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**Marriage and the Position of Women in Wharton's
Age of Innocence and James's *Portrait of a Lady***

Thesis

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Manželství a pozice ženy ve Whartonové *Věku nevinnosti* a Jamesovém *Portrétu dámy*

Diplomová práce

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Introduction

A woman in contemporary society can hardly imagine what life was like 130 years ago, or what it meant to be a woman and to be married. The position and role of women has changed, and this change is still in process. I would like to show how it used to be in the Victorian society, and how Edith Wharton and Henry James portrayed marriage and roles of women in their novels *The Age of Innocence* and *The Portrait of a Lady*, which I chose for my paper. They both treat the subject of love and marriage, and the struggle of women for freedom and independence, although the point of view is slightly different. Both of these authors treat the subject variously. I would like to compare the role of women from different points of view, using the author's biographies, critiques and introductions to the novels, as well as their own words through their characters in the books. Fight of women for freedom and independence seems to be the most important theme of both novels. James's main heroine is in major part of the novel portrayed as a single girl. I would like to describe difficulties that she went through as a single girl. She obtained several proposals before reaching her marital status. I would like to analyze in detail differences among the proposals and the impact of them on her. I cannot avoid comparison of European and American traditions.

The subject of marriage in 19th century Europe and America is another important theme, and I would also like to look at how this subject was treated by James and Wharton. They were close friends, and I would like to find to what extent Wharton was influenced by James, mainly in her writing, which would be impossible without looking of how she was influenced by him in her private life. There were already many comparisons of those two authors, who were both Americans who moved to Europe, and who chose similar characters and settings. Their characters often struggle with a movement to another country, where the culture and the society are much different than where they were brought up. They both mostly depict women as their main characters. Women are shown in many different roles - as single, proposed to, married, widowed, and also as mothers. We get a glimpse of how their roles were considered at the end of 19th century. Many of the characters are invented by the authors, but many of them portray either the author himself/herself or someone they knew or who was close to

them. I would like to depict responsibilities of married women and of mothers, as they are described in the novels, and compare them with reality.

I would like to concern situation in life periods of both authors for comparison of the novels, and also present situation. They experienced life in America as well as in Europe, and later both moved to Europe. Their reasons might have been different, but their desire not to live in America is in contrast with the themes and scenes they use for their work. They might have wanted the American world not to be forgotten, and they might have wanted the Europeans to see part of the world across the sea, to show them the differences between opinions and rules, or simply how the life was different and how different were the aims of people. Their main characters visit both continents, and the reader can see what tragedies or happiness awaits them there.

The other pole of marriage, divorce, is a global problem. The percentage of divorces was rising. Interesting is, how divorce was accepted by high society in 1870s. Both James and Wharton talk about those problems, as they were not discussed much at public at that time. James never married and Wharton divorced after many years of struggling in an unhappy marriage. There were women's movements in the mid-19th century to change the situation of women and opinions about marriage and divorce. The Victorian era was characterized by many changes in the economy and industry, and many inventions came to light in all spheres of science, leading to changes in society and for individuals. Some people were able to assimilate. However, for some of them it was hard.

This work should provide a coherent view on marriage and the position and the role of woman in the society of New York and Europe in the 19th century. Both of these societies were different. They had certain social codes, rules and standards that could be seen as very strict from our point of view. Victorian society was conventional; and, to us, it may seem almost impossible how they treated some subjects like marriage or love, how happy we can be about the influence of media helping us to prevent such misunderstandings as were happening in the past, such as a lack of talk about taboo matters, where awareness was almost zero. Women were expected to fulfill their function - to marry, bear children and be a support to their husbands - although they often did not feel like undergoing such a way of life. They were often forced to do so by society, and "whether that role was...accepted by women...is open to dispute"

(Cuncliffe. 286). Remaining single was not conventional, and girls were brought to the “marriage market” as soon as they reached marriageable age. Marriage was not always closed out of love of the partners: often financial matters or social status led them to marry. I would like to show the effect of society’s opinions on individuals, mainly on the characters in the novels of James and Wharton. I can hardly omit what affect those codes had on the private lives of Wharton and James. My intentions are to present values and rules of society, stressing the importance of family in Victorian society.

In the *Portrait of a Lady*, written in 1881, James presents the situation of poor orphaned girl who is taken out of her dream life among the novels and stories of love to the circle of real life. She is not prepared to take fully all acquaintances of life among unknown people in the foreign country. She is lucky to find a good advisor and friend. However, she soon falls under spell of mysterious lady, who drives her to the marriage by intrigues, because she would like to have usage of her money. After awakening the girl finds herself in precarious situation with cruel husband, adopted naïve daughter, and with ideas about freedom and independence irretrievably lost. Isabel, according to Edel, represented society in which a woman could not declare complete equality (Edel. 260). I would like to point out what drove her to unwanted marriage, and how people around treated her and what roles did they took in society.

The Age of Innocence is more concerned about society itself, and portrays the state of being single and the marriage in two different characters. Both women are young. However, one is thought to be innocent and representing American ideal. The other is experienced, gaining her experience through her marriage in Europe. Her integration to American society seems to be impossible. She is forced to leave the society, although, she felt in love there. Wharton is able to show the change and adaptation of society to the changes. She wrote the novel in 1920, although, she deals with same time as James, era of 1870s. She jumps to the turn of the century for the contrast, and apparently to reach her aim. Her novel explains some mysterious things from James’s novel, because she concentrates on description of society much more than James. She shows Old New York upper-class society, its customs, codes and principles, as well as its dangers not only for women. Family belongs among the most valuables among the members of society.

Friendship of the authors was extraordinary. They were connected by love for literature and art, and by portraying life around them. They are often criticized for influencing each other, however, James influenced Wharton more. He was her teacher and a good friend. He was giving her advise on many of her works. However, his influence cannot be proved. Her style might be similar, she may have chosen same background for her novels, but she always puts something of her own style into her writing, otherwise, she would not obtain the Pulitzer Prize for literature for *The Age of Innocence*. According to Rulland and Bradbury, Wharton exceeds James with precise knowledge of social life and with more intensive feeling of lack of social freedom (Rulland. 232).

1. Henry James – The Portrait of a Lady

The role of women in the Western world and their position in society has changed dramatically over the last one hundred and thirty years. Nowadays, Western women have the opportunity of education, employment and a choice of lifestyle. Certainly, society still limits women, as well as men in some areas. However, the limitations are not as strict for women as they used to be. Women are more emancipated, better educated and have a significant independence in choosing the field of employment that they wish to enter. Many women hold lead ship positions, and they can become rich without relying on their husbands. Unfortunately, at the time when Henry James wrote the novel *The Portrait of a Lady*, the situation of women was not as advanced as it is now. In general, women had limited rights according to both law and society. Even nowadays, the situations is not ideal for many women and opinions about women are still not pleasant “Although women comprise a majority of the population, they nonetheless are often treated like a minority group – assigned a definite ‘place’ in the social order, denied access to careers...and viewed as dependant, weak, and submissive by ‘nature’” (Chafe. 258). The situation of women differs in comparison with James’s heroine, however, millions of American women according to Chafe are still prevented from complete freedom and equality on account of gender, race or class (261). The struggle over reaching women’s independence was very slow and long process. The Victorian women were mostly devoted to their home and family matters and caring for their husbands. To work or have other kinds of activities outside the house was unthinkable. The Industrial Revolution, economics and politics all changed the situation throughout the Western world from about mid-19th century that led to the roles of women beginning to change. Previously focused primarily on childbearing and housekeeping; women’s roles gradually expanded to all spheres of life including education, science, economy plus many others.

1.1 Independence and freedom of single girls

Henry James started his career as a writer among these changes; he tried to realistically describe women’s feelings and struggles with those changes. His novel *The Portrait of a Lady* tells the story of Isabel Archer amidst late 19th century society while she goes through her early years of courtships and who eventually marries. Isabel is a

single modern American who tries to break the conventional rules of the Victorian society; she tries to educate herself, reads widely and attempts to gain experience from travelling to Europe. Victorian morality was a “set of social ideas widely influential among the privileged classes of England and America” (Boyer. 683), however in America they started to free themselves of its influence at the end of the 19th century, and “by 1900 the Victorian social and moral ethos was crumbling on every front” (696). James seems to show the beginning of the change in his heroine Isabel. She is first presented to the reader through the talk of three men: Mr. Touchet, an American who has lived a long time in England and is enjoying the autumn of his life; Ralph Touchet, the son of Mr. Touchet, who suffers from tuberculosis and cannot fully enjoy his own life, and Lord Warburton, an English lord and friend of the Touchets. They have received a telegram from Mrs. Touchet informing them that she will “return England with niece” (Portrait. 13). They do not know much about Isabel but are very interested in her. Mr. Touchet has not even met Isabel yet, but would like to protect her. He tells Lord Warburton that he would not like him to marry her and he will only introduce her to him, if he does not fall in love with her. The expectation occurs here that later Lord Warburton will fall in love with Isabel. At this moment, he is not thinking about marriage, he would only like to make the acquaintance of an interesting woman, and Isabel seems interesting to him. She is young, independent and she is from America, where girls are reared differently than in England. American girls were brought up with more freedom and independence than English girls, as William Veeder in his essay *The portrait of a Lack* suggests that women in American society showed more freedom and daring of mind (102). The Victorian rules affected American society; however they tried to free themselves from the ties to Europe and its traditions. The definition of freedom can have different meanings for different people with some having an idealized vision of freedom, as Isabel also had.

Isabel is young lady who charms all three men with her intelligence and high spirit. All fell in love with her at once, each one in his own way. Joe Porte refers to her influence over the men “Who can resist this self-reliant representative of imperious American femininity?...She winds a noble English lord around her finger; a strong-minded American businessman... [and] a wealthy expatriate American banker is persuaded to leave her a fortune” (Porte. 2-3). Her influence shows how the modern

state of mind affects the old English convention, but also the American character who is not convenient to the new. Lord Warburton tells Ralph that this is a woman who is of great interest to him. Isabel is said to be the most intelligent and the only one unmarried. She is found in a dark study reading a book and dreaming about life, when the opportunity of travelling and gaining experiences arises. She is very keen and decides to go with her aunt, Mrs. Touchet.

Isabel is independent as James mentions several times, however she someone close to fill the place of her lost mother and father. Mrs. Touchet is the first person who tries to become close to her and to begin to understand her. However, she is soon replaced by Madame Merle, who guides Isabel to adulthood as well as partly by Ralph whose friendship and intentions are not motherly, but still cares a great deal. Isabel was at the marriageable age, she was twenty, however she did not have many opportunities to find a husband in America even though, there was a large number of boys coming to call on her sisters,

But as a general thing they were afraid of her; they had a belief that some special preparation was required for talking with her. Her reputation of reading a great deal hung about her like the cloudy envelope of a goddess in an epic; it was supposed to engender difficult question, and to keep the conversation at a low temperature (Portrait, 25)

The education of ladies was not an ordinary situation in the 1870s and majority of the female members of high society did not educate themselves in institutions. The public schools and colleges were slowly developing but the endorsement of educating women formally was even slower. Isabel was not the most beautiful of the three sisters, but that was apparently not the reason why men were afraid of her. Instead they were afraid of her knowledge, and of the fact that as an intelligent and educated woman, she might not fulfil the traditional role of wife who stays at home and looks after children. Such a wife would want to educate herself more, would want to lead conversation with other educated women and would rather forget where her 'place' is. Women in Colonial America "were taught to be moral, pious, devoted, subservient, and nurturant" (Chafe. 258), educated woman had a broader view of the world and life which might not want to fulfil roles such as that of a subordinate wife.

Isabel was far from the ideal woman of that era. Leonore Davidoff talks about the ideal English woman, which could also be applied to American culture.

The feminine ideal was to be dependant, young, weak and childlike, encouraged by the widening age gap between spouses, for by mid century (19th), in the upper middle class, husbands were on average six years older than their wives. These strongly contrasted masculine and feminine identities were observed in clothes, colouring, objects of use, parts of the house (Davidoff. 84).

Dependency is characteristic of traditional Victorian girl. Isabel no desire to be dependant on anyone, she would like to pay all her expenses for the European trip. She had no idea about the little money she owned, her father left her almost none, the state of which her Aunt Lydia did not tell her. She left her in the belief that she pays everything for herself. Cousin Ralph would like to see her independent in all cases, and therefore he persuaded his father to leave Isabel a huge amount of money in his will. Thus, after her Uncle's death Isabel becomes rich, although she did not know what to do with her money. She would like to have someone who would take care of the money, and to whom it would be useful. Later in the novel, she believes that Osmond Gilbert is the "man to whom her fortune will be of real service" (Krook. 718). James shows Isabel's independency, however also her dependency on the traditional roles. He was conscious of the change of women's roles, but also the difficulty it brought to the women and to society. Money allows Isabel to be comfortable to make the decision to marry Osmond. Holland supports this idea "she [Isabel] recognizes that she never would have married him 'but for the money'. Her money had been the contribution to the marriage that appealed to her 'maternal strain'" (Holland. 741). Isabel was certainly not ideal Victorian girl, who was, as Cruikshank suggests, as angel or fairy kept in a safe place hidden from reality (Cruikshank. 4).

Experience of single girls is often gained through traveling to Europe. James's characters travel to Europe also in his other novel *Washington Square*, where Doctor Sloper travels with his daughter Catherine. He "travelled in considerable splendour and found so much in art and antiquity to interest him, that he remained abroad, not for six months, but for twelve" (*Washington Square*. 157). His main purpose was to show his daughter everything whilst making her forget about her lover. After coming back he interprets why he did so. His opinion explains why many Americans did go to Europe, "I have done a mighty good thing...in taking you abroad; your value is twice as great, with all the knowledge and taste that you have acquired...now you have seen everything, and appreciated everything, and you will be the most entertaining

companion” (162), this shows what Europe meant to Americans, in old culture of Europe they saw education and experience. As well as Catherine, Isabel also had a problem with “the inability to tell the fictitious from the real. But that is why James sent her to Europe” (Porte. 15), again Europe serves as means of education and experience. Person receives broader vision of the world and would be able to recognize reality of the world after visiting Europe. However, the results of Isabel’s and Catherine’s later actions were different after experiencing Europe. Catherine’s father reached his aim. She forgot about her lover, but she did not marry at all. Isabel did gain experience, however she followed the traditional role and married. Unfortunately, she did not realize that she chose a wrong man. Europe represented an experience and access to knowledge, which apparently could not be acquired anywhere in America. The European culture, art and architecture are much older than that of America, and it is thought that from these old things a person can gain much knowledge for the future. Shute expresses her opinion about European experience and American innocence, where Europe has long history and firmly established social traditions, while America is described as a new country (Shute. 12). Catherine’s and Isabel’s travelling to Europe can also be seen as a good way how to lose idealism, “the sort of ‘sentimental idealism’ which, as everyone knows, is the weaker side of the American national character” (Krook. 716). Henry James also moved to Europe in his adulthood, after having been taken there by his parents as a child, just as Isabel was. Margaret Oliphant who states that “old-fashioned scenery of countries which were...great powerful before America was ever heard of, is both amusing and impressive” (Oliphant. 374-383). Her opinion might explain why American people were visiting Europe. She also writes about what she finds unpleasant in Europeans that they are apparently unaware of the beauty around them and many things they do not notice, she points out the way “they inspect our antiquities...with the view of showing that we ourselves are unable to appreciate” (374-383). James chose to portray Europe and Americans living there, especially in *The Portrait of A Lady*. His opinions about America as a source of art were not positive, “No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight as is happily the case with my dear native land” (Introduction to The Europeans. 13), James

tried to write about his native land, but apparently did not feel that the novels were good enough, so he concentrated on Europe as the setting for his novels. Part of *The Portrait of a Lady* is set in Italy, where James started writing and finished the novel there. Many statements in the novel show that he appreciated Italy and Italian art more than that of America. He often uses his characters to represent his opinion. One of the reasons why he sent Isabel to stay in Italy might be because of his love for Italy.

Naivety is other from traditional characteristics of a Victorian girl. Isabel in her nature was a bit naive, or it can also be called inexperienced. She was very literate, she knew a lot from books, however the novels did not necessarily portray real life. Mr. Touchet tries to explain to her, when she was asking him about behaviour of people towards young ladies “I don’t know about the novels...It sometimes appears as if the young women in the lower class were not very well treated; but I guess their position is better in the upper class” (*Portrait*. 53). Mr. Touchet was right in observing English society. The young girls of lower classes had to work to survive, they did not have the variety of jobs, as women have nowadays. Usually they worked in manual jobs for the households.

Isabel was lucky to move in the upper classes. Mr. Touchet tells her “I never took much notice of the classes. That’s the advantage of being an American here; you don’t belong to any class...some of them are pretty comfortable - especially towards the top” (*Portrait*. 54). One could think that because Isabel was an American the British classes were not so important for her. However, she came to England and she was forced to obey the rules of the British upper class. Once when she wanted to stay to talk to Ralph and Lord Warburton in the evening at Gardencourt (the Touchet’s country house), Mrs. Touchet was present as the chaperone, it was late and she desired to go to bed asking Isabel to “bid the gentlemen good night” (62), Isabel did not want to go, however after her aunt’s words “You can’t stay alone with the gentlemen. You are not - you are not at Albany, my dear” (62), she went to bed. This accident shows that single young ladies of the upper class could not stay with men alone, without married woman present. Isabel did not know the rules of English higher society, she tried to break them, but it was meaningless. Among other rules is that young ladies could not go alone anywhere, Isabel wanted to visit London with her friend Henrietta, which she confided to Ralph. He had great fun out of it. Isabel objected that with Henrietta she could go

anywhere, because “she has travelled over the whole American continent and she can surely find her way about this simple little island” (117). Isabel did not understand that the problem lays in the habits and rules, which a person in upper society should adhere to. The rules of social etiquette in America were certainly more relaxed, judging from Henrietta’s travelling all over the continent alone. Ralph being a proper gentleman, offered to go with the two ladies, without explaining to Isabel the true reasons for his trip. One of James’s intentions was apparently to show some of the differences between the American and European societies.

Isabel had several theories. One of her theories was that she “was very fortunate in being independent” (48), and her opinions or theories in the question of marriage were “that it was very vulgar to think too much about it”(49), which shows her low opinion on marriage, supported also with “a woman ought to be able to make up her life in singleness, and that it was perfectly possible to be happy without the society of a more or less coarseminded person of another sex” (49). Her ideas suggest that she did not want to marry immediately but she wanted to expand her mind and enjoy her independence. Single women can be happy and do not have to rely on men. In Britain there were changes in marriage patterns and “the proportion of women never married seems to have fluctuated between 9 and 12 per cent in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; it reached rather over 10 per cent by the mid-nineteenth century and more than 14 per cent in the first third of the twentieth” (Anderson. 28). Although Isabel was not British, she started to change initially the change was slow, but Henrietta noticed it. She would do all possible to prevent Isabel from changing more towards British culture “She is not the bright American girl she was. She is taking different view, and turning away from her old ideals. I want to save those ideals” (Portrait. 112). She asked Ralph for help to have Isabel marry an American, but Henrietta’s intentions came to ruin, and a striking element is that at the very end of the novel she marries an English man herself. She must have been influenced and changed by the European culture as well as Isabel was.

James stresses independence in Mrs. Touchet who is a married woman. She travels a lot and communicates by means of telegrams without giving any details to her husband and son. Her independence is presented several times, “She likes to do everything for herself, and has no belief in any one’s power to help her” (14). She goes

away from her husband and child and comes back again. Husband and wife are virtually separated, she hates all English things and she mostly resides in Italy, while her husband spends his time in England. When Isabel comes to the house the Mr. Touchet asks where did she leave his wife, and there is another mention of Mrs. Touchet's independence in Ralph's saying, "I suppose the young lady has left her somewhere: that's a part of the independence" (15). She liked to do things in her specific way, she brought a niece and did not introduce her to her husband and son, and she did not come to greet them before she retired to her room. It seems strange after a long absence from home that it might also show the strength of her love for her husband. She only "came once a year to spend a month with her husband" (21), which does not appear to be long enough. The independence for Mrs. Touchet means to be away from her husband and child whenever she wants, it may draw attention to what James thought about the American upper-class ladies and about the modernity the changes in society were bringing.

1.2. Proposals and refusals

Isabel received several proposals in very short time and was not prepared to accept them. Caspar Goodwood, the first man to propose to her before leaving America. He loved her and thought she was extremely beautiful, no matter what others thought about her. He wished to marry her but she refused him. She was not like her sister, who seemed to be a proper married woman, caring about her husband and two children whilst expecting a third. Her sister fulfilled the traditional role of Victorian woman, of wife and mother, as one writer wrote, "the home is the wife's province, it is her natural field of labor" (Boyer. 685). Isabel, symbolising the modern advancement of women's roles, had greater ideas and dreams about her future life and she wanted to see Europe, as did many Americans at that time. Isabel had other proposals soon after her arrival to Europe; one from Caspar who followed her to Europe and another from Lord Warburton who fell in love with her. She refused both of them.

Looking at the proposals closely shows why Isabel did not choose an English Lord or a prosperous American, but an ordinary older American man, who settled in Italy. Her first proposal from Caspar Goodwood is only suggested at the beginning of the novel, he thought about her a good deal, "He was supposed by the world in general to wish to marry her, but this of course was between themselves" (34). Henry James

does not describe the proposal in detail, there is no written conversation between these two and the reader can only imagine what has happened. Isabel liked Caspar, she thought he is “quite a magnificent man” (34), however she was embarrassed in front of him, she hesitated to see him and really did not expect him to come to see her. Suddenly, the servant brought the card with his name, and soon after Caspar was leaving “with the feeling of a man defeated” (34), but not “discouraged” (34). The last word could suggest that he will propose to Isabel again, although he would have to go to find her in Europe. Luckily, he found a companion who supported him in his intention of marrying Isabel. The one was Henrietta, who wanted Isabel to marry an American, because she wanted her to stay truthful to her American ideas. She found that Isabel was losing them, she was becoming subordinate to the English standards, and Henrietta did not like that, “you have changed, ...you are not the girl you were a few short weeks ago”, she would tell her (92).

Henrietta announced Caspar’s arrival to England and to Isabel. The latter was not happy about the news and felt uneasy for next two days, when the letter came from Caspar saying that he “did not accept it [dismissal]” (93), and that he would like to persuade Isabel to marry him “I had come to see you with the hope that you would let me to bring you over to my conviction” (93). The letter also explains the reasons why he is doing so, what forces him to come over the sea. He came only to see her “I shall always think of you; I shall never think of anyone else...I hated the country because you were not in it” (93). That certainly demonstrates his love for Isabel. Unfortunately his love was not reciprocated. Although, she was certainly not indifferent to him “[he] had a character of which it was useless for her to try to persuade herself that the impression on her mind had been light” (95). She apparently could not decide, she was confused about her feelings because of a lack of knowledge about the subject of love. Nobody has told her about what to do in this situation, what she should expect from men, and from love. She was not educated in this way; it was one of a mother’s primary functions to prepare a daughter for marriage as Davidoff suggests in the essay *The Family in Britain*. Unfortunately, Isabel lacked a mother who would prepare her for future life. Her father tried hard, but somehow forgot about this subject, “many girls were educated at home by mothers, elder sisters or governesses” (Davidoff. 101), and therefore they “were so sheltered from worldly knowledge as to make the basic facts of economic as well as the

sexual life a mystery” (102). Towards the beginning of twentieth century the situation started to change through education, however the beliefs “that childhood should be a period of innocence, untainted by the pollution of sexuality...continued to be an obsession” (103). This can be said about Britain as well as America, where the situation was very similar. Isabel is a perfect example of ingeniousness that this kind of education caused among young girls. She was innocent as the young girls should be. However, her innocence would lead her to a disastrous marriage.

The proposals made Isabel confused. She did not even put the letter from Caspar into her pocket when Lord Warburton appeared in front of her and also proposed to her.

I felt in love with you then. It was at first sight, as the novels say; I know now that is not a fancy-phrase, and I should think better of novels forevermore. Those two days I spent here settled it; I don't know whether you suspected I was doing so, but I paid - mentally speaking, I mean - the greatest possible attention to you. Nothing you said, nothing you did, was lost upon me. When you came to Lockleigh the other day - or rather when you went away - I was perfectly sure. Nevertheless, I made up my mind to think it over, and to question myself narrowly. I have done so; all these days I have thought of nothing else. I don't make mistakes about such things; I am a very judicious fellow. I don't go off easily, but when I am touched, it's for life. It's for life, Miss Archer, it's for life. (Portrait. 97-98)

She might have realized that Warburton did not know what he truly wanted from his life and what path he would take. Isabel was not sure about it herself. She wanted to be free and independent, however in what sense she did not really know. She was probably looking for someone who would secure her and protect her from the rest of the world, as in her childhood her father had. Such a person should be settled, able to provide a secure place for her and also be able to show her the position she should take in life and in society. None of her present suitors offered her such a position. Several phrases in the novel illustrate Warburton's insecurity and lack of irresolution. Ralph tells Isabel “he is all in the muddle about himself...he doesn't know what to believe in”(Portrait. 67). Isabel did not want to have a man who did not provide security for her. Warburton offered Isabel merely the “common lot in a comfortable sort of way” (123) and it was not enough for her. She did not want anything common, she expected something extraordinary, something what would strike her. One of the reasons for her refusal could be that he offered her only common life. Her hope for extraordinary life is part of her American character. With the industrial and economical boom, new inventions and

technologies the Americans hoped for better future. James might have wanted to show how the hopes can be false. Of course, he did not know that worse things were to come such as two world wars, followed by the depression of the 1930s. However, it seems that Isabel had great ideas and hopes but worse things were to come such as her marriage to a horrible man, her awakening to reality and her depression.

To receive two marriage proposals one straight after the other would be too much for anyone, not only for a young inexperienced girl. Isabel was not totally against marriage, “deep in her soul lay a belief that if a certain light should dawn, she could give herself completely” (50), but she was not prepared yet and therefore “this image...was formidable not attractive” (50) at the moment for her. She was not ready for the marriage yet, she was “planning out her own development, desiring her own perfection” (p. 50). The marriage was not banned in the modern American society, only the roles of women were changing. The woman was not only to be the wife and mother, but also a member of working society. Women did not want to be stuck in their households; they wanted to expand their roles to other fields of life. Isabel can be understood as a symbol of the expansion, however the change of women’s roles in 1870s was in its infancy, and as well as many of her contemporaries, Isabel felt confused about her role. One side of the problem is the traditional Victorian conception of the marriage and a woman’s role in it, and the other side is the hope for change, for integrating woman into what is primarily a man’s field of life.

Next to Isabel’s plans laid her fear, her “sense of danger...related to her ideas on marriage, to the conventional proposals of marriage she receives from her three suitors, and to the fatality of money” (Mazzella. 601). Because of her fear of marriage she postponed it and so planned to travel far away from those who remind her of the marriage and those who want to see her as a married woman. Isabel was rather overlooking the pressures from the society for the marriage, she was not really at home in the English society, according to which she was almost in the marriageable age. The age for marriage was “for the late 1850s ...24.4 for men and 22.9 for women” (Anderson. 32). There were of course differences in the ages of marriage, according to regional and also occupational reasons. On the family farms there were delays in the marriages, and professionals delayed marriage one or two years as Anderson describes in his study.

Both the men, Goodwood and also Warburton, use the same tool to attract Isabel, they talk about the things she likes, one of them about the novels and the other about the country where she is staying at the moment. Her intentions were not to go back to America, at least not soon that can be judged from the statement “I like it [England] this way” (Portrait. 100). Caspar tries to attract her attention in the letter “If I like this country at the present, it is only because you are here. I have been to England before, but I have never enjoyed it much” (93). Both of the men appear to be saying ‘I will do everything for you, only please marry me,’ none of them is interested if she feels the same way. That refers to their lack of understanding for the opposite sex, which might be reason Isabel refused both of them. When she told Warburton “how little you know me”, his reaction is the reaction of a cruel man, he goes for what he wants and does not take consideration of her feelings or her wants “if you will be my wife, then I shall know you” (98). He does not care what would happen if he would not like her later. He asks her, “You do like me rather, don’t you?” He does not want to take into account the possibility she might not like him. She refuses him as she refused Caspar. Only one difference occurs in the refusal. To Warburton she does not give any hope for changing her mind, but to Caspar she apparently did as he did not feel defeated. Warburton does not want to believe to her refusal. She is trying to get the dialog over with many excuses “I don’t think I should suit you...I am not sure I wish to marry any one...I am afraid I can’t make you understand...I ask you to say no more about this today...I think you had better go” (101-102). Isabel felt nervous from the fact that it did not seem difficult to refuse him. It seemed rather easy.

Important questions occur, what is she expecting will be better from her future life, which other man would she want if not a rich and loving one? She liked Warburton, but something was telling she would not to be satisfied with him, that something better was waiting for her. She was not sure what kind of better. Isabel needed advice from someone more experienced than her and her choice was Mr. Touchet. The old man understood her well, he knew that she was confused by the situation, she was in. He helped her to make her decisions, encouraging her that she should do what she wishes and that she does not have to give reasons for her behaviour to anyone. She does not have to explain why she decided to refuse Lord Warburton, but by refusing him she protected her independence and freedom.

Isabel's refusals can have another explanation. She was afraid of men, of their sexuality and masculinity. The refusals can have an erotic colouring. She feared the idea of sexual act with Warburton and also with Goodwood. She refused Warburton "for logical and not amorous reasons" (Mazzella. 613), as was already, said she could not imagine life with him. However, Goodwood's "adoration is of another kind...the American's presence embodies a complex sexual force" (Bradbury. xviii). She was attracted to Goodwood from the beginning, she finds him "monotonously masculine" (Edel. 259). Despite that, she also feared him; she feared that she will be touched by his sexuality. In her opinion "passion, or sex, is not freedom" (259), and freedom was what she most wanted and valued at that moment. She felt that Goodwood wants to possess her and that "her freedom will be lost through erotic possession" (Mazzella. 609). She did not want to be limited in her freedom. The reason why she decided to refuse him is because she was afraid "that she would yield to him fully as she would no one else" (609). Isabel fully realizes his erotic presence and her fear of it at the end of the novel while he is persuading her to stay with him and he gives her the kiss. In the version of the *Portrait of a Lady* from 1997 there is only one sentence about the kiss "His kiss was like a flash of lightning; when it was dark again she was free" (*Portrait*. 544). It makes it seem almost unimportant, and does not give much explanation of how she felt about the kiss; in the revised version, which Mazzella was using, James reveals more to the reader about the kiss

His kiss was like white lightning, a flash that spread, and spread again, and stayed; and it was extraordinary as if, while she took it, she felt each thing in his hard manhood that had least pleased her, each aggressive fact of his face, his figure, his presence, justified of its intense identity and made one with this act of possession. So had she heard of those wrecked and under water following a train of images before they sink. But when the darkness returned she was (Mazzella 610).

It can be felt that she is afraid of becoming the possession of a man, that she has sex with. She might also be threatened by "being 'touched' with love madness" which means for her "a distortion of the human. She wants to be admired but not 'touched' sexually" (Porte. 20). That may be why she was on such good terms with Ralph. She knows that he admires her, she might also know that he loves her, however she also knows that he would never touch her sexually, and therefore she was 'safe' with him.

Mentioning safety, she would have to feel something similar for Osmond; she would not marry him while being afraid of him and of his sexuality. Apparently, the vision of him as a father made her feel that she will also be safe with him, because he would behave to her as to his daughter. The sexual part of the marriage cannot be found, it is hidden in the gap James put in the novel.

The refusals were not the same. The first one is not described in detail. However, Isabel apparently did not tell to Caspar strictly enough, that she does not want to marry him. She left herself a contingency for the future, she told him that she could not discuss the question of their marriage because she is busy “with the idea of going to Europe with her aunt” (Portrait. 107). The reason, he followed her to England, was in hope that while being there her mind would not be occupied with thoughts other than their marriage. Consequently, the refusal of her other suitor, was a written one in the form of a letter where she clearly stated “I do not find myself able to regard you in the light of a husband...We see our lives from our own point of view...and I should never be able to see mine in the manner you proposed” (109). She must have been surer about not wanting to marry Warburton, because her refusal was clearer, in the written form, allowing a person to read it again and again to understand it. It was “neat refusal” (137) as Lord Warburton told his friend Ralph. Isabel saw marrying Lord Warburton as giving up “the peace, the kindness, the honour, the possessions, a deep security and a great exclusion” (125). Apparently she did not value those qualities as highly as she valued her freedom and independence. James may seem here to give a message to girls and young women not to marry only for the security of someone with a good social position and lots of money but to marry for love is much more important.

Isabel’s refusals brought much disapproval among her family and friends. Mrs. Touchet was among them, however after Isabel’s explanation “I don’t love Lord Warburton enough to marry him” (128), she agrees that Isabel did the right thing. Ralph is also rather glad of what Isabel told him about Warburton, who “was too perfect...he is too good for me. Besides his perfection would irritate me” (138). Isabel is sure that she does not want to marry Warburton; however she is also sure she does not want to marry at all until she has seen Europe. The reader could await the next proposal from Caspar while he came to Europe only because of Isabel. Caspar was angry that Isabel did not answer his letter, she expressed herself that her “silence was deliberate” and she

“thought it best” (143). Again she did not deliberately tell him that she does not want him, her words seem to try to keep him as an alternate marriage option telling him, “If you would only try and banish me from your mind for a few months” (144). This means that she had some feelings for him, but still she was not sure of them and therefore she wanted to wait. Caspar asks the important question about marrying him in the future. Her answer is not pleasant “assuredly not, if I feel as I feel at present” (145). Here it seems that she has finally made her mind up and she becomes sure about the refusal “I don’t want to marry. I shall probably never marry...I can’t marry you simply to please you.” (145-146). During this part of the novel Isabel seems not to want to marry at all, she might have distinct reasons. She might also be fed up with the proposals at that moment, as they were unexpected and frequent. The proposals came from persons she did not dislike, but neither was she in love with them. It was not her secret wish to marry any of these men, which may be the other reason of refusing them. She might have wanted to choose her own man whom she would want to marry, who would attract her immediately, and with whom she would fall in love.

During Isabel’s travels she forgets all about her previous suitors. She did not expect anyone else to come. She did not know what her friend Madame Merle prepared for her. To see and understand the role of Madame Merle in the novel, the word Merle should be defined. It means a blackbird and the symbolism for this bird is that it has the “melodious song” which make it “a symbol of the darkness of sin” (Swyrich Corporation). When Isabel meets Merle for the first time she hears the piano and discovers a lady behind it, who played “remarkably well” (Portrait. 160). Isabel liked the sound of music. While talking to Merle Isabel finds out that she also has “a charming manner” (162), and also her figure makes a great impression on Isabel. Merle seems to be “an ideal combination” of “woman of ardent impulses, kept in admirable order” (163). Ralph agreed with Isabel that Merle is a “complete” (164) lady. Even though not pretty she looks perfect, and she astonishes Isabel. She takes her as an idol. When their friendship develops, she is happy to have such a friend. Merle had a feeling for art as Isabel did which only makes Isabel even more interested in her. Merle’s heightened interest in Isabel comes with the news that she has inherited a large sum of money. No one expects what are her aims, because she presents herself in so polished way and does not reveal one of her secrets. Neither Isabel, who was so close to her, can

sense her plans. Isabel is drawn to Merle also because she sees this lady as a woman who is “worldly-wise and accomplished...who has the appearance of freedom” (Edel. 259), which are reasons Isabel actually came to Europe, to gain freedom and experience by travelling. So she felt that this lady could help her to reach her own goals. Madame Merle and her world “polished, perfect, beautiful without a fault, mysterious, exciting, treacherous, repellent, and at bottom, like Isabel, identically betrayed” (Gass. 711). However Isabel could not see to the bottom of Merle’s life. Merle does not talk about her past, and Isabel in her blindness, has to experience her betrayal by herself.

Merle’s intentions with Isabel seem to be saintly from the beginning. The reader is informed that Merle would like to introduce her Italian friend to Isabel. First mention of him comes soon after their meeting. He is presented as a man of “no career, no name, no position, no fortune, no past, no future, no anything” (Portrait. 183). It appears that Merle wanted to introduce to Isabel a man who is a complete opposite of those who proposed to her before. She hopes that this kind of man could attract Isabel to such an extent that she would marry him. Isabel did not realize what is hidden behind Merle’s intentions at that time. Merle wanted to gather something for herself out of the marriage. Before Isabel and Osmond meet for the first time, the reader learns about Osmond’s pleasant appearance, his “luminous intelligent eye, an eye which expressed both softness and keenness” (212), and about his adoration for his daughter. The only negative characteristic is that he is indolent. Merle works on her plan with no delay. She describes Isabel to him and tries to make him interested in the woman she chose for him, he seems to take interest only in that the woman is “beautiful, clever, rich, splendid, universally intelligent and unprecedentedly virtuous” (222). Further he is assured about her wealth and prettiness. He still does not understand why Merle wants him to marry her. Merle persuades him to see and judge Isabel for himself, that he will perceive the importance. Madame Merle’s actions become reasonable to the reader almost at the very end of the novel, when he/she discovers that Pansy is Merle’s daughter. It is actually the reason why Merle was acting behind the scenes.

Isabel seems to sense some connection between Merle and Osmond, after Merle reminded Isabel that she should meet Osmond. Isabel “wondered a little what was the nature of the tie that united them [Merle and Gilbert]” (227). Isabel must have felt something peculiar, however, she did not think long about it. Merle was all mysterious

and no one could see what she had on her mind. Osmond impressed Isabel on their first meeting with his delicacy, his sensitiveness, his fine look and colourless manner. He did not have any of Warburton's money and position in society. He did not even have any of Goodwood's Americanism, freedom and poverty. Isabel was again confused, because she had never met a man who impressed her like Osmond had. Isabel sought Ralph's opinion on Osmond, however did not find much, only that he was "a mysterious American...a poor gentleman" (230) and that he had "a great dread of vulgarity" (230), again features that none of her previous suitors had. They were not mysterious. You could find out everything about them, about their childhood and their families. They were both rich. She thought that Osmond could live happily without a great fortune. Finally and not the least they seemed not to be afraid of anything; however Osmond showed his anxiety about his daughter and also his caring nature. James gives the impression to the reader that from Osmond's house there is no escape, once you get inside, which Mazzella also writes about "a sense of being trapped" (Mazzella. 604). Unfortunately, Isabel could not feel that. Osmond talks to Isabel about the beauty of Italy and art, about his past, how poor he was and about his misunderstanding with his sister. He draws a very sensible picture of himself. He shows his shyness, he is critical of himself and he is also interested in Isabel's feelings. The whole scene when he is talking to her, his daughter is present and is holding her father's hand, which gives Isabel a feeling of paternity and safety.

Isabel's family and friends suspect that something is happening between her and Osmond but they did not know how correct they were. Mrs. Touchet likes Osmond but despite this she hopes that Isabel does not get involved with him. Ralph has the same opinion, however these are only conjectures and nobody asks Isabel about the truth. She starts to fall in love, without her consciously knowing it. She could not get his picture out of her mind and was defeated by his subtlety. While she was preparing for a trip to Rome, she expressed her intentions to Osmond. He conveyed his desire to come to see her there. He also expressed his passion for Isabel to Merle. He felt that Isabel matters to him as well, and after finding out that she refused the English Lord, he feels the greatness of success, for which he was longing his whole life. He experienced fatherhood but together with it also singleness, and it is understandable that after a long time alone he would like to have someone next to him. Someone like Isabel, "he had

waited all these years because he wanted only the best” (Portrait. 283). She was the perfect opportunity, she had all he expected from a woman and on the top she brought her fortune as a prize.

Isabel was preparing the trip around the world and Osmond prepared a trap. He tries to speak to her in very soft words, although very impressive. His primary aim is to make her believe that she is doing what she wants. The mistake his predecessors made was persuading her what they wanted. He rather tells her to go and do whatever she wants, “you are under no obligation to come back; you can do exactly what you choose; you can roam through the space...I should like to see you when you are tired and satiated” (284). He knows about her big ideas and about her desire for independence, and also that it would be useless to try to and marry her before she feels herself satisfied. She would always have desire to leave him and find out what she could not do before, when she was single. He is an experienced man and knows that he has to be patient. He waits for her as he has already waited his whole life for her. Osmond wants her to know how he feels about her ideas and announces to her that he gives her the freedom of decision “Go everywhere, do everything, get everything out of life. Be happy be triumphant” (286). He decides to tell her he is in love with her and her answer is “Ah, keep that till I am tired” (287). It was a year after her last proposal and she still does not seem to be ready for another one. He repeats himself “in a tone of almost impersonal discretion; like a man who expected very little from it” (287), that might be another reason why he succeeded while the others did not. He pretended to expect nothing. He avoided mistakes the other suitors did, and the trap was set.

Mistakes Caspar and Warburton made included that they expected a lot from their proposals and they expected her to love them the way they loved here leading to her immediately accept their proposals. They offered her marriage, themselves, safety, money and many other things, while Gilbert offers her nothing except himself. Mazzella believes “she responds differently to Osmond’s proposal” (Mazzella. 602), because he offered only himself. With Osmond’s proposal Isabel did not know why but “the tears came into ...[her] eyes - they were caused by an intense throb of that pleasant pain” (Portrait. 287). She felt pain, however it was pleasant. She longed and expected Osmond to propose to her and possibly this was it was so pleasant. However, it was still pain, because she was afraid that this moment would end soon, as she was going for her long

trip. Her anxiety was caused by fear that when she comes back Osmond may not be there and would feel the same way as he does now. Isabel has again some excuses as she had before, she does not know anything about him. She likes the idea they are separating just now. She might want to forget about him while being away, but the impressions he left seem to be deeper than anyone had on her before.

Part of Osmond's plan is knowledge about Isabel's lost father. He sees through her, he seems to know her weak point, that she misses her father. He presents himself as a perfect father and asks her to visit his daughter before leaving for her travels. He counts on her weakness a lot and wins. James does not present Gilbert as a perfect father. The reader knows that his daughter was brought up in the convent and she has to obey her father in all she does, unfortunately Isabel is saved from the knowledge at this stage of the novel. Isabel is suddenly reminded about her father who died not long ago. She was his little girl and while being in England she apparently forgot about missing him. She "feels much more deserted by her father than she realizes" (Habegger. 60), and Osmond must have felt it and draws his plan on it. He was told by Merle about Isabel being an orphan. He tries to show her that he is similar to her father; he also could care about her as her father did and he could give her even more, if she would allow him to become her husband. He would give her love and passion her father used to give her. Watching Osmond and Pansy together, Isabel feels as if her father was back again. She could imagine herself in Pansy's place in Osmond's loon "she abruptly begins to imitate a fifteen-year-old girl's devotion to a forty-year-old father's every whim, and then takes him as her preceptor" (60). She tries to be as Pansy for a while and can imagine Osmond as her husband, when he asks her, she is willing to follow him and become his wife. She discovers much later, that he was acting out all of this. He is a caring father to some extent; however his practices as father are not what she really expected.

Other differences in Osmond's proposal is that he did not really ask Isabel to marry him, he only told her that he loves her, and that she can do whatever she wants. The cause why she decided to marry Osmond and to refuse her previous suitors might as well be because Warburton and Goodwood were

limited by social position and personal circumstances, and instead marries Osmond, who appears to her to be pure personality, having no specific social position and material circumstances to define or fix him. By becoming Osmond's wife, Isabel believes she will elude the fixedness of a

definite social role; instead she finds herself 'ground in the very will of the conventional' (Izzo. 37)

Isabel perceived the limitations of both Warburton and Goodwood. With Warburton, she would have to move among the members of the upper classes, where the rules were strict and she would not be able to behave in her own way or do what she likes. She would have to follow the rules and present herself as his perfect wife, a wife of an English Lord, not as a free ordinary girl, whom she really was. And with Goodwood, she would have to go back to America, back to the shabby world which she did not like much. It was the world without ideas. She would be forbidden to view the books in the library, only dreaming about the world described in the books. She has finally reached such a world, and she would not give it up as easily. On the contrary, Osmond did not have any social position that would be limiting for him and for his wife. He seemed to have free spirit and to be living according to his own rules and conventions. She really valued them and she wanted to try to live such a life, "Isabel marries Osmond to share what she thinks is his point of view, believing that the marriage with him can lead her to the high places of happiness, from which the world would seem to lie below one, so that one could look down with a sense of exaltation and advantage" (Izzo. 37). She finds out too late, that his point of view is not the same as hers, as it appeared before the marriage. His mind is free and he does not follow the rules of the society, but he does not allow her to lead same life. She must obey his rules and live according to him. However, his own rules are much worse than the ones she would have to follow with Warburton or with Goodwood.

1.3. Responsibilities of married women and mothers

Responsibilities of married Victorian women were to be sweet and loving wives, to be a good housekeeper and to bear and raise children. Whilst "excluded from the world of business and commerce, many middle- and upper-class women devoted considerable time and energy to decorating their home" (Boyer. 685) women felt that they need to expand their range of activities, their household was not enough for them at the end of 19th century, the time of changes. "Changing attitudes toward femininity and women's proper role also found expression in gradually shifting ideas about marriage" (702), women no longer believed that the household is their only field after marriage. James makes Isabel's expectations about the marriage great and exaggerated. Osmond

made her feel that she will be free and independent even after the marriage, which was not the traditional conception of marriage of that time. Many women accept the traditional form of marriage, however many evaluated their situation as unacceptable and believed that “women would make an effective contribution to society only when they won economic independence from men through work outside the home” (702). James did not see Isabel’s independency in working outside of the home, but in having great ideas, own opinion, and meeting friends she liked. Many men, but also women were “worried that women’s changing role would lead to a weakening of the family” (1137), and family matters should be on the first place.

Some of the ideas about changing attitudes towards marriage, roles of married women and mothers are presented by James in his novel. The reader experiences Isabel’s marriage and change of her attitudes towards marriage. The conversation between Caspar and Isabel about her marriage with Osmond and the reader does not fully understand how she eventually came to her decision. Nor why she is talking about her decision to Caspar of all the people close to her. She did not open her heart to Ralph, as she did many times before. Ralph received the news about Isabel’s wedding from his mother and was anxious about it. He did not speak to Isabel for three days. It drove her crazy. He warned her then that he did not expect her to be caught and put in the cage. Caspar would like to hear a full explanation of her decision as would Mrs. Touchet. However, Isabel has is herself unsure plus she believes that she does not have to give them any explanations. They all, including Ralph, complain about Isabel marrying a man, who means nothing to society and who has nothing. After refusing an English Lord, they expected her to marry someone greater. Only Isabel does not follow their disappointment, she is happy to marry Osmond, a man who means a lot only to her. She likes him also because he makes her feel that he lets her get to know everything, and as Dorothea Krook says: “At the same time (she [Isabel] also believes) he is a man who in his turn will share her desire for self-development, and by virtue of his superior gifts and accomplishments will contribute everything in the world to the enlargement of her mind” (Krook. 718). She does not listen to any warnings from her friends and family, and she will soon realize how mistaken she was. She thinks she is marrying “a person she likes” (Portrait. 319) and that she is following her “good feeling” (321). Isabel does not sense that she was manipulated into marriage. Merle was

very careful to introduce her to her lover and Osmond very sensitively fulfilled Merle's wish. It may seem that he really loved Isabel, that the money matter caused only the first driving force to catch her.

James intentionally put the gap in the novel where there is no word about the wedding, and about the first years of the marriage. The gap seems to make the novel more interesting, the reader is forced to think what had happened between Isabel and Osmond in the first years of their marriage, what did they do, how did they feel, what has happened to the baby and how was the marriage perceived by the relatives and friends? James makes the reader focused on the subject of the plot and the interest of the reader will force him/her to continue in the reading. The questions might be answered later in the novel. Margaret Oliphant's feelings about the gaps are that, "he [James] leaves us usually tantalised, half angry with an end which is left to our imagination" (Oliphant. 374-383). Reported by Shute, James refuses to tell anything about Isabel's period of change (Shute). Readers might be angry, however the novel leaves impressions on them, which might be what James intended to do, and he apparently did not want his novel to be forgotten immediately after the readers put the book down. He exercises the readers' imagination. It was not only James's opinion that novels should make you think but also Daniel D. Howells's (High. 86). Graham Greene invented this theory about James's ending of the novel, "There is no possibility of a happy ending: this is surely what James always tells us...He presents us with a theorem, but it is we who have to work out the meaning of x and discover that x equals no-way-out" (Greene. 670), and it also explains how James keeps his readers focused and interested in his novels. Although, the readers are forced to think, they also have advantage over Isabel. The readers "know from the start, certain things that Isabel does not know" (Kettle. 673), James could not let Isabel to know the same as the readers know from the beginning "since his purpose is to render the full implications of Isabel's situation" (674).

Absence of Isabel's mother is obvious at the beginning of the novel and several substitutes for her mother appear before her marriage. Isabel could observe several married women, starting with her two sisters and following with Mrs. Touchet, whose married life was extraordinary; later Countess Gemini, who did not have much in common with her husband and thought badly of him. Isabel did not have an example of

ordinary marriage in the traditional sense of the word, as if there had been none at the time of the novel's setting. James never married himself, the reasons he knew only himself. That maybe why he does not describe the ordinary common marriages in his novels, in his letters to his brother William and to Grace Norton he explains why he decided not to marry

I believe almost as much in matrimony for most other people as I believe in it for myself...one's attitude toward marriage is...the most characteristic part doubtless of one's general attitude toward life...If I were to marry I should be guilty in my own eyes of inconsistency—I should pretend to think quite a bit better of life than I really do (Matthiessen. 294-295)

The other explanation of why James did not think highly of the world he lived in could be that “Downtown was the world of the money-makers...uptown represented leisure, largely feminine” (Veeder. 98), James not being Downtown apparently felt not like a real man. He did not want to work in business and whoever was not working in business in New York were women, who stayed uptown just as James did. He must have hated this distinction and therefore wanted to move to England, where he was saved of such distinctions. The situation in New York left marks on him and inclined him more to women from which arises his decision not to marry.

The wedding ceremony is presented only as a simple almost unimportant matter with the presence only of Mrs. Touchet and Ralph, Countess Gemini and Pansy. The life of the groom and the bride James skipped. The plot continues few years after the marriage when Pansy has problems with marriage, and reader finds Isabel and Osmond arguing about certain matters: about Pansy, about her future husband, about Isabel's meetings with Ralph and other friends, and later about Isabel going to England to see dying Ralph. It makes impression that their marriage is not in order. Isabel is slowly finding out that her decision to marry Osmond was flawed. His behaviour changed, he was not anymore the man, who “had always treated her so completely as an independent person” (Portrait. 324). But in reality, he apparently stayed as he always has been. She realized later what kind of person he is, not the one she thought before, the one he presented to her.

Isabel pretended to be Osmond's perfect wife, but on occasions as Lord Warburton discovers, she does not act as the one who has the main decision in their household, which can be seen in the furnishing of the house. Isabel mentions several

times that “It was a taste of Osmond’s own” (337), “that’s not my merit—it’s my husbands” (356). She did not have any chance to do it according to her tastes. Either she did not want to decorate the house or Osmond did not let her. Nowadays, readers can leave those statements without notice, but “during 1880s and 1890s” was “added a new obligation to the traditional woman’s role as director of the house-hold” (Boyer. 685). Although Isabel had modern and great ideas about her future life, she was stuck in the traditional marriage, where the husband took all decision and she was subordinate to him. She also seems to have lost all her ideas, “I have no ideas” (356), she says to Edward Rosier. She apparently did get rid of them as was her husband’s wish or she hid them in the back of her mind. Their life seemed perfect from the outside, “she lives with a certain magnificence, but you needed to be a member of her circle to perceive it, for there was nothing to gape at, nothing to criticize, nothing even to admire, in the daily proceedings of Mr. and Mrs. Osmond” (362), she was meeting only people that Osmond allowed her. He did not want her to meet her old friends, it seems that he was afraid of them. They would be supporting her in her great ideas. However, according to Shute, her great ideas are actually bad in Osmond’s opinion. Those bad ideas are associated with Isabel’s desire for independence (Shute. 14).

Isabel knew she had made a mistake, she should do something about it, and she should try to get out of the marriage. However, her opinion was that “when a woman had made such a mistake, there was only one way to repair it—to accept it” (Portrait 374). This phrase explains why she later accepted her return to Osmond. It shows how much she was influenced by English society and their Victorian ideas. They were followed also in America, however not to such extend. Isabel had an inner struggle, she was not afraid of Osmond but she knew he hated her. He wanted to change her from the beginning, “she had done her best to be what he would like. But she was after all, herself—she couldn’t help that...she had made herself small, pretending there was less of her than there really was” (392). And this all made Osmond hate her in the end. They both made a mistake, they pretended to be someone else in front of others and that ruined their marriage and their relationship. Krook seems to support this idea, stating, “she [Isabel] carries a proper share of the moral responsibility for the disaster that overtakes her” (Krook. 723).

Money causes major conflict. Osmond loved Isabel from the time they first met, not only for the money she brought him. But she discovers that if there had not been money, he would not have married her. It makes her feel worse, almost an unimportant person. He had married her not because of her personality, but because of something that was not even part of her, she did not endorse with the money because she gained it from her uncle. She did not really earn any and did not know the value of it, partly because she did not know what to do with it, how to look after it. Discovery gave her great pain. Awakening made her see “that she has been wrong...Wrong about Osmond, wrong about the source of her wealth; wrong about Madame Merle...wrong above all about the freedom which turns out to be bondage” (Washington. xix). It hurts even more because she believed “that it is she who brings powerful elements into the union; possessed of her wealth, ‘she would launch his boat for him; she would be his providence.’ This is indeed an exalted notion of her role” (Edel. 260). Osmond was a collector. He would like to keep things, because they were pretty. He wanted to keep Isabel, however she was more than only pretty, she had her own personality, she was a human being. According to William H. Gass, Isabel “is a piece of property; her mind is attached to his like a small garden-plot to a deer park” (Gass. 710).

Osmond had high expectations towards Isabel, which contribute to the end of their marriage. They were too high to be fulfilled; “he didn’t wish her to be stupid...he expected her intelligence to operate altogether in his favour...He had [only] expected his wife to feel with him and for him, to enter into his opinions, his ambitions, his preferences...But there were certain things she could never take in” (398), she tried to follow him, she tried to change for him. However, their personalities were differed as they were brought up in different backgrounds. The cracks in their marriage occurred because “he despised her; she had no traditions” (399), she tried to follow his, but it was impossible. She was not the person who would change easily, she had her own mind, but she still was willing to change. Her father taught her to have her own ideas and opinions and for a long time she relied on them. Suddenly, there was someone who put her in a cage and was telling her what to do, but not only that, he also wanted her to adopt his ideas and opinions, “he wished her to have no freedom of mind, and he knew perfectly well” (425) that her close friends were the apostles of freedom, they were supporting her independence as her father used to do. This was the reason Osmond had

not allowed her to meet them. James, in the character of Osmond, followed general idea about women being subordinate to their husbands. Schmiechen writes that women were of less importance not only in public opinion but also in law (Schmiechen. 1). Dorothea Krook's opinion is that Osmond "turned out to be a brute: morally coarse, to the last fibre; cold-hearted; appallingly egotistical; and capable of acts of calculated violence—'mental cruelty'" (Krook. 721). She seems to be right to a certain extent, as James does not let the reader to know what kind of love Isabel and Osmond shared together from the beginning of their marriage. It cannot be said that Osmond did not love Isabel. He wanted her money, but later he may have fallen in love with her. This is doubtful because their early marriage is not mentioned.

Isabel found out about the nature of Osmond's character, however she did not really wanted to leave him. There were cases that wife would leave her husband, but were not common. Victorian society preferred woman to accept her role as wife no matter what her marriage was like. Osmond was egotistical and also cruel as husband and also as father, judging from the way he dealt with Pansy. He did not care about her happiness, only about her fortune. He was also cruel to Isabel. On the other hand he did not want her to leave him, so he must have had some kind of feelings for her. They both agreed that their marriage was not over. Not to have freedom of the mind was not natural for Isabel, being an American woman. She followed the main American ideas; Luther S. Luedtke marks that "America as a promised land, based particularly on pride in American government and political institutions; independence and self-reliance" (Luedtke. 21). However, by being in Europe and being married, her independence was gone. She realizes it consciously, she realizes it is her own fault, and she could blame only herself. It was her decision to marry Osmond and all her friends were warning her. After realising her mistake, "she insists on holding her head high long after her marriage has failed" (Habegger. 58). Leaving Osmond would mean to tell the whole world about her mistake, which she did not want to face, "I can't publish my mistake...I don't like him...I can't tell all the world" (Portrait. 450). She preferred to put a mask on in front all of her friends. Most of her friends knew even before the marriage that it would be a disaster. They were sure about it now. She tried to digest the knowledge that Osmond married her only for the money. She finds herself "caught in the meshes of love-less marriage" (Greene. 668). The possibility to leave Osmond arose, when she wanted to go

to see Ralph in England while he was dying. Osmond was not happy about her decision, he tries to apply his old trick to show her his idea, not to persuade her, but to show her the right way. He wanted to imply to her what she should do, however this time, his effort did not have an immediate result. By obeying Osmond's wish James makes many readers happy. Isabel will be free at the end. She starts to live again upon the idea of going away, because she was only surviving until now. Her old ideas are coming back to her, "Her faculties, her energy, her passion, were all dispersed again" (Portrait. 496), and she became very happy with Ralph in her arms, although there were sad circumstance. He was dying.

Isabel meets Caspar Goodwood again after Ralph's death. He tries to persuade her to stay with him, he offers her everything. The reader might expect that finally she will grasp the chance to be with Caspar, to be freed from her cruel husband. To the reader's surprise and disappointment Isabel denies him and runs away from him. She seems to be afraid of him, or rather of his persuasion; he still has not found the right way to deal with this woman with so many ideas. She must feel free to make her own decisions. Her husband was perfect in leaving her to do what she wanted or at least making her feel that she did what she wanted. His main trick lays in not persuading her, because by persuading she does the opposite, she becomes stubborn. That explains why she came back to him. The other explanation of her decision might be that she wanted to help Pansy to survive. Maybe her maternal feelings were awoken; or she might also finally accept and remember that by closing marriage, she would undergo certain tightening constraints that cannot be untied simply by leaving her husband. According to her thoughts:

Her errand was over, she had done what she left her husband for. She had a husband in a foreign city, counting the hours of her absence; in such a case one needed an excellent motive. He was not one of the best husbands; but that didn't alter the case. Certain obligations were involved in the very fact of marriage (Portrait. 538).

Although her thought was extremely sad, she could not do anything else than to go back to Osmond. Habegger gives his opinion that Isabel went back to Osmond, because she "finds freedom only in the acceptance of traditional forms" (Habegger. 61), this could be one possibility. It also seems rather improbable, "certain obligations were involved in the very fact of the marriage" (538). She did not seem to accept the old tradition of

England, she wanted to be free and independent. She showed it to her aunt, as was already mentioned, on the evening she wanted to stay with Ralph and Warburton talking. The truth is, that finally she accepted her aunt's warning about how the single woman should behave, and went to bed. Maybe Isabel's freedom was only what she thought she wanted, and in the back of her mind was unconscious acceptance of the rules. Caspar's final offer was "an offer of complete freedom and a restoration of independence to Isabel—a typically indulgent American offer to an American woman" (Cargill. 555). Isabel was already Europeanised; she was changed by the culture in which she was moving in and she did not want to go back to her previous culture. The offer could have been thrilling, but also scary, because she would get back to what she left to the extent that she sacrificed her freedom and independence. She had made the decision even before she left Osmond. Coming to Ralph, he asks her if everything was over between her and her husband (Portrait. 531), and she gives him answer "Oh no; I don't think anything is over" (531). That gives feeling that she has to go back, she does not like to leave things open. As the dialogue between them continues, Isabel says that she does not know if she is going back to him. It again seems to leave her decision incomplete. Apparently, she did not mean to leave Osmond at all, she might have thought about it, but she did not mean to do it. She would rather keep her family as a whole, she does not want to break the ties between them. For most people family means mother, father and children, but this was not the same in the 19th century Britain, where "the family was often still conceived as a group of dependants: wife, children, lesser kin, servants and apprentices attached to the household of the masculine head, usually the master/husband/father" (Davidoff. 71). Isabel did not have any other family except her aunt, who had her own life. Her sisters lived in America, and she did not want to go back, and they both had their own families already, so her place was next to Osmond. She did not have her own child, but this could be changed, and there was still Pansy who needed a mother.

Mothers are not portrayed in a good sense in the novel; it would seem that James did not have a good experience with his own mother. However, from his letters to his mother it is obvious that he loved her, he always writes "Dearest mother" (Horne. 36), "dearest mammy" (62), or "beloved mammy" (65) and is showing his love for his mother, as in the letter from 3 May 1874 "If I were at home I would close mother round

her delicate waist” (56), or from a year earlier “I should like to sit between you [his parents] on the sofa, holding a hand of you apiece” (54). The reason, why he portrayed mothers as he did, is ambiguous. Ash thinks that “James’s attitude towards mothers was decidedly ambivalent...he...represented mothers in his fiction as manipulative, self-centred, and often terrifying” (Ash. 123). James might have loved his mother, but it does not change the fact that his mother and father did not encourage James to develop as a writer. According to Veeder “one reason why Henry is in London is to escape the smothering mother” (Veeder. 97). He also gains weight in England and let his mother know about it, to show her that without her care he can develop better, mentally and also physically. His father was also writing and their works were appearing in the same magazine, they were often mistaken for one other. This did not help James’s ego, he was forced to compete within his own family and trying to find his own identity, escaping to books and writing, where he would draw his frustration (Edel. 17-19).

To many people, mother, as a role of a woman would seem the most important of all women’s roles. Isabel’s mother is mentioned only once that she died early in her childhood, and Isabel does not have any memories of her. Her father took the important role of bringing up the children, however Chasseguet-Smirgel observes that, “whatever compensation for the maternal deficit the girl might find in relation to the father, the idealization is programmed ultimately to fail [the father] does not yet have the attributes of the parental role and plays only the role of a substitute for the mother” (Ash. 145), her father tried hard to raise his children, however could not give them all that mother would do. Aunt Touchet seems to be adopting Isabel; however she is too independent for another child. She has one, Ralph, and she seems not to take care of him much, he does not need much care now in the adulthood. How it was before in Ralph’s childhood James does not really mention, only that she was away for most of the year. It is unknown Ralph was taken with her, or if he was staying with his father in England. Mrs. Touchet does not seem to be a good example of a mother.

The fact that Madame Merle is a mother is for a long time hidden from the reader, and very few readers would be able to imagine her as a mother. Only towards the end of the novel is a glimpse of Merle being a mother, while she is talking to Osmond “if I had a child—...There is something, after all, that holds us together” (Portrait. 484). It is not mentioned in this section that Pansy is her daughter but Osmond

does not approve Merle being her mother. He educates Pansy in his own way and by himself. Pansy being Madame Merle's daughter, the reader is informed about this from the mouth of Osmond's sister, Countess Gemini. She informed Isabel about the true relationship between Osmond and Merle, about their lies about Pansy's birth and about her legal mother. The question is: what kind of person Merle is, if she could leave her child plus the child's father and never confess the child being hers. She was close to her, could see her whenever she wanted but she could never behave as her mother, she could never cuddle her. How could she lead Pansy to think, that her mother had died, and at the same time be so close and so frequently with her? Merle must have had a very strong reason not to tell the truth. It might have been because of society, which did not accept bastards. Nor did they accept their mothers. Merle apparently wanted to retain the esteem of high society and be accepted as a good woman, as she finally was. Helena Wojtczak states that raising child out of wedlock is morally more wrong than to marry someone of lower social class (Wojtczak. 9). The other reason could be that Osmond forced her to do it, and then she was so in love with him, to do anything for him. She dedicated her life to him; however, she still was far from him. She left him her child, which might be better for her and also for the child. In this case, Pansy is the legitimate child of a husband and a wife, and nobody could accuse her of being a bastard. The opposite case would have meant an unpleasant life for her, her father and her mother. Society would not have approved. Pansy would be a social outcast, unable to marry a 'decent' man of her class. Illegitimacy "seems to have been closely related to family and community structure and to women's positions within a family and local economy" (Anderson. 37). Illegitimacy occurred more often in lower social classes and, since Merle was moving in the upper classes, tolerance for illegitimacy was much lower. It seems to have been the reason for her decision to leave Pansy with Osmond.

Merle appears to be a strong and steady person, but the reality is different. While meeting Isabel, and as their friendship develops, she seems a very pleasant woman of great characteristics. While her intentions and intrigues are revealed - as well her friendship or rather love for Osmond, her hidden daughter and her secret arrangements with Isabel's marriage - she does not seem as innocent and grand as she did at the beginning of the novel. Indeed, she seems a very cruel person without any feelings, and hunting for money. On the other hand, when one observes her closely, one finds a

lonely woman. She has nothing at all; she does not have any money, her child is with the father, and she cannot give her love. She does not have a husband, nor a lover, as Osmond stays faithful to Isabel after marriage. She finds that she is at the end of life and she did not reach any aims. It is hard to say what her life's aims were. If she had aimed only for her position as a lady in high society, her aim was fulfilled, because it is her present position. However, her aims might have been elsewhere, to have a happy family with nice husband and many children. She also might have wanted to marry Osmond, who had unfortunately never proposed to her. In that case she would have Pansy as well and she would not have to pretend that she is not her mother, and she would be able to give all she wanted, because she did care for her daughter.

Isabel and her role as a mother has not been described by James much, the reader is informed of her having a child, but not much is said about the child. There is a gap of few years in the story. The child died soon after the birth and Isabel does not give any opinion on how she felt, and neither does Osmond. It must have affected both of them, but to what extent, is hidden. To describe Isabel as a mother of her own child is impossible. She still can be seen as a mother, because she actually adopted Pansy. Isabel loved Pansy, and she grew dependant on Isabel. They were together frequently and went to the balls together, where Isabel acted as Pansy's real mother. She would like to help her to get married, because she knows that she cares for one gentleman, Mr. Rosier, who also cares for Pansy. However Osmond does not like the match, apparently because Rosier's position and financial situation is not high enough. He would like his daughter to marry someone like Lord Warburton, with great position and influence in society, and great wealth. Osmond does not care if Pansy likes Warburton or not, he knows that she will do whatever he wants, she will obey him in everything. It seems that he would like to purchase a better life for his daughter, than he has himself ever acquired. Also he would like her to have the money that he had never had. It shows that he did not really like his social position much, as he showed before to Isabel, when he was trying to catch her in his web.

2. The friendship

The similarities between the two novels *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Age of Innocence*, sparks a friendship of their two authors Henry James and Edith Wharton. The novels are both linked by the themes of problems of women in society, marriage and the use of American characters. Rather striking is the choice of the surname of the main characters 'Archer'. Although one is a woman, Isabel Archer, and the other is a man, Newland Archer.

Not only was James a close friend of Wharton, he was also her mentor and critic. She trusted and relied on his words in her carrier. He was the one who told her what theme she should choose for her writings: "Do New York! The 1st-hand account is precious" (Lewis. 1986. vii), and she followed his advice. They traveled together, went for motoring trips and chat about literature and art, but also about problems of private life.

Their friendship did not start immediately after their first meeting. Wharton knew about James and his writing and she read apparently most of his books. She adored him and saw him as a master of art. She wanted to attract him with her appearance, however she did not succeed. He noticed her only about ten years later when she wrote her first major novel *The Valley of Decision*. He became interested in this young female author, and sent her letter about her novel and he both praised and criticized it stating its weaker sides. She did not expect to receive a letter from James, already an experienced writer, who did not pay any attention to her before. Their friendship developed slowly, they were often together, either in his house in English countryside of Sussex, or in The Mount, her house in America. They later began meeting in Paris and while not together they held frequent correspondence, from which not all the letters are preserved, some of the conversation they had are irrevocably lost.

Wharton was not happy with her husband Teddy, because he did not hold her devotion for art and literature. He suffered many depressions, which led to his maniac disease. Wharton wanted to divorce him after more than twenty years of marriage and after their relation "became hardly bearable" (Bell. 148). She reached her aim, although he and his family did not agree and put great pressure on her. James often met her together with Teddy, but it seems that the two men did not share any kind of relationship. James warned Wharton to divorce him as soon as possible, because he was

only using her and making her suffer. James's words "it is the only thing to save her life" (173) show that, he was highly concerned in her case with Teddy. He would like to help, but could not. When hearing the news about the divorce, he commented "lovely" (186).

Among Wharton's other friends was her lifelong friend "her most treasured until his death" (34) Walter Berry New York lawyer, who later became European. She most valued his intelligence. She apparently secretly loved him however there is no evidence about their affair. They shared similar interests in literature and traveling. He was her advisor and also helped her with many of her works. During her later years of depression with Teddy, when she was trying to stay far from him, her unsatisfied passion led her to start an affair with Morton Fullerton. Despite, his mysterious history and his affairs with other women and men, she had many amazing moments in love with him. However, he often disappointed her and she managed to put their affair on into terms of friendship. He was the man, with whom she fully enjoyed the passion and love for several years, all she missed in her marriage.

Relationship with James was more on the terms of comradeship, it "was of rarest kind between man and woman. It contained humor...each had a kind of imaginative anticipation of the other" (21). When they met "he was nearly done" (22), he was experienced well-known writer. He became interested in her not as a man but as a writer: "it would appear that she seemed to him to have the qualities of his type of the American woman" (23). She is comparable to Isabel Archer "she had all the conditions of freedom – wealth, looks, mental and emotional energy of the highest order – and the added bonus of talent as well" (24). Wharton was "seeking mental companions among the men of her social world, [and she] found, almost inevitably, that they tend to be bachelors" (32), which explains her friendship with James and also Berry, both of whom never married.

James settled in London in 1876. He experienced European traveling as a child, as well as Wharton did. She decided to settle in France. She was missing an intellectual literary circle in America, and she found it in England with help of her old friend Paul Bourget. He and his wife often visited Wharton and traveled together with her. Uncountable motor trips with James and Berry were most enjoyable for Wharton. They were touring around different countries and visiting friends. Her idea of society was

”the daily companionship of the same five or six friends, and its pleasure is based on continuity” (98, therefore she continually visited her circle of friends. France became home for Wharton, although James “had some reservations, however, concerning choice of France as a permanent milieu for a transported American, particularly a writer” (124) he did not like that she was dealing with “the French or the ‘Franco – American’ subject” (124). He thought that her native land gives her more suitable themes. She should settle in England in his opinion. England has “‘far more fusibility’ with...native experience” (125), and the American does not “feel cut off from his beginnings...and the language was still one’s own” (125). England became part of her life, but as home she chose Paris, as she said: “I...discovered compensations in my life in Paris” (125). She preferred France, because in France “intelligence had a place in all aspects and ranks of life, that there was respect for its embodiment in books, science, or art” (127). But in America “the leisure class into which she had been born had no contact at all with the world of intellectual creation” (127), as she portrays in her character of Ellen. As was already mentioned Wharton highly valued intelligence and not finding it in America she moved to France. Wharton’s books became published in France in translation. She also tried to write in French, which met James’s negative criticism. He advised her to never do it again (132-133). Throughout his life, he offered his wisdom to Wharton, as well as his ”heart...tender friendship – the understanding, the participation” (155).

Their friendship lasted until James’s death in 1915, ”taking out of the world that extraordinary light of awareness that had shone for so many years, illuminated so many objects” (215). His influence survived with Wharton, ”he was the greatest man she knew” (215). She studies his works deeply, she was often said to be one of his ”faithful followers” (216). Many reviewers wrote about James’s influence, as John D. Barry: ”she has been influenced by his method of developing a motive but by his style as well” (218), or Peter High ”many people notice a strong similarity between her stories and those of her friend and teacher, Henry James. They both wrote psychological novels, usually about the problems of women in the upper-class society” (High. 111). But Wharton ”never took pleasure in the verdict that she was James’s imitator” (Bell. 218), or also Benstock writes that there was a resemblance in their subject matter and style of writing (Benstock. 99). She was trying to avoid similarities with her friend, but ”she

found herself caught” (Bell. 220). In two novels this paper deals with can be found many similarities and influences, although they were written with, the distance of almost forty years. Almost everyone seems to be underestimating Wharton’s influence she could have over James ”there is actually some indication that *The Ivory Tower*...may have borrowed something from her distinctive tone” (216). Such example is inappropriate with the novels chosen for this paper. James could not have read *The Age of Innocence* because he died before the time of publishing. The similarities are explainable, as James tried to be a teacher for Wharton, and was giving her continuous advice with her writing. He would probably praise *The Age of Innocence*, where she followed his advice and concentrated on the native theme, had he only read it.

3. Edith Wharton – The Age of Innocence

The novel *The Age of Innocence* seems as if it was a second part of *The Portrait of a Lady*, as if Edith Wharton would like to show, what would happen to James's Isabel after leaving her husband and going back to her own country. Despite many different circumstances are the novels similar in some extent. The novel *The Age of Innocence* concentrates on the American, precisely on New York society. Wharton was born and brought up there. She left America later in her life, similarly to James. He was also born and brought up there, only few streets away from Wharton's house. He also left this place for England. It might seem that Wharton was following James, not only in his writing, but also in life.

3.1. Similarities and differences

There are many different definitions of society. For example, in Britain, as Henry James also mentions in *The Portrait of a Lady*, society was divided into many classes: "How many classes have they? About fifty, I suppose" (*Portrait*. 54), Mr. Touchet asked Isabel. By his reply, "Well, I don't know that I ever counted them...But for me there are only two classes: the people I trust, and the people I don't" (54), James suggests that in America, where Mr. Touchet comes from, there were not so many classes, or maybe none. Mr. Touchet tries to explain that, as an American girl, Isabel does not have to notice the classes in Britain. Besides, what James said about American classes Wharton demonstrates, that the classes had an important role in America as well as in Britain. Many people did not believe classes existed in America: "Woodrow Wilson in 1912 observed that Americans like to think that 'this is the country where there is no distinction of class, no distinction of social status'" (*Pessen*. 270), however "the evidence is abundant that classes, class lines, and distinctions of status do exist and has always existed here, as elsewhere in the modern world" (270). From James's suggestions, a reader is not sure if James disbeliefs in the existence of classes in America or not, but Wharton surely writes about the classes of her native land; and according to Pessen, class played unusually important role for Americans (*Pessen*. 272).

To write about the roles of the members of a class society, one must choose the definition for "class":

The families and individuals that constitute a distinctive class are roughly similar in a number of significant respects: their level of wealth; their means of achieving it; the prestige, quality, and relative irksomeness of these means; their style of living, including their uses of leisure; their social repute; the standing of the social circle within which they move and with which they are intimate (and how long they have held such standing); and the influence and the power they command in their own and in the larger American community (Pessen. 271).

American society is mainly differentiated into three classes - upper, middle, and lower. Wharton concentrates on the upper class New York society and on life in such a community, and on the influences and restraints it has on its members. She describes the society of 1870s, the era of her own childhood. Edel considers Wharton's writing to be realistic: "she knew to the core this small world [New York society], with its old decencies, its stratified codes, its traditions of elegance, and the daily life within its brownstone mansions already fenced in by tall buildings" (Edel. 579). Phelps agrees that "New York society and the customs in the seventies are described with an accuracy that is almost uncanny; to read these pages is to live again" (Phelps. 384). Wharton shows how class controlled all aspects of life of Americans, as is also stated by Pessen (Pessen. 273).

The resemblance of Wharton's and James's works appear as soon as the reader finds that the surname Archer is chosen for Isabel and also for Newland; hence, both writers chose the same surname for their main hero and heroines. Coincidence seems improbable. One of their reasons why is that the symbolism of Archer is connected to that of Sagittarius, which has "emotional nature, egoic focus, sensed duality and struggle" (Bailey. 1). It signifies "selfishness, desire, aspiration and the orientation of the man towards a definite goal" (1). This name would suit Isabel more, as she was following her ideas and wanted to achieve her goals, the main one being to become experienced. Newland seems not to have a significant goal which he would like to reach. Maybe his goal was to have a good family and children, who will be brought up nicely according to the rules of the society.

The two novels have much in common, which is apparently again not coincidence. Written with the distance of almost forty years, they are set in the same era, but most of the plot of *The Portrait of a Lady* develops in Europe. Both novels "contrast American and European values" (Ammons. 436), and both are concerned with upper class societies. The main hero of *The Age of Innocence* is a man, Newland

Archer; but *The Portrait of a Lady* has a main heroine, Isabel Archer. This paper deals with comparison of women characters. Although Newland is described first to the reader, Ellen and May became the center characters of the novel. May is a single girl, as Isabel, and they both become married; however, Isabel has much more in common with married Ellen.

Differences in the point of view can be found, because one author is a man and one is a woman. Their works mark their life experience. Wharton wrote this novel after experiencing her own disastrous marriage, out of which she successfully escaped. While James, has never experienced marriage. It does not mean that the work of James would be of less value than Wharton's work. He was a perfect observer of women's mind and of their affair as well as of love and marriage. They had different opinions, but James followed the main stream where "major nineteenth and early twentieth-century American novelists, ..., idealized a virginal American girl. In fact, Edith Wharton did not" (Ammons. 440). He saw "the American girl as America's noblest creation, the nation's most interesting contribution to modern civilization. She [Wharton] sees her as the nation's failure, the human victim of a deluded obsession with innocence" (437). James puts Isabel's struggle for independence, experience and freedom first, as her good characteristics. Many of her relatives and friends highly valued it, except her husband Osmond. Wharton, on the other hand, presents Ellen's experience and independence, as something unwilling. A typical Victorian girl is often characterized as innocent and inexperienced. James tries to show that an American girl can be wanted even though she becomes experienced. Wharton follows the belief of her society and puts May as a perfect example of typical Victorian girl, whether Ellen is presented as a creature in the eyes of society, maybe because her innocence is gone. Ellen comes to New York society, which is not agreeable with her attitude of experienced and independent woman.

In both novels is also important shift in time. In the gaps are hidden facts about the heroes. In James's novel it is more significant than in Wharton's, where the readers get to know more. Wharton writes a summary of what happened in May and Newland's marriage. Whilst James mentions only a few words about Isabel's child who died and the most significant points and situations from Isabel and Osmond's early life together are also not mentioned.

The New York society was narrow and un-intellectual, sometimes it seems also primitive from our point of view, the roles of women were not very convenient as Tuttleton states, Old New York society was not developed perfectly (Tuttleton. 357), it was "marked by sexual hypocrisy, intellectual narrowness, civic irresponsibility, and class snobbery. But at its best preserved dignity and decorum...however inhibited by convention" (357).

The first scene of *The Age of Innocence* reveals an Opera where men observed women, they watched them as if they were on the display in the theatre boxes. They discussed them, their appearance and their clothes, whether they were suitable for the society to be shown on public. Some of the men were specialists on the social codes and fashion. They perceived it as almost their employment, to watch and guard if the manners and codes are in accordance to the society's rules. Members of society were those, who made the rules and followed them, someone from the outside of New York society could not know them. Lawrence Leffers, one of the specialists, knew exactly what one could wear to the theatre, as well as to the other occasions. The men discover one unsuitable dress, and even more inappropriate woman in it. Countess Ellen Oleska, a woman with questionable past. They all agreed that it was extremely impertinent to take her away on this occasion and she was not the member of their class for whom was this performance meant. Nobody warned them that she would be present and the members did not like outsiders among themselves. The main heroine in *The Portrait of a Lady* was also judged by men in the first scene, however she was expected in the house, she was not coming as a stranger. The Archer family awaited Isabel and was, in contrary to New York Society, glad to meet her.

Ellen was sort of new in New York although she was born there and grew there. Her aunt took her away after Ellen's parents death. All the members of society knew about Ellen, they also knew that she would have bad influence on proper and conventional May Welland, who was sharing one theater box with her. Only one lady of all, could venture to take Ellen to this occasion, Mrs. Catherine Manson Mingott, unconventional and eccentric, however well-respected member of the New York aristocracy. The women in the theatre were almost like the products on the market, people watched them from all sides and then they decide whether they were important for them, and whether they wanted to buy them and take them home. This is

metaphorical principal how a man could choose his future wife. There were more occasions in New York where ladies can be presented to men and where they were introduced to the other members of the society. The idea of marriage market has evidence in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain*, but it seems to be valid also for New York society: "in an attempt to maintain suitable partners for the young, occasions where they might meet were multiplied. For the titled aristocracy, London, the Court and the Social Season remained paramount as a marriage market" (Davidoff. 74), except the fact that in New York it was The Opera. Men were allowed to choose the girl they liked, and then ask her parents about his proposal of their daughter. Skaggs states that members of society presented evidence of their status on their evening dresses and jewels publicly in Opera. (Skaggs. 3), Ellen in her old-fashioned dress "demonstrated poor taste" (3). Wharton shows that Ellen could not belong to this society because she did not realize importance of Opera.

Mrs. Mingott was a widow, as Madame Merle was, however old and fat. She did not need to be tricky as Merle. Mrs. Mingott married a rich man and he left her a lot of money and well set position in society. On the other hand, Merle was poor and lived to the detriment of her friends, therefore she need to be very circumspect with people, so they did not realize that she was using them. She let herself be invited to her friends and was staying there as long as was convenient. This was kind of life many people led in America at the end of 19th and early 20th century, and according to Hareven, a great part of population lived in someone's household as a boarder or welcomed boarders or lodgers (Hareven. 242). The difference was, that Madame Merle did not pay anything to her inviters, or at least, James did not mention any payments. Ellen was in similar position as Madame Merle when her grandmother, Mrs. Mingott, invited her to her house. Ellen, after leave of her husband did not have any money to pay her own expenses. Women were loosing their wealth after marriage at that time. However, slight difference occurs, Ellen and Mrs. Mingott were relatives, while Madame Merle did visit only her friends, as she did not have any relatives.

The American household in the past was different from the contemporary one, as Hareven claims the household had many different functions and members of household were not only members of a close family, but also servants, orphaned children and elderly people who did not have any other relatives (Hareven. 242). Ellen was

something in between, she was a grown up orphaned child, married woman seeking divorce. She had other relatives however; they would not take her under their roof, in accordance to her improper past. Her past was improper for their society, because women were not expected to leave their husbands; they "were expected to concentrate on making the home a perfect place and on child bearing, rather than on being economic partners in the family. Tenderness, gentleness, affection, sweetness, and a comforting demeanor were all considered ideal characteristics for the domestic life" (248). Society apparently saw Ellen as failing her role of wife and mother, and therefore not being proper woman.

May was a perfect example of ideal woman. She was innocent and prepared to fulfill all demands of her future husband. Cuncliffe also supports the suggestion about women, he defines duty of the American woman as clearly domestic and moral and her main aim should be the idea of peaceful and safe place for her busy man (Cuncliffe. 286), other writers also agree:

Patriarchal control of women's lives during the nineteenth century was not only economic, it was also religious and sexual...according to both the Bible and the nineteenth century church, women were to marry and the ideal helpmeets for their husbands and True Woman families. The true Woman was sexually naïve and pure; virginity was a requirement for any socially approved marriage (Wagner-Martin. 362).

May can be again shown as an example of such a woman. May was a "product of the system" (Age. 6) from Newland's point of view. She was pure and seemed to be naïve. Newland found that she cared about him as well at the day of the opera performance. He liked her naivety and purity, and he would like to shape her mind to his best ideas, he held about women: "he meant her to develop a social tact and readiness of wit enabling her to hold her own with the most popular married women of the 'younger set,'" (5). It seems to be selfish for him to want to shape his own wife. He was also brought up in this society and he behaved according to its rules. The rules apparently were, that women were here to please their husbands, although, it would mean to make oneself subordinate to men. Osmond's plans were also to change Isabel to his will. He partly succeeded, as well as Newland did. May was a good wife to him until her death. Isabel was also a good wife, however she did not want to be subordinate to anyone, she would like to keep her own ideas, although, she had to give them up to stay with Osmond. She

was about to gain them again, when she left for England to see Ralph, but she did not. She gave them up and came back to Osmond. May seems to be without any ideas of her own before marriage, only afterwards she shapes them under influence of Newland. A slight change in Newland's ideas occurs while he pleads for Ellen's reputation with Mr. Jackson "women ought to be free - as free as we are" (39), he said the sentence in irritation and did not think of the consequences, it would have for him. Maybe, he was talking from his heart, because he felt in love with Ellen. However, he talked against his own conviction about a woman's role. It might have been an example of what being blind with love can do with the ideas of a person. He did not fully realize how much in love with Ellen he was, and how it would change his reputation, if the members of society knew about their love. He knew that he was safe with his choice of future wife, who was the best "match in New York" (34), although, having Ellen as a cousin does cast some shadow over May, but May stays innocent and the ideal woman.

3.2. Values and rules of New York society

Victorian society placed high values on several virtues that became as standard for all society and spread all over the world. Members believe in progress and had optimistic view of human nature. Family background and high social status were sources for success in high society, as well as beauty, taste, money, and knowledge of morals, manners and proper behaviour.

Family as an institution belongs among the most valuable things of Old New York society, together with beauty, stylishness and aristocratic origin. According to Wagner-Martin, also money was a valuable thing. Lewis adds "loyalty, decency, honesty, fidelity and the adherence to moral commitments" (Lewis. xvi) Wharton does not only remember those values from her childhood, but she also did a research while writing the novel to describe all the details as realistically as possible, and she herself "had an architect's eye for proportion and detail, an excellent visual memory" (Benstock. 164). Mary Cadwalader Jones, Wharton's former sister in law, helped her with the research of American society. According to Ehrhardt, Mary verified all Wharton's references in various sources. She was reading issues of *the New York Tribune* and visiting Yale University to consult Ward McAllister's autobiography, *Society as I Have Found It* (Ehrhardt. 405). Also according to Peter Washington, Wharton wrote truly about New York and provided precise descriptions (Washington.

xii). The family was there to help, to give advice, to explain the differences between the cultures and to show the way one should follow (Age. 74). If the family decides to stand behind someone, as in Ellen's case her grandmother to support her in the integration into the society, the decision should be taken as final. Of course, not all the families could have afforded this. To take such a step, the family should have been well known, with huge influence over society (54).

The families, who influenced New York society in Wharton's novel, were only three. They had aristocratic predecessors, the Dagonets, the Lannings and the van der Luydens, of which only the last named family participated in active public life. Other families such as Mingotts, Mansons, Wellands, would like to consider themselves as leading families. However, there were only "three families...who can claim an aristocratic origin in the real sense of the word" (47), Mrs. Archer, Newland's mother, explains, that other factors are also very important. They also could be proud of them, such as great-grandfathers who came among the first colonist and did well, one of them who signed the Declaration and other who was a general and received General Burgoyne's sword (47). These factors meant almost the same as being of an aristocratic origin. "Families were intimate and close-knit" (Haveren. 241), and also Newland had to face the closeness and intimacy of the family, while he was engaged to May. Her cousin Ellen was black sheep of the family and Newland was going to be joined into family, where someone was of not appropriate behavior. He was advised by his sister to warn and stop Ellen from wanting divorce. He answered to his sister that he was not marrying Ellen, so he should not care about her. His sister insisted on her words: "You're marrying into her family" (Age. 84), Newland jeered about the family matter and his sister accused him of not caring about the family, let alone about what the van der Luydens will think. Mentioning van der Luydens family again shows, how much influence the leading families had on others, and how the individuals were subordinate to them. A similar occasion occurs a few pages further when Mr. Letterblair, Newland's employer, asks him "Do you want to marry into a family with a scandalous divorce suit hanging over it?" (98). Newland still does not see the importance of the family matter, however he agrees to try to persuade Ellen not to divorce. In reality it was against his will, because he would like to see Ellen free.

Individual person, without the family support, would not survive in New York's upper-class society. Going alone against the whole family was also impossible, "the individual...is nearly always sacrificed to what is supposed to be the collective interest: people cling to any convention that keeps the family together" (Age. 110). Haveren states that this situation changed. Luckily, priorities of individuals were taking over collective family needs over last years (Haveren. 249). Its consequences led "to a greater separation among family members and especially to the isolation of older people" (249). The consequences are not really portrayed in Wharton's novel however, in the book she does show the loosening of the social codes and principles on which Old New York society related.

The family and its values are not portrayed in James's novel in a good light, the whole family, meaning mother, father and a child and as was already stated, despite being a complete family Mrs. Touchet does not behave as a proper mother, being not at home most of the time. At the end of the novel, James writes about Isabel's family, however it is also not a good example of a complete family. The gap hides most of how her family functioned. The parts about family and values would be definitely where Wharton was not influenced by James's novel. She might have been influenced by it in the way that she wanted to show that even good families existed in the Old New York at the time of 1870s, not only the improper as James pictured them. She does not mean to show or state that James's writing was not correct, she valued his personality and his writing too much to do this. However, she writes about the family from her point of view. She experienced having her own family, although childless. James has never experienced this. It cannot be said that James would not value the family and its matters, he loved both of his parents, and also his brothers and sister however, he felt that he is not determined to establish his own family and produce children. He concentrated more on his literary life, his friendships and on helping other young writers; he apparently saw these activities as more important.

Value of beauty seems striking in New York society, "a gift which, in the eyes of New York, justified every success, and excused a certain number of failings" (Age. 11). Wharton talks about the importance of beauty in *Little Girl*: "in that simple society there was an almost pagan worship of physical beauty, and the first question asked about any youthful new-comer on the social scene was invariably: 'Is she pretty?' or 'Is

he handsome?’ – for good looks were as much prized young men as in maidens” (Little Girl, 251). Although Ellen was beautiful in eyes of many, it did not help her to succeed in integration into the society. It did not even help her to be excused of some failings while not knowing the proper rules. Maybe because the beauty went together with the stylishness ”what New York [also] most valued” (Age, 58). Ellen was not stylish, according to New York fashion. She was also not the beauty she used to be as a child, whom everyone adored, ”her early radiance was gone. The red Cheeks had paled; she was thin, worn, a little older looking than her age...her early vivacity had disappeared...but there was about her the mysterious authority of beauty” (58). No one thought that the loss of her early look could be because she struggled a lot with her husband. It must have been hard to leave him and free herself from the constraints the marriage brought. Members of society were not open-minded to such opinions and they looked at her as a stranger who wants to steal part of their privacy, even though she was originally New Yorker. Among the values of New York society is money, however ”it was not what a person owned, because anyone with money could buy whatever merchandise existed. It was how a person used money, how a person shown taste, that mattered” (Warner-Martin. vii).

Entering society for divorced person was not easy. Divorce and leaving a husband was just unacceptable in New York society, as well as it was in Europe. Ellen wanted to go home, to people who would accept her and where she would find her lost freedom. She soon found that the society she was heading to is not easily accessible and also is not willing to receive anyone from the outside world. Ellen sees their world ”naïve at first...but she learn of its cruel social isolations, and she learns of the loneliness of living among the ‘kind people who only ask one to pretend’ who don’t want to ‘hear anything unpleasant’” (Wolff. 427). Unlike on the other side of the Atlantic, Isabel experienced great success entering European society; she did not have any struggles to become liked by all the people. To point out she was not married, but single, young and later also rich, which Ellen was not. James portrays Isabel’s entering into society as an easy task, however from the evidence it was not as easy as it seems in the novel: ”until the later nineteenth century entry to London ‘Society’ was carefully guarded and its social functions were mostly private” (Cunningham. 291), however Isabel was not entering directly the London society. There apparently lies the difference

and the reason why her entrance was easier than Ellen's. Difficult to enter seems to be society in major city, but not as much society in countryside.

May is a single woman, whose engagement is soon going to be released. She was brought up in New York and she was strictly trained to follow the society's codes. She was freed from any experience the outer world could give her. Newland liked her for purity and he was proud only when he looked at her. Until Ellen came, he did not have much comparison with other women other than the New Yorkers brought up in the same way. The comparison shocked him. He thought, he is in love with May's pure innocence, and also that without him she would not be able to survive in this society. The realization that May, the purity, innocence and the frankness is the production of society and that it is not real, but factitious, "so cunningly manufactured by a conspiracy of mothers and aunts and grandmothers and long-dead ancestresses" (Age. 43), is amazing not only for the reader, however also for Newland. Society produces people according to own desires. They are meant to live only in this society. However, when someone goes outside and sees the outer world and the differences among other people, valuing and further accepting own society values and becoming happy with people of own sort is almost impossible. Not only according to Wharton, is society unreal, but also according to Peter Washington is society production of imagination of members of society, although, it seems so secure and real (Washington. xix). The strength and persuasiveness of them leads society into relying on the codes and keeping and following them. Newland at one point loves May and cannot be without her, later he wishes not to see her, and later again he would rather quicken their marriage to keep himself from the temptation. One can argue that the temptation can come to a person even being engaged to marry. However marriage for Newland and many of his sort meant sacrifice and a sacred union out of which there is no escape.

May was not so innocent, and although, Newland was rushing with the marriage, he was also afraid of it and of coexistence with May, who might become superordinate to him. He might not have been able to do what he wants, to change May's behaviour to his idea. He was afraid that he would not be able to decorate their house, "his only comfort was to reflect that she would probably let him arrange his library as he pleased" (Age. 70), where he will later spend most of his time reading books and dealing with his mind. Arranging the house was lady's occupation in America. In James's novel,

Osmond decorates their house. Isabel does not argue against it, she takes it as it is, even though she does not feel happy in the dark rooms. Osmond took away one of Isabel's main duties in the household. May would not allow Newland to decorate their house, she is not as innocent and quiet as she appears to be and which she demonstrates in public and to Newland. He thinks that she cannot even speak for herself, although, she would be already twenty-two (80). May shows strong desire for choosing her way. Everyone from society sees only how Ellen is bad and that she wants to live in New York in their own society. No one sees how the product of their society, May, is corrupted, and how May manipulates Newland to save their engagement, even though he was in love with another woman. It was for her own sake to keep Newland, because she was of marriageable age. To look for another husband could take long struggles, and also the woman who was refused by a man and whose engagement was broken from the man's side would find it difficult to find another man to marry. May was not such a beast, she only did what was expected from her, and she was also wise and kind. Her kindness can be seen on her behavior to Ellen, she wants Newland to take care of her cousin, because she was new in New York and it "must seem dull to her" (118). There was no one to help her, only the family, and Newland was almost a part of her family.

Newland was about to establish his own family lying on valid principles of New York society. He did not love May, as much as was expected from his society, however he sacrificed his life to her. May loved Newland so much, that she was ready to give him up for another woman. She felt that since Ellen came, their relationship has changed a little. She counted, that it was because Newland was not fully sacrificed to her. She wanted him whole, his whole mind and devotion, which she unfortunately never obtained. His changeable moods, in which he one moment loved May and another moment loved Ellen, influenced their relationship without him consciously realizing it. Meanwhile, May knew or suspected it and before their marriage, she offered him to be free again and to find his love. In the back of her mind, she counted on his not obeying the rules of the gentleman. She believed that he would stay with her and finally marry her, Peter Washington agrees that her offer was "genuinely noble" (Washington. 1993. xv), however "the code of conduct by which they live makes it virtually impossible for him to accept the offer" (xv). Her way of dealing with her loved one is similar to

Osmond's dealing with Isabel in a way, that she does not persuade Newland to marry her. She lets him free, fully relying on his appropriate following the principles, luckily her calculations are right as well as Osmond's were. She shows herself in a good light, she show him her innocence and leads Newland to understanding that with her, he will be safe. Osmond did the same. He also presented himself in very good light to Isabel and showed her that he will care about her as her father did. Unfortunately, Osmond's intentions were not as clear as May's. Osmond wanted Isabel's money and mainly married her for it, however May wanted Newland, not his money or position. May also gives to Newland a glance that she is not as silly as it may look, she can put things together, and she can feel. Mainly, because she is in love with him "one hears and one notices—one has one's feelings and ideas" (Age. 148). Apparently, her idea was to have a husband and a happy family life with him, an idea, which the majority of women in the past as well as in contemporary society have. The idea which May and other women have, is different from the reality Haveren mentions that sixty percent of women around the turn of the 20th century never married or did not reach marriageable age (Haveren. 251). Wharton states several times, that marriages in New York society would not definitely be closed for love. People would marry for money, or to reach higher social standard. Haveren presents the same opinion about marriage that family economic and social needs should govern marriage (249).

For Wharton "marriage was the primary relationship between adults, a relation built on mutual 'liking' and understanding, and children prolonged its joy" (Benstock. 291), however her idea was different from reality. Her marriage definitely was not based on liking and understanding. She might have liked Teddy, but there seems not to be mutual understanding between them. Their childless marriage could not prolong the joy. As Lewis wrote, marriage was source of sorrow and suffering for Wharton (Lewis. 365). Newland and May lived according to Wharton's idea about marriage, they liked each other, they partly understood each other and they also had children. James was apparently not against the marriage for money as he made Osmond to marry Isabel for money, true is that there was love as well. He wanted to give a lesson to readers how marriage for money would end. Nevertheless, in his private life, he did not want to marry, "'I am too good a bachelor to spoil,' he told a friend...He saw a social purpose in the bachelor role" (Bell. 32). Newland seems to be a huge idealist who does not see

or cannot observe what is going on around him. He finds himself in love with Ellen, however, too late for him to do something about it, because he has already persuaded Ellen not to break her marriage with the Count. So now, he has to follow the way set for him and to marry May. She achieved quickening of the marriage to earlier day and happily wrote about it to Newland who really wanted to marry earlier. Although, the message reached him in unsuitable time, while he was making confession of love to Ellen, he became very anxious about the idea of marriage.

Ellen was different from May. Ellen must have had something extraordinary to attract a man, who was already engaged with the women of his heart. She had a kind of beauty in herself; maybe it was her experience as a woman and a wife or maybe that she traveled a lot to Europe, as did James' Isabel and Catherine to gain experiences and attractiveness. Ellen was also mature, what could have been the reason of her being attractive to him. Compared to May, who was pure and innocent and never was out on the trip without her parents, she was also younger and closed in society unable to grow mature.

Americans prefer to believe that they are innocent, innocent of immorality after marriage...innocent of incompatibility between husbands and wives. Americans do not like to admit the existence (in family) of passion, of unscrupulousness, of temperament. They have made a code for what is to be done, and what is not to be done, and whatever differs is un-American" (Cauby. 387)

May was American, and Ellen also, however Ellen differed in her behaviour and also in her appearance, and therefore she was not thought to be an American. Catherine Mansfield has similar opinion "the real problem...is that Ellen Oleska has become that most mysterious creature – a European. She is dangerous, fascinating, foreign" (Mansfield. 398). None would allow someone dangerous and foreign to enter their own circle. James's Isabel also Europeanized and her best American friend Henrietta did not like it. She would like her to stay as she was before.

The truth is, that the family pushed Newland to take care of Ellen, to tell her about the rules of their society. May also wanted to be very friendly to her and told Newland several times to be very kind to Ellen. Family must hold together and he was becoming part of May's family, and therefore of Ellen's. He discovered, that Ellen really needed guidance, she was lonely and she did not have anyone to take care of her.

Nobody would care to tell her the proper codes for behaviour in this kind of society, everyone apparently thought that when she is coming to join them she must know all the principles. How mistaken were they. She broke the rules several times and nobody would warn her, everyone would only talk about it behind her back. Ellen was an individual, she was Europeanized, unfortunately society in her time was scared of individualism, only one of them was not, Mrs. Mingott who built her house "above Fortieth Street" (Age. 152), where no one from members of upper-class society have ever lived. Mrs. Mingott also states, talking about the members of her society, that "not one of them wants to be different; they are as scared of it as a small-pox" (159), Ellen was different and it did make her stay out of the row. They all knew that society and its rules were not the best in the world, but still they wanted to keep them unchanged. They were living there and people should respect the principles when they came among them (86). Newland's sister said "Ellen Oleska especially [should keep the rules]: she came back to get away from the kind of life people lead in brilliant societies" (86), so she could know that she should respect them. However, some people did not realize that a rule in one society does not have to be true in another one.

Not all people had bad meaning about Ellen, Mr. van der Luyden thought her to be "the handsomest girl" (64) and "a charming woman" (87). It was Newland, who was indulgent with her and who helped her. He knew the whole case about her husband first hand, not only from the people's talk. He knew that "she was frightened, she was desperate" (114) and he wanted to help her, to save her. Without him consciously realizing it, he fell in love with her. She was open to any help from the inside of society, "I want to cast off all my old life, to become just like everybody else here" (106), she was willing to change. As is expressed in analysis of *The Age of Innocence* in Spark notes, Ellen blindly believed that New York society would forget any failure of respect of the codes (Spark notes. 7). Ellen's grandmother, who was the first member of the family and of society to receive her in New York, was not satisfied when she found out about Ellen's refusal to go back to her husband and about her desire of divorce "wanting to pass herself off as Ellen Mingott and an old maid, when she has the luck to be a married woman and a Countess" (115). Mrs. Mingott seems not to be interested in happiness of her granddaughter. She wanted her to go back as all the rest of the family, but nobody asked Ellen what happened between her and her husband, why she does not

want to go back. They had the idea that a woman should be happy in marriage and should assimilate herself with the husband and the situation, no matter what the husband and the situation was like. She did not want to be restricted by her cruel marriage, as well as Isabel did not want to be defined by marriage, according to Nestvald (Nestvald. 3). Unfortunately, Ellen did not want to undergo this again, she wanted to stay free. They thought that being a Countess alone should make you happy. Isabel had at least Ralph, who was helping her without wanting anything in return. Wharton does not make any of the characters interested in what Ellen experienced while living with her husband, she could be thinking about her own struggles in her marriage with Teddy. Before Ellen realized how society defeated her and how they cheated against her, "she's very happy at being among her own people again" (151), she wanted to assimilate, but did not know all the rules and no one told her about them. Only after she did something wrong, they would criticize her. The rules were known only among the local people, who were brought up in society, the rules were told them from their birth.

Ellen liked art and poetry, same as Newland did. Unluckily, in New York people did not know much about art, they did not value people who wrote, painted, sing or acted. Such people were not their kind of people and therefore they would not mix with them or even talk to them. Ellen did not see this behavior as correct. She did not want to break her tradition of meeting those art people. While she followed her desires and habits she broke the rules of society. She was used to meeting artists even while she was married, because the Count was keen on art. And suddenly, someone was trying to tell her, that it is not right. New York was controversial in the matter, none of the artistic people were allowed into society, even though they knew that "there were societies where painters and poets and novelists...and even great actors, were as sought after as Dukes" (101), Lewis also agreed "it was not a world that encouraged literary learnings" (Lewis. 261). When Ellen visited Mrs. Lemuel Struthers's party, she broke the rules and people began to talk and considered it as unrespectable, because members of the society did not go to the house of woman, who was common and who entertained people with good music, champagne and smoking. According to the article "The Age of Innocence" in Spark notes, everyone who broke social code, was punished by members of society (Spark notes. 1). Ellen's punishment was her non-acceptance in society. Two years after this event, everybody goes there and nobody sees it as something that should not be

done. The occurrence shows, how the society was changing over years, although the members of society tried hard to stop the change. They would have to change their rules as well. Ellen was a kind of predecessor to the change that would come later, and as all the pioneers she had it difficult, she was not an exception to other pioneers.

Ellen came to America to look for her lost freedom and did not really find it in New York, the rules and principles of society were even stricter there. Isabel went to look for freedom in Europe and also did not find it, instead she found tight marriage in which she was unhappy. Both heroines were seeking freedom and independence and none of them found it on either continent. They both found love; at least Isabel idealistically thought she did. However, she lost it soon. Ellen also found love, however the problem occurred she loved a man whom she could not have, for two reasons, she was still married and he was engaged to her cousin. She could not break her marriage and she did not even to break his. She did not want to take him from May because of the morals of the decision. She also would not be able to face life as someone's mistress and would not be hiding all the time, as Newland wanted her to do. The same situation would face Isabel if she did not decided to go back to her husband. She might not have been as brave as Ellen, or she might have sensed, what would have happened to her and how society would look at her.

Both heroines faced rules of society at some period of their lives. Isabel was taken from American society, where she was thought to be a stranger, to European society, where she was accepted. Ellen ran away from the European society of her husband, back home where she was actually abandoned, to go back to European society in France. The reader does not know into what extent she was accepted there. Society forced both women to accept their rules. Isabel finally did, maybe because she did not want to look bad in the eyes of society. Ellen fought for her freedom while breaking the rules, which not many people dared to break.

3.3. Roles of women

James, as well as Wharton, describes the transformation of a single girl to a married woman. They both show how uneducated the girls were with love and marriage matters. Although the proper education can bring success, as could be seen in example of May, who was closed in her cage. She did not have any unimportant questions about marriage and she accepted her role and all circumstances. However

Isabel, to whom was shown the real world outside of her cage, had problems in choosing husband and accepting her roles of wife and mother.

Luckily, May's marriage was happier than Isabel's and in contrast May's marriage was not childless. Wharton states that "a girl is only a sketch; a married woman is the finished picture" (New Frenchwoman. 294), so Ellen comes to New York as a whole woman, however was not accepted in society, although, "it is only the married woman who counts as a social factor" (294). She was married but seeking divorce, by which she again lost on the social ladder. May and Newland's marriage was the same according to the general pattern "wife's efforts concentrated on home-making and child rearing. With men leaving the home to work elsewhere, time invested in fatherhood occurred primarily during leisure hours" (Haveren. 248). They seem to be following this pattern, May was not working, and Newland was. May changed only a little when she entered the marriage, she dropped her girlishness (Age. 188), she was "loyal, gallant and unresentful" (197) and it led Newland to do the same. He could not behave otherwise towards her, he actually did what May wanted, although, he did not like it, going to Newport with her parents was one example. He outweighed it with the idea of being "the husband of one of the handsomest and most popular young married women in New York...one of the sweetest and most reasonable wives" (208). While looking at her appearance he had pleasant feeling of "proprietorship" (212), unfortunately, he could not forget about Ellen, he could not get her appearance out of his mind.

The most apparent reason why Newland was not happy with all he gained in marriage, including May, his good wife, it was the temptation that he could have been with Ellen. Sometimes he felt lucky, that he did not end up with Ellen, because life would not be so easy going with her. But still, the idea of her did not diminish out of his mind as was already said. May must have sensed, that he is not fully hers and she therefore invented this strategy of offering Ellen to him "you must be sure to go and see Ellen...I wish you to do so with my full and explicit approval" (269). She might have done it for different reasons, one might be that the 'forbidden fruit tastes better', and if she did not allow him to see Ellen he would be tempted and who knows where it would lead to. The other might be that she was so nice that she wanted her husband to be happy and saw that meeting with Ellen will make him happy. The most probable reason

is that she wanted him to find out by himself that living with Ellen would not be the right way for him and that she, was the best wife he could get in life. She was mentioning Ellen several times to him to show him that she knew about them. However, he did not perceive it and did not guess that it may be truth that she knows. Sometimes it seems that she was cruel to him "What a pity, that you and Ellen will cross each other on the way!" (278). On the other hand she was happy, that he would not see her. She was pretending to feel pity for them, and she was scornful.

May wanted Newland to be happy, however, individual happiness was not the primary aim for the 19th century society, as is stated in the article "*Edith Wharton 1862-1937*" (Wharton. 2). Newland did not realize that behind his back May had a plan. Cooperating together with all her family, she wanted to send Ellen away. The whole family wanted her to go back to her husband, where her rightful place was. On the contrary, Ellen and Newland were sort of manipulated, by May and her family. Same problem of manipulation occurs in James's novel when Merle and Osmond play with Isabel. Both authors are using manipulation, as if they would like to show to readers that they should be careful not to be handled by someone close in such a way, by someone who is trying to be your friend. Edmund Wilson in *Justice to Edith Wharton* generalizes men in Wharton's novel "men are usually captured and dominated by women of conventional morals and middle class ideals" (352). Ellen thought only positively about May, who was her nice cousin, who helped her to assimilate in New York. Ellen did not see the intrigues behind her back. Isabel saw Merle as her friend and idol, she did not suspect Merle's plan and intrigues.

Ellen did not want to steal May's husband from her, she could have had him, however not as a husband as he was already married, but as a lover, which she refused. She had the instinct of self-preservation and she was also moral. To run from her husband did not mean that she was immoral. According to Peter Washington, Ellen accepts the rules "of the sexual and social game as determined by the dynasties...The basic laws of this game are that a mistress has no rights and that a wife may use means as she deems necessary to preserve her marriage and the honour of her family" (Washington. 1993. xv). Ellen in that case would not like to be a mistress because they do not have any rights and she wanted to be free and have her rights. May in the same case has the right to fight for saving her marriage. She later uses all possible means,

"Ellen understands that the protection that society provides must not be relinquished. The code of behaviour prevents her from becoming a mistress and Newland from spiraling into professional and personal ruin" (Shagg. 5).

May, according to Newland, did not have imagination and their life would be monotonous, of which Newland was afraid. He later lacked excitement, which he experienced with Ellen. She was always herself and she was a huge personality. May, on the other hand echoed what he told her at the time of their engagement, but later in the marriage she developed her own opinion (Age. 297). However, she was still doing what was expected from the society, she did not like needlework, she was not good at it, but because other wives did it, she was knitting as well. Ellen in contrast did only what she liked. If May only knew, that Newland once wished her to be dead, so he would be free to go to his real love, what would she think about this? She would probably not devote herself to him as she did. May had a long talk with Ellen, however what was said between them stays unknown to the reader. Wharton only mentions one, but the most important thing that May told Ellen about her pregnancy. May wants to hide her willingness for Ellen to go far away, she would like to hide it in front of Newland, for him to think that she likes Ellen, "I'm afraid I haven't been fair to her [Ellen] lately"(317). She plays the role of wife who wants to keep her husband and wants his rather mistress to go away. She does it with the help of her family without him knowing, she uses all the tools she can and she has the right to do it, to save her marriage. Wharton made her to do it by intrigues rather than to persuade her husband or at least talk to him about it. In that time people apparently did not talk about such topics, and May and Newland did not talk about their relationship at all, which also his oldest son Dallas realizes,

You never did ask each other anything, did you? And you never told each other anything. You just sat and watched each other, and guessed at what was going on underneath...I back you generation for knowing more about each other's private thoughts than we ever have time to find out about our own (359-360)

he disagrees with the lack of talk between his parents, but he also admires them for spending time with each other and only looking at each and guessing what the other might think. He does not state which way is better, but his statement says that society at

his time, twenty-six years after his parent's marriage, lives in a hurry and does not have as much time for each other as they did have in past.

James did not like the rushing life, huge materialization and industrialization in America, he preferred England where the changes were not so obvious. Wharton might have adapted his ideas and used them in her novel; however she might have the same opinion still. She was right with Dallas's opinion about the society. The rules should have been changed according also to Sherwood, who claims that if we want to live together in unity, society should become comfortable and obey fashionable rules (Sherwood. 318). New York society felt that the change is coming, they wanted to stop it, but such changing cannot be stopped. They really knew it in back of their mind, but they still tried. Archer perceives the change through his son, "ideal of freedom which allows people to say what they mean and do what they want; which allows husband and wife to live in comradeship with one another, not in silent fear and wonder" (Washington. 1993. xxiii), as their own marriage actually was. Newland may be a bit jealous of his son, but he does not let him to know it, he does not try to change what has happened before, his decision to stay with May. The change of New York and also of society was reasonable; industrial as well as economic growth, and heavy immigration were parts of the change. Society was forced to "civilize other nation" (Maura. 24), however "about 1900 the Progressive Movement arose to reform the society and individuals through government action" (26). The fear of new immigrants was strong, they knew if more newcomers arrive, they will make a new circle, new society and their old one might be ruined and forgotten. Their children, although, brought up on their old principles will have to accept the new ones as well. Wharton wrote the novel after the World War II. And while living in Paris, she saw New York and its society with distance and she also saw to what extent the society changed over the years. According to Wagner-Martin "she did not believe traditional society" (Wagner-Martin. viii). Crowninshield agrees that the change was necessary, because "The telephone, the coeducation, wireless telegraphy, motor cars, millionaires...and talking machines have all contributed to an astonishing social metamorphosis" (Crowninshield. 330). The truth is that having many newcomers was scary. The talk about the number 400, from Wharton's childhood, meaning how many people could have been fitted in Mrs. Astor's ball room: "maximum size of the whole of genuine New York society" (Lewis. 262).

On one hand, society was right, that the number of members should not be extended in protection of all their rules and habits, however as Sherwood believes not even the highest class has permission to set fashion (Sherwood. 37).

May uses the most powerful lie to get Ellen from New York. At one point in the story, Newland thinks that May hates Ellen. She would like not to hate her and she would like to help him to overcome his feelings towards Ellen (Age. 318). May found perfect reason for Ellen to go away for the rest of their lives. While having a long talk with her she did not forget to mention to Ellen that she is expecting a baby with Newland. It was the last straw for Ellen and nothing could keep her from going back to Europe. May made her triumph complete by organizing a farewell dinner for Ellen, to show how nice she is to her own cousin, "May works unscrupulously to defend her position – that of married woman whose husband has no other duties but those of providing for, loving, her and their children" (Wagner-Martin. xvi). Newland fulfills his role. May uses a lie, because she was not sure about being pregnant while talking to Ellen about it. She uses the information "as a weapon against Ellen" (Bauer. 480) and it becomes "unethical" (480), although she was fighting to save her marriage. Wharton mentions May's great satisfaction several times, apparently to show the amount of May's feeling about her own action, "he [Newland] met May's triumphant eyes" (Age. 342), "glitter of victory in his wife's eyes" (343) and "her blue eyes wet with victory" (346). May did not tell to anyone how she feels about her victory, not even to her husband, but she let him to perceive it through senses, through her eyes. He knew, that she was the one, who had great participation on Ellen's going away. He did not hate her for that, he knew that Ellen would not allow him to come closer to her and with her departure; the temptation would suddenly be gone. He had never had such feeling for another woman.

The role Ellen participates in the novel is difficult to describe, she was not single, and she was married but not living with her husband in one household. She was "Europeanized, experienced, and therefore corrupted" (Waid. xviii). She has fallen in love, however does not have an affair with the other man; she just enjoys life and a kind of freedom which does not really allow her to find another man. Finally, she achieves divorce, and with the label 'divorced woman' she leaves for Paris, she does not try to enter New York society again. Ellen was a married woman coming back to New York,

however she did not behave as a married lady. She was separated from her husband and it was the main reason why the New York society did not want to let her inside their community. Her life was morbid and unnatural (Age. 210), because she was breaking the rules about marriage and the role of a proper wife, but were not their rules also unnatural. There was someone who made them, and a few others who followed them, only the participants knew them. Wharton writes about Ellen's perception of rules in a way that Ellen as a foreigner did not have chance to learn rules of society. However, in reality existed etiquette books, which were imported from Britain, but in mid-19th century they were also published in America (Etiquette. 1). Wharton must have known about those books. With the flood of new people coming to America from all over the world, the rules must have changed, and what once was unthinkable, later was a normal thing. Ellen seems to be the indicator of the change, and also the one who was punished for her modern behavior and her opinions. She was forced to leave New York and live abroad, the people, her family and friends, to whom she came for help, did not satisfy her. They did all possible to send her back. Many of them would not care if she went back to her cruel husband. Lewis thinks that Wharton experienced the same problem (Lewis. 261) that may be reason for her decision to stay in Europe where people were interested in art and where she had many friends.

Ellen had possibility to go back to her husband, he also promised to give her back her money, which was an attractive offer, however she refused it. She did not want to go back and experience the same cruelty as she did before, only for the sake of money. Ellen's life might seem strange to the reader, she ran from her husband and she could not have her beloved man, because he was already engaged. The view of his mistress was not convenient for her, so she left for Paris. The reader never finds what life she led there, what people she was meeting there and what she was doing there. She was finally freed from her husband's constraints with the help of her grandmother, but the reader does not know if she found new husband or lover. Ellen must have been a great woman and friend because she did not grab her chance to be with Newland but rather told him to marry May, even though, she loved him. It also points out her clear character that she did not even allow herself to have an affair, except one kiss. The same cannot be said about Wharton herself. Clear evidence points to the fact that she had an affair with Morton Fullerton. She also possibly could have had an affair with Walter

Berry, however it was never proven. Nevertheless, she makes her heroine refuse the affair with Newland and rather to choose the way on her own. The reader does not get the glimpse of how society in Paris perceived a young lady who was divorced from her husband. "Aristocratic privilege enabled some English ladies to flaunt middle - class standards: women intellectuals in Paris were not absolutely constrained by bourgeois codes. In the United States, however, increasing number of well-educated women seemed to be trapped by domesticity" (Cuncliffe. 286-7), society by Cuncliffe was not so bewildered by codes in Paris and it might be one of the reasons why Wharton left America for Paris. Wharton preferred France to England, because she did not stay in England, where she had many friends. She also sent Ellen to Paris, Ellen was apparently accepted by society more easily than anywhere else.

Ellen's love for Newland was strong, she wanted to have him all, or she wanted to be as far as possible from him. They loved each other so much that they did not even need words, in one of their few meetings alone on the boat in Boston, they did not talk much they mainly watched each other and enjoyed their time together, a moment which would be ruined by the words. Ellen seems to be in control of herself and her feelings. Newland, on the other hand, was nervous from their meeting and she made him even more nervous with her calmness, "she seemed to take their adventure as a matter of course" (Age. 240). It made him confused, but she had nothing to lose, she already knew that he will not be able to give up May and his life in his society. She apparently wanted to enjoy being in his presence, as it will not last long. They will not have another chance to be together back in New York.

Ellen moved to Washington, because she could not stand, that in New York people did not have own opinion but they all relied on the opinion of someone who was super ordinate to them. It was not Ellen's habit, she was free in her opinions and she was willing to meet variety of people with free ideas, which was impossible in New York, where everyone was narrow minded. She felt different from all those people and that might be the main reason why she did not try harder to participate in life of upper class New York society. They seem to be not worthy for her, she needed to communicate "she prizes good conversation even more than the heirloom jewels and priceless antiques that she married into" (Ammons. 442), this opinion is also supported by statement "I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and

real freedom of discussion as in America” (Luedtke. 27). Ellen needed to be livelier and freer, not to be tied with so many rules. Her later decision to move to France might have similar basis of free mind as also Wagner-Martin presents France as being more free spirited (Wagner-Martin. xvii). But in New York was the man whom she loved and could not have, and therefore she did not want to be close to him.

Isabel has similar character as Ellen, she also wanted to be free, to do what she likes, and she had also many ideas about freedom and independence. However, while Ellen’s way led her to real freedom, Isabel’s led her to ruins as she did not gain freedom but lost it in her marriage as well as her ideas. Ellen promised to Newland that she would not go back to Europe as long as he will not touch her and will not start closer relationship with her, “as long as we can look straight at each other like this” (Age. 245). However, why she changed her mind at the end of the novel is a mystery. She might be forced by the circumstances, while Newland was married she still might be hoping him to leave May and stay with her, although it would have bad influence on society’s opinion on them. She could not have been sure that he would ever do it, but there still was some little chance. However, she was not the one who would be cheating on someone, and neither on the member of her own family. It would be in Newland’s hands to leave May and come to live with her. As the marriage “preserves the vital social values of stability, continuity and propriety” according to Peter Washington (1993. xv), and as for Newland, social values meant a lot, apparently, more than his happiness and love. With the news about the child May was expecting, Ellen did not have any other reason to fight for Newland. He was married man and on the top of it, he would have a child soon, and it was the reason why she left. To break the marriage was not accepted, however there were some exception to the rule, and with the changing of society, divorce might be soon forgotten. But to have a child and leave the wife, it was really unthinkable at that time, and Ellen as well as Newland knew it. They also knew that motherhood was highly valued for nurturing of children but also “for its economic contributions” (Haveren. 245).

Moving abroad seems to be an indication of dissatisfaction with the country. The other reason for not fighting for Newland might be that she finally reached her main aim, divorce from her husband. She did not have anything else to do in New York, she moved to Paris to “the Rue de Varenne” (Lewis. xi). Wharton moved to the same street

in Paris after separation from her husband, and her love Fullerton also used to live there. As was already mentioned the environment was not the best she would wish for, she did not feel free enough there, because she still felt rejection from New York society, as Skaggs claims (Skaggs. 7), which Ellen felt strongly on herself, might also give her other stimulation to leave New York. Ellen's desire to leave New York might also have come from Wharton's impression about New York, she apparently did not like it much: "intolerable ugliness of New York" (Little Girl. 256), neither James was amazed by New York. On the contrary Ammons says that Wharton "did not hate her country or feel aggrieved; she simply needed an older, richer environment in which to live and work. Having spent large portion of her youth in Europe, she settled abroad" (Ammons. 445). Ammons seems to be apologizing for Wharton of her leaving America, but Edwards again supports the idea about Wharton not liking New York "she was deeply disappointed with her native country" (Edwards. 489).

Some of the rules and principles of the 19th century New York society seem very strange compared to nowadays, the "divorce was considered sociably unacceptable. This does not mean...that families were living happily and in harmony. A high rate of desertion and separation of couples took the place of legal divorce" (Haveren. 255), which was partially Ellen's case. As is mentioned in *Hastings History*, woman could not escape from cruel marriage, and until 1891 woman running from husband could be captured by police and returned to husband. Church, law and also society approved of the situation (Hastings History. 1). Ellen was lucky that her family saved her and did not return her to her husband. Primarily, Ellen longed for divorce, but the circumstances against the divorce were too high to do it, she was persuaded to remain in marriage. However, after she did not find any luck in America, she persisted on the divorce and reached it at the end, and Ammons explains Wharton's clear point that in America would Ellen never be independent (Ammons. 443), as well as was not for Wharton. It seems that neither Newland's and May's marriage was as happy as others might have awaited but Newland never fully devoted himself to May which she knew, but apparently never complained about. "What Newland has lost is not Ellen, but May, whom he never took pains to know or to love, May who knew all along the extent and the fullness of her husband's 'sacrifice'" (Coxe. 354), they both tried to remain in their marriage and it might be "proof that people care[d] enough about the content and

quality of family life and marriage to be willing to dissolve an unsatisfactory marriage” (Haveren. 255). Isabel might have decided to go back to Osmond for the same reason, to preserve the marriage thinking that it would become better. The problem with May and Newland might not have been deep to the extent of divorce, because May loved Newland and he did not dislike her. May lived, according to Wagner-Martin, proper life without scandals, being a perfect wife respected by husband and society (Wagner-Martin. xvii). Newland proved to be loyal and faithful to her even after her death.

He was free to go to find Ellen, and his son wanted to help him to be happy after all, after spending the whole life longing for something unreachable. Now, when he had it in front of him, he did not go for it. He decides not to see Ellen. It might have been because of his loyalty to May, but it seems that he was more afraid of the meeting, then being loyal. He might have different reasons: that she will not look the same as he saw her twenty-six years ago, that he will not like her, or that she will not like him as an old man, that they will not have anything to say to each other, because they really do not know and did not know each other much. He also might have been afraid to admit that his previous decision about whom he married were wrong, that he should not have left Ellen. Although, he has lived according to Old New York society’s codes, he was missing something all of his life, he led “life without passion, without expression, without satisfaction” (Doren. 386). He apparently did not know how he could apologize to Ellen, and therefore he sees only one possible way, to leave all as it is and not to see her. It was too late that he realized “what the members of New York’s elite think of one another is more important than individual effort, honor, or happiness” (Wagner-Martin. xi). A good point is that Wharton made Newland to realize such a problem, through his own son; however, bad point is that Newland could not do much about his situation at the moment. It was too late and he was unable to act, he could only be “dreaming of action” (xx). ”Wharton announced that the sealed society of ‘Old New York,’ which could not admit of the marriage of Archer and the Countess, must inevitably open to modernity and to the wider world, and must thereby pass out existence” (Greeson. 420) and therefore Wharton puts Archer’s family await the chance “Archer family...feels keenly the changes in New York society, vigilantly tracing ‘each new crack in its surface’” (Bentley. 454).

Wharton as well as Ellen could be thought not to fulfill primary roles of women in the society, they both married, however they both left their husbands and they both did not bear children. Reason, why Wharton did not have them is not known, there is no evidence even in her notes and she didn't leave any clues in her novels. The reader does not find out also why Ellen did not have any children. Isabel also did not have own child, only an adopted one and the reason why she went back to Osmond might be that she wanted to continue to care for Pansy. She at least partly fulfilled the role of mother. The one who wholly fulfilled this role was May, she had three children, she is again shown in the best light and the society can be proud of her.

Conclusion

The role of women and their position in the Western world changed rapidly over the last 130 years, the woman is now generally free to choose if she wants to marry, whom she wants to marry and if she wants to bear children, she can even regulate how many of them she will have; or on the other hand she can simply become a professional and have an excellent career. Of course there are still some professions where the men do not accept women, however over the time is less and less of them, because women have proved their abilities to work, behave and think as well as men can do. The woman choosing marriage over the career does not necessarily have to stay at home only bearing and raising children; the women also does not loose all her fortune by marrying someone, she does not become the possession of her husband and she can still go to work and have career as well as children. The marriage and career does not exclude each other, in the contemporary society many women have both, even though the majority of them marry later than those without career.

In my opinion the American girls are still brought up with more freedom of mind than the European girls, however it is not as significant as it used to be at the time of the chosen novels *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Age of Innocence*. If Isabel decided to leave Osmond and go back to her country she would apparently have similar problems as Ellen, therefore *The Age of Innocence* seems as a second part of *The Portrait of a Lady*, almost as if Wharton would really be following James as was often spoken about her. Characters in the first novel are described by the mouth of other characters, however in the latter they are mostly seen from the point of view of Newland.

Concerning the classes, James writes that there are many of them in Britain, and seems not to take much importance in them as the characters are American, James is apparently trying to say that in America the classes are not present; however Wharton is writing and showing that even in America there were classes and they were almost as important as in Britain. James also seems to demonstrate that the rules were more relaxed in America than in Europe, and again Wharton presents them as being stricter.

Talking about single women, Isabel's intelligence and erudition of which were some of her contemporaries were afraid and which would obstruct her from getting married, would be a huge plus in present-day society, the education of women is more

valued now and all people either male or female, have the same chances to obtain an education. The woman entering marriage was supposed to be dependent, weak and childlike, the opposite is more valued now. Isabel with her free mind and longing for independence seems more like girls nowadays, however they are not as naïve and idealistic. Huge difference is in the awareness of contemporary women in what awaits them from men and husbands. Books, magazines, radio, television, and cinema are all dealing with many examples of women in love, marriages and cruel husbands. Lack of education and awareness led to confusion and fear in the past.

May was a single woman; however she was perfectly even-minded with her role of married woman. She was brought up in such a belief and she does not see any other way of life. Therefore, she does not have any struggle or doubt in getting married. Society and her family expects her to marry and she does not even think about disappointing them. When Newland proposes to her she agrees, in comparison to Isabel who refuses. Isabel is forced to be dealing with several proposals, she does not know what is expected from her in the marriage, and therefore she is scared and refuses her suitors, although they are rich, have appropriate social standing and she would apparently have comfortable life with them. She wants more from her life, she wants to gain experience, and to be able to choose someone by herself; she feels that a greater life is in front of her, she also wants to prove that she is able to do well without husband. However singleness was not fashionable at that time and she was of marriageable age already. Isabel's proposals are held differently, the first one is not written about much, two other are a kind of persuasion by her suitors and they evoke fear in her. A person longing for freedom and independence does not like to be pushed into anything. With Caspar she leaves herself a back door for escape, she does not fully refuse him and she always keeps some hope in him to try it again. In fact she was not against marriage, but expected to fall in love as the lovers in novels do. The right tool to attract Isabel was found by Osmond, he did not present what she likes and did not throw himself in front of her feet like a real man, he rather showed her that he would take care of her still giving her freedom and independence, freedom of love, because she was afraid of close personal contact with her previous two suitors. She feared their sexuality and this fear is fully revealed at the end of the novel when Caspar gives her a kiss. She wants to be saved from this kind of fear and therefore goes to Osmond. The tool for

attracting May Newland used is not known from the text. May did not have fear as Isabel did, she only feared how to keep her husband because Ellen appears on the scene, who happens to be running from her own husband looking for help. She is more experienced, she was in Europe and she can be dangerous. Nowadays traveling to Europe does not mean getting experience, it's more for holiday.

Ellen is similar to Isabel in being an orphan, being married in Europe, having a cruel husband, being a bit rebellious and not wanting to follow the set rules of society. But Ellen seems to be a step further than Isabel; she overcame her unhappy marriage and wants to start a new life whilst Isabel decides to continue with her role of married woman. She had the opportunity to leave Osmond, but decided not to because of fear that she would stay alone. Warburton was getting married and Caspar would want sex of which she was afraid of, her closest friend Ralph died and the only one she had was Osmond. He differs a lot from previous men she met, mysterious, presenting himself as a father, whom Isabel misses so much, a father would not hurt her and would not want sex from her. He would take care of her, she would be safe with him and that might be why she chose Osmond, which shows her naiveté. Her money would help him and his daughter more than anyone else but she did not know what to do with it. He leaves her to do what she wants, she can go and travel and find herself, he does not hurry her, and shows that marriage does not matter to him much. She falls in love, which she did not do before. His acting purposely to attract her she only finds out about much later, already deep into the marriage, about false safety from sexuality, about him wanting to change her ideas, about becoming subordinate to him and more about him marrying her for the money, only for the money. We do not get to know much about Ellen's husband, we are presented with some information about Isabel's marriage however the same is hidden about Ellen.

No one is able to help Isabel with her feelings, she longs for freedom and independence, however, she does not really know what is hidden behind those two terms. She escapes by traveling. No one is able to help Ellen, her family mainly her grandmother tried to, but was not happy about where Ellen was heading. Isabel has Ralph who is trying to help her however he falls in love with her, then gives her money that in fact ruined her life. Ellen has Newland who is forced by his family to help her,

he also falls in love with her, however is unable to stay with her, as well as Ralph, but Ralph could not really change his state of health, whereas Newland had the choice.

Marriage in James's novel comes suddenly and unexpectedly and Isabel herself is unable to give explanation why she is marrying, neither why she chose Osmond. Whether in Wharton's novel the marriage is planned, her opinion about the marriage is that only in marriage the woman can fully develop. In James' novel he does not give an example of married woman which would be worth following, Mrs. Touchet, Madame Merle, neither Countess Gemini, no wonder Isabel is confused in the marriage and that her marriage was denounced to the problems between her and her husband. She did not expect that she would have to change her ideas, her behavior, and that she will not have any freedom, she could do only what Osmond allowed her to do, he gave her false hopes before their marriage.

Among the values of the society belonged family, wealth, social position and beauty. Nowadays the wealth and beauty is still important for a marriage, however understanding and good matching of partners overtook these values of Victorian society. Wharton is more concerned in the family matters, whereas in James' novels he concentrates more on single and engaged woman. Wharton tells us what it is like to be an individual who is unable to survive in New York society. Family is important and all her members have to behave according to set principles. Family would also help in troubled times as they helped to May to get rid of Ellen and keep her husband away from Ellen. However the set rules must be followed and for example a woman marrying a man has to accept him as he is, she has to be a good wife even though her husband is cruel, she must accept her fate.

Intrigues seem to be a frequent theme in those novels, in *The Age of Innocence* Newland and Ellen were under intrigue of May and her family, as well as Madame Merle in *The Portrait of a Lady*, May did it for the sake of her marriage and her child as well as in fact Merle. Merle was a widow, in translation blackbird, presenting herself in the best light, charming with pleasant features, that even Isabel wants to be like her. However she was hiding a lot behind the 'black wings', she was mysterious and tricky, a fact that unfortunately Isabel discovers too late, she is disappointed with Merle, but also feels pity for this poor lady's life situation. James used the name intentionally as Merle is exactly what the symbolism means. Merle made a mistake, which the society

would not accept and she had to give up her own child, which must have been hard. Merle stayed alone without anyone and anything, however May celebrated a triumph. James would like to warn against marriage for money and against intrigues.

Another relation that James does not shed good light on is that of mothers despite the fact he had an excellent relationship with his own mother. Wharton also does not talk about mothers much, and she would have better reasons for that than James because she was not on good terms with her mother. Ellen is orphaned, as is also Isabel; May has a mother who is trying to help her to reach her triumph. Newland's mother is also present but she is not described much. Mothers seem to be the people who are on guard in terms of following the rules. May becomes the mother of three children, in contrast to Ellen and Isabel, however she is not described much. Wharton concentrates more on her being single and just married. In the Victorian society the role of mothers was important mainly for bearing and educating children.

The ending of both novels leaves the reader to think, in *The Age of Innocence* Isabel is on her way back to Osmond while she was so close to gaining back her lost freedom, but she gave up. In *The Portrait of a Lady* Newland is finally free from his marriage and is about to see his love Ellen, however gives up while also being so close. In the novels there are other points, which are similar, which shows that Wharton's friend and mentor James influenced her even after his death, despite her trying to avoid it.

Resumé

Problém žen v dnešní společnosti je stejně žhavý jako byl před 130 lety ve viktoriánské společnosti, možná ještě žhavější. Změny role žen jsou výrazné v průběhu let a proces stále není u konce. Ve své práci se zabývám problematikou žen a manželství jak je popisována ve dvou románech v *Portrétu dámy* (The Portrait of a Lady) od Henryho Jamese a ve *Věku nevinnosti* (The Age of Innocence) Edith Whartonové, v porovnání se skutečným stavem věcí v té době a v současnosti. Jedním z hlavních cílů mé práce je potvrdit vliv Jamese na Whartonovou a její dílo, vzhledem k tomu, že je s ním často srovnávána v kritikách mnoha autorů. Ona sama s tímto srovnáním nebyla moc spokojená i přes své vřelé přátelství s Jamesem, přes studium jeho literatury a jeho četné rady. Ženy ve viktoriánské společnosti neměly stejná práva jako dnešní ženy, neměli volnou ruku ve výběru manžela, mnoho manželství bylo uzavíráno z finančních nebo společenských důvodů, žena v manželství ztrácela mnoho svých práv, jako i možnost disponovat se svým majetkem, který přecházel po svatbě na manžela; výběr mezi kariérou a manželstvím byl tehdy nemyslitelný. V dnešní době se v západním světě kariéra ženy a manželství vzájemně nevylučují, mnoho žen se rozhodne pro obojí a když už se žena rozhodne jen pro svou kariéru má na to plné právo a není za své rozhodnutí odsouzena společností. Oba romány se zabývají hledáním svobody a nezávislosti svých hrdinek, čehož ne všechny dosáhnou.

V úvodu své práce se snažím nastínit problematiku žen v dnešní společnosti a poukázat na možné rozdíly s problémy žen v 19. století jak jsou popisovány v obou románech. Snažím se podotknout, co manželství znamenalo pro Jamese a Whartonovou a jak je zobrazili v románech, stejně jako role žen ve společnosti. Viktoriánská doba byla charakteristická mnohými změnami, ať už v ekonomii nebo průmyslu, a také poznamenána různými vynálezy a to vše mělo dopad na změnu společenského chování. Podotýkám, že v práci bude porovnána vyšší společnost New Yorku s Evropskou společností, jejich pohled na úlohu ženy, manželství, ale také jejich zvyky a zákony a jejich dopad na jedince. Podávám stručný přehled děje obou románů a poukazuji na jejich souvislost.

Práci jsem rozdělila do tří částí z nichž první podrobně přibližuje román *Portrét dámy* a postupně rozebírá role žen v tehdejší společnosti 19. století. Isabel je mladá,

svobodná dívka přicházející z Ameriky po smrti svého otce, se svou tetou která ji vytrhne od zasněného života mezi knihami a romány o lásce a vezme ji do skutečného světa v Evropě, na jehož nástrahy však není Isabel připravená. Isabel aniž by se o to nějak hluboce zasloužila okouzlí mnoho mužů hned po svém příjezdu, nevyjímaje svého strýce a bratrance. Ráda by v Evropě našla svobodu a nezávislost, pod jejichž podstatou však neví co by si přesně měla představovat. Její teta je nezávislá a dokazuje to tím, že většinu roku netráví se svým manželem a synem, po příjezdu se s nimi ani nejde hned přivítat. James zdůrazňuje svobodu a nezávislost jako víceméně dobrou vlastnost Amerických žen, která však není přijímána společností jako vhodná pro manželství, ženský ideál je žena závislá, křehká až dětinská. Isabel však nechce být závislá na nikom a na ničem, její bratranec Ralph se snaží ji v tomhle podporovat a před smrtí svého otce ho přesvědčí, aby jí dal polovinu majetku, která by měla patřit Ralphovi, který si myslí, že to Isabele dopomůže k dosažení její nezávislosti, opak se však stane pravdou a jeho peníze se stanou podnětem k intrikám na Isabelu. Isabela obdrží hned několik nabídek k sňatku, na které není připravená a které ji vyvedou z míry. James se zhostil pojednání nabídek rozdílně, jakož i Isabeliny reakce byly rozdílné. O první nabídce od Caspara Goodwooda je napsáno jen velice málo, druhá od Lorda Warburtona přijde velice náhle a Isabel ji odmítá stejně jako předchozí, ale také následující znovu od Caspara. Warburtona ovšem odmítne přímo a natrvalo, kdežto Casparovi dá malou naději na pozdější úspěch. Isabel má mnoho nesplněných ideálů a nechce se prozatím usadit, ovšem není úplně proti manželství, ale ráda by dokázala, že se obejde i bez muže, což ovšem nebylo příjemně přijímáno společností. James se snaží zdůraznit zásady společnosti i přes to že on se nikdy neoženil, procentuálně ho následovalo 10% lidí na konci 19. století, kteří se nikdy neoženili nebo nevdali a začátkem 20. století to bylo už 14%. Isabel byla trochu naivní, ale také vzpurná a nerada se podřizovala pravidlům společnosti, která ji omezovala. Po podrobné analýze nabídek k sňatku zjistíme, že oba muži se předhodili Isabele jako by si s nimi mohla dělat co by chtěla, oba jí nabízeli věci, které má ráda, a oba na ni také naléhali, aby si je vzala, což by ublížilo její nezávislosti, proto je také odmítla. Její odmítnutí má ovšem ještě jiné důvody, jako je strach z neznáma, nevěděla co je od ní očekáváno, ale také jí děsila mužnost a sexualita obou mužů, hlavně Caspara, bála se že by jí to celou pohltilo a už by nebyla tou nezávislou a volnou dívkou. Její strach je nelépe viditelný na konci

románu, kdy dostane polibek od Caspara, který způsobí její definitivní rozhodnutí k návratu k manželovi. Strach, touhu po zážitcích a zkušenostech se Isabel snaží zahnat v cestování po Evropě, kde na vše zapomene. James klade důraz na fakt, že zkušenost mohou americké dívky získat cestováním po Evropě, také ve svém románu *Washingtonské náměstí*, byl to v tehdejší době častý jev.

Další role ženy je vdova, kterou představuje Madame Merle, její jméno je v překladu kos a ten má ze symbolického hlediska melodický hlas, ale jeho černá křídla představují hřích, a přesně takhle se jeví Merle, pro kterou James zvolil tohle jméno záměrně. Merle působí příjemně, má bezvadné vystupování a nikdo na ní nevidí jedinou chybu, avšak pod slupkou se skrývá žena, která má v úmyslu dostat Isabel do manželství lstí a okrást ji o peníze. Isabel ve své naivitě nic netuší, a rozvine s Merle přátelství, které ji zavede až k budoucímu manželovi. Na varování svých přátel se neohlíží a jde si za svým cílem. Osmond na ni působí zcela jiným dojmem než ostatní, jeví se jí jako skromný člověk, perfektní táta a manžel, který by jí neublížil a nechal by jí její svobodu a také jít za svými ideály, ostatní nápadníci jí nic z toho nenabízeli tak není divu, že se do něj zamiluje. Bohužel velmi pozdě zjistí, že vše z toho bylo předstírané a že si ji Osmond vzal jen kvůli penězům; její probuzení hodně bolí. Navíc ještě zjištění, že Merle je také matkou Osmondovy dcery Pansy, způsobí na jedné straně velkou bolest a újmu na duševním zdraví, ale také lítost nad nebohou Merle, která se musela vzdát dítěte jen aby zachránila svou neposkvrněnou pozici ve společnosti, jak velká oběť. James by rád varoval před sňatky pro peníze a před intrikami blízkých lidí. Osmond byl v tomhle spiknutý s Merle a využil toho, že Isabel nedávno přišla o otce, kterého velmi postrádala a prezentoval se jako otec, který by jí nikdy neublížil a který se o ni bude starat, což byl jeden z důvodů proč si ho Isabel vzala. Z neznámého důvodu se James vyhnul popisu svatby a prvních let manželství, nechává díru v textu, asi aby si čtenář domyslel sám, co považuje za důležité.

Matky nejsou v románu popsány v nejlepší světlo, i přes Jamesův vřelý vztah ke své matce. Paní Touchetová je sice nezávislá, ale také se zdá být velice nezodpovědná ke svému synu a manželovi. Isabelina matka není přítomna vůbec, neboť zemřela, když byla Isabel dítě. Několik lidí se snaží Isabel jakoby adoptovat, Paní Touchetová, Ralph a v neposlední řadě také Madame Merle, všichni, kromě Ralpa,

kteří ve své roli matky zklamali. James pokračuje v době kdy další hrdinka Pansy dostane nabídku k sňatku a sleduje reakce Osmonda a nevlastní matky Isabel.

Vdaných žen je v románu hned několik a postupně se k nim přidá i Isabel a dokonce i velice nekonvenční a nezávislá Henrieta, Isabelina americká kamarádka. Vdané ženy se stejně jako matky v románu nechovají tak jak by se od nich očekávala, ať už je zmíněna Paní Touchetová, nebo Osmondova sestra Countess Gemini, která je se svým manželem ne zrovna zadobře. Isabel tak nemá vhodný příklad, jak by mělo vypadat manželství a jak by se měla chovat správná žena. Její otec ji učil mít své vlastní ideály a jít si za nimi, ale neřekl jí nic o tom, jaké je to v manželství a co by měla dělat, když ji někdo připraví a své ideály, James zde znovu poukazuje na její naivitu. I přes nešťastné manželství se Isabel rozhodne navrátit k manželovi, ať už ze strachu před samotou, nebo před negativním přijetím společnosti, kdyby se rozhodla pro rozvod.

Druhou částí se snažím nastínit problematiku přátelství Whartonové a Jamese, byli velice blízkými přáteli, trávili spolu mnoho času a v odloučení si často psali dopisy. Začátek jejich přátelství nebyl podle očekávání Whartonové, snažila se upoutat Jamese několikrát svým vzhledem, ale podařilo se jí to až svým románem, kdy jí James poslal dopis s pochvalou, kritikou, ale i radou. Whartonová tak získala rádce, ale především cenného přítele, který jí byl oporou i v jejím nešťastném manželství, ale i v jiných těžkých chvílích, ovšem sdíleli také chvíle radostné, když James vyprávěl vtipy, nebo když spolu cestovali, což bylo jejich velkou zálibou. Oba měli i jiné přátele, dokonce i společné, oba byli členy literárního kroužku, kde se setkávali s jinými spisovateli a rozebírali literaturu, jejich další společný zájem. James se přestěhoval do Británie a Whartonová ho jakoby následovala, ale až za více než třicet let. Oba se shodli, že Amerika není vhodná a bohatá země na psaní literatury, Evropa má daleko lepší předpoklady. Whartonová se po více než dvaceti letech rozvedla i přes nepřízeň okolí, protože její vztah s manželem se stal, také zásluhou jeho choroby, nesnesitelným a ona pravděpodobně neviděla jiné východisko. James jí v tom byl nápomocen, protože věděl, že manžel ji ubíjí a brzdí její literární existenci, která se v jeho přítomnosti nemohla plně rozvíjet. Mnohokrát byl v médiích a kritikách zdůrazněn vliv Jamese na Whartonovou, což může být prokázáno i v tomto případě.

V poslední třetí části se soustředím na analýzu románu *Věku nevinosti*, role žen ve společnosti, pravidla a zákony Staré New Yorkské horní vrstvy společnosti

a poukazují na souvislost s Jamesovým románem. Základní myšlenkou je že román je jakýmsi pokračováním Jamesova románu, co by se stalo nebo mohlo stát, kdyby Isabel opustila Osmonda a odjela zpátky do Ameriky a jak by s ní pravděpodobně naložila tamní společnost. Samozřejmě jsou v románech velké rozdíly, například, že by Isabel neměla v Americe podporu své rodiny jakou měla Ellen a nebo, že hlavním hrdinou Whartonové románu je víceméně muž, přes kterého vnímání vidíme ostatní postavy. Pro rozbor Staré New Yorkské horní vrstvy společnosti jsem musela zvolit vhodnou definici společenské třídy. Whartonová věří v přítomnost společenských tříd daleko více než James, který uvádí, že tam třídy v podstatě nejsou. Whartonová znala poměry třídy velice dobře, protože se tam, narodila a vyrůstala, stejně jako James.

Porovnávat jsem se rozhodla Isabel s May, ale také Isabel s Ellen, a nejde se zde vyhnout porovnání Ellen s May. Isabel má hodně společného s Ellen, obě ztratily rodiče, obě se vdaly v Evropě a obě měli krutého manžela, v případě Ellen se však o manželovi více nedozvíme, kdežto Isabelin je popsán dopodrobna. Isabel ale sdílí s May její nevinnost a naivitu, kdežto Ellen je zkušená žena, u které se naivity projeví jen v pohledu na New Yorkskou společnost a v očekávání, že ji přijmou mezi sebe. Místem, kde se společnost scházela je Opera, sloužilo nejen pro pobavení, ale také pro předvedení se před ostatními členy společnosti, a v neposlední řadě jako manželský trh, kde si muži mohli vybírat své budoucí chotě. Muži si ovšem jen nevybírali, ale také kontrolovali kdo má co oblečeno a jestli je to vhodné pro tuhle příležitost, někteří to považovali skoro za svoje zaměstnání a právě ti objevili ženu v nevyhovujícím oděvu a náležitě prodiskutují její nevhodnou přítomnost. Členové společnosti si přísně strážili koho si mezi sebe připustí, kdo nesplňoval jejich nepsaná pravidla a zákony nemohl být přítomen, a tahle žena dlouho žila v Evropě, což už samo o sobě napovídá, že je zkažená a navíc utekla od manžela a žádá o rozvod, což bylo přímo nepřípustné. Její rodina se jí však zastala a rodina, jak už bylo řečeno rodina byla na prvním místě v žebříčku hodnot společnosti, v tomto případě však velice vážená a zámožná dáma Paní Mingottová, Ellenina babička, překročila rámeček svého vlivu a udělala nepřípustné gesto. Takovýchle zákony se nám mohou zdát nevhodné až primitivní. Paní Mingottová byla vdova stejně jako madame Merle, ale nepotřebovala klást někomu nástrahy jako Merle, byla totiž bohatá a měla velice dobré postavení ve společnosti, byla uznávaným členem, a to vše díky svému zemřelému manželovi.

Jako svobodná žena zde vystupuje May, která je záhy požádána o ruku Newlandem Archerem, ona však vnímá nabídku k sňatku zcela odlišně od Isabely, nabídku přijímá a je připravena převzít místo po boku svého budoucího manžela, byla v tomhle smyslu vychována a udělá to, co od ní společnost očekává. Newland také nemusel vymýšlet žádné triky nebo záminky, jak by May dostal, prostě pro oba bylo přirozené, že se vezmou. Ovšem jen do té doby než se na scéně objeví Ellen a Newland má srovnání, jeho May nevinnost sama a umělý výplod své společnosti v porovnání ze zkušenou, dráždivou a při tom přirozenou Ellen, která v New Yorku hledá útočiště před svým manželem. Newland je donucen pomoci Ellen, protože jeho i Mayina rodina na něj vyvíjí nátlak, má být jejím rádcem a přesvědčit ji aby nežádala o rozvod, bohužel se do ní zamiluje. Zájmy rodiny a společnosti jsou však pro Newlanda, i když se to zpočátku tak nezdá, přednější. Miluje Ellen, ale uvědomuje si, že život s ní by byl nepřijatelný ve společnosti kde žili, způsobil by mnoho nepříjemností; rád by se však uchýlil někam, kde by byli jen sami, Ellen je ovšem realistická a upozorní jej, že takový svět neexistuje. Protože by Newland jako jedinec jdoucí proti celé společnosti neuspěl, ožení se z May, ale v duši stále miluje Ellen. May nabídne před svatbou Newlandovi svobodu, ale on ji v rámci dodržování pravidel své společnosti, odmítne. Dosáhne urychlení své svatby, aby se zbavil pokušení, které ho ovšem neopouští ani po svatbě. May, i když se jeví jako naivní dívka, tuší, že je ohrožena ona a její manželství a snaží se všemi prostředky dosáhnout svého cíle.

Ellen představitelka vdané ženy se snaží o začlenění do společnosti, což je ovšem skoro nemožné. Tehdejší společnost neakceptovala rozvod, ani odloučení od manžela, byli přesvědčeni, že žena musí přijmout svou roli hodné manželky i přes to, že se jí manžel protivil nebo byl pro ni jinak nevhodný, byl to prostě úděl, který musí přijmout a vyrovnat se s ním. Ellen si brzy uvědomí, že život v New Yorku není to po čem toužila, že jejich zákonitosti v podstatě neuznává že jí tam chybí lidé, kteří by smýšleli intelektuálně, zajímali by se o literaturu a umění, takoví však v New Yorku nejsou a když se tam objeví tak nejsou uznávaní mezi členy vyšší společnosti. Rozhodne se přestěhovat do Washingtonu. Z May se také stává vdaná žena, ale není zatím šťastná, protože její manžel jí není plně odevzdán a to kvůli Ellen. May se rozhodne použít lež, i když je to neetické, aby se Ellen navždy zbavila dosáhla jejího

odjezdu zpátky do Evropy a řekne jí, že očekává s Newlandem dítě. Takle skutečnost podpoří Ellenino rozhodnutí o odjezdu. May si užívá vítězoslavně svého úspěchu.

Román pokračuje po více než dvaceti letech a Whartonová zhruba nastíní, stejně jako James, co se událo v rodině Archer, May porodila tři děti a společně je vychovali, zdánlivě šťastné manželství však ovlivňuje neustále zasněný a myslí nepřítomný Newland. Po Mayině smrti si s pomocí svého syna uvědomuje jak se společnost změnila a co bylo kdysi nepřipustné je teď zcela normální věc. Uvědomuje si, že je teď volný jít za svou životní láskou a napravit, co zkazil, a nahradit si to co celý svůj život postrádal. Jede se synem do Paříže a chystá se navštívit Ellen, ale těsně před jejím domem si to rozmyslí a zůstane venku. Stejně jako se může zdát nepochopitelné proč se Isabel vrátila ke svému manželovi, když byla na dosah svobody, se zdá situace Newlanda, který nevyužil svou šanci, když už byl tak blízko.

V závěru práce shrnuji a dávám dohromady souvislosti nalezené v obou analýzách románu za účelem dokázat a potvrdit vliv Jamese na Whartonovou a její román. Podotýkám, že ženy v dnešní společnosti mají mnohem větší volnost, ať už ve výběru manžela nebo kariéry; a že Americké dívky jsou a byly vychovávány ve větší volnosti. Ve srovnání tříd jak je popisuje James a Whartonová jsou značné rozdíly, James třídy zřejmě moc neuznával a přikláněl se k názoru, že v Americe neexistují, naopak Whartonová je popisuje jako důležité a poukazuje na jejich existenci. Role svobodné ženy nebyla v minulosti brána jako významná, žena se stává pro společnost váženou až po svatbě. Dnešní ženy jsou mnohem více informované o problémech manželství a to tom, co mohou očekávat po svatbě, což je dělá mnohem zkušenější a připravené. Isabel neměla nikoho, kdo by ji připravil na její budoucí roli, kdežto May byla vychována ve víře budoucí manželky a matky a proto přijala své manželství v očekávání skvělého života, naopak Isabel byla zaskočená a z nabídek k sňatku a měla z budoucího manželství strach, což vedlo k pozdějším problémům. Poukazuji na podobnost Ellen a Isabel a jejich životní dráhu. Romány nejsou jen o lásce a manželství, ale také intrikách několika hrdinů, kteří bojují za dosažení svého cíle a nezaleknou se ani lži, jako je to v případě Madame Merle a May. Zmiňuji se o matkách, které nejsou hlavním tématem románů, a nejsou ani popsány v nejlepší světlo. Má poslední zmínka je tom, že i přes snahu Whartonové o odlišení, se její práce nápadně podobá práci Jamese a jeho vliv přetrvává po jeho smrti.

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Abstract

This theses with the positions and the roles of women in the society and in the marriage at the end of 19th century, the women's struggle with men, love and their longing for freedom and independence, as is portrayed in two novels Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* and Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*, it gives a glimpse to the principles and codes of the Victorian society and mainly intend to show if and how was Wharton influenced in her writing of this novel by James. The paper is divided into three parts, the first analyzes *The Portrait of a Lady*, the second is a linkage of the novels and concern the friendship of both the writers, and last aims to show *The Age of Innocence* in the contrast with the previous novel, demonstrating similarities and differences between the novels in the frame of conception of woman.

Abstrakt

Tato práce se zabývá pozicemi a rolemi žen ve společnosti a v manželství na konci 19. století, boj žen s muži, láskou a jejich touhu po svobodě a nezávislosti, jak je znázorněno ve dvou románech Henryho Jamese *Portrét dámy* a Edith Whartonové *Věk nevinnosti*, dává náhled do zásad a zákonů Viktoriánské společnosti a hlavně se snaží ukázat jestli a jak byla Whartonová ovlivněna Jamesem ve svém románu. Práce se skládá ze tří částí, první analyzuje *Portrét dámy*, druhá je jakýmsi spojovacím bodem mezi oběma romány a týká se přátelství obou autorů, poslední část si klade za cíl ukázat *Věk nevinnosti* v porovnání s předcházejícím románem a prokazuje podobnosti a rozdíly mezi romány v rámci pojetí ženy.

ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI

Název práce	Marriage and the Position of Women in Wharton's <i>Age of Innocence</i> and James's <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>
Autor práce	Kateřina Mrtvá
Obor	Učitelství anglického jazyka
Rok obhajoby	2005
Vedoucí práce	Michael M. Kaylor, MA
Anotace	Práce se zabývá rolmi žen ve Viktoriánské společnosti, analyzuje román Henryho Jamese <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i> a Edith Whartonové <i>The Age of Innocence</i> a snaží se prokázat vliv na Jamese na Whartonovou a její psaní.
Klíčová slova	Henry James Edith Wharton Marriage Roles of Women Victorian society <i>Age of Innocence</i> <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>