than the one she was raised in.

Thus, *The Wings of the Dove* is a presentation of people’s identity in social circumstances. They have to create their own identities according to their social roles. The novel concludes with uncertainty, an illustration that an individual’s confrontation with the world is not, in many instances, an altogether clear thing.

³²¹ Bell, 1991, 332.

Chapter IV

4. Conclusion

This exploration of fiction has sought to clarify identity as a concept that takes on a widening range of meaning for Henry James. The notion of identity for Henry James' works, as a whole, is fully as complex as modern usage and includes shades of meaning that appear in the past and in 20th century or even early 21st century usage. The analysis of the concept in Henry James, therefore, reveals that he has a modern sense of understanding of the notion that deals with the issues of cultural difference, self-awareness and realization, and his relationship between self and society. In most of James' fiction, the protagonists set out on a journey, something unfortunate happens to them, and, as a consequence, they gain a greater awareness of themselves and others.

The underlying structure of this suggests that James conveys meaning through his style or method. The notion of difference, which James uses in many novels, should be seen as one technique for the creation of discourse between self and other. For instance, in *The American*, Newman travels to Europe for an experience, but he encounters differences in culture which teach him an important lesson. Similarly, in the case of Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady*, she suffers in Europe because of her independent nature and having too many ideas, which Osmond takes as a threat to his identity. Later, she understands the situation through self-reflection and returns to Rome despite the challenges she will have to face. Furthermore, in *The Wings of the Dove*, Milly Theale establishes herself as a distinct identity in Europe by forgiving others. All the examples mentioned above show the major subject of James' novels as being a quest for identity.

In *The American*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, and *The Wings of the Dove*, the three novels that have received special attention in this dissertation, the cultural difference and the relationship of characters with the people around them make it imperative that both the characters to be found in the novels, as well as the readers of the novels, make an effort to understand the workings of two cultures on each other simultaneously. Moreover, the endings of the novels display the fact that human nature is unpredictable and uncertain. Christopher Newman of *The American* gives up his intention of making public a short note written by the late Marquis de Bellegarde accusing his wife of being responsible for his imminent death and, thereby, obtaining revenge on the Bellegarde family for their rejection of him. Isabel Archer returns to Rome despite having other options than going back to what will surely be a confrontation, whether over herself, over Pansy (her stepdaughter), or over both, with Osmond, a man whom she loathes, and Milly Theale gives her money to Densher before her death although she knows that he is in love with another woman and that there were ulterior motives in his association with her. Each of the protagonists sacrifice something and, by means of their respective sacrifices, their ability to forgive and move forward, they no longer remain victims of fate. They also show a preference by Henry James for promoting kindness and morality as the core of the self and identity. Each of the protagonists discovers who he/she is at the end, what their differences with others really mean, and achieve self-awareness.

With regard to Christopher Newman one literary critic states that “In *The American* the hero’s experiences are used to illustrate the contrast between the two civilizations. Newman never actually gets “educated,” never changes inside; he just becomes more and

more aware of the differences between America and France”.³²² Newman, thus, becomes aware of his identity by means of facing and finally of understanding the differences between two dissimilar nations.

In the case of Isabel Archer, her independent nature, her desire for seeing life by herself guides her *self* to do whatever she desires. Not only depicted the conflict between innocence and experience but also her entire journey is shown as representing her search for her ‘identity’. She rejects Casper Goodwood and Lord Warburton’s proposals of marriage, refusing because of fear of losing her original identity to men who she, by the end of the novel, must have felt were stalking her. Her choice of marrying Osmond is based on her intrinsic idea that he is unique in his ideas and personality and because, unlike her other two suitors, he had too much pride to stalk her. Accordingly, she takes a bold decision on the false assumption that marrying Osmond will work to give her a distinct identity. However, it is not long before the truth of her situation comes to the surface and she realizes that marriage to Osmond represents the ultimate challenge to her identity, and that if she does not respond in some way or other that her identity as an independent human being will be erased, because Osmond, in spite of his passivity, has no intention of encouraging her existence as a free and independent spirit. So, although on the surface it seems that Isabel’s marriage is ending in a disaster, by having become fully aware of the situation around her and by recognizing the facts as they are and not as she might wish them to have been, her return to Rome represents an acceptance of the reality of life and provides her with the means for creating a new life for herself and possibly for her stepdaughter, Pansy.

³²² Anderson, 1977, 41.

On the significance of Isabel's choice in returning to Osmond, one Jamesian scholar explains, "It is plain that her moral integrity at least must be granted, but James insists that the reader be prepared to go beyond this and accept that her decision implies neither renunciation nor defeat".³²³ To recapitulate, Isabel develops a new sense of identity through this acceptance of and self-reflection on the facts of life and society.

The relationship between Kate, Densher, and Milly seems complex but they each work to form each other's identity. The triangular entanglement reveals each other's self as becoming a reflection of one another. In analyzing their relationship, Tambling sees it as being about 'an incremental development of the waste passion' with reference to the 'pale faces' of Kate and Densher. She explains that, "the word 'pale' suggests the ghostliness, and death, and the world of Holbein's 'The Ambassadors'. Looking – whether in the glass, in the Lacanian 'mirror-stage', where the subject receives its identity, or looking at the lover – produces an uncanny paleness".³²⁴ These experiences gathered from this small but strongly interconnected group of human beings affect each other in significant ways. From another perspective, while people are obsessed with selfhood in relation to their personal development and personal feeling, Milly, Kate and Densher, through the inherent decency of their concern for others, illustrate the need of the inner 'self' to show concern for the betterment of others as a means for bettering themselves.

More generally speaking, Henry James' concern for self and identity of the characters of his novels and short stories provides a detailed panorama of the human mind and society. There is clearly an ambiguity, uncertainty, and unpredictability at the surface level, but at the deeper level, his characters give off a sense of their 'being' part of a

³²³ Lee, 1978, 39.

³²⁴ Tambling, 2000, 157.

greater whole and, as in art, the meaning may be seen as being derived out of the whole picture, and not merely from the individual parts.

Appendix-I

AntConc.

'Identity' in Henry James' seven novels (59 hits)

I. *The American* (1877)

1. The cut of this gentleman's moustache, with the two premature wrinkles in the cheek above it, and the fashion of his garments, in which an exposed shirt-front and a cerulean cravat played perhaps an obtrusive part, completed the conditions of his *identity*.

2. The voice in which the words were spoken made them seem even more like a thing with which he had once been familiar, and as he bent his eyes it lent an *identity* to the commonplace elegance of the back hair and shoulders of a young lady walking in the same direction as *himself*.

II. *The Europeans* (1878)

3. "I am afraid of you!" said the young man. "I had a different plan. I expected the servant would take in my card, and that you would put your heads together, before admitting me, and make out my *identity*."

4. He had not heard her coming, and he lay motionless, flat on his back, with his hands clasped under his head, staring up at the sky; so that the Baroness was able to reflect, at her leisure, upon the question of his *identity*.

III. *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881)

5. 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*.

6. "A very little of it, I am sure, will content Miss Archer!" the lady exclaimed with a light laugh. "I'm an old friend of your aunt's. I've lived much in Florence. I'm Madame Merle." She made this last announcement as if she were referring to a person of tolerably distinct *identity*. For Isabel, however, it represented little; she could only continue to feel that Madame Merle had as charming a manner as any she had ever encountered.

7. The collection is all that's wanted to make it pitiful. I'm tired of the sound of the word; I think it's grotesque. With the poor old father it's different; he has his *identity*, and it's rather a massive one.

8. "I don't object to her," said Osmond; "I rather like Mrs. Touchett. She has a sort of old-fashioned character that's passing away—a vivid *identity*. But that long jackanapes the son—is he about the place?"

9. His kiss was like white lightning, a flash that spread, and spread again, and stayed; and it was extraordinarily as if, while she took it, she felt each thing in his hard manhood that had least pleased her, each aggressive fact of his face, his figure, his presence, justified of its intense *identity* and made one with this act of possession. So had she heard of those wrecked and under water following a train of images before they sink.

IV. *The Wings of the Dove* (1902)

10. The exact *identity* of her candidate was a detail; what was of the essence was her conception of the kind of match it was open to her niece to make with her aid.

11. Lowder's existence, and still more of her remarkable *identity*, had been of so recent and so sudden a birth.

12. Kate had for her new friend's eyes the extraordinary and attaching property of appearing at a given moment to show as a beautiful stranger, to cut her connexions and lose her *identity*, letting the imagination for the time make what it would of them—make her merely a person striking from afar, more and more pleasing as one watched, but who was above all a subject for curiosity.

13. The gentleman still stood, a little helpless, addressing *himself* to the intension of urbanity as if it were a large loud whistle; he had been sighing sympathy, in his way, while the lady made her overture; and Milly had in this light soon arrived at their *identity*.

14. & 15. It just pulled her friend up, for even while they talked—at least it was one of the reasons—she stood there suddenly, irrelevantly, in the light of her OTHER *identity*, the *identity* she would have for Mr. Densher.

16. It was for several seconds again as if the TOTAL of her *identity* had been that of the person known to him—a determination having for result another sharpness of its own.

17. She had thought him at first very quiet, in spite of his recovery from his original confusion; though even the shade of bewilderment, she yet perceived, had not been due to such vagueness on the subject of her reintensified *identity* as the probable sight, over there, of many thousands of her kind would sufficiently have justified.

18. Oh!" said Lord Mark—in a manner that, making it resound through the great cool hall, might have carried it even to Densher's ear as a judgement of his *identity* heard and noted once before.

19. That a visit from Milly should, in this projection of necessities, strike him as of the last incongruity, quite as a hateful idea, and above all as spoiling, should one put it grossly, his game—the adoption of such a view might of course have an *identity* with one of those numerous ways of being a fool that seemed so to abound for him.

20. Densher had him for a minute in profile, had him for a time during which his *identity* produced, however quickly, all the effect of establishing connexions—connexions startling and direct; and then, as if it were the one thing more needed, seized the look, determined by a turn of the head, that might have been a prompt result of the sense of being noticed.

21. He had come to say he had saved her—he had come, as from Mrs. Stringham, to say how she might BE saved—he had come, in spite of Mrs. Stringham, to say she was lost: the distinct throbs of hope, of fear, simultaneous for all their distinctness, merged their *identity* in a bound of the heart just as immediate and which remained after they had passed.

22. The young man at these moments so seen was too distant and too strange for the right *identity*; and yet, outside, afterwards, it was his own face Densher had known.

23. The man was seated in the very place in which, beside Mrs. Lowder's, he had looked to find Kate, and that was a sufficient *identity*.

V. *The Ambassadors* (1903)

24. The dear man in the Paris garden was then admirably and unmistakably IN one—which was no small point gained; what next accordingly concerned us was the determination of THIS *identity*. One could only go by probabilities, but there was the advantage that the most general of the probabilities were virtual certainties.

25. He read thus the simple designation “Maria Gostrey,” to which was attached, in a corner of the card, with a number, the name of a street, presumably in Paris, without other appreciable *identity* than its foreignness.

26. “I beg your pardon—that’s exactly what I do put it on for. It’s exactly the thing that I’m reduced to doing for *myself*. It seems to rescue a little, you see, from the wreck of hopes and ambitions, the refuse-heap of disappointments and failures, my one presentable little scrap of an *identity*.”

27. The fact was that his perception of the young man's *identity*—so absolutely checked for a minute—had been quite one of the sensations that count in life; he certainly had never known one that had acted, as he might have said, with more of a crowded rush.

28. He asked *himself* if, by any chance, before he should have in some way to commit *himself*, he might feel his mind settled to the new vision, might habituate it, so to speak, to the remarkable truth. But oh it was too remarkable, the truth; for what could be more remarkable than this sharp rupture of an *identity*?

29. It was as if at these instants he just presented *himself*, his *identity* so rounded off, his palpable presence and his massive young manhood, as such a link in the chain as might practically amount to a kind of demonstration.

30. She was delighted at this hit of her *identity* with that personage—it fitted so her character; she declared it was the title she meant henceforth to adopt.

31. The moments had already, for that matter, drawn their deepest tinge from the special interest excited in him by his vision of his companion's *identity* with the person whose attitude before the glimmering altar had so impressed him.

32. Small and fat and constantly facetious, straw-coloured and destitute of marks, he would have been practically indistinguishable hadn't his constant preference for light-grey clothes, for white hats, for very big cigars and very little stories, done what it could for his *identity*.

33. He saw furthermore that they weren't, as had first come to him, alone together; he was at no loss as to the *identity* of the broad high back presented to him in the embrasure of the window furthest from the door.

34. The question of his own French had never come up for them; it was the one thing she wouldn't have permitted—it belonged, for a person who had been through much, to mere boredom; but the present result was odd, fairly veiling her *identity*, shifting her back into a mere voluble class or race to the intense audibility of which he was by this time inured.

VI. *The Golden Bowl* (1904)

35. He knew as well the other things of which her appearance was at any time—and in Eaton Square especially—made up: her resemblance to her father, at times so vivid and coming out, in the delicate warmth of occasions, like the quickened fragrance of a flower; her resemblance, as he had hit it off for her once in Rome, during the first flushed days after their engagement, to a little dancing-girl at rest, ever so light of movement but most often panting gently, even a shade compunctiously, on a bench; her approximation, finally—for it was analogy somehow more than *identity*—to the transmitted images of rather neutral and negative propriety that made up, in his long line, the average of wifehood and motherhood.

36. “English society,” as he would have said, cut him accordingly in two, and he reminded *himself* often, in his relations with it, of a man possessed of a shining star, a decoration, an order of some sort, something so ornamental as to make his *identity* not complete, ideally, without it, yet who, finding no other such object generally worn, should be perpetually and the least bit ruefully unpinning it from his breast to transfer it to his pocket.

37. His preference had during the evening not failed of occasion to press him with mute insistences; practically without words, without any sort of straight telegraphy, it had arrived at a felt *identity* with Charlotte's own.

38. The picture flushed at the same time with all its essential colour—that of the so possible *identity* of her father's motive and principle with her own. HE was "deep," as Amerigo called it, so that no *vibration* of the still air should reach his daughter; just as she had earned that description by making and by, for that matter, intending still to make, her care for his serenity, or at any rate for the firm outer shell of his dignity, all marvellous enamel, her paramount law.

39. Then it was that, across half the gallery—for he hadn't moved from where she had first seen him—he struck her as confessing, with strange tears in his own eyes, to sharp *identity* of emotion.

40. She knew *herself* suddenly, almost strangely glad to be coming to him at this hour with nothing more abstract than a telegram; but even after she had stepped into his prison under her pretext, while her eyes took in his face and then embraced the four walls that enclosed his restlessness, she recognised the virtual *identity* of his condition with that aspect of Charlotte's situation for which, early in the summer and in all the amplitude of a great residence, she had found with so little seeking the similitude of the locked cage.

VII. *The American Scene* (1907)

41. The immense liberality of the Bay, the noble amplitude of the boat, the great unlocked and tumbled-out city on one hand, and the low, accessible mystery of the opposite State on the other, watching any approach, to all appearance, with so gentle and patient an eye; the gaiety of the light, the gladness of the air, and, above all (for it most came back to that), the unconscious affluence, the variety in *identity*, of the young men of business: these things somehow left speculation, left curiosity exciting, yet kept it beguilingly safe.

42. "Oh, yes; we were awfully dear, for what we are and for what we do"—it was proud, but it was rather rueful; with the odd appearance everywhere as of florid creations waiting, a little bewilderingly, for their justification, waiting for the next clause in the sequence, waiting in short for life, for time, for interest, for character, for *identity itself* to come to them, quite as large spread tables or superfluous shops may wait for guests and customers.

43. I had supposed it for a moment, in my innocence, the Connecticut—which it decidedly was not; it was only, as appeared, a stream quelconque a stream without an *identity*.

44. The reflection follows close moreover that, tactfully speaking, criticism has no close concern with Alumni Hall; it is as if that grim visitor found the approaches closed to him—had to enter, to the loss of all his *identity*, some relaxing air of mere sentimental,

mere shameless association. He turns his back, a trifle ruefully whistling, and wanders wide; so at least I seemed to see him do, all September, all October, and hereabouts in particular: I felt him resignedly reduced, for the time, to looking over, to looking through, the fence—all the more that at Cambridge there was at last something in the nature of a fence so to be dealt with.

45. And I have had indeed to permit *myself* this free fantasy of the hypothetic rescued *identity* of a given house—taking the vanished number in Washington Place as most pertinent—in order to invite the reader to gasp properly with me before the fact that we not only fail to remember, in the whole length of the city, one of these frontal records of birth, sojourn, or death, under a celebrated name, but that we have only to reflect an instant to see any such form of civic piety inevitably and for ever absent.

46. Still, as I have already hinted, there was always the case of the one other rescued *identity* and preserved felicity, the happy accident of the elder day still ungrudged and finally legitimated.

47. The “American” *identity* that has profited by their sacrifice has meanwhile acquired (in the happiest cases) all apparent confidence and consistency; but may not the doubt remain of whether the extinction of qualities ingrained in generations is to be taken for quite complete?

48. The cell is still there at Sunnyside, and there is even yet so much charm that one doesn’t attempt to say where the parts of it, all kept together in a rich conciliatory way, begin or end—though indeed, I hasten to add, the *identity* of the original modest house, the shrine within the gilded shell, has been religiously preserved.

49. If a walk across the Park, with a responsive friend, late on the golden afternoon of a warm week-day, and if a consequent desultory stroll, for speculation’s sake, through certain northward and eastward streets and avenues, of an *identity* a little vague to me now, save as a blur of builded evidence as to proprietary incomes—if such an incident ministered, on the spot, to a boundless evocation, it then became history of a splendid order: though I perhaps must add that it became so for the two participants alone, and with an effect after all not easy to communicate.

50. Yet why, on the other hand, could they affect one, even with the Fatherland planked under them in the manner of the praying-carpet spread beneath the good Mahometan, as still more disconnected from the historic consciousness implied in their own type, and with the mere moral *identity* of German or Slav, or whatever it might be, too extinct in them for any possibility of renewal?

51. Such had been from the first, under a chastened light and in a purple sea, the dainty isle of Aquidneck; which might have avoided the weak mistake of giving up its pretty native name and of becoming thereby as good as nameless—with an existence as Rhode Island practically monopolized by the State and a Newport *identity* borrowed at the best and applicable but to a corner.

52. I FELT *myself*, on the spot, cast about a little for the right expression of it, and then lost any hesitation to say that, putting the three or four biggest cities aside, Concord, Massachusetts, had an *identity* more palpable to the mind, had nestled in other words more successfully beneath her narrow fold of the mantle of history, than any other American town.

53. If its *identity* in “Europe,” that is, resides more especially in its perpendicular, its backward and forward extension, its ascent and descent of the long ladder of time, so it develops in the United States mainly by its lateral spread, as one may say; expressing *itself* thus rather by number than by name, and yet taking *itself* for granted, when one comes to compare, with an intensity to which mere virtue of name elsewhere scarce helps it.

54. But I try in vain to recall a case in which, either during the New England May and June, or during those of the Middle States (since these groups of weeks have in the two regions a differing *identity* and value), the genius in question struck me as adopting with any frankness, as doing more than passively, helplessly accept, the supplied paraphernalia, the signs of existing life. The business is clearly to get rid of them as far as may be, to cover and smother them; dissimulating with the biggest, freest brush their impertinence and their ugliness.

55. London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, goodness knows, talk about themselves: that is each member of this sisterhood talks, sufficiently or inordinately, of the great number of divided and differing selves that form together her controlling *identity*.

56. and 57. It is in positive quest of an *identity* of some sort, much rather—an *identity* other than merely functional and technical—that Washington goes forth, encumbered with no ideal of avoidance or escape: it is about *herself* as the City of Conversation precisely that she incessantly converses; adorning the topic, moreover, with endless ingenuity and humour.

58. The admirable old house of the stately hall and staircase, of the charming coved and vaulted drawing-room, of the precious mahogany doors, the tall unsophisticated portraits, the delicate dignity of welcome, owed nothing of its noble *identity*, nothing at all appreciable, to the monomania.

59. The whole appearance operates as by an economy so thorough that no element of either party to the arrangement is discoverably sacrificed; neither is mutilated, docked in any degree of its *identity*, its amplitude of type; nothing is left unexpressed in either through its relation with the other.

Appendix-II

Ant Conc.

'Self' in Henry James' seven novels (175 hits)

I. *The Europeans* (1878)

1. They were very plump and pretty—to the multifold braids of her hair, with a movement half caressing, half corrective. An attentive observer might have fancied that during these periods of desultory *self-inspection* her face forgot its melancholy; but as soon as she neared the window again it began to proclaim that she was a very ill-pleased woman.

2. “Oh, surely, sometimes,” replied Mr. Brand, as if he thought this a regrettable account of *one's self*. “I am never depressed,” Gertrude repeated. “But I am sometimes wicked. When I am wicked I am in high spirits. I was wicked just now to my sister.” “What did you do to her?”

3. Gertrude Wentworth put her arm round the young girl and led her forward. It was not, apparently, that she needed much leading. She came toward the Baroness with a light, quick step, and with perfect *self-possession*, rolling her stocking round its needles. She had dark blue eyes and dark brown hair; she was wonderfully pretty.

4. I don't say they are bad. I don't judge them in advance. But they may perhaps make it necessary that we should exercise a great deal of wisdom and *self-control*. It will be a different tone.” Gertrude was silent a moment, in deference to her father's speech; then she spoke in a manner that was not in the least an answer to it.

5. Mr. Wentworth was liberal, and he knew he was liberal. It gave him pleasure to know it, to feel it, to see it recorded; and this pleasure is the only palpable form of *self-indulgence* with which the narrator of these incidents will be able to charge him.

6. The sense, indeed, that the good people about her had, as regards her remarkable *self*, no standard of comparison at all gave her a feeling of almost illimitable power. It was true, as she said to herself, that if for this reason they would be able to discover nothing against her.

7. “Yes, you seem to me different from your father and sister—from most of the people you have lived with,” he observed. “To say that *one's self*,” Gertrude went on, “is like saying—by implication, at least—that one is better. I am not better; I am much worse. But they say themselves that I am different. It makes them unhappy.”

8. It is beside the matter to say that he had a good conscience; for the best conscience is a sort of *self-reproach*, and this young man's brilliantly healthy nature spent *itself* in objective good intentions which were ignorant of any test save exactness in hitting their mark.

9. But it has a little look of some other parts of the principality. One might fancy one's *self* among those grand old German forests, those legendary mountains [...]

10. There was something akin to an acknowledgment of fascination in the way Mr. Brand looked at him; but the young clergyman retained as yet quite enough *self*-possession to be able to say, with a good deal of solemnity, "She is not in love with you."

11. "Well," said Felix meditatively, "I mean that she has had a great deal of *self*-possession. She was waiting—for years; even when she seemed, perhaps, to be living in the present. She knew how to wait; she had a purpose. That's what I mean by her being strong."

12. She watched him, with her needle poised, and with a certain shy, fluttered look which she always wore when he approached her. There was something in Felix's manner that quickened her modesty, her *self*-consciousness [...]

13. [...] if absolute choice had been given her she would have preferred never to find *herself* alone with him [...]

14. "I mean in my conduct. You don't think it's an abuse of hospitality?"

"To—to care for Gertrude?" asked Charlotte.

"To have really expressed one's *self*."

15. Because I HAVE expressed *myself*, Charlotte; I must tell you the whole truth—I have! Of course I want to marry her—and here is the difficulty.

16. "Well, we will say, then, that it is tiresome for others but delightful for one's *self*. A woman's husband, you know, is supposed to be her second *self*; so that, for Felix and Gertrude, gayety will be a common property."

17. "Well, we will say, then, that it is tiresome for others but delightful for one's *self*. A woman's husband, you know, is supposed to be her second *self*; so that, for Felix and Gertrude, gayety will be a common property." "Gertrude was always very gay," said Mr. Wentworth. He was trying to follow this argument.

II. *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881)

18. Beautiful places, dropping into that wonderment. The real truth is, I think, that they express, under this appeal, only too much—more than, in the given case, one has use for; so that one finds one's *self* working less congruously, after all, so far as the surrounding picture is concerned, than in presence of the moderate and the neutral, to which we may lend something of the light of our vision.

19. There are reasons why one would have liked this to be felt, as in general one

would like almost anything to be felt, in one's work, that one has one's *self* contributively felt. We have seen, however, how idle is that pretension, which I should be sorry to make too much of.

20. Quire into the condition of her nieces. There was no need of writing, for she should attach no importance to any account of them she should elicit by letter; she believed, always, in seeing for one's *self*. Isabel found, however, that she knew a good deal about them, and knew about the marriage of the two elder girls; knew that their poor father had left very little money, but that the house in Albany.

21. He had to give up the idea of distinguishing *himself*; an idea nonetheless importunate for being vague and nonetheless delightful for having had to struggle in the same breast with bursts of inspiring *self*-criticism. His friends at present judged him more cheerful, and attributed it to a theory, over which they shook their heads knowingly, that he would recover his health.

22. Moved more quickly than theirs, and this encouraged an impatience that might easily be confounded with superiority. It may be affirmed without delay that Isabel was probably very liable to the sin of *self*-esteem; she often surveyed with complacency the field of her own nature; she was in the habit of taking for granted, on scanty evidence, that she was right; she treated *herself* to occasions.

23. Knowing her organisation was fine), should move in a realm of light, of natural wisdom, of happy impulse, of inspiration gracefully chronic. It was almost as unnecessary to cultivate doubt of one's *self* as to cultivate doubt of one's best friend: one should try to be one's own best friend and to give one's *self*, in this manner, distinguished company. The girl had a certain nobleness of imagination.

24. Inspiration gracefully chronic. It was almost as unnecessary to cultivate doubt of one's *self* as to cultivate doubt of one's best friend: one should try to be one's own best friend and to give one's *self*, in this manner, distinguished company. The girl had a certain nobleness of imagination which rendered her a good many services and played her a great many tricks. She spent half her time in thin.

25. Talent and a genius for guessing, as Henrietta said, what the public was going to want, one was not therefore to conclude that one had no vocation, no beneficent aptitude of any sort, and resign one's *self* to being frivolous and hollow. Isabel was stoutly determined not to be hollow. If one should wait with the right patience one would find some happy work to one's hand. Of course, among her theories.

26. Happy than *herself*—a thought which for the moment made her fine, full consciousness appear a kind of immodesty. What should one do with the misery of the world in a scheme of the agreeable for one's *self*? It must be confessed that this question never held her long. She was too young, too impatient to live, too unacquainted with pain. She always returned to her theory that a young woman.

27. I suppose that was it. She afterwards published a work of fiction in which she was understood to have given a representation—something in the nature of a caricature, as you might say—of my unworthy *self*. I didn't read it, but Ralph just handed me the book with the principal passages marked. It was understood to be a description of my conversation; American peculiarities, nasal twang and Yankee.

28. To let her remain outside; to punish him for which Isabel administered innumerable taps with the ferrule of her straight young wit. It must be said that her wit was exercised to a large extent in *self*-defence, for her cousin amused *himself* with calling her "Columbia" and accusing her of a patriotism so heated that it scorched.

29. "Well, perhaps he is," said Isabel. "Perhaps he is—though on the whole I don't think so. But in that case what's more pitiable than a sentient, *self*-conscious abuse planted by other hands, deeply rooted but aching with a sense of its injustice? For me, in his place, I could be as solemn as a statue of Buddha. He occupies a position that appeal.

30. He does will always be right," Isabel repeated. "When a man's of that infallible mould what does it matter to him what one feels?". "It may not matter to him, but it matters to one's *self*. "Ah, what it matters to me—that's not what we're discussing," said Isabel with a cold smile. This time her companion was grave. "Well, I don't care; you HAVE changed.

31. She had received a strong impression of his being a "personage," and she had occupied *herself* in examining the image so conveyed. At the risk of adding to the evidence of her *self*-sufficiency it must be said that there had been moments when this possibility of admiration by a personage represented to her an aggression almost to the degree of an affront, quite to the degree.

32. Seat adjoining Lord Warburton's. Isabel, who was nervous and had no relish for the prospect of again arguing the question he had so prematurely opened, could not help admiring his good-humoured *self*-possession, which quite disguised the symptoms of that preoccupation with her presence it was natural she should suppose him to feel. He neither looked at her nor spoke to her, and the only sign.

33. Creation a sort of greatness. To be so cultivated and civilised, so wise and so easy, and still make so light of it—that was really to be a great lady, especially when one so carried and presented one's *self*. It was as if somehow she had all society under contribution, and all the arts and graces it practised—or was the effect rather that of charming uses found FOR her, even from a distance, subtle.

34. There was a great deal more to say; and it was clear in the third that for a person to speak to one without ceremony of one's near relations was an agreeable sign of that person's intimacy with one's *self*. These signs of deep communion multiplied as the days elapsed, and there was none of which Isabel was more sensible than of her companion's preference for making Miss Archer *herself* a topic.

35. Account. By the shell I mean the whole envelope of circumstances. There's no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we're each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our '*self*'? Where does it begin? where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us—and then it flows back again. I know a large part of *myself* is in the clothes I choose to wear.

36. There does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us—and then it flows back again. I know a large part of *myself* is in the clothes I choose to wear. I've a great respect for THINGS! One's *self*—for other people—is one's expression of one's *self*; and one's house, one's furniture, one's garments, the books one reads, the company one keeps—these things are all expressive.

37. Belongs to us—and then it flows back again. I know a large part of *myself* is in the clothes I choose to wear. I've a great respect for THINGS! One's *self*—for other people—is one's expression of one's *self*; and one's house, one's furniture, one's garments, the books one reads, the company one keeps—these things are all expressive. This was very metaphysical; not more.

38. To be done by a rich, independent, generous girl who took a large human view of occasions and obligations were sublime in the mass. Her fortune therefore became to her mind a part of her better *self*; it gave her importance, gave her even, to her own imagination, a certain ideal beauty. What it did for her in the imagination of others is another affair, and on this point we must also touch.

39. Activate a scar out of proportion to any wound. Englishmen liked moreover to be comfortable, said Isabel, and there could be little comfort for Lord Warburton, in the long run, in brooding over a *self*-sufficient American girl who had been but a casual acquaintance. She flattered *herself* that, should she hear from one day to another that he had married some young woman of his own country.

40. Indirect and circumspect, as if they had approached each other obliquely and addressed each other by implication. The effect of each appeared to be to intensify to an appreciable degree the *self*-consciousness of the other. Madame Merle of course carried off any embarrassment better than her friend; but even Madame Merle had not on this occasion the form she would have liked.

41. Consciousness of the other. Madame Merle of course carried off any embarrassment better than her friend; but even Madame Merle had not on this occasion the form she would have liked to have—the perfect *self*-possession she would have wished to wear for her host. The point to be made is, however, that at a certain moment the element between them, whatever it was, always levelled *itself* and left them.

42. Red of waiting for her. There's nothing in life to prevent her marrying Mr. Osmond if she only looks at him in a certain way. That's all very well; no one approves more than I of one's pleasing one's *self*. But she takes her pleasure in such odd things;

she's capable of marrying Mr. (396) Osmond for the beauty of his opinions or for his autograph of Michael Angelo. She wants to be disinterested.

43. Allowing only for arid places freshened by the natural dews of a quaint half-anxious, half-helpless fatherhood. At Palazzo Crescentini Mr. Osmond's manner remained the same; diffident at first—oh *self*-conscious beyond doubt! and full of the effort (visible only to a sympathetic eye) to overcome this disadvantage; an effort which usually resulted in a great deal of easy, lively, very positive.

44. Moment. I may add that when I came upon you a few minutes since, without the smallest idea of seeing you, I was, upon my honour, in the very act of wishing I knew where you were." He had recovered his *self*-control, and while he spoke it became complete. He might have been addressing a small committee—making all quietly and clearly a statement of importance; aided by an occasional look at a paper.

45. The deep personal mystery, and it had pleased her, up to this time, to be in doubt as to whether this tender slip were not really all-knowing. Was the extremity of her candour but the perfection of *self*-consciousness? Was it put on to please her father's visitor, or was it the direct expression of an unspotted nature? The hour that Isabel spent in Mr. Osmond's beautiful empty, dusky rooms.

46. Rebuke, the expectation of making her change her purpose. These things, however, if implied, had not been expressed; and now our young lady, strangely enough, began to resent her visitor's remarkable *self*-control. There was a dumb misery about him that irritated her; there was a manly staying of his hand that made her heart beat faster. She felt her agitation rising, and she said to *herself*.

47. Cold, I say, her tone had been, but at this a colour like a flame leaped into her face. "Of more importance to whom? It seems to me enough that one's husband should be of importance to one's *self*!". Ralph blushed as well; his attitude embarrassed him. Physically speaking he proceeded to change it; he straightened *himself*, then leaned forward, resting a hand on each knee.

48. Relation of success, which surely now flamed high in Osmond, emitted meanwhile very little smoke for so brilliant a blaze. Contentment, on his part, took no vulgar form; excitement, in the most *self*-conscious of men, was a kind of ecstasy of *self*-control. This disposition, however, made him an admirable lover; it gave him a constant view of the smitten and dedicated state.

49. In Osmond, emitted meanwhile very little smoke for so brilliant a blaze. Contentment, on his part, took no vulgar form; excitement, in the most *self*-conscious of men, was a kind of ecstasy of *self*-control. This disposition, however, made him an admirable lover; it gave him a constant view of the smitten and dedicated state. He never forgot *himself*, as I say; and so he never forgot.

50. His young lady; Madame Merle had made him a present of incalculable value.

What could be a finer thing to live with than a high spirit attuned to softness? For would not the softness be all for one's *self*, and the strenuousness for society, which admired the air of superiority? What could be a happier gift in a companion than a quick, fanciful mind which saved one repetitions and reflected one's.

51. Overcome with disgust; she never appeared to need rest or consolation. She had her own ideas; she had of old exposed a great many of them to Isabel, who knew also that under an appearance of extreme *self*-control her highly-cultivated friend concealed a rich sensibility. But her will was mistress of her life; there was something gallant in the way she kept going. It was as if she had learned.

52. Learning for lessons in this art; if her brilliant friend had been near she would have made an appeal to her. She had become aware more than before of the advantage of being like that—of having made one's *self* a firm surface, a sort of corselet of silver. But, as I say, it was not till the winter during which we lately renewed acquaintance with our heroine that the personage in question made.

53. Covert observation had become a habit with her; an instinct, of which it is not an exaggeration to say that it was allied to that of *self*-defence, had made it habitual. She wished as much as possible to know his thoughts, to know what he would say, beforehand, so that she might prepare her answer.

54. Life, opened her eyes so wide to the stupidity, the depravity, the ignorance of mankind, that she had been properly impressed with the infinite vulgarity of things and of the virtue of keeping one's *self* unspotted by it. But this base, ignoble world, it appeared, was after all what one was to live for; one was to keep it forever in one's eye, in order not to enlighten or convert or redeem it.

55. Liked to go alone, in the night-train. He hated the European railway-carriages, in which one sat for hours in a vise, knee to knee and nose to nose with a foreigner to whom one presently found one's *self* objecting with all the added vehemence of one's wish to have the window open; and if they were worse at night even than by day, at least at night one could sleep and dream of an American saloon.

56. It seemed to him that at last the gulf between them had been bridged. It was this that made him exclaim in a moment: "How unhappy you must be!". He had no sooner spoken than she recovered her *self*-possession, and the first use she made of it was to pretend she had not heard him. "When I talk of your helping me I talk great nonsense," she said with a quick smile. "The idea of my troubling."

57. There was a conviction in the way she said this, and a felicity in her believing it, which conduced to Isabel's awkwardness. She felt accused of dishonesty, and the idea was disgusting. To repair her *self*-respect she was on the point of saying that Lord Warburton had let her know that there WAS a danger. But she didn't; she only said—in her embarrassment rather wide of the mark—that he sure.

58. It was so strangely deliberate—apparently so void of emotion. Did she wish to do public penance for a fault of which she had not been convicted? or were her words simply an attempt at enlightened *self*-analysis? However this might be, Ralph could not resist so easy an opportunity. “Afraid of your husband?” “Afraid of *myself*!” she said, getting up. She stood there a moment.

59. Acted so unusual a topic. But what did it matter, after all, whether he were demonic or not, and whether she loved him or hated him? She might hate him to the death without one’s gaining a straw one’s *self*. “You travel, by the by, with Ralph Touchett,” Osmond said. “I suppose that means you’ll move slowly?” “I don’t know. I shall do just as he likes.” “You’re very accommodating.

60. Certain some of her visitors. To such suggestions, however, he opposed but a stiff impatience. He wandered about and waited; he talked to the few people he knew, who found him for the first time rather *self*-contradictory. This was indeed rare with Caspar Goodwood, though he often contradicted others. There was often music at Palazzo Roccanera, and it was usually very good. Under cover of the music.

61. But do you think it’s too late?” “You had better ask Pansy,” said Isabel. “I shall ask her what you’ve said to her.” These words seemed to justify the impulse of *self*-defence aroused on Isabel’s part by her perceiving that her visitor’s attitude was a critical one. Madame Merle, as we know, had been very discreet hitherto; she had never criticised.

62. Me as bad as *yourself*.” “I don’t understand you. You seem to me quite good enough,” said Osmond, his conscious indifference giving an extreme effect to the words. Madame Merle’s self-possession tended on the contrary to diminish, and she was nearer losing it than on any occasion on which we have had the pleasure of meeting her. The glow of her eye turned sombre; her smile.

63. This is just a chance for a little seclusion—a little reflexion.” Pansy spoke in short detached sentences, as if she could scarce trust *herself*; and then she added with a triumph of *self*-control: “I think papa’s right; I’ve been so much in the world this winter.” Her announcement had a strange effect on Isabel; it seemed to carry a larger meaning than the girl.

64. He was very grave, very proper and, for the first time since Isabel had known him, greeted her without a smile. Even in his days of distress he had always begun with a smile. He looked extremely *self*-conscious. “Lord Warburton has been so good as to come out to see me,” said Mrs. Touchett. “He tells me he didn’t know you were still here. I know he’s an old friend of yours.

III. *The American* (1878)

65. Bundle of accounts, and heard the cock crow without a yawn. But Raphael and Titian and Rubens were a new kind of arithmetic, and they inspired our friend, for the

first time in his life, with a vague *self*-mistrust with anything of an eye for national types would have had no difficulty in determining the local origin.

66. “Well, Tristram, I’m glad to get hold of you. You can show me the ropes. I suppose you know Paris inside out.” Mr. Tristram gave a mellow smile of *self*-gratulation. “Well, I guess there are not many men that can show me much. I’ll take care of you.” “It’s a pity you were not here.

67. As an obligatory purchase. He had not only a dislike, but a sort of moral mistrust, of uncomfortable thoughts, and it was both uncomfortable and slightly contemptible to feel obliged to square one’s *self* with a standard. One’s standard which is the ideal of one’s own good-humored prosperity, the prosperity which enabled one to give as well.

68. And his own imagination had learned the trick of piling up consistent wonders. Bellegarde’s regular attitude at last became that of laughing *self*-defense; to maintain his reputation as an all-knowing Frenchman, he doubted of everything, wholesale. The result of this was that Newman found it impossible to convince him of certain time-honore.

69. Polished nails, and there was not a movement of his fine, perpendicular person that was not noble and majestic. Newman had never yet been confronted with such an incarnation of the art of taking one’s *self*s.

70. Showed his separation from them, but the marquise seemed neither more nor less frigidly grand than usual, and Valentin was kissing ladies’ hands with at least his habitual air of *self*-abandonment to the act. Madame de Bellegarde gave a glance at her eldest son, and by the time she had crossed the threshold of her boudoir.

71. Ancient tire-woman, gravely. And she stood looking at Newman with a strange expression of face. The old instinct of deference and humility was there; the habit of decent *self*-effacement and knowledge of her “own place.”

72. “He amuses you. But you would not like to resemble him.” Which shouldn’t like to resemble anyone. It is hard enough work resembling one’s *self*.” “What do you mean,” asked Madame de Cintre, “by resembling one’s *self*?” “Why, doing what is expected of one. Doing one’s duty.

73. Shouldn’t like to resemble any one. It is hard enough work resembling one’s *self*.” “What do you mean,” asked Madame de Cintre, “by resembling one’s *self*?” “Why, doing what is expected of one. Doing one’s duty.” “But that is only when one is very good.”

74. She looked “lady-like.” She was dressed in quiet colors, and wore her expensively unobtrusive toilet with a grace that might have come from years of practice. Her present *self*-possession and aplomb struck Newman as really infernal, and he inclined to agree with Valentin de Bellegarde that the young lady.

75. Series of impartial hand-shakes, accompanied by a "Happy to make your acquaintance, sir." He looked at Madame de Cintre but she was not looking at him. If his personal *self*-consciousness had been of a nature to make him constantly refer to her, as the critic before whom, in company, he played his part, he might have found it a flattering proof of her confidence.

76. To smoke cigars. At this game, in three years, we are told, you are going to be made president of America." The duchess recited this amazing "legend" with a smooth *self*-possession which gave the speech to Newman's mind, the air of being a bit of amusing dialogue in a play, delivered by a veteran comic actress. Before she had ceased.

77. Besides my liking you. It seemed good to change completely, to break, to go away. And then I admired you. But I can't it has overtaken and come back to me." Her *self*-control had now completely abandoned her, and her words were broken with long sobs. "Why such dreadful things happen to us.

78. They seemed to flicker, like blown candles. Newman could see that he was profoundly startled; but there was something admirable in his *self*-control. "Continue," said M. de Bellegarde. Newman lifted a finger and made it waver a little in the air. "Need I continue?"

79. The chant kept on, mechanical and monotonous, with dismal repetitions and despairing cadences. It was hideous, it was horrible; as it continued, Newman felt that he needed all his *self*-control. He was growing more agitated; he felt ears in his eyes. At last, as in its full force the thought came over him that this confused.

80. Bad I may be, you are not quite the people to say it." Madame de Bellegarde was silent again, and then she broke her silence. Her *self*-possession continued to be extraordinary. "I needn't ask you who has been your accomplice. Mrs. Bread told me that you had purchased her services."

81. Tried to make use of it." The old lady appeared for an instant to hesitate, and then, "She was my husband's mistress," she said, softly. This was the only concession to *self*-defense that she ascended to make. "I doubt that," said Newman. Madame de Bellegarde got up.

IV. *Wings of the Dove* (1902)

82. Force of his particular type, a terrible husband not to live with; his type reflecting so invidiously on the woman who had found him distasteful. Had this thereby not kept directly present to Kate her *self* that it might, on some sides, prove no light thing for her to leave uncompanion'd a parent with such a face and such a manner? Yet if there was much she neither knew nor dreamed of it passed.

83. However, Maud Manningham (her name, even in her presence, somehow still fed the fancy) HAD, all the same, been lovely, and one was going to meet her now quite as

far on as one had one's *self* been met. She had been with them at their hotel—they were a pair—before even they had supposed she could have got their letter. Of course indeed they had written in advance, but they had follow.

84. I'm a humbug; he might do great things—but they were as yet, so to speak, all he had done. On the other hand it was of course something of an achievement, and not open to every one, to have got one's *self* taken so seriously by Aunt Maud. The best thing about him doubtless, on the whole, was that Aunt Maud believed in him. She was often fantastic, but she knew a humbug.

85. MORE beautifully than less, into his own. She pulled *herself* up indeed with the thought that it had inevitably looked, as beautifully as one would, into thousands of faces in which one might one's *self* never trace it; but just the odd result of the thought was to intensify for the girl that side of her friend which she had doubtless already been more prepared than she quite knew to think.

86. That you're a pair. You must surely catch it," he added as if it were important to his character as a serious man not to appear to have invented his plea. "I don't know—one never knows one's *self*. It's a funny fancy, and I don't imagine it would have occurred—"

"I see it HAS occurred"—he had already taken her up. She had her back, as she faced the picture, to one of the doors.

87. Nobody can really help. That's why I'm by *myself* to-day. I WANT to be—in spite of Miss Croy, who came with me last. If you can help, so much the better—and also of course if one can a little one's *self*. Except for that—you and me doing our best—I like you to see me just as I am. Yes, I like it—and I don't exaggerate. Shouldn't one, at the start, show the worst—so that anything after that.

88. And as sharply as any other form of the charge of weakness. It was what every one, if she didn't look out, would soon be saying—"There's something the matter with you!" What one was therefore one's *self* concerned immediately to establish was that there was nothing at all. "I shall like to help you; I shall like, so far as that goes, to help Kate *herself*," she made such haste as she could to decline.

89. Doing what she liked in respect to another person, but she was in no way committed to the other person, and her moreover talking of Lord Mark as not young and not true were only the signs of her clear *self*-consciousness, were all in the line of her slightly hard but scarce the less graceful extravagance. She didn't wish to show too much her consent to be arranged for, but that was a different thing.

90. "Then you see. I shall meet you there." "I don't quite see," he presently returned, "why she should wish to receive YOU for it." "She receives me for *myself*—that is for HER *self*. She thinks no end of me. That I should have to drum it into you!" Yet still he didn't take it. "Then I confess she's beyond me." Well, Kate could but leave it as she saw it.

91. Milly believed, and what would now make working for Milly such a dreadful upward tug. All this within her was confusedly present—a cloud of questions out of which (117) Maud Manningham's large seated *self* loomed, however, as a mass more and more definite, taking in fact for the consultative relation something of the form of an oracle. From the oracle the sound did come—or at any rate the sense.

92. At I may just a little, all by *myself*, see where I am.” She was conscious of the dire impatience of it, for she gave up Susie as well as the others to him—Susie who would have drowned (142) her very *self* for her; gave her up to a mercenary monster through whom she thus purchased respites. Strange were the turns of life and the moods of weakness; strange the flickers of fancy and the cheats of hope.

93. Weakness; strange the flickers of fancy and the cheats of hope; yet lawful, all the same—weren't they?—those experiments tried with the truth that consisted, at the worst, but in practising on one's *self*. She was now playing with the thought that Eugenio might INCLUSIVELY assist her: he had brought home to her, and always by remarks that were really quite soundless, the conception, hitherto ungra.

94. Enough for what, Lord Mark?” “Why to get the full good of it.” Well, she didn't after all mock at him. “I see what you mean. That full good of it which consists in finding one's *self* forced to love in return.” She had grasped it, but she hesitated. “Your idea is that I might find *myself* forced to love YOU?” “Oh ‘forced’—!” He was so fine and so expert, so awake.

95. Uplifting passion it WAS in truth deficient; it wouldn't do as the communication of a force that should sweep them both away. And the beauty of him was that he too, even in the act of persuasion, of *self*-persuasion, could understand that, and could thereby show but the better as fitting into the pleasant commerce of prosperity. The way she let him see that she looked at him was a thing to shut.

96. Whose eyes were not (217) effectually preoccupied? It struck him none the less certainly that almost the first thing she said to him showed an exquisite attempt to appear if not unconvinced at least *self*-possessed. “Don't you think her good enough NOW? Almost heedless of the danger of overt freedoms, she eyed Milly from where they stood, noted her in renewed talk over.

97. He had suppressed the matter by leaving Victoria he would at once suppress now, in turn, whatever else suited. The perception of this became as a symbol of the whole pitch, so far as one might one's *self* be concerned, of his visit. One saw, our friend further meditated, everything that, in contact, he appeared to accept—if only, for much, not to trouble to sink it: what one missed was the inward.

98. Despite of the proscription of rushes and the propriety of shades, it proclaimed *itself* indeed precious. And all without prejudice—that was what kept it noble—to Kate's high sobriety and her beautiful *self*-command. If he had his discretion she had her perfect

manner, which was HER decorum. Mrs. Stringham, he had, to finish with the question of his delay, furthermore observed Mrs. Stringham.

99. That *itself* indeed, for our restless friend, became by the end of a week the very principle of reaction: so that he woke up one morning with such a sense of having played a part as he needed *self*-respect to gainsay. He hadn't in the least stated at Lancaster Gate that, as a haunted man—a man haunted with a memory—he was harmless; but the degree to which Mrs. Lowder accepted, admired.

100. He calls her, has folded her wonderful wings.” “Yes—folded them.” It rather racked him, but he tried to receive it as she intended, and she evidently took his formal assent for *self*-control. “Unless it's more true,” she accordingly added, “that she has spread them the wider.” He again but formally assented, though, strangely enough, the words fitted a figure deep.

V. *The Ambassadors* (1903)

101. Proprieties much stiffer and more salutary than any our straight and credulous gape are likely to bring home to him, has exhibitional conditions to meet, in a word, that forbid the terrible FLUIDITY of *self*-revelation. I may seem not to better the case for my discrimination if I say that, for my first care, I had thus inevitably to set him up a confidant or two, to wave away with energy the custom.

102. His wife's letters and of his not liking Europe. Strether would have reckoned his own career less futile had he been able to put into it anything so handsome as so much fine silence. One might one's *self* easily have left Mrs. Waymarsh; and one would assuredly have paid one's tribute to the ideal in covering with that attitude the derision of having been left by her. Her husband had held his tongue.

103. Now let *himself* go; and there had been elements of impression in their half-hour over their watered beer-glasses that gave him his occasion for conveying that he held this compromise with his stiffer *self* to have become extreme. He conveyed it—for it was still, after all, his stiffer *self* who gloomed out of the glare of the terrace—in solemn silence; and there was indeed a great deal.

104. Their watered beer-glasses that gave him his occasion for conveying that he held this compromise with his stiffer *self* to have become extreme. He conveyed it—for it was still, after all, his stiffer *self* who gloomed out of the glare of the terrace—in solemn silence; and there was indeed a great deal of critical silence, every way, between the companions, even till they gained the Place de l'Oper.

105. A few days, an almost envious vision of the boy's romantic privilege. Melancholy Murger, with Francine and Musette and Rodolphe, at home, in the company of the tattered, one—if he not in his single *self* two or three—of the unbound, the paper-covered dozen on the shelf; and when Chad had written, five years ago, after a sojourn then

already prolonged to six months, that he had decided to go.

106. But reaction—that the boy was accepting something? He was modestly benevolent, the boy—that was at least what he had been capable of the superiority of making out his chance to be; and one had one's *self* literally not had the gumption to get in ahead of him. If we should go into all that occupied our friend in the watches of the night we should have to mend our pen; but an instance.

107. Understood or, better still, didn't care if they didn't. From the moment they cared if they didn't it was living by the sweat of one's brow; and the sweat of one's brow was just what one might buy one's *self* off from by keeping the ground free of the wild weed of delusion. It easily grew too fast, and the Atlantic cable now alone could race with it. That agency would each day have testified for him.

108. And how but anomalously?—he couldn't after all help thinking sufficiently well of these things to let them go for what they were worth. What could there be in this for Strether but the hint of some *self*-respect, some sense of power, oddly perverted; something latent and beyond access, ominous and perhaps enviable? The intimation had the next thing, in a flash, taken on a name—a name.

109. A time; so that between him and your brother, when it comes to the point, how can you possibly want for good guidance? The great thing, Mr. Strether will show you," she smiled, "is just to let one's *self* go." "Oh I've not let *myself* go very far," Strether answered, feeling quite as if he had been called upon to hint to Mrs. Pocock how Parisians could talk. "I'm only afraid of showing.

110. "There's nothing left for her to do." "Not even to love him?" "She would have loved him better as she originally believed him." Strether wondered. "Of course one asks one's *self* what notion a little girl forms, where a young man's in question, of such a history and such a state." "Well, this little girl saw them, no doubt, as obscure, but she saw them.

111. "Speaking or silent," she lightly wailed, "I somehow 'compromise.' And it has never been any one but you." "That shows"—he was magnanimous—"that it's something not in you, but in one's *self*. It's MY fault. She was silent a little. "No, it's Mr. Waymarsh's. It's the fault of his having brought her." "Ah then," said Strether good-naturedly.

112. See now quite what degree of ceremony properly meets your case." "Of course," Strether conceded, "my attitude toward them is extraordinary." "Just so; so that one may ask one's *self* what style of proceeding on their own part can altogether match it. The attitude of their own that won't pale in its light they've doubtless still to work out. The really handsome thing perhaps.

113. "Certainly—she had quantities of old. But there are different ways of making one's *self* felt."

“Yes, it comes, no doubt, to that. You now—” He was benevolently going on, but she wouldn’t have it. “Oh I DON’T make *myself* felt; so my quantity needn’t be settled.

114. His sister, or the girl he may marry, or the fortune he may make or miss, or the right or the wrong, of any kind, he may do. If after the help one has had from you one can’t either take care of one’s *self* or simply hold one’s tongue, one must renounce all claim to be an object of interest. It’s in the name of what I DO care about that I’ve tried still to keep hold of you. How can I be indifferent.

115. Precisely—she was eager. “What I hate is *myself*—when I think that one has to take so much, to be happy, out of the lives of others, and that one isn’t happy even then. One does it to cheat one’s *self* and to stop one’s mouth—but that’s only at the best for a little. The wretched *self* is always there, always making one somehow a fresh anxiety. What it comes to is that it’s not, that it’s never.

116. There is so much, to be happy, out of the lives of others, and that one isn’t happy even then. One does it to cheat one’s *self* and to stop one’s mouth—but that’s only at the best for a little. The wretched *self* is always there, always making one somehow a fresh anxiety. What it comes to is that it’s not, that it’s never, a happiness, any happiness at all, to TAKE. The only safe thing is to give.

VI. *The Golden Bowl* (1904)

117. Respect of things or the combination of objects that might, by a latent virtue in it, speak for its connexion with something in the book, and yet at the same time speak enough for its odd or interesting *self*. It will be noticed that our series of frontispieces, while doing all justice to our need, largely consists in a “rendering” of certain inanimate characteristics of London streets; the ability.

118. Everybody can get at them, and you’ve both of you wonderfully looked them in the face. But there’s another part, very much smaller doubtless, which, such as it is, represents my single *self*, the unknown, unimportant—unimportant save to YOU—personal quantity. About this you’ve found out nothing. “Luckily, my dear,” the girl had bravely said; “for what then would become.

119. What was it else,” Maggie Verver had also said, “that made me originally think of you? It wasn’t—as I should suppose you must have seen—what you call your unknown quantity, your particular *self*. It was the generations behind you, the follies and the crimes, the plunder and (10) the waste—the wicked Pope, the monster most of all, whom so many of the volumes in your family library.

120. “Ah that’s not fair!” said the Prince. “To criticise her? Then there you are! You’re answered.” “I’m answered.” He took it, humorously, as his lesson—sank his previous *self*-consciousness, with excellent effect, in grateful docility. “I only meant that there are perhaps better things to be done with Miss Stant than to criticise her. When once you begin THAT with anything.

121. Would stick for the time to their English. “It doesn’t, I fear, seem particularly mine. And it doesn’t in the least matter over there whether one likes it or not—that is to any one but one’s *self*. But I didn’t like it,” said Charlotte Stant. “That’s not encouraging then to me, is it?” the Prince went on. “Do you mean because you’re going?” “Oh yes, of course.”

122. Laugh. “You might adore HIM more—!” “Ah but it isn’t, is it,” she asked, “a question of that? “My dear friend,” he returned, “it’s always a question of doing the best for one’s *self* one can—without injury to others.” He felt by this time that they were indeed on an excellent basis; so he went on again as if to show frankly his sense of its firmness.

123. “There’s a whole immense room, or recess, or department, or whatever, filled with books written about HIS family alone. You can see for *yourself*?” “Have you seen for YOUR *self*?” She faltered but an instant. “Certainly—I went one day with Maggie. We looked him up, so to say. They were most civil.” And she fell again into the current her husband.

124. Advantage of her character.” “Of her character?” “We mustn’t take advantage of her character,” the girl, again unheeding, pursued. “One mustn’t, if not for HER, at least for one’s *self*. She saves one such trouble.” She had spoken thoughtfully, her eyes on her friend’s; she might have been talking, preoccupied and practical, of someone with whom he was comparative.

125. And evidently had found nothing. It forced from Charlotte a rueful admission. “It ought, really, if it should be a thing of this sort, to take its little value from having belonged to one’s self.” “Ecco!” said the Prince—just triumphantly enough. “There you are.” Behind the dealer were sundry small cupboards in the wall. Two or three of these Charlotte had seen him.

126. Resisting, bent over the bowl again. “Then it’s impossible. It’s more than I can afford.” “Ah,” the man returned, “one can sometimes afford for a present more than one can afford for one’s self.” He said it so coaxingly that she found herself going on without, as might be said, putting him in his place. “Oh of course it would be only for a present—!”

127. The horizon, all dark blue upland and church-towered village and strong cloud-shadow, which were, together, a thing to create the sense, with everyone else at church, of one’s having the world to one’s self. We share this world, none the less, for the hour, with Mr. Verver; the very fact of his striking, as he would have said, for solitude, the fact of his quiet flight, almost on tiptoe.

128. Lack of a wife to whom applications could be referred. The applications, the contingencies with which Mrs. Rance struck him as potentially bristling, were really not of a sort to be met by one’s self. And the possibility of them, when his visitor said, or as

good as said, "I'm restrained, you see, because of Mr. Rance, and also because I'm proud and refined; but if it WASN'T for Mr. Rance.

129. Too grossly attributed nor too grossly denied, they had taken their specific lesson; but the difficulty was here of course that one could really never know—couldn't know without having BEEN one's self a personage; whether a Pope, a King, a President, a Peer, a General, or just a beautiful Author. Before such a question, as before several others when they recurred, he would come.

130. Better day than you it's perhaps, when I come to think of it, that I AM braver. You bore yourself, you see. But I don't. I don't, I don't," she repeated. (302) "It's precisely boring one's self without relief," he protested, "that takes courage." "Passive then—not active. My romance is that, if you want to know, I've been all day on the town. Literally on the town—isn't that?

131. "As extraordinary." A deeper shade, at the re-echo of the word, had come into the Colonel's face. "If they're each and all so extraordinary then, isn't that why one must just resign one's self to wash one's hands of them—to be lost?" Her face however so met the question as if it were but a flicker of the old tone that their trouble had now become too real for—her charged eyes .

132. So far as was possible, to the mere working of her own needs. It must be added, however, that she would have been at a loss to determine—and certainly at first—to which order, that of self-control or that of large expression, the step she had taken the afternoon of her husband's return from Matcham with his companion properly belonged. For it had been a step, distinctly, on Maggie'.

133. Gratified, that resembled an attempt to play again, with more refinement, at disparity of relation. Charlotte's attitude had in short its moments of flowering into pretty excesses of civility, self-effacements in the presence of others, sudden little formalisms of suggestion and recognition, that might have represented her sense of the duty of not "losing sight" of a social distinction.

134. Little memory gave out its full power. Since the question was of doors she had afterwards, she now saw, shut it out; she had responsibly shut in, as we have understood, shut in there with her sentient self, only the fact of his reappearance and the plenitude of his presence. These things had been testimony after all to supersede any other, for on the spot, even while she looked.

135. With ME, without exciting comment, without exciting any other remark than that such kindnesses are 'like' me." We have each our own way of making up for our unselfishness, and Maggie, who had no small self at all as against her husband or her father and only a weak and uncertain one as against her stepmother, would verily at this crisis have seen Mrs. Assingham's personal life or liberty sacrificed.

136. Pledges then exchanged. This rapid play of suppressed appeal and disguised

response lasted indeed long enough for more results than one; quite enough for Mrs. Assingham to measure the feat of quick self-recovery, possibly therefore of recognition still more immediate, accompanying Amerigo's vision and estimate of the evidence with which she had been—so admirably, she felt as she looked at him.

137. A fantastic flight of divination she heard Amerigo reply, in a voice of which every fine note, familiar and admirable, came home to her, that one must really manage such prudences a little for one's self. It was positive in the Princess that for this she breathed Charlotte's cold air—turned away from him in it with her, turned with her, in growing compassion, this way and that, hovered.

138. Spiritual face: she might have said to herself at this moment that in leaving the thing behind him, held as in her claspings arms, he was doing the most possible toward leaving her a part of his palpable self. She put her hand over his shoulder, and their eyes were held again together by the abiding felicity; they smiled in emulation, vaguely, as if speech failed them through their having passed.

VII. *The American Scene* (1907)

139. Due water, that carried me up into the subject, so to speak, and enabled me to step ashore. The subject was everywhere—that was the beauty, that the advantage: it was thrilling, really, to find one's self in presence of a theme to which everything directly contributed, leaving no touch of experience irrelevant. That, at any rate, so far as feeling it went; treating it, evidently.

140. The constituted relations, possibilities, amenities, in the social, the domestic order, was inwardly projected. It was as if the projection had been so completely outward that one could but find one's self almost uneasy about the mere perspective required for the common acts of the personal life, that minimum of vagueness as to what takes place in it for which the complete "home" aspires to provide.

141. Because, of their habit of murmurous hinted approval. Other things had come by makeweight; the charming Country Club on toward Watertown, all verandahs and golf-links and tennis-lawns, all tea and ices and self-consciousness; and there had come, thereabouts too, the large extension of the "Park System," the admirable commissioners' roads that reach across the ruder countryside like the arms of carnivoro.

142. Owned house, with its mere two storeys, its lowly "stoop," its dislocated ironwork of the forties, the early fifties, the record, in its face, of blistering summers and of the long stages of the loss of self-respect, made it as consummate a morsel of the old liquor-scented, heated-looking city, the city of no pavements, but of such a plenty of politics, as I could have desired. And neighbouring Sixth.

143. Knowing, awfully, in the newest mass of multiplied floors and windows visible at this point. They, ranged in this terrible recent erection, were going to bring in money—and was not money the only thing a self-respecting structure could be thought of as

bringing in? Hadn't one heard, just before, in Boston, that the security, that the sweet serenity of the Park Street Church, charmingest.

144. One must of course choose between dispensing with the ugly presence and enjoying the scenery by the aid of the same—which but means, really, that to use the train at all had been to put one's self, for any proper justice to the scenery, in a false position. That, however, takes us too far back, and one can only save one's dignity by laying all such blames on our detestable age.

145. Absolute; the ladies, beautiful, gracious and glittering with gems, were in tiaras and a semblance of court-trains, a sort of prescribed official magnificence; but it was impossible not to ask one's self with what, in the wide American frame, such great matters might be supposed to consort or to rhyme. The material pitch was so high that it carried with it really no social sequence, no application.

146. As it is part of the light of New York. It appeared at all events, on the late days of spring, just a response to the facility of things, and to much of their juvenile pleasantries, to find one's self "liking," without more ado, and very much even at the risk of one's life, the heterogeneous, miscellaneous apology for a Square marking the spot at which the main entrance.

147. The effect of those old quaint prints which give in a single view the classic, gothic and other architectural wonders of the world. That is its sole defect—its being inevitably too self-conscious, being afraid to be just vague and frank and quiet. I should compare her again—and the propriety is proved by this instinctively feminine pronoun—to an actress in a company destitute.

148. Something that slides or slams or bangs, operating, in your rear, as ruthlessly as the guillotine—anything that performs this office puts a price on the lonely sweetness of a step or two taken by one's self, of deviating into some sense of independent motive power, of climbing even some grass-grown staircase, with a dream perhaps of the thrill of fellow-feeling then taking, then finding, place.

149. Working it, as I seem to remember, up to a higher and higher pitch. It had been intimated to me that one of these scenes of our climax had entered the sophisticated phase, that of sacrificing to a self-consciousness that was to be regretted—that of making eyes, so to speak, at the larger, the up-town public; that pestilent favour of "society" which is fatal to everything it touches.

150. Decent peace had appeared formerly to reign—though attended by the ghost of ancient war, inasmuch as these had indubitably been the haunts of our auxiliary French officers during the Revolution, and no self-respecting legend could fail to report that it was in the Vernon house Washington would have visited Rochambeau. There had hung about this structure, which is, architecturally speaking, all "rust".

151. A considerable company of Americans, not gathered at a mere rest-cure, who

confessed brazenly to not being in business. Do I grossly exaggerate in saying that this company, candidly, quite excitedly self-conscious, as all companies not commercial, in America, may be pleasantly noted as being, formed, for the time of its persistence, an almost unprecedented small body—unprecedented in America.

152. The experience had anciently been small—so far as smallness may be imputed to any of our prime initiations; yet it had left consequences out of proportion to its limited seeming self. Early contacts had been brief and few, and the slight bridge had long ago collapsed; wherefore the impressed condition that acquired again, on the spot, an intensity, struck me as but half explained.

153. The history of something as against the history of nothing?—so that, being gone, or generally going, they enabled one at last to feel and almost to talk about them as one had found one's self feeling and talking about the sacrificed relics of old Paris and old London. In this immediate neighbourhood of the enlarged State House, where a great raw clearance has been made, memory.

154. [...] that this edifice persistently “holds the note,” as yet, the note of the old felicity, and remains by so doing a precious public servant. Strange enough, doubtless, to find one's self pleading sanctity for a theological structure sanctified only by such a name—as Park Street Church—which is exactly the state of the matter with the Park Street Church.

155. Its newness, its dumped and shovelled foundations, the home till recently of a mere vague marine backwater, there the long, straight residential avenues, vistas quite documentary, as one finds one's self pronouncing them, testify with a perfection all their own to a whole vast side of American life. The winter winds and snows, and the eternal dust, run races in them over the clearest course.

156. [...] Sunday morning, tepid and bright and perfect for its use, through which I walked from the station under the constant archway of the elms, as yet but indulgently thinned: would one know, for one's self, what had formerly been the matter here, if one hadn't happened to be able to get round behind, in the past, as it were, and more or less understand? Would the operative elements of the past.

157. Beside, of guarantees, and the interesting thing to get at, for the student of manners, will ever be just this mystery of the terms of the bargain. I must add, none the less, that, though one was one's self, inevitably and always and everywhere, that student, my attention happened to be, or rather was obliged to be, confined to one view of the agreement.

158. Through their bedimmed condition, cropped up for me in the high American light, making good my odd parallel at almost every point. Yet if these signs of a slightly congested, but still practically self-sufficing, little world were all there, they were perhaps there most, to my ear, in the fact of the little world's proper intimate idiom and accent: a dialect as much its very own.

159. American scene, the missed interest—despite the ingenuities of wealth and industry and “energy” that strain so touchingly often, and even to grimace and contortion, somehow to supply it. One finds one’s self, when it has happened to intervene, weighing its action to the last grain of gold. One even puts to one’s self fantastic cases, such as the question, for instance, of what might, what might not.

160. One finds one’s self, when it has happened to intervene, weighing its action to the last grain of gold. One even puts to one’s self fantastic cases, such as the question, for instance, of what might, what might not have happened if poor dear reckless New York had been so distinguished or so blest—with the bad conscience.

161. Population, political, educational, economic. From the moment one’s record is not, in fine, a loud statistical shout, it falls into the order of those shy things that speak, at the most (when one is one’s self incapable even of the merest statistical whisper), but of the personal adventure—in other words but of one’s luck and of one’s sensibility. There are incidents, there are passages, that flush.

162. With members vaguely lounging and chatting, with open doors and comparatively cheerful vistas, and plenty of rocking-chairs and magazines. The only thing was that, under this analogy, one found one’s self speculating much on the implied requisites for membership. It was impossible not to wonder, from face to face, what these would have been, and not to ask what one would have taken them.

163. It had doubtless not been merely absurd, as the wild winter proceeded, to find one’s self so enamoured of the very name of the South that one was ready to take it in any small atmospheric instalment and to feel the echo of its voice in the yell of any engine that happened not to drag.

164. They have buried together all their past—about which, wise creature as I am, I allow them, of course, all piety. But this—what you make out around us—is their real collective self, which I am delighted to commend to you. I’ve found Baltimore a charming patient.” That was, in ten minutes, what it had come to; as if the brush of the sublime garment had by itself cleared.

165. Both other variations still. These were a whole cluster, not instantly to be made out, but constituting the unity of the place as soon as perceived; representing that finer extract or essence which the self-respecting observer is never easy till he be able to shake up and down in bottled form. The charming company of the foreground then, which referred itself so little to the sketchy back-scene.

166. The endless ingenuity and humour. But that, absolutely, remains the case; which thus becomes one of the most thorough, even if probably one of the most natural and of the happiest, cases of collective self-consciousness that one knows. The spectacle, as it at first met my senses, was that of a numerous community in ardent pursuit of some workable conception of its social self, and trying.

167. Happiest, cases of collective self-consciousness that one knows. The spectacle, as it at first met my senses, was that of a numerous community in ardent pursuit of some workable conception of its social self, and trying meanwhile intelligently to talk itself, and even this very embarrassment, into a subject for conversation. Such a picture might not seem purely pleasing, on the side.

169. Harm about it no less than of amusement, represented, to the unquiet fancy, much more the spirit of the old-time Legations. What was, at all events, better fun, of the finer sort, than having one's self a stake in the outcome?—what helped the time (so much of it as there was!) more to pass than just to join in the so fresh experiment of constitutive, creative talk?

169. Not in the least in the tone of solemnity. That would have been fatal, because probably irritating, and it was where the good star of Washington intervened. The tone was, so to speak, of conscious self-consciousness, and the highest genius for conversation doubtless dwelt in the fact that the ironic spirit was ready always to give its very self away, fifty times over, for the love.

170. The tone was, so to speak, of conscious self-consciousness, and the highest genius for conversation doubtless dwelt in the fact that the ironic spirit was ready always to give its very self away, fifty times over, for the love, or for any quickening, of the theme. The foundation for the whole happy predicament remained, moreover, of the firmest.

171. It was, toward the end of the winter, fairly romantic to feel one's self "going South"—in verification of the pleasant probability that, since one's mild adventure had appeared beforehand, and as a whole, to promise that complexion, there would now be aspects.

172. I recall the shock of that question after a single interrogative stroll, a mere vague mile of which had thrown me back wondering and a trifle mystified. One had had brutally to put it to one's self after a conscientious stare about: "This then the tragic ghost-haunted city, this the centre of the vast blood-drenched circle, one of the most blood-drenched, for miles and miles around.

173. Luggage after my arrival, while a group of tatterdemalion darkies lounged and sunned themselves within range. To take in with any attention two or three of these figures had surely been to feel one's self introduced at a bound to the formidable question, which rose suddenly like some beast that had sprung from the jungle. These were its far outposts; they represented the Southern black as we knew.

174. As to a reflection I had already, on occasion, found myself perhaps a little perversely making. One was liable, in the States, on many a scene, to react, as it were, from the people, and to throw one's self passionately on the bosom of contiguous Nature, whatever surface it might happen to offer; one was apt to be moved, in possibly almost invidious preference, or in deeper and sweeter confidence.

175. So, therefore, one seemed destined a bit incoherently to proceed; asking one's self again and again what the play would have been without the scenery, sometimes "even such" scenery, and then once more not quite seeing why such scenery (in especial) should propose to put one off .

176. Where than the latter is ever perceptibly moved to try it on the former. The hotel-spirit is an omniscient genius, while the character of the tributary nation is still but struggling into relatively dim self-knowledge. An illustration of this met me, precisely, at the very hour of my alighting: one had entered, toward ten o'clock in the evening, the hotel-world; it had become the all in all and made.

177. The edge of the whirlpool, the centre of which formed the heart of the adjacent colossus. One could plunge, by a short walk through a luxuriance of garden, into the deeper depths; one could lose one's *self*, if so minded, in the labyrinth of the other show. There, if Vanity Fair was not encamped, it was not for want of booths; the long corridors were streets of shops, dealing, naturally.

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