

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Tlemcen



Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages
Department of English

Travelling Women and Self-Reconstruction **in Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady***

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Literature and Civilization

Presented by

Razika Bennacer

Supervised by

Meriem Mengouchi

BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Chair woman

Dr. Wassila Mouro

Supervisor

Ms. Meriem Mengouchi

Examiner

Dr. Souad Berbar

Academic Year 2016/2017

Dedications

I dedicate this work from deep heart

To my dearest parents Mohamed and Aissi Zahra, who gave inspiration to fulfill this dream with their support, patience and encouragement.

To my brothers: Ismail and Ibrahim.

To my lovely sisters Nadia and Amel.

To my dearest and cheerful friends Sarah and Merriam

To all whom supported and encouraged me.

To all whom I love and respect.

Acknowledgements

To start with, I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my research supervisor, Miss. Mengouchi Meriem, for providing me with invaluable guidance throughout this research. Her dynamism, vision and motivation have deeply inspired me. It was a great privilege and honor to work and study under her guidance.

Special thanks go to Mrs. Souad Berbar for her help and immense knowledge. Her guidance and inspiring suggestions have been precious for the development of this work.

I am also sincerely thankful to the board of examiners for devoting their time and effort to evaluate this work.

My sincerest acknowledgements to all my dearest teachers who helped, taught and gave me all the necessary knowledge and guidance throughout the whole five years.

Abstract

The Portrait of a Lady (1881) is a novel written by the American expatriate novelist Henry James, who travelled back and forth between Europe and America, and portrayed Americans living abroad. Indeed, most of James' novels are related to American young ladies focusing on contact between America and Europe in order to give an extensive portrait about their positions in both societies during nineteenth century. The fact that they were largely influenced by the ideology of separate sphere, where women were not considered as equal to men, drove many masculine writers to represent the status of those women in their works. In James' works, travelling women emerged as challenging power; they chose travel to achieve knowledge and freedom regardless the patriarchal norms of their society, it was an act of revolution. Travel literature is a literary genre which presents a place, people, or culture through the eyes of the writers, while travel novel in particular, is relied on fictional narratives and includes the element of travel. Being a writer who covers all the above aspects in the *Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James is proven to be a transnational novelist. The fact that his travel novel uses travel as a form of liberation to female characters makes James a Feminist male writer. In this respect, he succeeded to defend women by depicting travelling women who challenged the patriarchal society and the fixed gender roles imposed by the Victorian era, as opposed to other women depicted as weak and treated as objects. Finally, he referred to travel as a means that helps them to shape their identities and self-reconstruction.

Keywords: Travel literature, Travel novel, Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, the Victorian Period, Gender, Identity, Travelling Women.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Dedications | ii |
| Acknowledgements | iii |
| Abstract | iv |
| Table of Contents | v |
| General Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century | 6 |
| 1.1. Introduction..... | 7 |
| 1.2. Travel in Literature | 8 |
| 1.3. The Travel Novel | 9 |
| 1.4. Travel Literature Significant..... | 10 |
| 1.5. Travel and Feminism | 12 |
| 1.5.1. The Concept of Feminism | 12 |
| 1.5.2 Women’s Status in the Nineteenth Century | 13 |
| 1.5.3 Women in Nineteenth Century America | 14 |
| 1.5.4. Women in Nineteenth Century England | 17 |
| 1.6. Gender Issue and Traveling Women in the Nineteenth Century | 20 |
| 1.6.1 Gender as a Concept | 21 |
| 1.6.2 Gender Equality and Inequality | 21 |
| 1.6.3 Women Challenging Gender Roles through Travel..... | 23 |
| 1.7. The Representation of Women in Masculine Literature | 24 |
| 1.8. Conclusion | 26 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Chapter Two: Women’s Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel | 27 |
| 2.1. Introduction | 28 |
| 2.2. Henry James and the Transnational Novel | 28 |
| 2.3. The Study of Travelling Female Characters in <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i> | 29 |
| 2.3.1. Isabel Archer, The Protagonist: From Innocence to Experience | 30 |
| 2.3.2. The Main Female Characters Surrounding Isabel Archer: | 33 |
| 2.4. Mobile women’s Identities and the Experience of Self-Creating | 39 |
| 2.5. Challenging Modes of Female Social Existence | 41 |
| 2.6. Henry James as a Feminist Novelist in <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i> | 43 |
| 2.7. Conclusion..... | 44 |
| General Conclusion..... | 45 |
| Bibliography | 49 |

General Introduction

Nineteenth-century Europe and America were characterized by a heightened scientific and economic development, which led to the invention of advanced means of travel allowing people to travel easily to larger distances in short periods of time. These inventions raised the sense of curiosity and exploration in the people's minds, and fed their passion for discovery. Such voyages were not only enjoyed, but also recorded in personal journals and accounts which were both realistic and fictitious. They sought merely to mirror the visited places. Hence, travel and writing became closely interwoven in the genre of travel literature.

Travel literature presents an account of a cross-cultural or transnational travel, or tells about travel to particular regions of a country. Thus, this genre gives the opportunity to writers to present their works including: travelogues, memoirs, and autobiographies. This was a chance to explore the unknown using imagination and create curiosity and excitement in the form of what is referred to as the travel novel¹, to attract the reader's attention. Travel Literature is adapted by many authors and novelists, among them Henry James who is considered as a transnational American author, often referred to as the expatriate novelist.

The nineteenth century also witnessed the feminine ideal in the private spheres of family, motherhood, and social conventions. Consequently, the "ideal" woman was limited or non-existent in a male-dominated society. Ideas which featured women as independent, strong, or even intelligent were rejected and considered nonsensical. Women could not take the least decision for their own, not even those dealing with their future, like choosing a husband, or travelling to different countries alone. A woman travelling without male supervision was viewed as vicious and frivolous, thus the entire idea was discarded by society. Hence, the writers of the period were trying to represent their societies in the novel being a way of depicting these women's living conditions, both intentionally and unintentionally.

¹ Travel Novel: Term coined for the first time by Dr. Berbar Souad in her Doctorate thesis entitled *Outward Voyages, Inner Journeys in the Travel Novels of Joseph Conrad, Henry James and Graham Greene*, University of Tlemcen.

One of the works written in this period, and covering the themes of travelling women, both in Europe and America, is Henry James' *The portrait of a Lady*. The novel features a plot that deals merely with travel in the lives of women as the most essential part of the narrative.

In another respect, Henry James was one of the nineteenth century authors who concerned themselves with the issue of women as second class citizens in their societies. This period witnessed many economic and social circumstances that abused women in different ways. Furthermore, the reason behind the choice of this novel was to study how travel provides freedom for women and empowers them to challenge the complex gender roles that were imposed in that era.

This thesis will study women travellers who challenge the issue of gender roles from a male point of view. The work will try to answer the question, how did Henry James, as male writer, depict and defend women's situation in his novel *The Portrait of a Lady*?

In the sake to answering the question, this extended essay raised a number of sub-questions, which are:

- First, in the purpose of investigating the image of women during the discussed century, what are the different ways in which nineteenth-century male writers represented women both in American and English societies?
- Second, since Henry James' work reflects women who have been subverted by the nineteenth-century patriarchal society, how did the credo of gender roles affect the women depicted in *The Portrait of a Lady*?
- Third, starting from the fact that Henry James defended his female characters in the novel as outstanding women challenging fixed gender roles through travel, Is Henry James a Feminist writer?

The questions asked in this research work aim to find whether travel was able to uncover the complex gender roles and change the stereotypical image of women in the Victorian society. Although novel is American, this work will focus on Victorian

women status, since the novel's events are set merely in Europe, and particularly in England. These questions also attempt to approach the writer Henry James as a male travel author writing about female issues, and the question to be answered in this case is whether he succeeded in embodying both roles in the same literary work, that is both as travel writer, and feminist writer. The research hypothesizes that:

- Henry James attempts to expose the complex gender roles imposed by the Victorian society through travel.
- Taking the first hypothesis into consideration, travel, thus, provides freedom for women and empowers them far from the patriarchal norms and traditional conventions.
- Finally, Henry James, being a male writer, successfully creates strong challenging female characters—which he favours—that are juxtaposed to weaker, and submissive ones, makes him a Feminist writer.

This research work is divided into two chapters; the first chapter provides an overview about the genre of travel literature focusing on the form of the travel novel, whereas its essential feature is that it has to rely on fictional characters narrating fictional trips, which led to a Feminist study. The chapter also discussed women's living conditions in the nineteenth century, whereas men and women have accommodated the idea of separate spheres of society, that of gendering domestic place as Feminine, and public as masculine, thus women were not considered as equal to men. Besides, it will supply a broad vision about the concepts of Feminism and Gender by studying their impacts on the status of women in both America and Britain, during the nineteenth century. The study relies on Judith Butler's and Simone de Beauvoir's theories. This chapter will also shed light on the representation of women in masculine literature by taking Henry James as an example.

The second chapter stands as the practical part of this research work. It presents a broad feminist study of the novel *The Portrait of a Lady*. Furthermore, this chapter begins with the study of the protagonist Isabel Archer in addition to three main mobile female characters that accompany her in her travels. Starting analysis from Mrs. Touchett, Henrietta Stackpole to Madame Merle, with a view to discuss the way

they challenged the patriarchal gender roles imposed by Victorian society through travelling. In contrast, Pansy symbolizes the immobile woman and accepts the status of object in this novel. Moreover, it studies the mobile women's identities and the experience of self-creating. The fact of challenging the modes of female social existence leads to the conclusion that Henry James, as male writer, succeeded through his novel in presenting travelling women as self-dependent and strong during the Victorian era.

Chapter One:
Women in Travel Literature
during the Nineteenth
Century

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

1.1. Introduction

Travel literature has been studied for many years by manifold scholars. It has been debated that the theme of travel runs through all the great literatures of the world. Besides, travel literature combines two popular literary genres: travel writing which is true accounts and fiction travel or in its new notion, travel novel which relies on fictional characters narrating fictional trips.

In fact, travel has a great impact on the nineteenth century's society concerning women in particular in both America and England. Therefore, the importance of travel literature can be partly explained by the qualities that it shares with fictitious literature presenting the concept of Feminism. In this respect many novelists as Henry James who is considered as a symbol of travel literature since most of his works are travel writings or novels that include fictional characters perform fictional trips. Moreover, the majority of his novels' events turn around the clash of two cultures American and European especially the Victorian society. On the other hand, he presents the status of women who had the experience of travel but unfortunately they faced the traditional norms of the nineteenth century. Travel was considered as something men should do and completely forbidden for women, and who dared to enter masculine space they were called immoral women, because of the fixed gender roles imposed during that era.

Most women, however, traveled to escape gender roles and the patriarchal rules of the American and Victorian society that were influenced by the doctrine of 'separate spheres' and the ideology of 'the angel in the house', gendering domestic place as feminine and movement as masculine. Therefore in general the idea of a woman traveller was mainly discarded during the nineteenth century. However, women were tired of hearing that their sole purpose in life was to get married and have children; hence they started to strive for more and wanted to have a purpose other than the domestic sphere, such travelling that allowed them in somehow to enter the male public sphere, that what was known of woman question.

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

1.2. Travel in Literature

Journeys are the subject of every literary genre; hence literature and tourism are associated in the genre of travel literature. That “the 19th century has become a means of the individual expressing his view of the world, the focus of attention more and more shifting from the world to the individual in romantic and post-romantic times” (Ulrich 49).

Therefore, travel literature paves the way for individuals telling about their observations and views of the visited places and the “enlightenment ethos” to give a true account of the unknown parts of the world and provide their own reactions to the place (ibid). Moreover, travel literature is regarded as one of the most popular literary genres during the nineteenth-century. It is considered as a meaningful combination of entertainment and education, whereas the detailed accounts of journeys encouraged readers and gave them the desire for knowledge regarding the foreign and the exotic (Seglie 25).

Indeed, the eighteenth century was also a period of heightened scientific and economic exploration, whereas many travelers had the curiosity and the eagerness to visit other places as tourists or even new places where no one went before as explorers, then wrote everything they have seen and experienced as form of travel narrative (Flohr 1).

German sociologist Niklas Luhmann states that, “the travel experience is a temporal form of the detotalizing of the individual’s individuality, consisting of events that supply the value of their own succession” (qtd in Ulrich 72). While William H. Sherman, the American travel critic stated that, travel literature presents a place, people, or culture through the eyes of the writers, when they “had long been instructed to keep careful records of their movements, to direct the travelers who would follow in their footsteps and fill in the gaps of geographical knowledge” (qtd in Berbar 23). Moreover, “Travel narratives are often records of the places, people, and occurrences of a particular region that a traveller visits. An individual work is often known as a travelogue.” which means a travelogue contains

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

the writer's own adventures and experiences collected often in a "non-fictional nature" while expressed by the narrator (Persaud 1).

1.3. The Travel Novel

With the development of writing, travel and writing come to be closely interwoven. Travelers write about what they see and while they describe a trip, they make detailed observations on the people of the country visited, therefore this kind of writing is called travel writing which is a form of writing closely parallel to translation. "Like the translator, the travel writer shapes material in such a way that readers may have access to whatever situations and places, known or unknown, are being described" (Speake xi).

In a deeper sense, travel writing, or as the author Cory Ledoux in *Travel Literature and History* defines; "non-fiction travel writing", emerged in the nineteenth century considered as one of the dominant literary genres at that time (Seglie 21). In this context, Stevenson states that "Travel writing is a conscious act of the traveller/writer to render his/her experiences into documents for future reference to the readers" (1), which means the personal experiences of traveler or writer that compiles often in a non-fiction form, as editor Jennifer Speake' speculates :

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that travelers who write about actual journeys they have undertaken are often in some way influenced by that fictitious writing, and indeed the boundaries between fact and fiction in what we shall call the genre of travel writing are often hard to discern (xi)

Indeed, the concern of this thesis is about novel, fiction work that contains several trips by many travel characters, in this respect the Algerian Scholar Souad Berbar provides her own definition in her PHD thesis *Outward Voyages, Inner Journeys in the Travel Novels of Joseph Conrad, Henry James and Graham Greene*, that any novel relying a journey or a trip that includes the element of travel and considered as an essential part of the plot, whereas it confers a kind of knowledge to enhance character development, therefore it is travel novel (Berbar 31). Dr. Berbar

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

supports this idea saying “The choice of the label suggests itself naturally and is even encouraged by the rhyming of ‘travel’ with ‘novel’ ” and “It has not been formally attempted before in English”, since the majority of novels about travel define as sea novels and adventure travel narratives (30).

In addition, “If an individual has travelled throughout his life time, then his autobiography and travel accounts will be the same”. Indeed, the essential feature of travel novel is that it has to rely on fictional characters narrating fictional trips, if it is not then it turns to be non-fiction genre in travel literature, closely related to autobiography (Persaud 3).

1.4. Travel Literature Significant

The theme of travel has an important role in the great literatures of the world, since the metaphor of life as a journey is a powerful one that resonates across time and across cultures (Speake xi). Therefore, travelling is an activity that helps a traveller to break the cultural, social, racial, ethnic, gender-related, and religious boundaries that control humanity. It was thus meant “to experience the pleasure of travelling, to see new sites and to build new relations with unknown people” (Persaud 1). Travel gained a greater significance, which is submitted as a genre in the study of travel literature (3). However, travel literature is a functional genre which is important because it offers much more than just a factual account of journeys to foreign places. It is imaginative, creative and inspiring; whereas the writer may record and analyze his experience (Buckton-Tucker 1). Mary Baine Campbell, American poet, remarks:

The sense of travel writing as a genre was, where it manifested itself, often crude and restrictive, but the articulated concept of a corpus or ‘tradition’ was in fact useful, especially to social historians, in showing contemporary readers how to be proficient at reading with the grain of older accounts. Without that we cannot do the ‘deeper’ work of reading against it (qtd in Persaud 3).

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

While Austrian-British philosopher Karl. R. Popper claims that the study of travel literature as a genre is considered as part of human biological requirements, to further expand the idea saying:

We are born with expectations: with “knowledge” which, although not *valid a priori*, is, *is psychologically or genetically a priori*, i.e. prior to all observational experience. One of the most important of these expectations is the expectation of finding regularity. It is connected with an inborn propensity to look out of regularities, or with a *need to find* regularities. (qtd in Wispinski 3)

Ultimately, many explorations or researches are mainly done out of the curiosity of the traveller such as Shipton, Thesiger, Hillary and Fiennes to understand a ‘foreign’ place or people, or because of the eagerness of knowledge. Besides, writers from Twain and Steinbeck to Thoreau and Wordsworth have depicted and noted down the human adventures towards the unknown and strange places (Buckton-Tucker 1).

In addition, the importance of travel literature can be partly explained as well by the qualities that it shares with fictitious literature presenting the concept of Feminism. Thus, travel plays a key role in several of the female authored sentimental novels² that are so central among the masses of readers, including Susan Warner’s *The Wide, Wide World* and Maria Cummins’ *El Fureidis* (Seglie 21). Furthermore, women experienced and portrayed travel differently; therefore their travel writings reflected the impact of gender and coordinates such as race, class, culture, religion, economics, and politics. For instance Lady Mary Montagu in her writings depicts and presents a comparison between the women of her culture and some of non British women she met in her journeys focusing on the politics of cross-cultural encounters (3). On the other hand, Zora Neale Hurston also represented in her masterpiece *Their Eyes Were Watching God* the protagonist’s eventful life in the form of a long journey meant to gain experience and reach knowledge (Berbar 37).

² Sentimental Novel it is a literary genre which celebrates feelings and emotions, and feminine topics of children, woman, family, and home (Hart 7).

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

1.5. Travel and Feminism

It is hard to understand the real meaning of Feminism because of its complexity, its differences, and in its specificity as well (Mitchell and Oakley 8). However Feminism is considered as academic discipline that emerged only by the seventies in the United States and Europe (D'Arcy 446). It became stronger because of different issues and goals in different countries, cultures, and circumstances, in which many feminists started to call for liberty and equality between women and men (ibid).

1.5.1. The Concept of Feminism

The term Feminism emerged long ago, starting by the birth of women's rights movement in the United States leading to the founding of National Woman Suffrage Association in 1848. In Britain, the 1840s witnessed the emergence of women's suffrage movements, but even before this movement, women had been writing about the inequalities and injustices in women's social conditions and protested to change them, like Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792 (Freedman 2).

Furthermore, Jane Freedman American author defines Feminism in her book *Concepts in the Social Sciences- Feminism-* as the struggle to end women's oppression in the nineteenth century. This movement attempted to resist discrimination since women were deprived of their rights, and started calling for equality-(3). She asserts that "feminisms concern themselves with women's inferior position in society and with discrimination encountered by women because of their sex" (1). While according to Toril Moi, Norwegian writer, Feminism is a political label that supports the new women's movement which emerged in the late 1960s, and a practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism (Belsey and Moore 117). For others, it is the advocacy of women's rights to full citizenship which is political, economic, and social equality with men (Academic American Encyclopedia qtd in Anggariningsih 28).

Hence, Feminism in general is often divided into three waves known as the First Wave, Second Wave, and Third Wave. Yet this approximate timelines, merged because feminists do not all agree to be categorized and have independent ideas that

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

may carry over from one wave to another (D'Arcy 447). The First Wave Feminism sought to obtain voting rights, abolition, temperance causes, including changes in the right to vote and property rights for women, and one of the mothers of Feminist thought was Mary Wollstonecraft. Then the Second Wave refers to the growth of Feminist activism in the United States, Britain, and Europe from the late 1960s through the late 1980s (448). In addition, there are two political movements that shaped Second Wave Feminism: The Women's Rights Movement and The Women's Liberation Movement (Freedman 4). Then, the Third Wave began between 1983 and early 1990s rejected what it viewed before as the Second Wave's essentialism that is, a female identity that represents all women. Likewise, according to American Feminist writer Rebecca Walker, the Third Wave Feminism allowed new generations of Feminists to express themselves, while is changed their ways and methods of calling for women's rights (D'Arcy 452).

Feminism created an enduring debate all over the world. It was the voice of women in times they were not able to speak or to express their feelings and wishes. Thus, researchers and feminists have been agreed to evolve strategies and ensure more equal and desirable pattern of relationships between men and women (ibid).

1.5.2 Women's Status in the Nineteenth Century

Traditionally, both in America and Europe, men and women have accommodated the idea of separate spheres of society, particularly in the nineteenth century, where women were not considered as equal to men. Therefore women did not have the same rights or the same opportunities that were presented to men in that period (Sindradóttir 2). However, the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said: "you can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women", hence in order to judge the progress of a certain nation, one should perceive the status of its women (qtd in Karthika and Suganya 29).

Accordingly, women had passion for learning and gaining more knowledge. Yet educated women were often seen as subversive, a possible perversion of the correct social order (Anggariningsih11). They were described in *The Outline of American*

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

History by the American editor George Clack, as “not[being] permitted to vote and their education was limited largely to reading, writing, music, dancing, and needle work” (122). However, it was believed that women were not able to process as much knowledge as men, since they had a female body and they were smaller and weaker (Showalter 76). This claim was supported by Victorian physicians and anthropologists. Indeed, they argued that women’s inferiority could be seen by analyzing the brain itself and its functions. According to them, women had smaller brains and as a result, the female brain was not as efficient as men’s brain. It was more important that women learn the codes of behavior for a proper lady, instead of having a passion for education (77).

Basically, many women revolted against these injustices, when their acceptance of these traditional roles began to dissipate. Women started taking on serious roles in the abolition and temperance movements in both the United States and Europe; they attempted to enter the masculine sphere and to prove that they were as equal as men (38).

1.5.3 Women in Nineteenth Century America

During the early 1800’s, Americans generally believed that there was a definite difference between the sexes, that man was active, dominant and materialistic, while woman was religious, modest, passive, submissive and domestic (Cruea 188). Women were the recurrent victims of social and economic discrimination, therefore their choices were limited to marriage and motherhood, or spinsterhood. Both choices were resulted in domestic dependency. As a result, the American Woman Movement³ developed in response to women’s dependent situation that promoted new ideals for women: True Womanhood, Real Womanhood, Public Womanhood, and New Womanhood (Cruea 187).

1.5.3.1. Changing Ideals of Womanhood

The 1820s till 1840s were characterized through the cult of True Womanhood, which prescribed a female role bound by kitchen and nursery. True Womanhood was

³ American Woman Movement of the 1960 and 1970 is often called Second wave Feminism, feminists sought to achieve equality for women by challenging unfair labor practices and discriminatory laws (Wood 1)

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

chosen as the symbolic keeper of morality and decency within the home, hence the feminist American author Marilyn French states that “True Womanhood was defined by four virtues: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity” which were thought to be natural to women (qtd in Mulnæs, Paul and Nishimura 20). Therefore, according to the ideology promoting for this concept, in piety, women were more religious than men. In purity, American women were pure and protected their chastity until marriage. While submissiveness meant that women were naturally inferior to men. Domesticity stated that home was a woman’s domain (Anggariningsih 54), thus “the charm will be greater for domestic woman than public one” (58).

American scholar Susan M. Cruea built her ideas on Frances B. Cogan’s *All-American Girl: The Ideal of Real Womanhood in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America*, who affirms that True Womanhood was crediting women with a moral authority which implicitly empowered them to extend their moral influence outside the home. Therefore, because of such responsibility True Womanhood expected women “to fulfill [themselves] in the 'instinctive' arts of child rearing, domestic pursuits, and spiritual comfort”, therefore to be more religious than men and civilized society (189).

Furthermore, another American ideal came as an alternative to True Womanhood which is the ideal of Real Womanhood (192). In this sense, Cogan illustrates that Real Womanhood differs from True Womanhood in its attitude toward health, education, marriage, and, most importantly, employment. For instance Real Womanhood encouraged strenuous exercises and activities, instead of remaining passive, as the conventions of True Womanhood dictate. Also it supported healthy activity that permitted women a minor degree of independence, far from male force domination (Cruea 192).

Real Womanhood, as an ideology, also viewed that education is important for women to manage their household, raise their children suitably, and choose the right husband. It encouraged women to marry “a man who was hardworking, compassionate moral rather than one who was merely wealthy or physically attractive”, and to be of a more equal level of understanding (Cogan qtd in 192-193). Therefore to avoid

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

marrying an unsuitable man, Real Womanhood permitted women to work for an income in order to support themselves and their families, but this work was usually of a domestic nature (ibid).

Meanwhile women started to subsist outside the home as the next step, what was known as Public Womanhood. American author and historian Glenna Matthews delineates this ideal in *The Rise of the Public Woman: Woman's Power and Woman's Place in the United States*; however she examines American women's exclusion from public space and the history of their struggle to gain public access. She points out that women began to gain greater public access and claim public roles for themselves as a result of women's increasing involvement in the moral and cultural welfare of their communities. This phase involved a move out of the private realm and into the public in the “legal, political, spatial, and cultural sense” (6). Indeed, Matthews defines the term of a Public Woman as a prostitute. As well as she “was seen as the dregs of society, vile, unclean... [T]o be a public woman—in any of several senses of the term—was to risk the accusation of sexual impropriety” (4).

In the face of these challenges, women soon began to develop works for themselves outside the home. This move allowed them to work respectably and to be treated fairly, for instance school teaching quickly became a public work dominated by women since it was closely related to childcare (95). Moreover, since caring for the ill was traditionally women's responsibility, consequently during the civil war nursing became an occupation for women for the first time, when large numbers of men participated in the fight. Hence, government was in need for help for the wounded, and women picked up this opportunity as new profession for them (Cruea 194).

Although Public Womanhood increased freedom for women, it was not enough for them to gain more rights and equality with man. The New Womanhood ideal emerged during the 1880s and 1890s to continue what Public Woman was struggling for (198). The New Woman phase was fighting to gain “greater access to education, employment, and economic and civic rights, and in changing expectations concerning personal behavior”. For example “education was one of the New Woman's first self-conscious demands” not for attending just women's colleges but also male

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

universities, in order to have her own career and to be a beneficial and effective member in the American society. Furthermore, the New Woman phase did not stop at this level, yet women also demanded the same rights as men to economic independence and political power far from private sphere (199-200).

Accordingly, despite these problems and male resistance to put up boundaries for female advancements, the New Womanhood allowed women the opportunity for self-sufficiency, public involvement, and meaningful employment. This ideal was considered as the Woman Movement of the nineteenth century in America along with the previous ideals (202).

1.5.4. Women in Nineteenth Century England

Ultimately, the nineteenth century in English society was known as the Victorian period, where men were regarded as the superior sex and women as inferior. However, both men and women put up with the ideology of separate spheres which was invented to help women understand that their place in society was to occupy the domestic sphere and just believing that their sole purpose in life was to become a wife and a mother, while men could participate in the public sphere (Sindradóttir 1).

1.5.4.1 The ideology of Separate Spheres

The Victorian women in this period fought against some injustices they had to face like separate spheres' ideology, one such woman is the author Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon who stated in *Women and Work*, "Cries are heard on every hand that women are conspiring, that women are discontented, that women are idle, that women are overworked, and that women are out of their sphere. God only knows what is the sphere of any human being" (37). This indicates how women were perceived in this period, and the tension that existed between the sexes. Moreover, Bodichon dares to say that "the larger-natured a woman is, the more decidedly feminine she will be; the stronger she is, the more strongly feminine. You do not call a lioness unfeminine, though she is different in size and strength from the domestic cat or mouse" (44). Hence, women wanted to break out of their bonds, they were tired of the idea that, for a woman to be feminine she had to be ignorant, weak and light-minded.

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

Likewise American author Elaine Showalter claims that, “[t]he middle-class ideology of the proper sphere of womanhood, which developed in post-industrial England and America, prescribed a woman who would be a Perfect Lady, an Angel in the House, contentedly submissive to men” (14). Therefore, this ideology was considered as a serious issue for women at that time since it limited women’s professional and educational opportunities in society and “made women incapable of functioning in the public realm”. Moreover the ideology of separate spheres based on the assumption of separation, female domesticity and was reinforced by religious views (Lewis 6). England was a deeply religious country during the Victorian era, with the bible which performed as a guideline for moral consciousness, thus it was women’s duty to take the responsibility as guardians of the moral purity of the children and therefore the future of the nation (Mulnæs, Paul and Nishimura 13).

In deeper sense, separate spheres ideology became a symbol of the nineteenth-century England, since this era was ruled by Queen Victoria who represented a kind of femininity and domesticity, often depicted herself in terms of the ideal wife and mother even as she reigned as a monarch (Mulnæs, Paul and Nishimura 13). This form of domesticity is further explained in the following statement:

[D]omestic focus of women’s lives, to be narrowly limited to home and family, was justified and given ideological unity in the nineteenth century by a range of arguments, resting on women’s nature, on God’s ordinances, on the evidence of past and present societies (Rendall qtd in Sindradóttir 1).

Because of this feminine ideology, women ended up be known as “the Angel in the House”; a metaphorical function, though referring to them as *angels*, implicitly obliging them to conform to the expectations by being passive, powerless, devoted and submissive to their husbands (Lewis7).

For some authors such as American Feminist Marilyn French, in her book *From Eve to Dawn, A History of Women in the World*, women adjusted with the ideology of domesticity and accepted their home as a prison, since the separated spheres between

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

men and women became very “physical” (qtd in Mulnæs, Paul and Nishimura 20). While the author Ellen Jordan depicts woman as the ideal wife, who had to accept that God created her as relative for man, and designed for her a subordinate position in a patriarchal household far from public society (qtd in Mulnæs, Paul and Nishimura 17).

1.5.4.2 The Woman Question

Despite the great impact of Separate Spheres ideology on British society during the nineteenth century, yet women had to prove that they were as clever as men and deserve to be considered equal to them. “Woman question” a phase emerged in the late of nineteenth in Victorian England particularly. It is usually connected with social change which questioned the woman’s nature and societal role, “with opposing voices emphasizing either the need for women to have greater economic, educational, and political opportunities or the idea that women properly belonged in the home as caretaker to her family” (The Woman Question in Victorian England 1). Hence this transformation of the British society was result of industrialization and the development of capitalism. For instance, women were accepted to occupy industrial labor as men even though for less wages and also they had large educational opportunities as practicing a profession (the law, medicine, etc), which was before very limited, thanks to the first women’s college opened in 1848 (ibid).

Women defied the traditional ideas and gender roles in order to found political expression, meant to allow the voting right to them, and to change laws of women’s rights to own property. However, the Reform Bills⁴ of 1832 and 1867 motivated the suffragists to call for women’s right to vote (ibid), and also right to own property that came out of the Married Women's Property Act of 1882 which “was the first comprehensive piece of legislation to give property rights to married women, and in 1891 an Act was passed which denied men 'conjugal rights' to their wives’ bodies without their wives’ consent” (Ledger 11).

Additionally, the emergence of the medical and scientific study of sex brought also a widespread prostitution in the Victorian society; though women were considered

⁴ The 1832 Reform Bill, limited the vote to male who occupied homes, and also property qualifications for people living in rural areas , as a result the act extended the electorate to adult males (Johnston 19).

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

as the angel in the house. Therefore because of these changes there were women who were “idealized as nearly disembodied angels[...] and long-standing associations of womanly virtue with chastity and virginity continued”, while other women were “seen as nothing but sexual objects” (The Woman Question in Victorian England 2). Besides, this era also witnessed the arrival of the New Woman⁵, considered as “a threat to the human race” for the late nineteenth-century women's movement (Ledger 9).

In a deeper sense, the emergence of the New Woman was in the nineteenth century as a reaction to the organization of feminists' movement, who raised the woman's issues in public debates; therefore it was the reason of many changes in society attitudes such as gender equality which overlapped the patriarchal of male domination (Mahajan and Randhawa). Yet, from another respect, the New Woman included various popular feminine novelists such as Sarah Grand, Mona Caird, Olive Schreiner and George Egerton, as well as on male novelists such as George Gissing, George Moore, Thomas Hardy and Henry James, all of whom reacted to the New Woman phenomenon (Ledger 1). Indeed, the majority of Henry James' novels presented the New Woman's characteristics, for instance he depicted the American emigrant women living in Europe as wealthy, showed a free spirit in their attitude and behavior, and took up the new positions in cultural, social, political and economic life (Mahajan and Randhawa).

1.6. Gender Issue and Traveling Women in the Nineteenth Century

Some researchers and psychologists state that, the understanding of gender is dynamic and changing over time. Hence, they shed light on the distinction between sex and gender to understand differences between male and female regardless the biological category (Roshchynskaya78).

⁵ The New Woman was 'christened' in 1894, that women were resisting traditional controls and seeking to fill a complete role in the world it was Ouida who extrapolated the phrase the New Woman' from Sarah Grand's essay 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question'(Ledger 9).

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

1.6.1 Gender as a Concept

Sex refers to the biological aspects of being male and female; gender mainly refers to behavioral, social, and psychological characteristics of men and women (ibid). On one hand, theorist and scientist Charles Darwin evaluates in his work the distinction of gender and sex, when he shows that men are totally different from women in terms of size, energy, body, and of intelligence which creates different mental abilities and activity among them (Anggariningsih 30).

On the other hand, American socialist feminist Judith Lorber declares in *The Variety of Feminisms...* that “Gender is now understood to be a social status, a personal identity, and a set of relationships between women and men, and among women and men”. Therefore, marriage and families and also economic, religious, political and cultural constructions associated with gender (Lorber 8).

1.6.2 Gender Equality and Inequality

English poet Christina Rossetti claimed in *Goblin Market*, that both genders are equally important, and are dependent on each other. Even as she suggests that both genders should be able to play any roles in society, she also claimed that nurturing and mothering roles should be ideally taken by women (qtd in Mulnæs, Paul and Nishimura 54). According to Freedman, there is usually a kind of combination between gender inequality and women’s oppression, since men’s domination of women is the result of the system of patriarchy. However, she mentions that because of “women’s biological capacity for childbirth and breastfeeding”, made them unable to participate in public sphere and incapable to make political decision as they were controlled by their emotions and less reasonable than men (12). Therefore this social and psychological diversity between men and women led to a distinction among “physiological ‘sex’ and social ‘gender’”. Furthermore, it can also “be expressed by the terms ‘female’ and ‘feminine’, ‘female’ being the biological category to which women belong and ‘feminine’ behaviour and roles being the social constructions based on this biological category”(13). For British feminist Ann Oakley, “‘Sex’ is a word that refers to the biological differences between male and female... [in terms

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

of]‘Gender’, however, is a matter of culture: it refers to the social classification into ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’” Thus, gender refers to manners, feelings and thoughts that were related to the sexes but did not have any association with biological category (qtd in 15).

Furthermore, French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir states, in her renowned book *The Second Sex* in 1949, that many feminist scholars and researchers in biology dispute “their argument that some sexual differences [...]are innate rather than “situational” ’(13). They started from de Beauvoir’s most famous assertion that “One is not born, but rather becomes, woman”. Thus, de Beauvoir emphasizes that it is the social roles and culture kept women in oppression and inferior position, not their biological construction (14).

According to some critics and feminists, gender is seen as “the content” which defined as variable, while sex as “the container”, that is defined as universal and unchanging because it is natural (Freedman 17). Whereas the American philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* (1990), attempted to contradict the distinction of gender and sex along with other binary distinction of nature and culture when she said: “Beauvoir is clear that one “becomes” a woman, but always under a cultural compulsion to become one. And clearly, the compulsion does not come from “sex”” (12). However, she assumes that this distinction refers to the argument that gender is a cultural construction which can consider “as a multiple interpretation of sex”, while the biological sex itself is natural (10).

Feminists during the 1980s had another discussion about two main distinctive concepts, that are: “gender equality” and “gender difference” (Doucet 272). Yet, they asserted that “women are as capable as men are in competing for equal access to a wide range of social, economic, and intellectual opportunities” (273). Therefore, equality became strongly linked with women’s positions who should be respected and equally treated. While gender difference was to be “associated with women as well as challenge the value accorded to them by society. Women’s differences from men are highlighted in many areas, including: women’s care-taking roles”. So the two

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

categories seem to be close to and complement each other (ibid). Moreover, women started to work outside and favor a career because they were usually bored and exhausted from the ideologies of private sphere; thus “Gender differences in household life are seen as disadvantages because they further inhibit gender equality outside the home” (274). From another perspective, Freedman asserts that talking about equality and difference is difficult to overcome and not easy to define their terms, in general “it is a debate over whether women should struggle to be equal to men or whether they should valorize their differences from men” (8).

1.6.3 Women Challenging Gender Roles through Travel

Basically, Women began to travel in the nineteenth century for many personal and political reasons. Hence some women sought to further cause, like missionary work, while others travelled to satisfy personal curiosities of foreign lands. Most women, however, travelled to escape gender oppression in Europe (Persaud 2).

Since, mobility furnishes women with power and immobility links with inferiority, on the other hand, travel becomes the key point because it provides some kind of freedom for women revealing gender shifts (Kemaloğlu 105). In a deeper sense, the Victorian society was symbolized by the doctrine of separate sphere and the ideology of the angel in the house, that gendering domestic place as feminine and movement as masculine. Moreover, women were treated as angels or dolls in which the domesticity life of mother and wife was their natural responsibility beside stability and submissiveness; while men enjoyed the freedom of the public spaces and mobility (106). In addition women were prevented to involve in public spaces and barred to having equal rights and opportunities with men. Hugh Cunningham, a former British Army officer, states that “the general rule was that any woman in a public place of leisure, and unaccompanied by husband or other suitable male, was a prostitute” (qtd in ibid). Whereas travelling was under the control of man's domination, and the women who attempted to enter masculine space were called “immoral women or women who were excluded from society due to various reasons” (Ezer 3).

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

In addition, American historian Clifford James perceived that no matter the purpose of travel, it is still remaining as something men should do, and as something completely forbidden on women, because of the fixed gender roles imposed during the Victorian era (Kemaloğlu107). On the other hand, Susan Morgan, English author, claimed that “To change must mean to change what we mean by masculine and feminine, male and female. Gender, then, must be an issue in any account of Victorian progress”, thus these transformations influenced the construction of gender (ibid). Therefore the idea of a woman traveller was mainly discarded during the Victorian period, in which travelling may “endanger the ostensibly 'natural' qualities that made her a woman” (Ezer 1).

Additionally, women travellers’ experiences helped them to refashion their image of themselves and to achieve knowledge, further to overcome the limitations embodied in the prejudices and preconceptions of the Victorian period. Thus, travel contributed the reconstruction of their identity (7), whereas “Cultural contact, travel, and mobility open up hidden links ... generating new configurations of identity in formerly uniform spaces” (qtd Romeo 1267).

Indeed, not only men had the chance of travelling and recording their journeys. Before the nineteenth century there were also women travel writers who were characterized by the real meaning of freedom and mobility, such as Mary Kingsley, Fanny Bullock Workman, Isabella Bird Bishop and May French Sheldon. These women were the most eccentric women travellers of the period (Kemaloğlu 108), who “were able to cross the private sphere and to write/publish authentic accounts of their transitional experience in a public, male-dominated sphere” (Romeo 1263).

1.7. The Representation of Women in Masculine Literature

Women in the nineteenth century were rarely offered active fictions bearing imaginative possibilities of challenge in male writers’ works; hence tales of discovery, travel, work, exploration were indeed men’s stories (Chattopadhyay 23).

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

British writer Thomas Hardy, unlike the majority of Victorian novelists, through his novels, challenged the social patriarchal norms and moral problems faced by women.

... [H]e begins with radical verve: the soiled and soiling world of work was not, as Victorians argued, a suitable place for noble womankind. In the same radical spirit, Hardy not only acknowledges to female volatile emotions, female sensations, but he also treats them with the same devotion to physical detail as he gives to the male (ibid).

Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, represents women suffering from inequalities when compared to men in various respects; which is mainly exemplified by the detailed portrayal of his protagonist Tess Durbeyfield. Tess is the central female figure in the novel, representing her subordination in terms of social and economic aspects, the male domination, and her attitude towards the unfortunate events she experienced (Sunbul 130).

Likewise, Charles Dickens, the famous novelist of the Victorian era, wrote about women who were supposed to be at home and perform domestic tasks. In his masterpiece *Oliver Twist*, he criticized the cruelty of Victorian society and people's view of fallen women, while they admired women that were sexually pure and capable of self-sacrifice. The most noticeably in this the novel that, Dickens defended and was well aware that these women were victims of society, poverty and men, as a result they may have to prostitute themselves in order to survive (Dumovska 3).

Henry James, also one of the most famous American novelists of nineteenth century, represented women's issues and sufferings in both American and European society in most of his works (Mohamadi 8886). Therefore, his novels: *Daisy Miller*, *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Wings of the Doves* are examples of his best works that handled women's challenges of the patriarchal conventions at that time (ibid).

Chapter One: Women in Travel Literature during the Nineteenth Century

1.8. Conclusion

The theme of travel has a close relationship with literature, which comes to be associated in the genre of travel literature; this is why it becomes a matter of interest by many scholars. The nineteenth century was an attractive epoch concerning the status of women in particular. In fact women defy the patriarchal ideas and gender roles fixed through travel that become the key point because mobility provides some kind of freedom for women and furnish them with power, yet immobility links with inferiority.

Consequently, many writers represent the women position in society through their literary works for instance, Henry James who depicts women's issues and sufferings in both American and European society in most of his works. Furthermore, since James is the author of travel novel is clearly to notice the theme of travel in his novel, that he used as different perspective to represent and defend women position of his epoch. Hence, *The Portrait of a Lady* novel is one of his best works that illustrates the link between travel and women status in the nineteenth century.

**Chapter Two:
Women's Self-
Reconstruction and the
Experience of Travel**

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

2.1. Introduction

The Portrait of a Lady is an American trait of initiation story of a young self-determining American girl into European society facing the Victorian norms in particular which was an outstanding device in Henry James's fiction. The novel depicts a transition from innocence to experience of the protagonist Isabel Archer, who claimed she is fond of her freedom, surrounded with a number of challenging travelling women.

Indeed, *Portrait of a Lady* portrays those mobile women standing against the patriarchal gender roles imposed by Victorian society, which was mainly the impact of the two doctrines; Separate Spheres and Angel in the House. While the public sphere, social life, travel, and independence belonged to the masculine gender, women had both the desire and the eagerness of being part of these *male* spheres and sought to immerse in other spaces through travel.

The concept of identity as one of novel's features is absolutely central in James's female characters. Moreover, throughout the novel women present various types of female social existence of the nineteenth-century conventions. However, they tried to challenge, believing that travel is a means which provides some kind of freedom and furnish them with power.

2.2. Henry James and the Transnational Novel

Henry James was born in New York City in 1843 in the middle of the nineteenth century, which he identified as the "golden age" for Americans abroad, yet he spent this period travelling back and forth between America and Europe ("Henry James Biography & Chronology" 1). This movement between the two continents was to become "a constant in his adult life" (ibid). Moreover, most of James's travels were New York, Boston, and then crossing over to London, Paris and Italy forth and back, an experience that profoundly shaped his fiction, such as *Daisy Miller*, *Bostonians*, *The European*, *The American* and *The Portrait of a Lady* in which in these novels he represented the international theme. He was an acute observer and revered critic of

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

European and American culture, what made him known as the “Atlantic Writer” (“Henry James Biography & Chronology” 2). He also produced critical works and travel writing, including *French Poets and Novelists* and *Transatlantic Sketches* (Kooistra and Denisoff 1). In fact, James had double citizenship which is, in the words that mark his grave in Cambridge, Massachusetts, “novelist, citizen of two countries, interpreter of his generation on both sides of the sea” (ibid).

James continued to present knowledge, power and story of desire, in his late novels, including *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl*, as well as *The American Scene* which “was written with all the passion of a[n American] patriot.” (Kooistra and Denisoff 3). Therefore, he is not only a transatlantic travel writer who can depict place and portray people’s cultures, “[h]e is also the author of ‘travel novels’”, since his novels always involve a trip (Berbar 3). Henry James as an expatriate author, “wanted to make [his novels and writings] impossible for his readers to know whether he was ‘an American writing about England or an Englishman writing about America’”(Gorra 11). Thus, the fact that most of his novels provide that element of the clash between the two cultures of America and England makes him transnational novelist.

2.3. The Study of Travelling Female Characters in *The Portrait of a Lady*

The Portrait of a Lady presents a group of female characters through which Henry James brings to light the perception of gender roles fixed in the nineteenth century. James Clifford asserts that, gender is a cultural construct and an organizing principle of social life generated by power relations. Therefore, culture is better conceptualized in terms of travel and movement, then travel will help reveal the formations and changes in gender and becomes the means of conflict and a battle for power within the gendered spaces (Kemaloğlu 105). On the other hand, Judith Butler claims that gender is not a biological attribute, so it should be studied as the subject of that very culture (6).

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

2.3.1. Isabel Archer, The Protagonist: From Innocence to Experience

Henry James's protagonist Isabel Archer is introduced to the novel's setting towards the end of Chapter 1 of *The Portrait of a Lady*. From the beginning of the novel Isabel became immediately the center of interest and speculation as well, because of a telegram from Mrs. Touchett, who announced the arrival of her niece Isabel from America to England (36-37 James).

Moreover, the content of the telegram turned out to be the main topic of a conversation between with three men gathered for afternoon tea in an old English mansion, Gardencourt. "Taken sister's girl, died last year, go to Europe, two sisters, quite independent" (37). This pre-definition of Isabel's most unique and original trait of character makes the three men wonder in what sense the term "independence" is used. Hence, the novel's opening presents the development of the novel's major theme, namely the conflict between independence and social norms, or, in other words, Isabel Archer's self-determination in relation to the restricting imposed by of the society around her.

Shortly after Isabel Archer arrival, she proved herself to be the independent American Girl, and the other characters discovered her independence to be of a moral nature. Already in the initial conversation with her cousin Ralph, Isabel fondly declared her liberty after correcting the misunderstand that she was not adopted by her aunt in contrary she was "very fond of [her] liberty" (44).

In addition, from the first scene in the novel it is obvious to recognize Isabel eagerness for liberty. She believed that her travel from America to England is a great opportunity to have a chance to develop (56). Moreover, once again, Isabel declared to her aunt about her desire to visit Florence. She wanted to be free as long as there is nothing impinging on her continuing ability to choose, regardless of social circumstances (James 53).

The study of the protagonist Isabel Archer's travels and her gender constructions becomes interesting because she could intrude into masculine public space. Therefore, she left America with her aunt in the hope of achieving knowledge,

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

independence, and happiness in Europe (Satak111). She is depicted to believe that travel would provide her the means to achieve knowledge, and at the same time, revealing the fixed gender roles of that period (James 240).

Isabel Archer is a perceptive woman, she is described as “looking at everything with an eye that denoted clear perception” (40) and as having “a comprehensiveness of observation” (42). In this respect, Isabel clearly desired to be further educated and independent when she admitted to her cousin Ralph that she is “...very fond of knowledge” (74).

Henry James states that the protagonist has a “contradictory nature”, since all her behaviors are generated by her mind (44). She is an independent and isolated woman. Such character traits led her to the conviction that by her acceptance of the different marriage proposals she received from wealthy and powerful men as Lord Warburton and Caspar Goodwood are, she may lose her freedom (143). She admitted freely: “...I don't wish to marry any one just now.” because they are powerful men physically and economically (ibid). Clearly, both of them represent masculine virtues; unlike Ralph Touchett, her cousin, the sick and dying man, who was depicted as a passive spectator in the novel. Hence her aim was to run away from the strong male dominance of patriarchal society.

Hence, Isabel refused male dominance which assigned women no occupation other than being a wife when she asserts; “I don't need the aid of a clever man to teach me how to live. I can find it out for myself” showing her strong will to move freely and travel alone (154). Isabel took the risk of speaking her desires, although it was forbidden to Victorian women because of the doctrines of ‘Angels in the House’ and ‘Separation of Spheres’. In this respect, Henry James provides his heroine inheritance. Isabel believed that a large fortune means freedom since money was equated with independence; as result money became the key to travel.

Still within the depiction of gender roles in the novel, when Isabel and her friend Henrietta decided to go to London, they were in the obligation of staying under “Ralph's escort” (169). Henry James was well aware of the conventions of the

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

Victorian society about ladies travelling alone, so in each journey he organized a company for Isabel in all her travels. Likewise, her aunt Mrs. Touchett, warned her “you can go and come, you can travel alone,...if you'll take a companion” (236), because her sex kept her freedom limited.

Despite this situation, Isabel was still believed that travel is the gate opening up to the male sphere. She “was full of premises, conclusions, emotions” and wanted to learn everything as “she asked more questions than he [Ralph] could answer, and launched brave theories” (172). Turkish scholar Gorkem Satak describes Isabel Archer as “very imaginative, confident in her mind and in her manners, even slightly narcissistic. James presents a girl who widely reads and learns life through books, but never has an opportunity to experience it” (111). Since, she was brought up by her father who raised her without providing her a disciplined education, and always encouraging her to express herself independently. Therefore, she had a passive life that is filled with mere theories and an imagined version of reality that she is fond to experience it.

Isabel's curiosity drove her to travel to Florence wondering what “Europe would offer to a young person of taste” (James 237). She considered Italy as “a land of promise” presenting “endless knowledge” (239) and as adventure for exchanging knowledge. Yet, she was not satisfied with these travels; once again she asked Madam Merle to accompany her on a pilgrimage to the East, and then to Greece, Turkey, and Egypt. This was the last major journey in the novel. She believed the further she travels the more knowledge she gets, James depicted her “like a thirsty person draining cup after cup” (290), hence travel becomes an occupation and part of education for Isabel.

Consequently, since travel provided Isabel with knowledge and authority, she could invade the public sphere, and then she could experience the male power and take decisions about her life by herself. Indeed, through the novel she met with women who inspired, or even helped her to achieve her aims. These women were moving outside their existing gender roles to create new and more challenging ones.

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

2.3.2. The Main Female Characters Surrounding Isabel Archer:

Henry James in *The Portrait of a Lady* presents a range of different women who stand as representatives for specific female types, especially against the social conventions and patriarchal rules of the nineteenth century. Some authors consider that:

[w]hat makes the novel unique is James's handling the gender roles. On one hand there are the outstanding female characters challenging the fixed gender roles imposed by the Victorian period, and on the other hand there are still women seen as 'objects' (Kemaloğlu 103).

Indeed, the women appearing in James' novel could be divided into two main categories. On the one hand, there are 'immobile' women, restricted to the narrow confines of the domestic sphere as Pansy; On the other hand, there are the 'mobile' women as Isabel Archer, Henrietta Stackpole, Lydia Touchett and Madame Merle, who seem to travel even more than the male characters.

However, he introduces each of the other female characters with different feminine aspects and different modes of female social existence. According to the literary scholar Mary Suzanne Schriber states that: "compared with these other female characters, Isabel proves to be not only different from other women, but different from other women who are themselves different from other women" (qtd in Uhlig 22). Thus, Henry James' novel is based on the Protagonist Isabel Archer besides the other challenging women.

2.3.2.1. Mrs.Lydia Touchett: "a person of many oddities"⁶

Mrs.Touchett, Isabel's aunt, is an older, independent woman who enjoyed all forms of freedom, including the freedom of travelling alone. The reason Mrs. Touchett fancied such freedom since she was empowered by a strong financial situation. She believed that money provides the means of power and freedom for women. Yet, she said concerning her niece's inheritance:

⁶ (James 45)

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

You can do a great many things if you're rich which would be severely criticized if you were poor. You can go and come, you can travel alone, you can have your own establishment: I mean of course if you'll take a companion....Of course you can do as you please; I only want you to understand how much you're at liberty (James 205).

Henry James describes Mrs.Touchett as oddity woman "virtually separated from her husband" who keeps an emotional distance from him and her son (45). She decided to live a life of her own in Florence, away "from the stereotype caring, submissive wife image of the epoch, which she flouts in many respects" (Iftimie 478). Thus, she is one of the strongest female characters in the novel, even her son Ralph looked at her as woman with masculine traits relating her strength to male characteristics saying: "...[my]father was the more motherly;[my] mother, on the other hand, was paternal" (James 62).

Mrs. Touchett had the wisdom of "not exposing herself to the English climate" (ibid), that made her rejecting the Victorian revealing the gender roles. Therefore, this distribution of power in the novel represents this woman as strong, dominant and active, while the husband, due to his health problems, accepts the role of the weak, fragile, passive member of the relationship. Thus James successfully shifts gender roles by providing Mrs.Touchett with masculine power and depicting her husband with feminine weakness and dependence.

Indeed, Mrs.Touchett neglected her family duties as her role of mother and wife because of her frequent travels. Even though, at the beginning of the novel she played the role of mother to her niece when she took her from Albany to Europe in England, she later left her alone to do everything she chooses. As a result, Mrs.Touchett is the woman who broke the norms of patriarchal Victorian society.

2.3.2.2. Henrietta Stackpole: James's Specter of the New Woman⁷

Henrietta Stackpole, Isabel's best friend, was the only woman in the novel who has a profitable profession and assumes the traditional male role of a worker. One can

⁷ (Nientzow 381)

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

say that Henrietta's character is 'Feminist', whether it is her love and belief in her personal freedom, and her hard work and dedication, and most importantly her declaration that women do not need to be married to be fulfilled, she epitomizes Feminism in the novel (James 79).

Furthermore, Henrietta was a successful journalist who challenged male writers, because "she was thoroughly launched in journalism, and her letters...were universally quoted... Henrietta was in the van of progress and had clear-cut views on most subjects" (78). Therefore, because of her professional career as a literary woman (135), she could move freely to different locations in America or Europe without being accompanied by a man.

James Clifford argues that during the Victorian Age "it was not usual to see the bourgeois and white women travelling and if they did so they were forced to conform, masquerade, or rebel discreetly within a set of normatively male definitions and experiences" (qtd in Kemaloğlu 112). Travelling alone was forbidden even for the professional woman, either a family member or a servant had to accompany her. For instance the British author Janet Wolff asserts about the situation of a literary woman:

When Mrs. Gaskell wanted to visit London in 1849 to see her publisher and to meet people in the literary world, she had to find another woman to travel with her as chaperone, since her husband could not leave his work in Manchester (qtd in Kemaloğlu 111).

Likewise, Italian scholar Marcella Romeo agrees that "travelling alone in a difficult, peripheral place, for a woman was considered a degenerative act" (1264), hence it was an obvious challenge for the patriarchal society to see a woman travelling alone.

Therefore, due to her profession, Henrietta could support herself financially since she lived without parents and without property; she was able to take care of her widowed sister's three children like a man. In fact, she could successfully break the boundaries between male and female in the Victorian society. She invaded the male sphere, taking over some masculine characteristics, which was considered to be male territory then acquire a dominant status (Iftimie 476). Moreover, she expressed

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

unreservedly her own opinions out loud and exchanged ideas with men on various topics, even the social and political issues of the day, the matter that was not allowed for a woman at that time (130).

Isabel appreciated Henrietta and looked at her as a model with male characteristics and as “a proof that a woman might suffice to herself and be happy” (79). At the same time, she saw her as a male companion with whom she would have no wavering to travel with and it will be a safe voyage, because she had travelled over the whole American continent and can easily find her way (135). Hence, Henrietta looked like a guard for Isabel always telling her “that a woman ought to be able to live to herself, in the absence of exceptional flimsiness, and that it was perfectly possible to be happy without the society of a more or less coarse-minded person of another sex”(79). She stood against the Victorian's public conventions.

In addition, since Henry James provides Henrietta in the novel with male qualities, on the other hand the patriarchal prejudices of the Victorian society are put forward through male characters' views about Henrietta. As Gilbert Osmond, Isabel's husband and the antagonist, James presents him as strong character who symbolizes those patriarchal norms; he criticized Henrietta with harsh irony and obvious dislike talking to Isabel:

You know I never have admitted that she's a woman. Do you know what she reminds me of? Of a steel pen -the most odious thing in nature. She talks as a steel pen writes; aren't her letters, by the way, on ruled paper? She thinks and moves and walks and looks exactly as she talks (604).

The metaphor 'steel pen' refers to authority and “becomes in Henrietta's hands a weapon which permits her to violate the other characters' private space” (Iftimie 477). Once again James reveals the gender roles by transferring male power to Henrietta, the things which annoyed Osmond and made him carry much feelings of hatred to her. He tried to keep her away from Isabel, because she was strong, independent and her characteristics were similar to male character traits (605).

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

2.3.2.3 Serena Merle: The 'Perfect' Lady

Serena Merle is another travelling woman in James's novel *The Portrait of a Lady*; a close friend of Mrs. Touchett. She is a strong powerful female character and well-established, which made her well-liked and well-known in society despite the fact that she was single and did not have substantial wealth.

Serena Merle "had been a dweller in many lands and had social ties in a dozen different countries" (230), the fact that impresses Isabel about her is that she had travelled a lot and made acquaintances in many countries. Moreover, she had many European friends from Sweden, Malta, Italy and England where she was thoroughly familiar (ibid). In fact Madame Merle was always travelling, for that reason she promised Isabel that she would introduce her to her friends (272). That was exactly the kind of freedom Isabel was looking for in her future life; she believed that travelling provided the means to learn about different people and customs of various countries. It was in fact the reason that equipped Merle with features to be competent in the social arena (357).

Henry James portrays Merle as 'a perfect' lady, since she occupied her time doing all kinds of activities that are mostly circumscribed to the domestic sphere: "When Mme Merle was neither writing, nor painting, nor touching the piano, she was usually employed upon wonderful tasks of rich embroidery" (245). Also Ralph depicted her as being "too good, too kind, too clever, too learned, too accomplished, too everything. She's too complete, in a word" (292).

Moreover, Madame Merle appears to be an extremely pleasant and knowledgeable travel companion for Isabel in the course of her travels. Immediately Isabel is drawn to Merle's personality and outward sense of confident independence (179).

Unfortunately, Isabel's misjudgment about this seemingly 'perfect' lady will lead her to despair and miserable marriage to Osmond Gilbert because of Madame Merle's influence as a fake mentor. While the Countess Gemini, Gilbert Osmond's sister describes them freely dangerous like some chemical combination (336). As a

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

final point, James again provides Madam Merle with masculine qualities that satisfy Isabel's needs for knowledge and which become the means to empower women, even though she was a manipulator.

2.3.2.4 Pansy Osmond: The Docile Woman

Unlike the other travelling female characters, Henry James presents another female character which is immobile. Pansy Osmond, daughter of Gilbert Osmond and Serena Merle whom she believed that she died giving birth to her. She was raised in a convent far from the circumstances of society, which made her an obedient and docile woman. In the present novel, Pansy stands for a perfect representation of a Victorian woman by her acceptance of her status as an object in a patriarchal society.

In addition, Pansy is a calm, passive woman, "so timid that she wonders if she dares do anything so grown-up as to make a pot of tea." (Gorra 96). Indeed, she was living in the shadow of her oppressive father as a piece of art in his collection, even when she grew up and left the convent she still "remained with a servant at the villa, where she seems something close to a prisoner, all owed to enter the garden but no more. She stands as the most expertly played of Osmond's cards, a low trump that still allows him to make his bid." (111). Therefore Isabel decided to marry Osmond in order to save Pansy when she said to herself "we must take our duty where we find it, and that we must look for it as much as possible" (James 347).

Yet Isabel is seen later in the novel as feeling superior to Pansy, she describes as "a nosegay composed all of the same flower" (348). Thus, the word 'nosegay' refers to that Isabel considers her nothing more than a suitcase she carries during her visits around. In fact Isabel's intention to save Pansy was basically to "edify" a blank page; and write whatever she wanted on it, in order to experience dominance and governance (qtd in Kemaloğlu 116). Hence James reveals in *The Portrait of a Lady* even the supremacy of authoritative women upon weak women.

Furthermore, Pansy's character is deeply affected by the conventions of Victorian society; she remains also as a doll in Serena's hand who tries to find a proper husband for her instead of educating or cultivating her about new experiences in life.

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

Whereas, Bodichon emphasized that it was the responsibility of mothers to educate their daughters about their worth as human beings instead of keeping in their minds the idea that they must marry someday (38).

2.4. Mobile women's Identities and the Experience of Self-Creating

Identity is the central and most explicit subject in the *Portrait of a Lady*, thus Henry James develops the matters of self, choice, morality and identity in which he uses the heroine Isabel Archer to provide examples and to draw parallels (25). Hence nationality, place and social context shape the identity of the novel's female characters. Isabel Archer proves herself to be the independent American girl, since she travelled to London. The other English characters on the other hand, discover her independence to be of a moral nature.

Marcella Romeo claims that, travel shapes and conveys new female identity trajectories able to cover a great cultural distance. Therefore, the "cultural contact, travel, and mobility open up hidden links ... generating new configurations of identity in formerly uniform spaces" (Arapoglou, Fodor, & Nyman qtd in Romeo 1267). As a result, Isabel seemed to have found herself and her identity because she experienced her internal conflict, both of knowledge and independence through travelling.

The other characters looked at Isabel as a special person who differed from them. Marcella Romeo argues that identity is "based" on conflicts that cover all human feelings "crossing each other with the most unpredictable enchanting irregularity" (1270). For instance her cousin Ralph told Lord Warburton that she is unlike the other ladies who come to England to look for a husband, and she's probably engaged because American girls are usually engaged (James 38). In fact, in the three first chapters James insists to remind readers of Isabel's identity. She could not be anything but what she is, and what she is depends on her American environment. The same matter for Henrietta's national identity; she is the symbol of the American democracy, and the features that make up her personal identity unique: self-reliance, ambition, perseverance, and professionalism (127).

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

On the other hand, there is Madam Merle; due to the many places she has visited as a result of her frequent relocations, she became a multinational expatriate whose national identity is difficult to guess, the idea is better expressed in her words:

[T]here are a great many of us [expatriates] like that in these parts, and I must say I think we're a wretched set of people. 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 (168).

The novel's major theme namely is the conflict between self-creating and social conventions, in other words, Isabel Archer's independence in relation to the restricting constraints of the world around her. Indeed after her arrival to London, she refused being adopted by her aunt correcting Ralph's misunderstands; that she is not a candidate for adoption. (James 44), then she added with a certain visible eagerness of desire to be explicit, "I'm very fond of my liberty." (45). She clearly asserted that the opportunity of going abroad to Europe with her aunt is offered as a temptation for her (ibid).

Indeed, the principal reason why Isabel Archer remained in continuous conflict with the world around her; lies in her conception of freedom. She associated this freedom to her identity and self-creating, and believed that she was able to choose freely regardless of social circumstances. Therefore, the foundation for this belief lies merely in Isabel's upbringing, and also in her national American inheritance.

Moreover, Isabel Archer went through a life in which she believed in always doing the right thing and this from her early childhood, because "[she] had never been corrected by the judgment of [authoritative] people" (46). Moreover, she thinks that she is aware of authority but "like most American girls she is ridiculously mistaken" (68). Thus the foundation of her idea of freedom whether it is positive or negative, as mentioned above, lies in this influential period.

In this respect, Indeed, James does not refer specifically or directly to the term *identity* in this novel. He states his idea of identity through his attempt to represent the

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

consciousness and self-creating of his characters necessarily and essentially that concerns him with questions of identity (Morris 3).

2.5. Challenging Modes of Female Social Existence

In Henry James' *Portrait of a Lady*, most of the female characters are American expatriates, they have the eagerness of travelling to many places despite the patriarchal rules and the traditional modes of social existence imposed on women during the nineteenth century.

Madame Merle claims that any society in which women live is one unnatural to them (foreign) and dominated by men,

There are a great many of us like that in these parts, and I must say I think we're a wretched set of people...We're mere parasites, crawling over the surface; we haven't our feet in the soil. At least one can know it and not have illusions. A woman perhaps can get on; a woman, it seems to me, has no natural place anywhere; wherever she finds herself she has to remain on the surface and, more or less, to crawl (James 168-169).

However, she said that women were forced to 'crawl' means to keep them visibly subordinate to whatever is under male's dominance. According to her, women could survive as parasitic expatriates in a foreign environment. The idea is that women, everywhere during the nineteenth century, have had to survive as parasitic in a male-dominated environment and must at least crawl to exist socially (Brown 2).

On the other hand, Ralph gives a masculine trait on women that they are as passive in somehow as active within powerful male qualities.

[Isabel]was intelligent and generous; it was a fine free nature; but what was she going to do with herself? This question was irregular, for with most women one had no occasion to ask it. Most women did with themselves nothing at all; they waited, in attitudes more or less gracefully passive, for a man to come that way and furnish them with a destiny. Isabel's originality was that she gave one an impression of having intentions of her own (James 63).

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

He wondered what a liberated woman will do or how she will act, which is a rarity in his experience. The only natural thing that women do, for him, is waiting for a husband, who will give them a purpose for living and a fate. Furthermore, their greatest actions are passive, they accept to be means in or just body wait for men's names and eventually children (Brown 2). In Butler's theory identity becomes a matter of performance challenging the essential norms of identity and body. Hence body and identity are represented when binary oppositions of young and old, black and white, male and female bodies (16).

Basically, marriage is predictable in the society of James's novels; therefore, the female characters in *The Portrait of a Lady* are defined according to their fulfillment of the subordinating social tasks of marriage and motherhood (Brown 16). Isabel and the other three female characters are all defined their positions in society in relation to men even though they travel and challenge the conventional norms of society; hence they are either wives, sisters or mothers.

However, these three modes of female social existence are inevitable for those women. For instance, Serena Merle's gender identity is completed through her three motherhood hypostases: biological, denied and surrogate mother (Brown 42), because due to social conventions, she cannot disclose this relationship to her own daughter Pansy. Also Henrietta Stackpole is sister and pre-wife, while Mrs Touchett is an unusual mother and wife, and because of her yearly travel she neglected her family. On the other hand, Isabel Archer is the only female character to play all three roles, first of all as unmarried woman in Gardencourt, then comes to live in Rome as a wife, and undertakes her final return there as a mother. Therefore, through the novel none of them are limited in their social female position as unmarried, married, or mothers.

One can say, these traditional modes of female social existence separately fulfill and perpetuate women's common submissive tasks that oppress and objectify them in a cycle of physical and economic dependence on men.

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

2.6. Henry James as a Feminist Novelist in *The Portrait of a Lady*

The Portrait of a Lady (1881) was the greatest literary achievement of the Anglo-American fiction of the nineteenth century; It had many criticism that made Henry James very famous (Gorra 10). Moreover, the majority of the dominated in the novel are female; it seems that James was deeply influenced by the patriarchy traditions that subordinated women at that epoch. Hence, he used female heroine to shape up one of his period's central concerns, "that of what George Eliot herself had described as the "delicate vessels" of female experience" (ibid).

Therefore, Henry James presents in the novel, the protagonist Isabel Archer in the center then he spins around her a web of challenging travelling women. Thus Mrs. Touchett, Henrietta and Madam Merle represent another facade of the patriarchal society. Throughout the novel they embodied their refusal of the tenets of various theoretical constructions of women and morality, including the Cult of True Womanhood⁸ and the New Woman (Brown 4). In this respect, American scholar Nina Baym noted that "*The Portrait of a Lady* was one of an increasing number of works about 'the woman question' " (qtd in ibid).

According to American critic Peggy McCormack, claims that:

James [...] is both feminist and feminine in his writing. His feminism derives from the extraordinary sympathy he demonstrates in dealing with women's position in a sexual exchange economy while his femininity may be found at the level of style. (qtd in Uhlig 14).

However, James' depiction of women's stories who were intending to break away from their traditionally ascribed roles is a fact that shows his obvious interest towards woman. As a conclusion, *The Portrait of a Lady* is a male novelist's treatment of women, since James represents the restrictive bonds for women in a world of patriarchal conventions and defended their status, he is a feminist writer.

⁸ Cult of True Womanhood is an Ideal emerged during the early 1800's in both England and specially America, made a definite difference between the sexes.

Chapter Two: Women's Self- Reconstruction and the Experience of Travel

2.7. Conclusion

Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* has a group of lively characters, and their lives are all closely involved with the American innocent Isabel Archer. She is fond for knowledge and believes travel would provide her the means of opening up to the world of male power and wisdom, besides other female characters challenge the fixed gender roles imposed by the nineteenth century period through travel. Indeed the nineteenth century society was deeply influenced by the two doctrines of 'separate sphere' and 'angel in the house'. Thus women were restricted to the narrow and private confines of their traditional social existence of sisters, wives and mothers, while men were allotted the public and social sphere, associated with independence and mobility. Hence, travel was men property and forbidden for women also illegal as prostitute.

James handles the issue of gender roles. He presents in his novel challenging female characters like Isabel, Mrs. Touchett, Madam Merle and Henrietta stepping out of their fixed gender roles attributed by the society, while there are still women seen as objects, like Pansy. Therefore, James suggests that mobility equips women with power, yet immobility points out to the contrary, when he depicts immobile women as the objects of the patriarchal society, while travelling women as strong figures with masculine traits.

Furthermore, James represents women's identities by revealing their modes of female social existence and adherence in society. In this respect, his treatment of women makes him a feminist writer, since he depicts women's status and signifies the restrictive bonds for them in a world of patriarchal conventions.

General Conclusion

The Target behind this dissertation was to shed light on the position and development of the women of the nineteenth-century society, in travel literature written by male authors. The research focused on the genre of travel novel in particular, and a group of female characters as a case study, the purpose being an illustration of women's status in America and Victorian England from a masculine perspective.

Furthermore, *The Portrait of a Lady* itself is a travel novel since it includes a journey and a trip that relies on the element of travel, which is also an essential part of the plot. Travel also confers a kind of knowledge to enhance female character development. Hence, since James is the author of travel writings, it is possible to see the reflection of travel in the discussed novel.

The research sought to study and evaluate the positions women held in two societies written from masculine perspectives. The events of the novel witnessed a move of some female characters between the two continents; America and Europe, focusing on the Victorian English society in particular. Moreover, as Henry James is an expatriate and transnational writer, he provides the international theme that is based on travel in most of his works, which is clearly presented in this novel.

The discussion in the first chapter covered the study of travel literature and the travel novel, by focusing on its significance as an important genre in literature. Then the research has proved that travel literature, especially the travel novel genre, and Feminism joined together, give a broad presentation of the status of women during the nineteenth century.

In fact, the nineteenth century witnessed the issue of gender roles, since the American and Victorian societies were largely influenced by the two doctrines of 'Separate Sphere' and 'Angel in the House'. Whereas the public sphere covered work outside the house, social life, travel, power, and independence, it belonged to the masculine gender. On the other hand, women were generally restricted to the private sphere, in which they performed the roles of sisters, wives and mothers.

Therefore, these women stood against gender inequality and the unfair conventions of society in both America and Victorian England. They proved that they were as clever as men and deserve to be considered equal to them. As a result, America saw the emergence of the Woman Movement, which developed in response to women's dependent situation and promoted new ideals for women: True Womanhood, Real Womanhood, Public Womanhood, and New Womanhood. While in England the Woman Question was raised, which questioned women's nature and societal roles, and gave them greater economic, educational, and political opportunities.

Moreover, in the first chapter we discussed how women could challenge the patriarchal norms and traditional conventions of society through travel. Thus they broke the boundaries between public sphere dominated by men and private sphere, since travel provided them freedom to reject the controlling idea of gender roles at that time. Furthermore, we had achieved this point by studying the representation of women in masculine literature by taking some of the greatest novelists of the nineteenth century as an example. In this respect the example discussed proves that an author in general is inspired in his work of art by the reality he faces, and the social conditions which surround him. The study also introduces Henry James as a transnational writer.

Second chapter focused on the analytical approach; whereas Henry James regarded his female characters as the central parts of the novel. He gave intellectual freedom to the protagonist Isabel Archer, in addition to other female characters regardless the social norms of that era. In that case, we have studied the protagonist and the main female characters surrounding her.

Indeed, the women appearing in James' novel challenge the traditional norms. On one hand, there are the 'mobile' women including the protagonist Isabel Archer, Henrietta Stackpole, Lydia Touchett and Mme Merle who seem to travel even more than the male characters each of them having her own reasons for doing so. Consequently, for Isabel travelling is a means of acquiring knowledge and satisfying her curiosity about life; for Henrietta, Isabel's best friend, and a successful journalist,

travelling is part of her job description; for Lydia Touchett, Isabel's aunt, travelling is part of her well-planned yearly schedule; for Mme Merle, travelling is a way of existence because she has no real home and as such, she is a kind of itinerant guest. On the Other hand, there are 'immobile' women, restricted to the narrow confines of the domestic sphere, seen as objects like Pansy Osmond.

Therefore, the frequent travels of Isabel Archer and of the other three mobile female characters mentioned above are considered as an attempt to enter the masculine public space. They are accepted on equal terms with their male counterparts and thus they reconstructed or redefined their social identity and gender roles. Furthermore, the way Henry James works it out points toward a consistent, coherent, and even very modern idea of identity. Thus, he states his idea of identity through endeavor to represent the consciousness and self reconstruction of the novel's female characters. Therefore, and from this respect, one notices that those mobile female characters managed to challenge their modes of female social existence of sisters, wives and daughters, through travel.

After a deep investigation, it is possible to conclude that, the choice of Henry James in this paper is based on our interest in his revolutionary themes regarding women in *The Portrait of a Lady*, which reflects women's positions, their behaviors, hopes, and manners to challenge society and its rules during the nineteenth century. Moreover, this period also witnessed a number of brilliant male writers who supported women's movement and presented them in their works as victims of oppressive society and men as well.

Furthermore, what makes this novel interesting is; James' portrait and defense of women who stepping out of their fixed gender roles attributed by the society through travel. As result, he implies the hope and need for improvement in the ever changing and imbalanced society, and most importantly reveals the possibilities for men and women for a better world. On the other hand, he successfully presents a strong and complex web of travelling female characters who challenged the patriarchal norms and traditional roles of their society, besides the weaker ones. Therefore his criticism at this point is valuable, since he is a male writer, and at the same time makes him a feminist writer who gives masculine traits of feminist exploration.

Bibliography

A-Primary Resources:

James, Henry. *The portrait of a Lady*. Beirut: Dar Al-Bihar, 2005. Print

B- Secondary Resources :

- **Books**

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York and London: Routledge, 1990. Print

Bodichon, Barbara Leigh Smith. *Women and Work*. London: G. Barglay, Castel St Leicester Sq, 1857. Print

Belsey, Catherine, Moore, Jane. *The Feminist Reader Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989. Pdf

De Beauvoir, Simon. *The Second Sex*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1949. Print

D'Arcy, Anne. "Feminist Philosophy". Noel, Brooke and Kenneth Bruder, *Philosophy the Power Ideas*. McGraw Hill Digital Software, 1979. Print

Gorra, Michael. *Portrait of a Novel: Henry James and the Making of an American Masterpiece*. New York: Liveright, 2012. Pdf

Ledger, Sally. *The New Woman Fiction and feminism at the fin de siècle*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. Print

Lorber, Judith. *The Variety of Feminisms and their Contribution to Gender Equality*. Oldenburg: Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Univ, 1997. Pdf

Matthews, Glenna. *The Rise of the Public Woman: Woman's Power and Woman's Place in the United States 1630-1970*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. Print

Mitchell, Juliet and Ann Oakley. *What is Feminism?*. California University. Pantheon Books, 1986 Pdf

Seglie, AnaMaria. *Travel Literature and History*. Texas: Rice University, 2011.Pdf

Speake, Jennifer. *Literature of travel and exploration*. New York: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2003.Pdf

Siegel, Kristi. *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing*. New York. Peter Lang, 2004. Pdf

Showalter, Elaine. *A literature of their Own, British Women Novelist from Bronte to Lessing*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.1977. Print

- **Journals :**

Buckton-Tucker, Rosalind. "Romanticism and the Philosophy of Travel", *International Journal of Arts & Sciences*. Oman: Sultan Qaboos University, 2010.Pdf

Chattopadhyay, Amrita. "Women in Victorian Society as Depicted in Thomas Hardy's Novels". *International Journal of Educational Planning and Administration*. vol. 1, no.1, 2011, pp. 23-28. Pdf

Doucet, Andrea. "Gender Equality and Gender Differences in Household Work and Parenting". *Women's Studies International Forum*. vol.18, no.3, 1995, pp. 271-284.Pdf

Freedman, Jane. "Concept in the Social Sciences". *Feminism*, Open University Press. Buckingham Philadelphia. Pdf

Johnston, Neil. "The History of the Parliamentary Franchise". House of Commons Library. Commons Briefing Papers , 2013. Pdf
www.Parliament. uk

Iftimie, Nicoleta Mariana. "Travelling Women: The Reconstruction of Self and Gender Roles in *The Portrait of a Lady*". *The European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences*. Future Academy, 2016. Pdf

Kemaloğlu, Azer Banu. "Travelling and Gender: *The portrait of a Lady*". *Journal of Social and Human Scientific Researchers*. Turkey: Muğla University Social Sciences Institute Magazine (İLKE), 2010. Pdf

Karthika. P and Suganya. K. "Social Status of Women in the 19th Century Tamil Society". *International Research Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 5, no. 9, September 2016, pp.29-34.Pdf

Mohamadi Moghadam, Davood. "Deceived American Young Ladies in Europe, a Basic Pattern of Henry James' s International Theme". *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research* .TextRoad Publications, 2012.Pdf

Mahajan, Priyanka and Dr.Jaideep Randhawa. "Emergence of 'New Woman': A Study of Origin of the Phrase in the West from Historical Perspective". *Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*. vol.21, no.1, March 2006, pp. 01-04.Pdf

Niemtzow, Annette. "Marriage and the New Woman in *The Portrait of a Lady*". *American Literature*. vol.3, no.47, pp 377-395. Pdf

Roshchynskaya, A. S. "Defining the Category of Gender: Literature Review". Biélorussie : Belorussian State University, 2010. Pdf

Romeo, Marcella. "'A Perfect Heroine in Foreign Travel.' Female Mobile Identities and Southern Italy in the 19th Century Non-feminist Periodical Press". *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*. vol. 6, no. 11, November 2016, pp.1263-1277. Pdf

Satak, Gorkem. "Evil In The Portrait of a Lady: The Existentialist James". *The International Journal of the Humanities*. vol.6, no.8, 2008, pp109-114. Pdf

- **Dissertations:**

Anggariningsih, Dessy Nuraini. *Early Feminists' Struggle against Patriarchy in Nineteenth Century American's Women Rights Movement in Henry James' The Bostonian*. Master thesis. Surakarta: Faculty of Letters and Fine Arts Sebelas Maret University, 2003. Pdf

Berber, Souad. *Outward Voyages, Inner Journeys in the Travel Novels of Joseph Conrad, Henry James and Graham Greene*. PHD thesis. Tlemcen: Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages Department of English, 2015. Pdf

Brown, Melanie Ann. *Modes of female social existence and adherence in Henry James's The Portrait of a Lady*. Master thesis. Iowa State University: Digital Repository Iowa State University, 1996. Pdf

Cruea, Susan M. *Changing Ideals of Womanhood During the Nineteenth-Century Woman Movement*. Bowling Green State University. ScholarWorks@BGSU, 2005. Pdf

Dumovska, Daniela. *The Women in Charles Dickens' s Novel Oliver Twist*. Independent thesis Basic level (degree of Bachelor). Halmstad University Library : HöGSKOLAN HALMSTAD, 2010. Pdf

Flohr, Brigitt. Representations of the 'Self' and the 'Other' in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature. May 1999, King's College London. Accessed on: 15 January 2017, Available on: www.itp.uni-hannover.de/fileadmin/arbeitgruppen/ag_flohr/papers/mlit-18-century5.pdf

Hart, Hilary. *Sentimental Spectacles: The Sentimental Novel, Natural Language, and Early Film Performance*. PHD thesis. Oregon: Department of English and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon, 2004. Pdf

- Morris, Barbara J. *Aspect of Identity in Four Novels by Henry James*. PHD thesis. University of Toronto: Graduate Department of English, 1997. Pdf
- Mulnæs, Rachel and Miyuki Nishimura and Marie-Charlotte Paul. *Gender and Feminism in Victorian Poetry*. Roskilde Universitetscenter's Digitale Arkiv, 2014. Pdf
- N/A. "The Woman Question in Victorian England". Handout. Università Degli Studi Di Trieste. Accessed on: 12 January 2017, Available on: <https://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ENGL203-Subunit-4.1.4-The-Woman-Question-in-Victorian-England-FINAL1.pdf>
- N/A. "Henry James Biography & Chronology". Handout. Accessed on: 4 April 2017. Available on : https://moodle2.units.it/pluginfile.php/81052/mod_folder/content/0/Henry%20James%20Biography%20Timeline.pdf
- Persaud, Annil. *The Problem of Origin: Politics of Indigeneity in Post-1830 British Guinia*. PHD thesis. Jawharlal Nehru University: School of Social Sciences, 2007. Pdf
- Sunbul, çiçek. *Nineteenth-Century Women's Place in George Eliot's Middlemarch and Thomas Hardy's The Return of the Native and Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Master thesis. Middle East Technical University: English Language and Literature Department, 2011. Pdf
- Sindradóttir, Tinna Sif. *Nineteenth Century Women Writers and the Challenge of Gender Roles: Feminist Heroines in the Novels of the Brontë Sisters*. B.A. Essay. University of Iceland School of Humanities Department of English, 2015. Pdf
- Ulrich, Brinkmann. *The Background of Tourism*. PHD thesis. Berlin: department of philosophy and humanities. Freie Universität Berlin, 2007. Pdf
- Uhlig, Annika. *Femininity and Female Interiority: The Representation of Gender in Henry James's "The Portrait of a Lady"*. Thesis (M.A.). Universität Hannover, 2006. Pdf
- Wisniewski, Matthew. *Re-Exploring Travel Literature: A Discourse Centered To Approach the Text Type*. Master of Art thesis. Alberta: B.A. University of Alberta, 1993. Pdf
- Wood, L. Maren. *The Women's Movement*. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School. LEARN NC's North Carolina History Digital Textbook Project, 2010. Pdf

- **Websites:**

Ezer, Özlem. "Reconstruction of Women's Identity through the Experience of Travel". *Cultural Studies in Turkey*, 1999. Web, 23 mars 2017.

<http://warlight.tripod.com/TRAVEL.html>

Kooistra, Lorraine Janzen, Denisoff, Dennis. "Introduction to the Yellow Nineties". *The Yellow Nineties Online*. Ed. Dennis Denisoff and Lorraine Janzen Kooistra. Ryerson University, 2012. Web. 23 février 2017. http://www.1890s.ca/HTML.aspx?s=Intro_Y90s.html

Lewis, Chris H. "Separate Spheres and Women's Status in 19 th Century England". American Studies Resources, 2015. Web, 5 march 2017. www.colorado.edu/AmStudies/lewis/1025/separatespheres.pdf