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THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM  
IN HENRY JAMES' THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

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## ÖZET

Özgürlük kavramı Amerikan edebiyatında her zaman önemli bir rol oynamıştır. 1870'lerde Amerika'luların çoğunluğu çiftçilik dışı şeylerle geçinmeye başladılar. İç savaştan sonra bir çok değişiklik oldu, Amerikalılar da bu arada yaşam tarzlarını değiştirdiler. Daha fazla kazanıp daha fazla harcar duruma geldiler. Bu değişikliklerden dolayı Amerikan yazarları, yurttaşlarının beğendiği bu değerleri sorgulamaya başladılar. Bu değerlerden biri de Özgürlük'tü.

Bu çalışmanın amacı kendilerini toplumun geleneklerinden uzak ve bağımsız düşünen insanların nasıl kendi düşünce ve duygularının kölesi olduklarını göstermektir. Henry James romanlarında Özgürlük kavramına çok fazla önem vermiştir. Kendisi psikolojik romanın babasıydı, çünkü insanları yoğunluğuna inceleyerek onları derinliğine anlamıştı. James romanlarında zamanı yavaşlatarak okuyucunun bir konuşmadaki veya bir karakterin davranışındaki en ince ayrıntıyı görmesini sağlar. James'in başka bir özelliği de onun evrensel bir yazar oluşu. Romanlarında iki ayrı kültürden gelen iki insan bir araya geldiklerinde ne olduğunu göstermiştir.

Henry James'in Bir Kadının Portresi adlı romanında bütün bu özelliklerin Isabel Archer'ın kişiliğinde birleştiğini görüyoruz.

Henry James Isabel Archer'ı farklı açılardan göstermeğe çalışmıştır. Isabel Archer Avrupa'da kaderiyle yüzyüze kalan bir Amerika'lı kız olan evrensel bir karakterdir. Genç, hayalperest ve tuhaf biri olarak çizilmiş. En önemli yanı özgür olduğunu, istediğini yapabileceğini ve tehlikeli insanların tuzağına düşmeden istediği gibi yaşayabileceğini düşünmesidir.

Özetle, Henry James okuyucuya bir kadının yaşamla ve çevresiyle mücadelesini anlatan ayrıntılı bir portre çizmiştir.

## ABSTRACT

The concept of freedom has always played an important role in American literature. In the 1870's a majority of Americans started to make a non-farming living. After the Civil War there have been lots of changes and also Americans changed their life styles. They earned more and spent more. Due to those changes American authors started to question the values which were dear to their citizens. One of those values was freedom.

The aim of this study is to show how people who think themselves free from the conventions of their society are in fact the slaves of their own thoughts and feelings. Henry James paid a lot of importance to the concept of freedom in his novels. He was the father of psychological novel, for he studied the human beings intensely and understood them deeply. James slows up the time factor in his novels so that the reader can sense every detail in a conversation or a character's action. Another feature of James is his having a universal appealing. In his novels he shows what happens when two characters from different cultures come together.

In Henry James' The Portrait of a Lady the features mentioned above are mixed and in this way the reader confronts a different character under the name of Isabel Archer.

Henry James tries to show Isabel Archer from various points of views. She is a universal character, an American girl confronting her destiny in Europe. She is young, full of imagination and curiosity. Her most important aspect is her thought that she is free and that she can do whatever she wants and live however she wants without falling into the trap of dangerous people.

To sum up, Henry James gives the reader a detailed portrait of a young lady by showing how this young lady copes with life and her environment.



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## INTRODUCTION

In spite of the fact that many people think they live in freedom, it is still a discussible point of view. The reason is that freedom is a very wide and dual concept. The main point is that one should not accept freedom as his ideal. Otherwise, he will not gain anything, but loose the things he has.

The concept of freedom in James' *The Portrait of a Lady* has been discussed for many years and by various critics. Also many importance has been given to James due to his exploring the novel-of-consciousness in which the human beings are studied intensely and in which the center of the subject is placed in the character's consciousness.

Unlike the other realist writers James, in addition to portraying the everyday life, tries to draw life using his character's consciousness. It is not James by whom the story is told but everything is seen through the character's mind.

The thesis consists of only one main chapter. The beginning of the chapter is about Isabel Archer's life before her marriage. "At the start of the novel Isabel believes herself to be free just as she believes herself not to be poor." (Woolf 1991: 44) It is obvious that she is young, lively, beautiful, and without any binding relationship. Her parents are dead and her sisters are married. She can do whatever she wants without giving any thought to her environment. That is why she thinks herself to be free. But, her strong belief in freedom makes her give the most vital decision in her life in the wrong way. She accepts freedom as her ideal. Therefore, instead of gaining it, she loses part of it.

The second part of the chapter is about Isabel Archer's life after her marriage. As it is mentioned before Isabel Archer thinks that she has given the most important decision of her life in freedom. In marrying Gilbert Osmond Isabel thinks that she is embracing the ideal, in other words her freedom. She idealizes herself, her

motives for marrying, her ambitions, and Osmond himself. It is all pathetically wrong. (Bloom 1987: 96) As Isabel looks at Osmond romantically, nothing can prevent her marrying him. Therefore, she thinks herself to be free also during the early stage of her marriage. Realizing the fact that she was deceived by two selfish persons - Madame Merle and Gilbert Osmond- she understands the bitter truth: She has never been free, but thought herself to be so.





## THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM IN THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

In the first chapters of the novel The Portrait of a Lady no information, except a particular thing, is given to the reader about the heroine Isabel Archer. This particular thing on which Henry James puts a lot of emphasis is Isabel's being an independent girl.

Thus, the reader comes across the independence theme in the first chapters. Isabel's aunt Mrs Touchett who is the first person to comment on Isabel's freedom is not quite explanatory in her telegrams "..... Taken sister's girl, died last year, go to Europe, two sister, quite independent " (James 1963:13)

Both the reader and the characters in the novel are quite puzzled about the message in the telegram because it is not clear whether the word independence is "used in a moral or financial sense. " (James 1963:13).

Is Isabel fond of her own way ? Does she like to do whatever she wishes ? Or Does she have enough money to live independently ? These are the questions which arise in the reader's mind and to which no responses are found yet.

After the telegram is read, more information is given about Gardencourt which is an old Tudor house. It is a symbol of English history. Henry James gives detailed information about the houses that take place in the novel, because later he will connect the houses with the characters so as to show the situations of the characters. It will be seen that one of the houses in the novel will turn out to be a cage for Isabel whereas Gardencourt will turn out to be a place where she can learn more about "freedom". The word "freedom" is especially used here, because in Gardencourt she is loved by everybody and she is given the right to choose the things she wants to do. Her opinions and ideas play an important role in her choice of the way of life. Nobody forces her to change them.

Later on, the expected heroine Isabel Archer is seen. She is full of excitement. Everything is new for her. After learning that Warburton is a Lord, she starts to take a keen interest in him, because it is the first time she sees a real Lord. From the expression " Oh, I hoped there would be a Lord, it's just like a novel. " (James 1963:16) it is understood that since then she has learned life only from books and novels. One can say that she is inexperienced. According to Leon Edel:

"In Isabel Archer, the novelist wished to draw 'the character and aspect of a particular engaging young woman' and to show her in the act of 'affronting her destiny'... She goes abroad a thorough provincial, with her 'meagre knowledge, her inflated ideals, her confidence at once innocent and dogmatic, her temper at once exacting and indulgent.' A person who is exacting and dogmatic on the strength of meagre knowledge can only be characterised as presumptuous, and there is presumption in Isabel, for all the delicacy of her feeling: presumption suggests also a strong measure of egotism." (Shelston 1984:132).

Isabel, during her first conversation with Ralph, makes him understand that she does not want to be known as an "adopted girl". Quickly she puts forward that independence is very important for her: " I am not a candidate for adoption.." she says, "I am very fond of my liberty. " (James 1963:20) This statement is clear enough to see that Isabel wants to stand on her own feet. As Tony Tanner says in one of his articles

"..... like many another characters in American fiction much of her energy goes into avoiding any commitment which might serve to define and arrest her. She is generally in favour of 'the free exploration of life ' and

yet she shrinks from any of the solid offers that life holds forth... " (Bloom 1992:93).

She has her own way. Her sense of freedom prevents her from obeying people who would help her to see the world. The reason is that she wants to see and explore everything by herself. If she gets help she thinks that she will not be in the state of choosing her own fate.

Mrs Touchett who cannot get along well with her husband lives in Florence and spends only a month every year with her husband. Being aware of the death of her brother - in - law she goes to America to look after her nieces. There she meets Isabel and at their first meeting she is so fond of her that she decides to take her to Europe. Isabel differs from the European heroines in the way that she is too honest and too inexperienced. For instance she is honest enough to call her aunt directly as "crazy aunt Lydia", although she does not know her closely, and she has not seen her for a long time.

Mrs Touchett wants to take Isabel to Florence, where she thinks Isabel will find and learn a lot of different things. She says: "Well, if you will be very good, and do everything I tell you, I will take you there." (James 1963:27). Although Isabel is very fond of her independence, her wish to see life, and gain more knowledge surpasses her fondness for her independence. She says:

" Do everything you tell me ? I don't think I can promise that "....." And yet to go to Florence, "the girl exclaimed in a moment " I would promise almost anything." (James 1963:27).

As Richard Chase states in one of his studies, "She sees in this offer an escape from the loneliness of the life she has known in the great, empty, dismal house". (Buitenhuis 1968:18)

Before Isabel met her aunt, she was trying to concentrate on the book she was reading. She was disciplining her mind, because lately it appeared to her that her mind was no more able to fix on something. Isabel is self-confident. She wants to have rigid control of all the parts of her body Only in that way she thinks she can do whatever she wants.

Isabel has got two sisters. The eldest, Lilian, is called the practical and sensible. Edith, is known as the beauty and Isabel is known as the intellectual, because she is always absorbed in her books. She likes to be known as the intellectual, but sometimes this gives her trouble. For instance, the young men who come to visit her are frightened because they think that some special preparation is needed to talk with her. This happening forces her to hold back and not to quote from the books she has read, even though she has an excellent memory.

She is fond of almost every kind of knowledge and she is curious to know about everything. Actually, she wants to have first-hand experience. That is why her sister Lilian thinks of her as a free greyhound. She likes to rush into life transgressing the boundaries of life. As Tony Tanner says, "..... her approach to life is very romantic, idealistic and theoretic. " ( Bloom 1993: 93) She is not involved in the everyday life. There is nobody to teach her the outside world except the books, and these make her approach life romantically. According to R.H.Hutton:

One knows that she is pretty, that she loves freedom, that she loves experience, that she has endless daydreams, that she is compassionate to the helpless, that she is grateful for goodness, and proud. not to say defiant, towards those who are not good to her; but beyond that one, knows nothing about her. Apparently,

she has no faith whatever, no fixed standard even of inward life and motive, though she is always chasing ideals with no particular substance, or even uniformity, in them. (Shelston 1984:81).

She likes to approach actual life itself. Till now, she has got only second-hand experience, she learned life only through novels, literary periodicals, music, poetry and grand events which occurred far away from her own life. After meeting her aunt we know that Isabel will have some opportunities to experience life. Her aunt has opened the door of experience for her. When Isabel enters this new world she will suffer a lot and she will understand that life is not the same as in the novels.

As a consequence of her innocence, her wish to gain more experience in life will cause her a lot of suffering. She will see that she is not equipped with the means of life. She has always been protected by her father, and her father tries to hinder every unpleasant thing that might upset her.

Isabel accepts the offer to go to Europe and accompanies her aunt to Gardencourt. The first person she meets there is her cousin, Ralph Touchett. He is Mr Touchett's only son. He got a very good education, but unfortunately cannot use his abilities, because he is in the paws of an incurable illness.

As soon as Ralph is able to speak to his mother he wants to know what his mother is going to do with Isabel, but he is not given a proper answer. According to Mrs Touchett, Isabel can do everything by herself. In fact, she wants to shape Isabel's life, but cannot do it due to Isabel's fondness of her liberty. Isabel wants nobody to meddle with her affairs.

Ralph and Isabel get used to each other in a very short time. Ralph is ready to do almost everything for Isabel, because he feels himself close to her. One day, Isabel asks Ralph to show her the Touchett art collection. While looking at the

pictures Isabel wants to learn whether Gardencourt lodges a ghost or not. In Isabel's opinion every such place should have a ghost, so that it can be talked of as romantic. She likes romantic places, and she is interested in them because she herself is romantic. Ralph's answer is:

"I might show it to you, but you would never see it. The privilege isn't given to every one; it's not enviable. It has never been seen by a young happy, innocent person like you. You must have gained some miserable knowledge. In that way your eyes are opened to it. I saw it long ago." (James 1963:45).

Isabel thinks that people suffer too easily, and that her aim in coming to Europe is not suffering, but being as happy as possible.

We can say that Ralph and Isabel are similar to each other. Both of them are interested in their independence. Isabel wants to live and see independence, whereas Ralph can only enjoy independence in his mind. He cannot do whatever he wants because of his illness. The only thing they differ in is that Isabel wants knowledge and happiness at the same time. That is why she rushes into life like a free greyhound. Ralph, on the other hand, knows and understands that knowledge involves suffering. The more you are involved in life, and gain experience, the more you will be face to face with the bad sides of life, and this means suffering.

Isabel Archer is a young lady, full of imagination:

"She spent half her time in thinking of beauty, and, bravery and magnanimity; she had a fixed determination to regard the world as a place of brightness, of free expansion, of irresistible action; she thought it would be detestable to be afraid or ashamed." (James 1963:47-48).

As Tony Tanner says "... she views the world as a benevolent sphere which will be plastic to her theories of 'free expansion' and irresistible action." (Bloom 1992:93) She is completely unprepared for the real world, in which a lot of suffering is seen. Her independence makes her see the world in a very different way.

There are a lot of people who are not as fortunate as she is, but this fact does not keep her attention as much as it should. Her thoughts are too ambiguous.

Here, Henry James wants to show us both Isabel's good and bad sides. Her imagination and curiosity are her attractive sides, but her feeling of calm satisfaction of her own abilities, her egoism, her vagueness are faults that can be seen by everyone. To take one good example, when she chooses her future husband she does not listen to the advice of anybody. She is sure of her own feelings, and thinks that she has given the right decision. This is the biggest mistake she makes in her life.

James says that " we shouldn't criticise Isabel for her faults, but be as compassionate as possible, otherwise she would be an easy victim of criticism." (Walker 1981:14)

During one of the conversations between Isabel and Mrs Touchett, Isabel accuses her aunt of not having " a point of view " (James 1963:55). She gives herself as an example, and claims that her point of view is thoroughly American. To this her aunt replies.

" My dear young lady, there are as many points of view in the world as there are people of sense. You may say that doesn't make them very numerous ! American ? Never in the world, that's shockingly narrow. My point of view, thank god, is personal ! " (James 1963:56).

For Isabel this is an excellent answer; better than she admits. In a way it describes herself. But, it is impossible for her to tell such a thing when she is in the company of a person like Mrs Touchett. Mrs Touchett is full of cultivation and knowledge, and in order to have the right to say that one has a personal point of view one should be enlightened by experience.

When Isabel is talking to Ralph she does not withdraw her opinions. She thinks that Ralph lacks seriousness, because out of everything he makes a joke. For instance he calls her 'Colombia'. Isabel fears to be thought of as narrow minded, but still in the presence of her cousin she tries to show that she is in love with her country. Actually, she is in love with her country, but it is not an unbreakable tie.

There is another occasion which makes us sense Isabel's originality. One evening Isabel wishes to sit up alone with Ralph and Lord Warburton. But this is an immoral behaviour according to the standards of that period of England. Mrs. Touchett insists on Isabel's going to bed with her. Isabel asks her aunt to tell her the right and wrong of a situation.

" I shall always tell you ", her aunt answered, "whenever I see you taking what seems too much liberty."  
 Isabel's answer is "Pray do; but I don't say I shall always think your remonstrance just."

The conversation ends like that:

"Very likely not. You are too fond of your liberty."  
 " Yes I think I am very fond of it. But I always want to know the things one shouldn't do." "So as to do them? "



asked her aunt "So as to choose," said Isabel. (James 1963:63).

As it is mentioned before, Isabel does not want anybody to meddle with her affairs. She is ready to learn everything provided that she is given the right to choose. This can be connected with the point of view theme. For Isabel "Independence is based on having one's own personal point of view and making decisions for oneself." (Walker 1981:14)

During her stay in Gardencourt, Isabel is invited to Lockleigh which is Lord Warburton's estate. He wants her to know that his family consists of four sisters and two brothers. Warburton thinks of himself as a radical and finds the Americans conservative. He wants to change the state of England. He also wants to have a revolution for the sake of his country. Isabel is delighted in hearing this idea. She thinks of it as a different and interesting happening. It will give her the opportunity to look noble. In a revolution she still would be conservative, she would stick to the old orders. Even though both she and Lord Warburton want a revolution, their aims are different. Warburton is worried about his country, whereas Isabel is interested only in her own image. In her search of knowledge and experience, she is also a little bit selfish.

On the other side, both Ralph and Mr Touchett pity Lord Warburton. For Ralph he has everything a man can wish to. Therefore he cannot even be pitied, and this constitutes a reason for Ralph to pity him. For Mr Touchett, he is to be pitied because he thinks that Isabel may hurt him. As Mr Touchett is an experienced man he can easily see that Warburton is affected by Isabel. And as he knows Isabel he thinks that she might refuse him. He is afraid that Isabel may hurt such a good man as Lord Warburton and he states his thoughts like that: "Ah, he couldn't be a martyr even if he wished!" Isabel exclaimed. "That's a very poor position." "He will never be a martyr unless you make him one," said the old man. (James 1963:69).

Isabel is visited by Lord Warburton's sisters the Misses Molyneuxes. They want her to visit them at Lockleigh. During their visit, Isabel questions them about their brother's political view. Although she is aware of it, she still wants to hear it from different points of view. Being friendly, but dull, they know very little about his political view. A few days later, after the visit of the Molyneuxes, Isabel, Ralph, and Mrs Touchett repay their visit. Isabel is attracted at first sight. Lockleigh captivates her imagination, because to her it seems like "a castle in a fairy-tale." (James 1963:73) As we have learned before, Isabel is a romantic person, and when she looks at something she tries to look at it in a romantic way. Lord Warbuton is eager to show every place of Lockleigh to Isabel. Wandering around in the garden, Lord Warburton manages to take Isabel a little away from the other members of the group. They chatter for a while and then Warburton changes the conversation into a more personal speech. He thinks that Isabel is always judging the people around her. He is afraid of Isabel, and says:

" ..... with you I never feel safe. I have a sort of sense that you are always judging people." (James 1963:74).

After these words Isabel immediately changes her behaviour. She is afraid of loosing her freedom. That is why she behaves coldly to Lord Warburton. She senses the approaching danger. She feels that Lord Warburton's intentions are different, and as she knows his life style she thinks that it would not suit her any way. She would have to obey the rules which the public has imposed upon Lords and their wives. She also gathers some information from the Misses Molyneuxes, and these are enough to make her give her decision. In fact, she is fond of Lord Warburton and his sisters, but she is fond of her freedom more. She cannot think of sacrificing her freedom for such a life style.

Some time later, Isabel receives a letter from Henrietta Stackpole, who is a journalist. Henrietta works for the New York Interwiever, and she is one of the women admired by Isabel, because Isabel thinks that Henrietta represents the type of women who can stand on their own feet and, who are not in need of men. Henrietta

can do whatever she wants. She is not tied up to anyone or anything. She can live her freedom to the utmost limit.

Henrietta comes to London to see Isabel and she wants to be introduced to people of importance so that she can write about them in the *Interwiever*. She is met by Isabel and Ralph and immediately starts to attack Ralph with her questions, some of which very personal. The word privacy is not known by Henrietta. She thinks that she has the right to learn everything about people's lives. She criticizes the good Ralph without knowing that he may have some rational excuses.

Henrietta with her rude behaviours is not much appreciated by Mrs Touchett. They are always on the opposite sides with their opinions. Some time later Isabel learns from Henrietta that Caspar Goodwood, Isabel's American suitor, might come to visit her any time. He still has the same feelings, and he wants to try his chance once more. At the end, not he himself but his letter arrives. He asks Isabel to let him see her again. Isabel is so absorbed in the letter that she is not aware of the approaching man. It is Lord Warburton. Although Isabel has refused Caspar Goodwood he still wants to have another chance. At the same time another danger is approaching her in the figure of Lord Warburton. Like Henrietta, Isabel wants to live her freedom, and see the world before marrying. If she marries any of her present suitors, she thinks that she will not be able to see the world as she would like to.

Lord Warbuston comes to propose marriage to Isabel. She is aware of the fact that some thing like that will come out but still she feels herself like a " wild caught creature in a vast cage " (Walker 1981:17) Some time ago she only could dream of such an event, but now she is so cool that she already knows the answer she is going to give. We pity not only Lord Warburton but also Isabel, even more Isabel, for when Warbuston says "Do you know I am very much afraid of it - of that mind of yours ? " Her answer is "So am I, my lord" ( James 1963:102)

After the Lord's departure Isabel starts to question herself. She cannot understand why she feels herself superior to the other women. She thinks that she must do greater things in life. It is now known that she likes Lord Warburton but "something told her that she wouldn't be satisfied " (James 1963: 103) with him.

Isabel thinks that she should inform somebody about the event. She wants to share her burden. The most suitable person turns out to be Mr Touchett. She later learns that Mr Touchett has been informed before hand. Mr Touchett makes no comment. He only says, "...I sometimes think I have paid too much for this. Perhaps you also might have to pay too much." (James, 1963:106).

Mr Touchett is an experienced old man and he knows that one cannot gain everything without giving something of himself. In a way, he warns Isabel to be more careful. As he loves her, he is anxious for her.

Isabel starts to think of Goodwood. He is the most amiable and clever person she has ever known, but still there is something in him which makes her drive away from him. For Isabel "there was something too forcible, something oppressive and restrictive in the manner in which he presented himself." ( James 1963:106).

Isabel refuses both Goodwood and Warburton because as E. Sackville West says,

" .. none of them touches her imagination. The young girl is still in the ascendant;. the lady awaits the test of experience." ( Bloom 1992:25).

While Isabel is in deep thoughts, Henrietta makes her imagination work and asks Ralph to invite Goodwood to Gardencourt. She wants to remind Isabel of America, because she thinks that Isabel has lost the love for her country.

Lord Warburton is not satisfied with the answer given by Isabel. He comes to Gardencourt accompanied by one of his sisters in order to question Isabel. Warburton is curious to know why he has been refused. Isabel thinks that by marrying him she will escape her fate. She does not want to separate herself from life, " from the usual chances and dangers, from what most people know and suffer. " (Bloom 1992:53). Also Isabel knows that she would gain a social position if she were to marry him. According to Leon Edel:

" Social position in a word was also not freedom; moreover, social position in a hierarchical society represented a strong threat to a woman powerful enough and egotistical enough to believe that she has " an orbit of her own." (Shelston1984:134).

Another fact known by Isabel is that if she marries Warburton she will lead a quiet life, like the Misses Molyneuxes. She will find peace, kindness, honour, possessions, a deep security and a great exclusion with Warburton. All these things Isabel thinks, would separate her from discovering the state of everyday life, for which she has been yearning for years.

Ralph finds an opportunity to talk to Isabel about her refusal. Isabel expresses her opinion freely. She says that before marrying anybody she would like to see more of the world. Ralph's only aim in life since he has met Isabel, is to keep an eye on her. She is the only creature in the world that can keep him alive. He would be one of her suitors if he were healthy, but his illness keeps him away from her. He can only be her best friend. A friend who can criticise her anyway.

Caspar Goodwood being informed by Henrietta that Isabel will be alone in one of these evenings, pays a visit to Isabel. He renews his offer, but is refused for the second time. As Nina Baym states in one of her articles:

"Neither Warburton nor Goodwood can accept the idea that she refuses them because she is unwilling to accept any mode of existence that is not self-expressive. But this is Isabel's good transcendental reason - this and the un-impeachable emotional truth that she -doesn't love either of them." (Shelstone 1984:197).

Caspar accepts Isabel's offer to leave her alone for two years. At the end of this time, he will try his chance again. Isabel does not give him her word, but at least she knows that she will not be bothered by Goodwood for two years. She is affected by Goodwood more than Warburton. He has a great pressure on her. He is forceful. That is why Isabel after his departure, kneels in front of her bed for a long time, trembling. She trembles not only because of the conversation she has had, but also and mostly because of " the enjoyment she found in the exercise of her power." ( James 1963:152).

One may think that Isabel is becoming harder and colder psychologically. But, as we are told before we should not criticise Isabel. If we do that, she might be an easy victim. In spite of all these, we can say that Isabel has changed.

During all these events, we witness another change in Gardencourt. We learn that Mr Touchett has become very ill, and that Ralph is wanted there. Isabel, immediately agrees to accompany him.

Isabel is again at Gardencourt. It is no more lively there due to Mr Touchett's illness. During her stay in Gardencourt, Isabel meets Madame Serena Merle, one of Mrs Touchett's friends. Our heroine is immediately attracted by her. As everybody in the house is occupied with Mr Touchett and his illness, Madame Merle and Isabel are left together for a long time. So, Isabel has the opportunity to find out

her character by herself, because she thinks that. "... each new acquaintance would exert some momentous influence upon her life." ( James 1963:159).

Meanwhile, Mr Touchett is looking for an opportunity to talk to his son. He is anxious about him, and asks him to marry Isabel. But this wish cannot be put into reality because of two reasons. Firstly, Ralph thinks that one cannot marry his cousin. Secondly, an ill man like him should not marry. But instead of marrying Isabel he asks Mr Touchett " to put a little wind in her sails." (James 1963:169). He wants her to achieve complete independence not by marrying her, but by putting a little money into her hands. He wants to see what a young girl with great imagination and economic power would do. Properly speaking he wants to have " the pleasure of observing what she does with her freedom." (Walker 1981:21). As Leon Edel says,

"Ralph knows he has not long to live and he wishes to see how Isabel's large nature will profit by endowment. If this is a sign of his love for her and the sole way in which he can be symbolically united to her, it is also Ralph's way of living vicariously in Isabel's life and participating in whatever fate her temperament may reserve for her." (Shelston 1984:133).

Mr Touchett, being aware of the fact that she might " fall a victim to the fortune- hunters, " (James 1963:172) still agrees to do what Ralph wishes, and gives half of Ralph's inheritance to Isabel.

To Isabel, Mademe Merle is one of the most accomplished women she knows. She thinks that she has taste and wisdom. According to Richard Poirier:

"Isabel is immediately impressed by Mademe Merle's having achieved what Isabel calls the aristocratic situation-of being in a better position for appreciating

people than they are for apprecating you. " (The Voice of America: Forum Lectures; The American Novel; 34-35).

During one of the conversations between Madame Merle and Isabel, we are given information by Madame Merle about Gilbert Osmond, one of her friends. We learn that he has "no carreer, no name, no position, no fortune, no past, no future, no anything. " (James 1963:182). She wants Isabel to know him some day, because this man is "free from all limitations, in a way likely to appeal to Isabel. " (Walker 1981:21).

Some time later Madame Merle leaves Gardencourt with the hope to continue her friendship with Isabel. And two days later Mr Touchett dies.

When Isabel learns that she is given a large sum of money by Mr Touchett, as Mrs Touchett says "she is simply stupefied." (James 1963:193). She does not know what to do with the money, but "she ultimately made up her mind that to be rich was a virtue , because it was to be able to do, and to do was sweat. " (James 1963:195). For Madame Merle it is a very different matter. She thinks that Isabel must have been very clever to make Mr Touchett change his will in her favour. She is corrected by Mrs Touchett, who tells her that Isabel did nothing but that it was Ralph who made his father change his will.

During her stay in Paris, Isabel meets some friends of Mrs Touchett. She thinks that they live too idle and luxurious. She also meets Edward (Ned) Rosier whom she had known from her childhood.

Meanwhile, Henrietta has been sight-seeing with Mr Bantling whom she likes immensely inspite of his being an English gentleman. Henrietta is again worried about Isabel, because she thinks that her fortune might seperate her from the reality, and put her in a world of dreams. We know that Isabel is a romantic person and it is likely that her fortune, as Henrietta says, may broaden her romantic view.



Isabel is afraid of the freedom the money has given her. She wonders whether she will be able to use it properly or not. She questions Ralph on whether he knows something about the will or not. Ralph does not reveal that it was he who made her rich, but just asks her to enjoy her freedom. His advice is worth mentioning:

".....Don't ask your self so much whether this or that is good for you. Don't question your conscience so much- it will get out of tune, like a strummed piano. Keep it for great occasions. Don't try too much to form your character - it's like trying to pull open a rosebud. Live as you like best, and your character will form itself. Most things are good for you; the exceptions are very rare, and a comfortable income is not one of them... Spread your wings; rise above the ground. .It's never wrong to do that." (James 1963:206)

Isabel, after this conversation with Ralph seems to be a little more confident. She tries to think about Italy which for her has the meaning of " a land of promise." (James 1963:207).

During all these days, Isabel gives but less thought to Caspar Goodwood and Lord Warburton. She thinks that she would like to correspond with Lord Warburton if he is to get married to another woman. Caspar Goodwood has a different image on her mind. She thinks that the things which she does not like with Caspar today may attract her one day. She thinks " - that his limitations should some day prove a sort of blessing in disguise - a clear and quiet harbour, enclosed by a fine granite breakwater." (James 1963:208).

In spite of the fact that she has refused him twice, Isabel still thinks that one day she might need him and his limitations.

After Ralph persuaded his father to leave some part of his fortune to Isabel, with the intention of providing her a life of freedom, Mr Touchett was anxious about Isabel's being a victim of fortune-hunters in the future. Isabel's preferring Gilbert Osmond as a husband shows how right Mr Touchett was in his anxiety. Isabel is very much fond of her freedom, but she has no knowledge about the realities of life; so being introduced by her "dear", "delicate" Madame Merle to Osmond, she is very happy without knowing anything about the hidden, real aspects of Osmond, who is the father of Pansy, a well convent bred girl. Pansy has been brought up in a convent and she came to spend her holidays with her father. Pansy thinks that she was born only to be her father's daughter. She is an obeying girl and does whatever her father wants her to do, For Osmond she is one of the precious parts of his collection.

Pansy is, in fact, Madame Merle's illegitimate daughter, and Madame Merle thinks of her daughter's future so, she requests Osmond to meet and marry Isabel. However, Osmond's answer is very striking:

" Is she beautiful, clever, rich, splendid, universally intelligent and unprecedentedly virtuous ? It is only on those conditions that I care to make her acquaintance. You know I asked you some time ago never to speak to me of anyone who should not correspond to that description. I know plenty of dingy people; I don't want to know any more. " (James 1963:222).

After Madame Merle reassures him that Isabel has all these qualities, he agrees to see her. Soon after we meet Osmond we conceive a doubt of him, because he calls Ralph a " jackanapes" (James 1963:225). As it is clearly shown in the novel, Ralph is one of the most amiable and helpful characters. But Osmond claims the opposite, and that is why Osmond's this behaviour makes us suspicious of him, even in the very beginning.

Osmond, some days later, visits Madame Merle at the Palazzo Crescentini. Isabel is also there. There she speaks as little as possible. She prefers to listen to the two persons. Isabel is invited to Osmond's house. Meanwhile, Madame Merle is delighted, because she thinks that Isabel has been very charming during their conversation. This means that Osmond has developed a liking for Isabel.

Later on, Isabel goes to Ralph to ask his opinion about Osmond. Although one can think that he may give more information about Osmond, Ralph leaves every thing to Isabel saying:

".... Don't mind anything that any one tells you about any one else. Judge everyone and everything for yourself." (James 1963:231).

He wants her to find out everything by herself. Isabel is delighted with Osmond's house and his goods, but she is more delighted with the owner of these. She finds him interesting, because to her it seems as if he has devoted himself to art and beauty. As it is mentioned in the novel Isabel has disagreed with Madame Merle's opinion that everybody is known with his environment, and that "we are each of us made up of a cluster of appurtenances..." (James 1963:186). But now we see that Isabel is admiring a man who is fond of his goods, who seems to be nothing without them. Even his daughter is one of his precious goods. The themes he tries to be interested in, indicate that he does not want to be known as an ordinary man. For instance when his sister, the Countess Gemini talks about his interests she says, "One is Machiavelli, the other is Vittoria Colonna, the next is Metastasio." (James 1963:240).

These persons are known to be very old and precious, because they gave art a meaning. A person who is supposed to be interested in them cannot be thought of as ordinary or vulgarly modern. Here we can compare Lord Warburton and Caspar Goodwood with Osmond. Warburton is interested in British Politics of

his own day and Goodwood is interested in the cotton industry. Osmond, on the other hand is interested in nothing but his own pleasure. He has no responsibility to take care of.

Isabel at first sight cannot see Osmond's all features. She thinks of him as a superior being. She cannot place him in any category of the people she knows. One can feel his taste in everything, but only his taste, nothing else.

While talking with Isabel, he confesses to her that he has never been a rich man, but he has not had the aims to be rich, therefore he was just as quiet as possible. He adds that he had no genius or talents. Therefore he says:

" I took my measure early in life. I was simply the most fastidious young gentleman living. There were two or three people in the world I envied the Emperror of Russia, for instance and the Sultan of Turkey! There were even moments when I envied the Pope of Rome - for the consideration he enjoys." (James 1963: 245).

As Leon Edel says:

"We grant Osmond his fine irony as he says this, but we must nevertheless recognise what it expresses. Since he cannot be Tsar or Sultan or Pope, Osmond has consoled himself with being 'simply the most fastidious young gentleman living'. By now he is no longer young; he is confirmed, however, in his own private domain of power, as the perfect collector of bric-à brac and objects d'art, and a subtle manipulator of persons as well as

things. Pansy has been made into one of these objects; and Isabel is to be added to the collection." (Shelston 1984:135-136).

Isabel appreciates and likes Osmond, because she thinks she has found the man who is both interesting and more important independent. However, the Countess Gemini, Osmond's sister, knows her brother's hidden character. She is aware of Osmond's dependence on Isabel's money and his cold-blooded treatment of other people. She also knows about Madame Merle's plans for the good of her daughter. She knows both Osmond and Madame Merle quite well, and she thinks that each of them alone has no danger but when they are together they are "like some chemical combination." (James 1963: 248). The Countess Gemini is worried about Isabel's being likely sacrificed to Osmond. Madame Merle thinks that only a superior being like Isabel would have the chance to be chosen by Osmond. That is why she says to the Countess Gemini: " If she were not superior, your brother would never look at her. He must have the best. " (James 1963:252). The Countess Gemini's answer is worth mentioning"..... he is very hard to please. That makes me fear for her happiness." (James 1963:252).

We can say that the Countess Gemini and Hanrietta Stackpole have some similar features. Because both of them like Isabel and they know that the money given to her may do Isabel harm.

Isabel is visited by Mr Osmond many times. He is attracted by her and her belongings, but our innocent heroine is unaware of the approaching danger. Another person, who is aware of the danger is Mrs Touchett. She questions Madame Merle about it. Given no proper answer she decides to talk to Isabel, but Madame Merle is against this, and tells her that she may find out what is going on. She wants Mrs Touchett not to stir Isabel's imagination.

Mrs Touchett discusses this point with Ralph, but Ralph thinks that one should not be afraid of Isabel. He says,

" My dear mother, I am not afraid. She is making fools of us all. She will please herself, of course; but she will do so by studying human nature and retaining her liberty..." (James 1963:254).

Meanwhile, Isabel, not knowing that many people are concerned in her behaviours, goes on examining Osmond and his daughter who is " like a sheet of blank paper. " (James 1963:257). In fact Isabel herself is still an innocent young American girl. She is too innocent to be a match for the two persons who together make up a dangerous combination: Gilbert Osmond and Madame Merle.

During one of their conversations Madame Merle asks Osmond what he thinks of Isabel. He thinks that she is charming, one of the most charming persons he has ever known, but he adds that she has one fault.

" What is that ? "

" She has too many ideas. "

" I warned you she was clever "

" Fortunately they are very bad ones. " said Osmond

" Why is that fortunate ? "

" Dame, if they must be sacrificed. " (James 1963:264).

As it is clearly seen, for Osmond, Isabel is only a valuable thing to be put in his collection like his daughter. As he is going to "sacrifice" her ideas, we can say that only his ideas, opinions are going to count. She is going to be his reflection; like one's reflection in a mirror. In order to reach his aims, Osmond must be close to Isabel, so he tries to make Isabel invite him to Rome while she is there. His daughter constitutes a problem for him, so there is an opportunity to be close to Isabel and to discuss his domestic affairs with her.

Isabel finds Rome fantastic. She is under the spell of it. While they are visiting the Forum, Isabel is left for a short time alone and, during that period of time she is encountered by Lord Warburton accidentally. Both of them are surprised, Lord Warburton declares his love again, but Isabel does not change her previous answer. Warburton promises not to touch this subject again.

While Isabel is talking to Warburton she is confronted by Osmond. Osmond comments that St. Peter's is "too large; it makes one feel like an atom." (James 1963:273). While Isabel finds it splendid because it gives her imagination room, Osmond thinks that it makes him diminutive. Here we are able to compare Lord Warburton and Osmond. Lord Warburton is a fine specimen who knows how to behave, but Osmond is just the opposite. He can think only of himself and the things that can give him pleasure. Unfortunately Isabel is also going to be one of those objects that will give him pleasure.

Seeing that Isabel will not give him any hope, Lord Warburton decides to leave Rome. He cannot bear to live in her environment without telling his love to her. We can see also envy in his eyes. He is jealous of Osmond, because the latter has the opportunity of attracting Isabel's attention.

Learning that Isabel has refused Lord Warburton she becomes a more precious possession in Osmond's eyes, because to be able to refuse an English peer one must be a rarity. Now she is fit to be included in his collection. As Tony Tanner says, Isabel, in behaving like that, "offers her self up to him (Osmond) as a fine finished object." (Shelstone 1984:168).

Osmond, during his stay in Rome, makes himself as agreeable as possible. Even Ralph has to admit this fact. He starts to be more and more anxious for Isabel. The latter is called by her aunt. She is asking her whether she will join her to Bellagio or not. Isabel agrees to that, and immediately prepares for leaving Rome. Before she leaves she is visited by Osmond. They have a long conversation together.

Osmond wants Isabel to see everywhere before she returns to Italy. He wants her to be tired of new ideas. In other words he does not like her as she is now. He says that "one ought to make one's life a work of art." (James 1963:284). After that he declares his love to her. Isabel is overjoyed. He also explains that he is a nonentity. He says "I have neither fortune, nor fame, nor extrinsic advantages of any kind." (James 1963:287). And to be like that, he says, gives him pleasure. Osmond finds Isabel's going with her aunt appropriate. He worships propriety. He says "I am not conventional. I am convention it self." (James 1963:288).

According to Emerson:

"humanity loses its humanness. When it commits itself to a particular quality or function. So James would seem to be implying that in going beyond the worldly and conventional Serena and Osmond have been diminished as human beings." (Powers 1991:43).

In other words when Osmond says that he is convention itself it is easily seen that he does not like the rules put, but that he himself is going to create and put rules and orders. Poor Isabel is in such a state of mood that she cannot see his real face although he shows it frankly. Now, she is again in front of two ways, and is in the position of having to choose one of them. She has to give the difficult decision for the third time. Lord Warburton, Caspar Goodwood, and now Gilbert Osmond. In her long run, Isabel will be accompanied by the reader. how will she cope with life and how will she manage to keep her freedom. Will she be able to be the same Isabel the reader first saw at Gardencourt or not?

As Isabel has promised Osmond to visit Pansy, she immediately wants to fulfil her promise. She discusses the matter with Madame Merle who thinks that her going there alone will not be proper, for the people around may not know that Osmond is away. In fact, Madame Merle wants to make Isabel think more of Osmond in that way. Still, Isabel, as she has promised, goes to Osmond's house. There she



finds Pansy full with directions given by her father. She cannot do whatever she wants even when her father is away. Isabel thinks that she may be an easy victim, for she is used to get directions and, she is not able to form her own views. Her aim of living is only to please first of all her father and then the persons around her. Isabel wishes to be able to speak to her about Osmond, but stops herself from doing that, for she thinks that she may use the innocent Pansy for her own benefit.

Isabel leaves Italy and joins her aunt. She receives a visit by her sister and her family. Then she chooses to travel again, but this time with Madame Merle. During this trip, Isabel gains more and more confidence. Now, she feels the freedom she has been longing for, because she is able to choose whatever she wants. She also sees that Madame Merle has rather different opinions than hers. She is also aware of the fact that they are inferior to her opinions. She makes the reader think that she has found the right way, and that she will see Madame Merle's and Osmond's genuine faces, before it is too late. But, unfortunately with Isabel's expecting Caspar Goodwood as her visitor it is understood that she is engaged. This engagement news makes the reader feel that Isabel can no more be rescued. While waiting for her visitor to come up, she thinks about the two years that have passed. Lots of things have happened during these years. Isabel feels herself more and more confident, but still she is anxious about how to treat Goodwood. She wants to defend herself as if she has done something wrong. Goodwood's aim is only to see her for the last time in her natural way. He knows that she will change after her marriage, in spite of her denying it. She says that she is marrying a nonentity, and that Goodwood is incapable of appreciating him. For Goodwood, this is an insult, because he thinks that Osmond must be a too fine person to be appreciated. As Isabel cannot defend herself as she has wanted, she bursts into tears.

Caspar Goodwood is the first person to learn the news. Isabel wants it that way, because she thinks that he has the right to learn it first and from herself. She wants to see how his reaction will be. Later on she breaks the news to her aunt who is very disappointed at hearing it. She cannot understand how a person like Isabel can fall in love with a person like Osmond. Mrs Touchett is also angry with Madame Merle, because she thinks that Madame Merle has deceived her. Isabel cannot explain the reasons for marrying Osmond to her aunt. She thinks that her money will find a

right place when she marries Osmond. For Osmond has made an art out of his life. His only lack is money. By putting her money into his service, she tries to make him a more perfect person than she thinks he is now.

Isabel refuses Caspar Goodwood because of his aggressiveness. As Denis Donoghue says,

"Isabel's error to describe it mildly - is that she does not perceive in Gilbert Osmond a sinister version of Caspar Goodwood's aggressiveness." (Shelston, 1984:180) .

She cannot see neither Osmond's nor Madame Merle's genuine face.

Isabel wants Mrs Touchett to tell the events to Ralph. She thinks that this would sound more proper. Mrs Touchett does not lose time in revealing the truth to her son. Ralph is disappointed. He thinks that " he has misjudged Isabel's capacity for freedom. " (Walker 1981:32) He feels himself worse, because the person whom he was most interested in has lost herself. It is as if Ralph's life depends on Isabel's freedom. Isabel realises that Ralph is getting worse day by day, but she cannot see that she herself is the reason of it.

Ralph leaves the theme untouched for some days. He does not know how to make Isabel understand the fact that Osmond is not what she is looking for. He knows that he himself is the cause of that. He blames himself for having left Isabel by herself in choosing her own way.

At the end, Isabel feels so impatient that she goes to Ralph, and makes him talk about the occasion. He thinks that she is "caught and is going to be put into a cage" (James 1963:315). It must be remembered that Isabel felt the same thing when

she got a proposal from Lord Warburton. But with Osmond there is not a feeling like that. Ralph also thinks that Isabel must have changed a lot, because some time ago her liberty was her most valuable thing, but now, she has found more interesting things. Ralph tells Isabel that he has some dreams for her. He says that he is amusing himself with these dreams. For instance he thinks that Isabel "were not to come down so easily, so soon ." (James 1963:318). By coming down he means her marrying so soon. Yet, for Ralph she is not a person to settle down so easily, without seeing the world.

Ralph, decides to tell Isabel clearly that he loves her, but without hope. His aim is either to win her for himself or to make her change her decision. But, Isabel, decisive as she is, makes Ralph believe that she loves Osmond, because he does not think of himself as an important personality. Only a romantic person can fall in love with a person who calls himself a nonentity. As we know, unfortunately, Isabel is one of these romantics. In fact, there is no such Osmond as Isabel describes him. It is the image of him she creates in her mind. She is not in love with him, but with her idea of him. As Leon Edel says:

“Isabel and Osmond had been attracted to one another because each saw in the other a mirror -image of self. The two had experienced an irresistible need for each other” .... (Shelston 1984:136).

At the end of their conversation Isabel promises Ralph that she will not bother him with her troubles, if she will have any.

It is easily seen that Isabel will be separated from her friends and relatives one by one. None of them is fond of Osmond. All of them know that Osmond is, as Ralph called him, " a sterile dilettante. " But Isabel thinks that her aim is to please herself not the others.

Meanwhile Osmond is aware of the fact that Isabel's friends and relatives do not like him. But this is not a serious problem for him, since he accepts Isabel as a free individual. He is delighted with her and her belongings, especially with her money.

Osmond's family has not got the same feelings as Isabel's family. Pansy, is very fond of Isabel and thinks that they suit each other very well. The Countess Gemini is pleased with the thought of having Isabel as a sister - in - law, but as she is always against marriages, she does not think her marrying proper. On the other hand, Madame Merle is quiet on this subject. She talks only to Osmond. She can congratulate herself because of her success.

During their engagement, Osmond behaves in an admirable way. He regards Isabel as "a silver plate" (James 1963:324) that will mirror his thoughts and opinions, and his daughter Pansy will amuse them both. For Osmond, both Isabel and Pansy are objects; objects that will fulfill his requirements and make him richer.

Three years after their engagement we learn accidentally, from a conversation made by Ned Rosier and Madame Merle, that Isabel and Osmond are married. We are also informed about their feelings towards each other. Osmond and Isabel are not on good terms. It is easily seen that Osmond proves to be what Ralph has called him. From Madame Merle we learn that Osmond and Isabel have always different opinions. Also we learn that they have had a baby which died six months after it's birth.

The place the Osmond's live in is called 'Palazzo Roccanera' (Black Rock Palace). Ned Rosier, assimilates it to a "dungeon" (James 1963:319) in which the innocent Pansy is captivated. After learning so much about the new state of the Osmond family "we wonder if Isabel, too, leads the life of a prisoner." (Walker 1981: 33).

Isabel has been warned by her friends and relatives, but she said that she has married to please herself. She has married with her free choice. She thinks that she was under no spell upon her. Without knowing it, she has gone under Osmond's spell. She has fallen in love not with him, but with his image, she loves the person whom she has created in her own mind.

Pansy's boyfriend, Ned Rosier's aim is to ask Madame Merle for help. He is in love with Pansy, and knowing that Madame Merle is intimate with the Osmond family, he comes straight to her to ask for advice and help. Madame Merle agrees to help Rosier. One day Rosier goes to the Palazzo Roccanera, and takes part in one of Isabel's famous Thursday evenings. There he talks to Osmond and immediately understands that Osmond knows about his intentions, because Osmond behaves rudely towards him.

They talk about Osmond's becoming disinterested in old pots and plates. As an answer to one of Rosier's questions Osmond says, "No, I'm not thinking of parting with anything at all, Mr Rosier. " (James 1963:339). It is so clear that for Osmond both Isabel and Pansy are objects like any of his plates or pots. When he tells Rosier that he will not part from any of them, he, in a way is warning Rosier not to encounter Pansy with a different aim. Because Osmond will not part from his daughter so easily.

Ned Rosier finds an opportunity to talk to Pansy alone. There he declares his love, and Pansy as if she has been waiting for this declaration, accepts it without much ado.

Rosier assures himself of Pansy's feeling and then turns to Mrs Osmond to ask her for help, inspite of the promise he has given Madame Merle. Isabel refuses to help him. She knows Osmond, and also knows that Rosier's money will not satisfy Osmond's hunger. In fact, Isabel would like to help him but she says " I simply can't ." (James 1963:347).

Isabel has changed. She is no more the self - confident, lively girl we have seen first at Gardencout. Not only in Pansy's matter -Pansy's love to Ned Rosier- but also in many other matters Isabel is helpless. She has lost her freedom, and now she is living in a cage: the cage Osmond has prepared for her.

On another Thursday evening, Ned Rosier again visits the Osmonds. There, he is told by Osmond that he is not good enough for Pansy, and that Pansy has forgotten him. Rosier is very upset, and goes straight to Isabel. He tells Isabel that her husband is 'awfully cold - blooded' (James 1963:350) Isabel is not surprised. She knows that her husband is not interested in other person's feelings. For him it is not important that Pansy is in love with Rosier. While they are talking, Osmond, accompanied by Lord Warburton encounters them. Isabel is surprised to see her suitors walking together. Osmond shows himself in his most appealing manners, and after a while leaves them alone. Lord Warburton's aim in visiting the Osmonds is Ralph's state of health. He tells Isabel that Ralph is worse now, and that he wants to go to Sicily. That is why Lord Warburton has come with him. Isabel, immediately wants to see Ralph, but Lord Warburton advises her to decline her visit till the morrow.

Meanwhile, Rosier finds a chance to talk to Pansy. He questions her about her feelings and learns that she is still in love with him, but that her father has forbidden her to marry him, even to speak to him. She asks him to be patient. She will ask Mrs Osmond for help, because she thinks that Isabel is afraid of nobody, even not of her husband. During Lord Warburton's visit the differences between Osmond and Lord Warburton are seen clearly. Warburton is as usual at his highest peak, whereas Osmond is dependent on Isabel's money. Warburton is worried about the feelings of the persons around him. He is so kind as to accompany Ralph to Rome. On the other hand, Osmond will not accept that his own daughter can have her own opinions and feelings. After the quarrel of Isabel and Ralph about Osmond, at Rome, they are no more able to share their feelings and ideas. They can no more be intimate friends. It has been the last time they have spoken frankly to each other. Now, Isabel is wearing a mask. She has no more the energy once she used to have. She is quick in her activities, but not in her mental vitality. It seems as if she has lost her imagination. She has lost her curiosity about life. She is not worried to see new places, to meet new personalities. Her behaviour in the house is not her own behaviour but Osmond's

reflection, like someone's reflection in the mirror. As it is seen in the comment of a critic, "As Isabel becomes more imprisoned in her marriage, Ralph grows more ill." (Walker 1981:33).

While lying ill on his bed, Ralph feels himself guiltily, for he has been the person who wanted to put Isabel on her guard, and see how she would cope with life. He has lost the game. He has not thought that Isabel would be cheated in such a short time. His aim now is to stay in Rome, and see what Isabel will do with her husband or what her husband will make out of her. Lord Warburton agrees to stay with him in Rome, but besides watching Isabel, he has some other intentions. He wants to marry Pansy.

For a very long time, Isabel cannot see that her marriage has been organised by Madame Merle. When she is alone she thinks of Madame Merle, and how that woman manages to be so calm. Madame Merle in Isabel's opinion lives always by reason and wisdom. Isabel sometimes feels the lack of these. In such times she thinks she would like to have Madame Merle as her teacher.

One day having just returned from a walk with Pansy. Isabel finds Madame Merle and Osmond sitting in one of the rooms without uttering any word. Isabel is surprised because it strikes her as "a sort of familiar silence, from which she instantly perceived that her entrance would startle them." (James 1963:376).

What is more, Madame Merle is standing whereas Osmond is sitting, and they are looking at each other. For a time she thinks that there is nothing interesting, because Osmond and Madame Merle are old friends. However, "their relative position, their absorbed natural gaze, struck her as something detected," (James 1963:376). Isabel thinks that she is not happy with Osmond, and that her feelings of love are all left in the past. "She sometimes felt a sort of passion of tenderness for memories which had no other merit than that they belonged to her unmarried life." (James 1963:386-387). But still she wants to be a wife who knows

her duty. She tries to please him, and starts to think that Lord Warburton may be a good match for Pansy. She knows that this would make Osmond happy. Actually, one evening Osmond discusses this matter with Isabel and asks for her help. He wants her to use her authority so as to make him marry Pansy. He asks for help in a cruel way. Now, slowly Isabel starts to see Osmond's genuine face. Isabel thinks that Osmond is "making everything wither that he touched, spoiling everything for her that he looked at." (James 1963:391).

She is sorry that she has not been more careful during their engagement. Now she is aware of the fact that under his charm "his egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers." (James 1963:396). They have nothing to talk about. They only look at each other across a gulf. Osmond is neither violent nor sensible towards Isabel, but she cannot see the person she has created in her mind anymore. She still believes that he has an excellent mind, but also knows that he hates her own mind. He wants her mind to be attached to his. He cannot bear her having her own ideas. Not only does he hate her mind, but also herself. He is also against her visiting Ralph. For Isabel, visiting Ralph is like "a lamp in the darkness.." (James 1963:400). This is what Osmond is afraid of. He thinks that Ralph reminds Isabel of her freedom. Isabel, now is aware of both Osmond's and Madame Merle's duplicity. It has taken her a long time to find this out. Now, the way she will manage to cope with life and the persons in her environment is a question in the mind of the reader.

Although Isabel leads an unhappy life, she still fulfills her husband's requirements. He wants her to assist Pansy wherever possible. Isabel, one evening, takes her to a party where both Edward Rosier and Lord Warburton are present. There, Lord Warburton again declares that he wishes to marry Pansy, but in fact his only aim is to be near Isabel. On the other hand Rosier asks for help. Isabel first of all refuses to help him, but later she promises him that she will do whatever she can. Isabel tries to help the two men at the same time. While promising Rosier help, she also does not neglect to tell Warburton to send his letter to Osmond, so that he can quicken his relationship with Pansy. One can think that Isabel looks to Warburton as a remedy. As she cannot find the happiness she seeks in her marriage, perhaps she will look for it somewhere else.



During the marriage years of Osmond and Isabel, the Countess Gemini is bored with the life she is leading. She looks forward to visiting the Osmonds, but she is not invited as much as she wishes to be. At the end, she gets an invitation from Osmond. Before leaving Florence she is visited by Henrietta Stackpole who on learning that Isabel is still wooed by Warburton, is anxious to visit her immediately. She informs Caspar Goodwood, who is at that time in Florence, about Isabel's state of mind. Two real friends of Isabel take the first train to Rome in order to assist her. Isabel now can see what she has missed by refusing Lord Warburton and Caspar Goodwood, and what she has gained by marrying Gilbert Osmond.

Osmond does not want Isabel to see the friends with whom she was getting on well before her marriage. He dislikes almost all of them. One of them is Ralph. If it were possible for Osmond, he would do almost everything to prevent their seeing each other. He thinks that Ralph is putting different views related to freedom into Isabel's mind. "...He knows perfectly well that Ralph was an apostle of freedom (James 1963:426). Ralph is the only person who can give Isabel a refreshment. That is why she continues to visit him, who is meanwhile in Rome, inspite of the fear that there may be an open break in her marriage with Osmond. Isabel cannot bear the other people to know that her marriage is a failure. She thinks that it is" the single sacred act - of her life." (James 1963:426).

Meanwhile, Isabel starts to behave insincerely. Her only aim is to be loyal to Osmond. Although she knows that Pansy will not marry anybody except Rosier, she still advises her to make her father happy by encouraging Lord Warburton to propose to her.

Inspite of all Isabel's efforts Lord Warburton does not propose marriage to Pansy, and he leaves Rome for England. Before parting he visits the Osmonds for the last time. He asks them to visit him in England. The only person he is sorry to leave in Rome in his poor state is Ralph Touchett. Ralph is unable to accompany Lord Warburton to England, because of the cold weather. Lord Warburton parts with the Osmond's cordially.

That evening Isabel is insulted by her husband. They are no more husband and wife, but two enemies. Osmond accuses Isabel of having discouraged Lord Warburton. Isabel defends herself by saying that she has done everything she can, but that neither Warburton cares for Pansy, nor Pansy for Warburton. This fact is not important for Osmond. The feelings of the people around him do not concern him, even if the person is his own daughter.

As it is mentioned before, Osmond dislikes most of Isabel's friends. He talks of Ralph as a 'conceited ass', (James 1963:451). He accuses Lord Warburton of having wounded his daughter, and Henrietta is talked of as a 'steel pen.' (James 1963:452). He does not even allow Isabel to invite Henrietta for dinner. Henrietta, as she always has been, is still Isabel's confidante. She is the only person to whom Isabel speaks frankly. Isabel hates talking about her misdeed, but she is too miserable to be able to conceal it from Henrietta. On Henrietta's offering her to leave Osmond Isabel says, " ..... I can't publish my mistake. I don't think that's decent. I would much rather die." (James 1963:450).

Isabel thinks that she accepted Osmond in freedom. Nobody forced her to do so. In her opinion, one must bear the effects of a deed that one has done when in freedom. So, she will never announce anybody except Henrietta that she is unhappy.

We know that Caspar Goodwood also senses that Isabel may be unhappy and accompanies Henrietta to Rome. But, to Isabel's great surprise, he does not call on her as soon as he arrives. Isabel wonders why he even has come. After some time she receives his card to ask for leave. From that time on he becomes a regular visitor to the Palazzo Roccanera.

Now, Isabel is in a serious danger, because Caspar Goodwood must be the last person to know that she is unhappy. She thinks that she has made him unhappy. He will be distressed again if he learns that Isabel is not content in her marriage.

Approximately at the same time, Madame Merle, the Countess Gemini, and Rosier reappear in Rome. Madame Merle wonders what has happened to Lord Warburton. She questions Isabel in a way as if she were the cause of his leaving.

After a long stay in Rome, Ralph decides to leave for England. He knows that he is living his last days and he does not want to die in Rome. The good Henrietta offers to accompany him to Gardencourt, Caspar Goodwood is asked by Isabel to go with Ralph, and take care of him.

All of them know that Isabel wants to get rid of them. So, by going, they will make life easier for her. She tells Henrietta that she wants to be alone. In fact with Osmond, Pansy, Madame Merle, the Countess Gemini, and Rosier around her she will not be alone, but she says "... they are part of the comedy, you others are spectators." (James 1963:461). By "the others" she means her own friends: the ones who love her and want her to be happy and free as she was once.

Caspar Goodwood is not content with what he has seen and heard. He learns from Osmond that they are in good harmony, but cannot believe him. At the end he can pity her. Even pitying Isabel would be an aim to live for him. Isabel's answer is "Don't give your life to it; but give a thought to it every now and then." (James 1963:472).

When Isabel bids Ralph goodbye she says that he is her best friend. Ralph says " It was for you that I wanted - that I wanted to live. But I am of no use to you." (James 1963:464). He wanted her to live her freedom, but the money he gave her turned out to be a prison for her. The effect of it was just the opposite of what Ralph thought.

To be frank, Madame Merle feels a great interest in Pansy's marriage. Her interest is identical with Osmond's. Isabel cannot give a meaning to that. According to her Pansy's marriage is none of Madame Merle's business. After a slight

discussion with her, Isabel realises that Mrs Touchett was right when she said that her marriage was arranged by Madame Merle. Isabel feels bewildered. She also knows that Osmond married her only for her money. Isabel even thinks of giving all her money to Osmond. She wonders whether he would let her be free after getting the money.

After encountering the facts that she was misused by Madame Merle and Osmond and that Pansy is their illegitimate daughter, Isabel throws herself into loneliness. She wanders between the ruins of Rome because "In a world of ruins the ruin of her happiness seemed a less unnatural catastrophe." (James 1963:477). She thinks of Madame Merle. She still cannot understand how she has fallen into the trap of that woman. Once she has thought that she knows a lot about human nature, but this error of her has made her understand that she is still too inexperienced.

Isabel changes a lot after her marriage. She is no more the girl who was full of curiosity about human life. She has got acquainted with two of the worst samples of human kind. And this will suffice her for a long time.

While Isabel is in these deep thoughts, Osmond is with Madame Merle in her flat talking about Isabel. Madame Merle is angry with Osmond, because she thinks that he has been cruel to Isabel.

Osmond seems not to be interested in what Madame Merle says. He gives more importance to the crack in one of the cups. He is so careful as to see the little crack in it. This implies that no matter how little it is, a fault is a fault, and it will destroy a perfect personality. For Osmond, Isabel has also a fault. He is not satisfied with her ideas. He does not like her having her own ideas. He has not been content with them even before their marriage, and he thought that he could change them, and thus she would be always thinking and behaving as he likes. But later on, he has easily understood that she will never give up her own ideas.

As Isabel is not fond of gossiping, she sometimes takes her sister - in - law on tours of the Roman ruins, when she comes to visit them so as to distract her from thinking about other things. One day, while they are again wandering around, Isabel asks Pansy to show her aunt the Colliseum. While Isabel is waiting for them, she comes across Rosier. Isabel gives him little time to talk to her. He immediately tells Isabel that he has sold all his bibelots so as to be rich. Rosier is a true lover. He can easily sacrifice his precious things for his beloved.

Isabel bids Rosier goodbye when she sees Pansy approaching. She sees " a spark of timid passion " (James 1963:488) in Pansy's eyes. There she understands how deep their love towards each other is. But Pansy, as she has promised not to upset her father, tries to hide her feelings from Isabel.

Meanwhile, the Countess Gemini introduces herself to Rosier. They converse for a long time. The Countess Gemini starts to believe in true love after her speech with Rosier.

A week after this occasion, Isabel learns from Pansy that her father sends her again to the convent. Pansy is very calm while revealing this news to Isabel. She says that her father wants her to think about the world in the right way. Isabel is horrified, because she knows that Osmond acts in that way only to show his dominance over Pansy. He shows what he is able to do. He can do this, because Pansy is his prime possession.

One day, Isabel receives a telegram from her aunt which tells that Ralph is about to die and would like to see her if convenient for her. Isabel immediately goes to her husband's study to ask for permission. At that moment Osmond is busy drawing. Isabel explains the situation and waits for an answer. Osmond thinks that such a behaviour of her would be " dishonourable, indelicate, and indecent." (James 1963:495) .

"Because" he says " I think we should accept the consequences of our actions, and what I value most in life is the honour of a thing." (James 1963:495).

The situation of their marriage may not be pleasant now, but they have chosen this act. So, according to Osmond, they should keep their promise. Isabel feels sorry, but still agrees with Osmond. Because, in this matter, she has the same feelings. As she has told Henrietta before, one must accept one's deeds.

With these thoughts on her mind, Isabel leaves Osmond's room. On the way to her own room she sees the Countess Gemini who wants her advice about a book. Isabel, for the first time, tells the Countess about her feelings. She tells her that Osmond has forbidden her to go to England and see Ralph. The Countess feels sympathy for Isabel, but is not allowed to ask more questions about their relationship.

In her room, Isabel has time enough to think everything over. For her, their marriage is still a holy act, although in the content of it there is nothing sacred. Isabel is morally very strong, that is why she agrees with Osmond in the matter of their marriage.

Some time later, Isabel is visited by the Countess Gemini in her room. The Countess wants to reveal something to Isabel. She tells Isabel that Pansy is the illegitimate daughter of Osmond and Madame Merle.

At first sight, Isabel is shocked and feels sorry for Madame Merle. The reason for her being sorry is that she knows that Pansy does not like her real mother. She would rather be with Isabel than be with her own mother. Isabel also learns that it is Madame Merle who has managed her marriage, and that Osmond's only aim in marrying her is her being rich.

After getting so much information, Isabel immediately decides to go to Gardencourt to see Ralph. Her aim is not to take revenge but to see the person who has understood and loved her for the last time.

Before leaving Rome, Isabel visits Pansy at her convent. She wants to bid her good - bye. When she enters the convent, she feels as if she were in a prison. Suddenly, she encounters with Madame Merle. She is shocked to see Madame Merle there, because the lady has always been on her mind, and to see her in front of her has made Isabel startled. They talk for a while, in fact, Madame Merle talks and Isabel keeps silent. Isabel's silence arouses the suspicion of Madame Merle, and she understands that Isabel knows everything.

For Isabel " it might have been a moment of triumph. " (James 1963:508). She might accuse Madame Merle and thus take her revenge. But she prefers being silent. "Isabel's only revenge was to be silent to leave Madame Merle in this unprecedented situation." (James 1963:509). She does not give her an opportunity to defend herself.

Isabel who is no more able to stay with Madame Merle, leaves her for Pansy. Pansy is suited in a nice, comfortable room. She is happy to see Isabel. Isabel informs her that she is going to England. Pansy feels sorry. She tells Isabel that she has thought enough and that from now on she will do anything to please her father and Madame Merle in spite of her being afraid of them. She adds that Isabel's being near her comforts her, and makes life easier for her.

Pansy is also frightened by the possibility that Isabel might not come back. She urges her to come back, and Isabel understands that she will not be able to leave Pansy alone. She promises Pansy to come back. This indicates that she has accepted the role of a mother for Pansy.

While leaving the convent, she sees that Madame Merle is still waiting there. It seems as if she has not finished talking with Isabel. She tells Isabel that it was Ralph who has made her rich. Isabel is shocked for the second time. Madame Merle also says that if it were not for Ralph, she would not be such a suitable match and that she has to thank Ralph for that. Isabel's answer is "I believed it was you I had to thank." (James 1963:515). This statement is the only revenge she takes from Madame Merle.

On the way to England, Isabel is lost in her thoughts. Has she really been free, she asks herself; has she been successful in her pursuit of independence? Was freedom worth running after? What did this pursuit cost her? She cannot even see the springtime scenery outside, instead, she sees the winter time scenery of her own life. She thinks about the last time she has been in Gardencourt. She has been full of strength and curiosity, but now she returns for a rest. She is jealous of Ralph because he is going to have a full rest. When she thinks of her own life, she sees an endless way, full of troubles and sufferings.

As Richard Chase states,

"She reflects that she had set out with her husband for 'the high places of happiness.' She had taken 'all the first steps in the purest confidence' but now 'she had suddenly found the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark narrow alley with a dead wall at the end.' The man who had so narrowed and enclosed her life, a creature of darkness, now steps forth into the light- 'she had seen only half 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.'" (Shelston 1984:130).



Isabel is met by Henrietta and Mr Bantling at the station. She gets the latest news about Ralph from them, and she agrees to spend a night with Henrietta before leaving for Gardencourt. She is questioned by Henrietta about Osmond and she does not deny that Osmond has made the house a hell for her. She also cannot explain why she has promised Pansy to come back.

Isabel is both surprised and disappointed at the news that Henrietta is going to marry Mr Bantling. Isabel is surprised because she would never think of Henrietta's being able to leave her country for an English man. She is disappointed because her friend, after all, turns out to be "human and feminine and subject to common passion." (James 1963:522) Here we see a little comparison between Henrietta's happy life and Isabel's "hard - earned view of life as a full destruction of precious things." ( Walker 1981:45).

At the end, Isabel is again at Gardencourt. She is not welcomed by known faces, but is coldly let in and asked to wait till her aunt comes and shows her her room. Isabel waits for a long time and while waiting she walks around, and she notices that nothing has changed except the people themselves.

After a few moments, Mrs Touchett comes. She is still the same Lydia Touchett, but looks a little bit older. She informs Isabel that Lord Warburton is engaged to be married. Isabel's only feeling is wondering how Osmond would take this news. Mrs Touchett has also some questions for Isabel. For instance she wants to know whether Isabel is still fond of Madame Merle. Isabel's answer is "Not as I once did..." (James 1963:528). Her other question is why she does not like Madame Merle any more. Isabel thinks "Madame Merle made a convenience of her. " (James 1963:528).

Isabel has the opportunity to sit at Ralph's bedside as much as she wants. But for three days, Ralph is not able to speak. At the end of these days, he gains the strength he needs. Isabel immediately asks whether he is the person who has made her rich. Ralph answers in the affirmative. Isabel tries no more to hide her

feelings. At the bedside of her dying cousin, she is as happy as she can be. In spite of his pain, Ralph is also happy. They are looking at the reality together. They both feel the same things; the same sorrow and the same happiness. Ralph tells Isabel that he has wanted to look at life for herself, but has not been allowed to do that. She has been punished. He says, "you were ground in the very mill of the conventional." (James 1963:531). He means while trying to be as far away from the conventions as possible, she has let herself fall in the arms of a conventional person.

Ralph is still worried about Isabel's future. He will not believe that Isabel is going to return to her husband again. Isabel, now, also does not know what to do. Her only aim now is to be with Ralph.

At the end of their conversation, Ralph tells Isabel that he loves her. Isabel in a very sad way says, " Ah, my brother." (James 1963:532). This mutual understanding of Ralph and Isabel turns the death-bed scene into a victory. Both of them now have found true love and they are looking at it together in a peaceful way.

When Isabel had come for the first time to Gardencourt she asked Ralph whether this place had a ghost or not. Ralph's answer was that in order to see a ghost one must suffer. Now, Isabel is suffering. The day after their conversation Isabel sees Ralph's ghost. She understands that Ralph is dead. Without being informed, she goes to Ralph's room, opens the door and sees Ralph's dead body lying peacefully on his bed.

The funeral takes place and among the visitors who are familiar to Isabel, are Lord Warburton, Caspar Goodwood, Mr. Bantling and Henrietta Stackpole. Caspar Goodwood insistently looks at Isabel's face, but Isabel avoids his look.

Isabel stays at Gardencourt for a while, after the funeral. She cannot decide what to do. Some time later Warburton visits Mrs Touchett. He is surprised to

see Isabel there. He invites her again to Lockleigh and tells her that his sisters would be pleased to see her again. He does not say a word related to his engagement.

Isabel wanders in the grounds of Gardencourt. She is restless. Suddenly she sees a bench which seems familiar to her. She realizes that this is the bench on which she was sitting when she was reading Goodwood's letter and when she got a marriage proposal from Lord Warburton.

While thinking, she is encountered by Caspar Goodwood. Isabel is surprised to see him there. Goodwood asks Isabel to leave her husband and trust him. Then, she may be free. He thinks that they might start again and forget the past. He says that it has been Ralph's wish. Ralph has asked him to help her wherever possible, to make her realize the taste of freedom.

Isabel, is now experienced enough not to believe in such freedom ideas. They are too superficial for her now. Isabel has learned a lot of things from life. She cannot believe in Goodwood's idea of their being able to live together and to be free. Her illusion of freedom has already made Isabel a slave. It is easily seen that Goodwood is different from Isabel, because of his being inexperienced. The reason why we call him inexperienced is that he thinks Isabel has still the chance to be free. He is sure that Isabel will be free after divorcing Osmond and marrying Goodwood.

Knowing that it is impossible for her to leave Osmond and especially Pansy, because of her marriage vow and her promise to Pansy to return, Isabel asks Goodwood to leave her. Before leaving, Goodwood embraces Isabel with a kiss "like a flash of lightning" (James 1963:544). Isabel is also affected. She understands that she also has some romantic feelings for him. However, she cannot accept his offer of love, because she is still, unconsciously, afraid that she will be bound to Caspar Goodwood if she marries him. So, when Goodwood leaves, she feels herself free again. She runs away. Now, she knows certainly what to do: She will go back to Rome as she has promised. Isabel has already learned enough about the realities of life. She has had the chance of living full liberty of self-expression, and discovery.

## CONCLUSION

Henry James felt that some of the realist writers concentrated too much on the surface of life. His own aim was to portray life from the inside. His novels are designed to give an air of reality and to be a representation of life, but interest is focused on the minds of the characters. It is the psychological realism that we find in his work. The Portrait of a Lady is a perfect example of James' novels, dealing with psychological realism.

During James' own life time, America was still a new innocent country. European subtleties of manners and morality, baffled the visiting American, who was accustomed to directness of behaviour and simple notions of right and wrong. In The Portrait of a Lady, Isabel Archer is determined to be free. She fails because her American background has not prepared her for the evil that traps her in Europe.

Isabel comes to the Old World hoping to experience some of the freedom denied her in America. Her ailing cousin Ralph Touchett, persuades his father to make Isabel rich, saying that she is very much fond of her freedom. He hopes to prevent her ever having to marry someone who will deprive her of her freedom. However, it is of course the marriage to Osmond that deprives her of freedom. As R.P. Blachmur states,

“Isabel Archer is given the chance to do what she can with her life, thanks to her uncle's surprising bequest of some seventy thousand pounds. Everybody tampers with Isabel, and it is hard to say whether her cousin Ralph Touchett, who had arranged the bequest, or the Prince, Gilbert Osmond, who marries her because of it, tampers the more deeply. (Stafford 1967:247).

Isabel sees that freedom can only exist as an incentive. One acts as if it could, in reality, be achieved. Still he has only the illusion of freedom. Isabel's life shows us what happens when an ideal of freedom becomes a defining principle of life. As Lyall H. Powers points out in one of his articles, "the gift has been bestowed; the freedom is now hers. The next step is to show what she does in consequence. (Powers 1991:38).

During her search for freedom, which is a governing principle in her life, Isabel becomes the victim of meagre knowledge. Only after learning the bitter realities of life, Isabel ceases to live in the imagination of freedom. She no longer imagines the possibility that freedom and that the life of the world are compatible. Her life is now dedicated to errors. She no more has the immature ideal of freedom she brought with her from America. That ideal had equated freedom with liberty of appreciation and self-fulfilment, yet it led her into marrying a man who seeks to extinguish her. Now she realizes that it is not enough "to be free to follow out a good feeling." (James 1963:320).

In the end of the novel, Isabel asserts her idealism of self not in innocence, but in full knowledge of the world. For that reason freedom, which was the condition of self-creation, becomes a form of indifference to the fact that returning to Rome will cost her her life.

"Freedom now means being in a position to choose the right thing with reference to all the circumstances, all the responsibilities, and in full awareness of probable consequences." (Walker 1981:73).

Isabel's decision to go back to Rome, to her husband and step daughter, shows clearly that she freely accepts responsibility for her own past and her own future.

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