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Woman and Nature in Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*: An Ecofeminist Study

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Abstract:

The paper aims at exploring Henry James's vision and method of the connection between woman and nature. It also aims at showing that James is an ecofeminist, who finds out some connections between woman and nature and uncovers the patriarchal oppression and subordination that have befallen them. A thorough reading and analysis of the text show James's feminine orientation. The analysis is based on the ecofeminist theory, which defends woman and nature and calls for their preservation. *The Portrait of a Lady* is selected for this study because it represents the middle period of James's writing, in which his orientation is feminine. The conclusion presents the results of this study, which prove that James is an ecofeminist, in spite of the fact that this movement appeared at the second half of the twentieth century.

Introduction:

Henry James (1843 – 1916), one of the pioneers of the nineteenth-century literary realism, was born in America but spent most of his life in England. He thinks that a good novel presents a piece of reality, following up the stylistic methods of the "French realist" and "naturalist" writers (Powers, 1970, p.17). From Zola and Balzac he has learned more about the craft of fiction like realistic presentation of characters and careful attention to detail. James called Balzac "his greatest master" (Powers, 1970, p.11). Both of them can "still be profitably compared as examples of systemic realism" (Stowe, 1983, p.xii). James has also learned the artistic designs of some impressionist painters like John La Farge he met in Paris in 1860. His impressionist style is obviously reflected in his later work, which foreshadows many of the modern technical developments appearing in the early twentieth-century novel like the stream of consciousness technique, interior monologue and unreliable narrator. A critic, Joseph O'Leary (2000), calls him a "modernist.... His works, like those of Joyce or Eliot, are a lamp held up to the entire range of European literature" (p.1). James's modernity is represented in his realist school of literature, which breaks with the English romantic tradition and takes his style as "its chief exemplar.... A novelist he is not, after the old fashion, or after any fashion but his own" (Lauter, 2010, p. 364). Not only is James a modernist but also he is regarded as "the first modernist... a man who met and socialized with Dickens and Eliot" (Griffin, 2012, p.9). His experiments with new styles and points of view have paved the way for more radical innovations in the modernist novel. He is a modern novelist, who is "responsive not only to his era's changing attitudes toward genre, sexuality, class and ethnicity, but also to changing conditions of literary production" (McWhirter, 2010, p.xix). His work can be seen in the light of such modern movements as feminism, ecofeminism and ecocriticism, due to his responsiveness to changing attitudes toward gender and sexuality. Moreover, in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) James introduces some styles that can show some features of postmodernism in his point of view. For example, he leaves the ending of this novel unresolved to the frustration of many readers, which is "an attitude associated with Joyce and his postmodern progeny but...such challenging fiction began with James's *The Portrait*" (Moore, 2012, p.4).

James's work is characterized by dramatic action and the action of his narratives often "exists in the detailed representation of intricate psychological processes, in the nuanced exchanges that constitute self and society" (Griffin, 2012, p.4). His realistic presentation of melodrama is called "melodrama of manners" (Brooks, 1976, p.22). He is more concerned with melodrama, at the centre of which his moral vision lies. He prefers internal psychological presentation because it explores a deep insight into human nature. A critic, Leo Levy (1957), calls him a "paradoxical creator, a civilized melodramatist" (p.1). The paradox of his narratives lies in the fact

that he is detached from the action while affirming his own aesthetic vision. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, for example, he lets the heroine, Isabel Archer, commit many follies and faults without any authorial intervention. He also lets readers infer the implications of her inner feelings from her action. The emphasis of the action is "more on the presentation of the mind rather than the body.... How does *The Portrait of a Lady* move forward in any sort of semblance of plot? The answer is characterization" (Martin, 2002, p.5). Fiction writers and psychologists share with each other "in the exploration of the dark continent of the human mind" (Ruddick, 2007, p.203). James also tries to explore this dark continent and the dualism between "individual, fluid consciousness and the obtuseness of others and the outside world" (Domestico, 2010, p.1). In *The Portrait of a Lady* the focus of the action is on Isabel's consciousness and mind. Isabel is "the first Jamesian venture into the realistic world of his middle period James's orientation in this period may be 'feminine' as it has been before, yet what he is essentially examining is the defeminized world which tends towards absolutes, toward extra-personal definitions of the self" (Bloom, 1992, p.76). James's orientation towards femininity is of more importance in this study.

Aim and method of the study:

The paper aims at exploring Henry James's vision and method of the connection between woman and nature and investigating his feminine orientation. It also aims at showing that James is an ecofeminist who thinks that the oppression of women and the degradation of nature are an effect of the patriarchal ideology dominating many societies. A thorough reading and analysis of the text discover many features of his orientation. This analysis is primarily based on the theories of ecofeminism and ecocriticism. *The Portrait of a Lady* is selected for this study because it is his "great, humane masterpiece..., is many readers' favorite of his books. All his critics and biographers put it at the centre of his life and work" (Lee, 2012, p.1). The novel also contributes to a century's progress in the fictional revelation of consciousness and "anticipates, in its formidable systemic microscopy, the next century of such progress" (Wood, 2012, p.5). The conclusion presents the results of this study.

Ecofeminism is concerned with the study of the connection between the natural world and femininity. This movement appeared in the mid-1970s alongside other movements like feminism, peace and ecology movement, and the green movement. The term was coined by the French writer, Françoise d'Eaubonne in her book, *Le Féminisme ou La Mort* (1974) {English: *Feminism or Death*} (Merchant, 1992, p.184). It became popular in the context of "numerous protests and activists against environmental destruction, sparked off initially by recurring ecological disasters" (Mies, 1993, p.24). Ecofeminism takes nature as its primal field of study and links "feminism with ecology" (MacGregor, 2006. P. 286). There are

traditional connections that link nature and woman like reciprocity, nurturing and cooperation. Ecofeminists link women specifically to the environment, due to "their traditional role as a nurturer and caregiver" (Stoddart, 2011, p. 342). Ecofeminism fights against the oppression and exploitation both of nature and woman. From the green movement ecofeminism takes its concern with "the impact of human activities on the non-human world and from feminism the view of humanity as gendered in ways that subordinate, exploit and oppress women" (Mellor, 1997, p. 1). Ecofeminism specifies some marginalized groups of different gender and race, which "must be included in environmental and women's movements" (Mann, 2011, p. 5). These groups may include people of color, children and the poor, who are dominated and oppressed in patriarchal societies. These societies claim that women are "unproductive, for they do not grow economy" (Shiva, 1990, p. 199). The ecofeminist theory should be inclusive, flexible and reflexive of the culture and philosophy of the community in which it is generated. Ecofeminists benefit from all the theories that are concerned with the issue of ecology and environment, for they suggest that "nothing less than the future of the earth and all of its inhabitants may well depend on how effectively we all can work together to achieve global justice and planetary health" (Gaard, 1993, p. 25). The ecofeminist theory also should include an ecological politics because degradation and " deconstructions of nature that do not explicitly embrace an ecological politics will leave us only further dissociated from the nonhuman around and within us" (Keller, 2005, p. 9). There are three approaches to theoretical research of ecofeminism: "1) through the study of political theory and history; 2) through the study of nature-based religions; 3) through environmentalism" (Spretnak, 1990, p. 3). This paper relies on the third approach of environmentalism in its analysis of the text. Environmentalism is concerned with the state of the natural environment, environmental protection and preservation of land. An understanding of the connection between nature and woman is essential to an understanding of the theories of "feminism, environmentalism and environmental philosophy. A main project of ecofeminism is to make visible these woman-nature connections and where harmful to women and nature, to dismantle them" (Warren, 1991, p.2). Many ecofeminists try to find radical alternatives for reconstructing life on Earth. For example, ecowomanists, African-American ecofeminists, discuss the issue of racism "as the first and most dominant oppression in their experience, while sexism is the secondary" (Hobgood-Oster, 2002, p.11). Other ecofeminists may suggest solutions for such issues as classism, heterosexism and naturism. Cathleen McGuire (1991), an ecofeminist, calls for the unity of man and woman and the abolition of the patriarchal idea of domination. She thinks that "by reactivating the ancient spiritual power of the feminine principle and balancing it with the male principle, men and women together can abandon dualistic thinking , 'grow

up', and live as sensitive, mature human beings in harmony with other animals and nature"(p.15). Another ecofeminist, Rosemary Ruether (1975), suggests that there is no liberation for women nor solution to the ecological crises in a society based on the principle of domination. She calls women to "unite the demands of the women's movements with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this modern industrial society" (p. 204). A critic, Leila Brammer (1998), urges women to "recognize the Earth as their mother and join in a communion with her....There is a call for these groups then to take action to save the earth" (p. 8). James also tries to find some connections between nature and woman that may prevent their oppression in the modern age.

Ecocriticism is a literary movement that studies the relationship between nature and literature. It is the study of "the relationship between literature and the physical environment.... Ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies", as Glotfelty indicates (1996, p.xvii). The term was coined by William Rueckert in his 1978 essay, 'Literature and ecology: An experiment in ecocriticism'. The movement has become public and "teetered uncertainly between postmodernism and a quasi-Darwinism naturalism" (Dickerson, 2006, p. xi). It has shifted its method from anthropocentrism or ego-centred studies to eco-centred studies. A critic, Greg Garrad (2004), thinks that ecocriticism is a moral, cultural, political and philosophical movement because ecocritics "tie their cultural analyses explicitly to a 'green' moral and political agenda. In this respect, ecocriticism is closely related to environmentally oriented developments in philosophy and political theory" (p.3). This movement can offer alternative solutions to environmental crises and make interdisciplinary connections with other movements like "ecofeminism, toxic texts, urban nature, Darwinism, ethnic literatures, environmental justice, and virtual environments" (Oppermann, 2011, p.2). Ecocritics carry out their research on the narratives representing environments and suggest solutions with the use of a "unique blend of environmental imagination, criticism and activism" (Ingram, 2007, p.8). They work on literary representations of nature and focus on natural relations rather than social relations. They call for preserving nature and ecological evolution and offer "a powerful conceptual frame for ecological progress: citizenship" (Ruffin, 2010, p.158). Ecocriticism regards the citizen or the individual as "a member of ecosystemic as well as human patterns of organization. It values highly the literary 'sense of place', not as 'setting' but as an essential expression of bonding with or alienation from a specific natural context" (Branch, 1994, p.5). Citizenship urges the individual to preserve environment and nature. The main target of ecocritical studies is the contribution to solving the problem of "twentieth-and twenty first-century pollution and degradation of

landscapes, climate, human bodies, etc., and the revival of nature sensibility" (Larson, 2007, p.1). In this respect, ecofeminists and ecocritics can cooperate for attaining this target, perform research on the nature writings including "the natural themes and images that deepen the other meanings in their texts" (Dickerson, 2006, p. x), and identify the connection between "human history and the nonhuman environment, empathy with the nonhuman, accountability on the part of humans toward the environment and the idea that the environment is not fixed but constantly in process" (Deloughrey, 2011, p.8). Ecocriticism is a "methodology that reexamines the history of ideologically, aesthetically, and ethically motivated conceptualizations of nature" (Gersdorf, 2006, p.10). It studies such themes as "the representation of nature in Romantic poetry, the American West as a symbol, metaphors of landscape, or Dante's Inferno as a polluted ecosystem" (Carroll, 2004, p.85). This paper is more concerned with metaphors of landscape in the text. Ecofeminists and ecocritics determine a set of ecological values including the meaning of such terms as nature, class, gender, race and place, and examine human perception of "wilderness, anthropocentrism, natural world, cultural values, history, economics, philosophy, ethics and psychology" (Gomides, 2006, p.13). This paper offers the meaning of such words as nature and place, as used by James. A critic, Simon Estok (2005), thinks that ecocriticism is a theory that analyzes the function of the natural environment whether it is "thematic, artistic, social, historical, ideological, theoretical, or otherwise" (p.16). The cultural ecology, a branch of ecocriticism, has the function of the analysis of "the analogies between ecosystems and imaginative texts and posits that such texts potentially have an ecological (regenerative, revitalizing) function in the cultural system" (Zapf, 2008, p. 847). The pastoral ecology, another branch of ecocriticism, supports this function because it "involves a critique of the cultural norms of nature that lead to environmental degradation" (Barry, 2009, p.56). Ecocritics and ecofeminists should have an ethical stand or a commitment by which they regard "the natural world as an important thing rather than simply as an object of thematic study" (Estok, 2001, p.220). Their studies should be conducted "in a spirit of commitment to environment praxis" (Buell, 1995, p.430).

Analysis of the text:

In *The Portrait of a Lady* James seeks the connections between nature and woman, nature and culture, and nature and history through an investigation of the natural world and environment of some European countries and landscapes where the heroine, Isabel Archer, lives and travels. He searches for the beauty of the natural world and reverence for history and culture. His literary career "was always a study of manners in the broadest sense – as a mode for the urgent transmission of culture. It was always a search for history and for evidence of reverence for the past...It was always a search for a sustainable aesthetic to carry the spirit upward,

and for the quiet beauty that gave that spirit peace" (Hoople, 2009, p.224). *The Portrait of a Lady* is one of an increasing number of works of art about the feminine question at the end of the nineteenth century. It also inscribes early twentieth-century issues about race, gender, and femininity and confronts them "with demands for modern, cosmopolitan versions of community" (Berman, 2001, p.3). Isabel is presented as an example of the modern woman who wants to set herself free from the shackles of patriarchal society. Her desire for an independent and free life is confronted by some inner qualities and external obstacles but she finally manages to realize it. Isabel is first seen in Mr. Touchett's English house in Gardencourt where the pastoral pleasures of the setting are visible: - "the lawn of an old English country-house, in what I should call the perfect middle of a splendid summer afternoon...the flood of summer light had begun to ebb, the air had grown mellow, the shadows were long upon the smooth, dense turf... and the scene expressed that sense of leisure still to come, which is perhaps the chief source of one's enjoyment of such a scene at such an hour" (17; ch.1). James uses such natural elements as the lawn, summer light, mellow air, long shadows and dense turf to show the beauty of the scene. He often derives images from natural elements like fruits, flowers, birds, seasons, seascapes and landscapes to suggest the pleasure and beauty of a certain scene. The beauty of the previous scene is blended with the beauty of Isabel, who expresses her enjoyment of this scene, saying: "I've never seen anything so lovely as this place. I've been all over the house; it's too enchanting...I've never seen anything so beautiful as this" (27,28; ch.2). A critic, Anthony Lane (2012), comments on this scene, saying: "And I have never read anything as beautiful as that. Decades after I first encountered the passage, it had lost none of its thrill and luster. The beauty of the telling should not be confused with the loveliness of the scene, whatever the enticement of the green ward...The beauty, rather, is in the excitement – in the motions of the flexible figure and in all that is presaged by the quickness of her response" (p.2). The beauty of the garden and the beauty of the heroine are representative of one of the connections between nature and woman. The house, which rises beyond the lawn of the garden, on a low hill, above the Thames, some forty miles from London, stands for this connection of beauty. In the garden there are "the still great oaks and beeches flung down a shade as dense as that of velvet curtains" (18; ch.1). The garden of the house is described in detail because the English landscape garden serves as "the paradigmatic embodiment of an ecological aesthetics of nature. Described by Kant as a concrete form of landscape painting, landscape gardening – like painting – produces more or less idealized images of nature...Entering an English landscape garden, the human individual will be confronted with a staged, dramatized, civilized version of nature...the creation of beauty in an English landscape garden involves

technologies of alliance, i.e., the cooperative interaction between nature and culture" (Gersdorf, 2006, pp.18,19). In a sense, the beauty of an English landscape garden is representative of the connection between nature and culture. It also offers a picture of the virtual environment

Like an ecofeminist, James fights against the oppression and exploitation of woman and nature. He is concerned with the view of humanity as gendered in a way that exploits and subordinates women and supports the ecofeminist theory that all human beings should work together to fulfill global justice and equal rights. He also calls for the abolition of the patriarchal principle of domination, so he presents Mr. Osmond's house as a model of this patriarchy. He thinks that balancing the ancient spiritual power of the feminine principle with the male principle prevents dualistic thinking of men and women and makes them live together as sensitive human beings.

Some ecofeminists urge women to recognize the Earth as their nurturing mother and connect in a communion with her. Women should take some tours through the Earth to enjoy its scenery and to have knowledge of the natural world around them. James presents the American girls as open-minded, liberal, and independent. They know more of the world, due to their travels and readings. Isabel is presented as a sort of the American girl who seeks knowledge, experience and culture. She has an immense curiosity about life and wants to see as much of the world as possible, because her "deepest enjoyment was to feel the continuity between the movements of her own soul and the agitations of the world. For this reason she was fond of seeing great crowds and large stretches of country, of reading about revolutions and wars, of looking at historical pictures" (24; ch.4). Mrs. Touchett, her aunt, decides to help Isabel to recognize nature, culture and history of Europe and to "introduce her to the world. She thinks she knows a great deal of it – like most American girls" (48; ch.5). Like American girls, Isabel regards Europe as "a land of emigration, of rescue, a refuge for their superfluous population" (49; ch.5). The land here means the landscape or the environment where the heroine prefers to live. She regards the world as "a place of brightness, of free expansion, of irresistible action" (55;ch.6). She has a fixed determination that her action and views won't be suppressed or oppressed in this free world.

Isabel thinks that a woman prefers to be unmarried than to get married to a domineering man who deprives her from her liberty. She holds that a woman "ought to be able to live to herself, in the absence of exceptional flimsiness, and that it was perfectly possible to be happy without the society or a more or less coarse-minded person of another sex" (57; ch.6). She refuses Lord Warburton's proposal when "it appeared to her there had been no choice in the question" (104; ch.12). Also, she does not accept Casper Goodwood's proposal of marriage because he "seemed to deprive her of the sense of freedom" (108; ch.13). Like an ecofeminist, James here calls

women for resisting patriarchal dominance. A woman should be clever, intelligent, knowledgeable and strong in order to overcome hardships confronting her. Isabel expects that she might "find herself someday in a difficult position, so that she should have the pleasure of being as heroic as the occasion demanded" (56; ch.6). In a sense, a woman should be as courageous and brave as a man is. Isabel decides to evade herself from the trifles and follies of some women, who "lied and who tried to hurt each other....Isabel, who know little of the sorts of artillery to which young women are exposed, feathered herself that such contradictions would never be noted in her own conduct" (55; ch.6). Isabel is fortunate to have a finer mind and a larger perception of truth and knowledge. She thinks that a woman should be "conscious of a fine organization (she couldn't help knowing her organization was fine), should move in a realm of light, of natural wisdom" (56; ch.6). A woman should be wise and shrewd. Among her fine organization Isabel has a good American friend, Henrietta Stackpole, who is a journalist for the *Interviewer*. She is active, intelligent and courageous. For Isabel, she is "a proof that a woman might suffice to herself and be happy" (56; ch.6). Henrietta thinks that liberty and equality between men and women are the best way for modern life. Women should cooperate for attaining their ends and getting rid of slavery and dominance – "They're the companions of freemen, Henrietta retorted" (92; ch.11). On the other hand, Isabel criticizes two English young girls, the Misses Molyneux, Lord Warburton's sisters, who seem "to show original stamp" (75; ch.9). They retain some traditional qualities like shyness of demeanor. They seem to be subordinated to patriarchal dominance. Isabel thinks that the English young girls should follow the example of the American girls who seek liberty and independence. The author calls all societies for getting rid of traditional beliefs like patriarchal dominance and regarding women as evil creatures. Ecofeminists suggest that in "a patriarchal system that conceives of nature as female, there is a clear and necessary connection between the development of science as the rational control of a chaotic natural world and the persecution of women as inherently irrational, erotic, and therefore evil creatures. Such connections have provided the conceptual foundations for ecofeminist theories" (Gaard, 1997, p.137). Ecofeminists fight against oppression of woman and nature. They call for cancelling differences of sex, class and gender. James introduces the character of Ralph as a man who hates woman for her gender:- "As a man I'm bound to dislike her then. She must be a kind of monster. Is she very ugly?" (81; ch.10). Ralph dislikes Henrietta before he sees her, for nothing but her being a woman and a reporter. He laughs at her because she works as a journalist but Isabel defends her, saying: - "It's very easy to laugh at her, but it is not easy to be as brave as she" (81; ch.10). She explains that Henrietta has the qualifications that make her worthy of this position and that many American

women have jobs, which are supposed to be occupied by men. On the other hand, James introduces the character of Mr. Bantling, whom Henrietta recognizes in London, as a man who sympathizes with the feminine question. Henrietta thinks that "her blooming, easy-voiced bachelor, with his impressibility to feminine merit and his splendid range of suggestion, a very agreeable man" (131; ch.15). This shows that many men can sympathize and cooperate with women to attain their rights and demands. Like Henrietta, Isabel has the desire to see much of the world to have more knowledge: - "I'm a good deal like Henrietta. The other day when I asked her if she wished to marry, she said: 'Not till I've seen Europe'. I too don't wish to marry till I've seen Europe" (137; ch.15). When Lord Warburton proposes to Isabel, she refuses marriage, saying: - "I don't want to begin life by marrying. There are other things a woman can do" (137; ch.15). Traditional women have preferred marriage and home to work and social rank while the modern woman seeks to fulfill her identity through education, work and social position. The modern woman is brave and adventurous. Ralph describes Isabel to be courageous but he thinks that women "rarely boast of their courage. Men do so with a certain frequency" (138; ch.15). The author tries to show that women have got many of the qualities that men have, so they can prove heroic in difficult situations. He also perceives that they are "filled with renunciations, repressions, conflicts, and even ideals which made life tragic but often noble....James chose his uncommon characters – people who, like the characters of George Eliot and Turgenev, could be placed in a situation drawn from a 'germ'- an anecdote – and with their sensibilities and their ideals face the test, perceive, suffer, grow, and, as a rule, make a noble renunciation" (Howells, 1961, p.14). This is just the case with Isabel, the heroine of the novel, who develops from an innocent, simple and beautiful girl into a wise, shrewd and strong lady.

Wealth is one of the factors that make a woman strong and independent. Mrs. Touchett tells Isabel that she is now free to do whatever she wants after she has her legacy but she warns her against some people who may approach her for her wealth: - "you're completely your own mistress and are as free as the bird on the bough....You can do a great many things if you're rich" (194; ch.21). Like an ecofeminist, James here connects Isabel and the natural world with one of the connections that link woman and nature, that is, freedom. The simile likens Isabel to a free bird. Moreover, it shows Mrs. Touchett's wisdom and experience, so Isabel decides to remain for the present with her as a kind of protection and guidance for her. Isabel learns the lesson that "a young gentleman without visible relations had always struck her as a flower without foliage" (195; ch.21). In this metaphor, James uses another connection between woman and nature, namely, protection. The metaphor shows that both of them need protection and preservation. The author often derives his metaphors and images from natural elements to support these connections. The foliage here

takes up the role of a mother who protects and takes care of her little children. Nurturing and caring are always offered by woman and nature. As a result, Mrs. Touchett protects Isabel from the advances of many men, including Mr. Osmond. However, Madame Merle, a friend of Osmond's, could tempt Isabel and convince her that Osmond falls in love with her. She plays trick on Isabel till she is engaged to him. Ralph is shocked to hear from this engagement: - "You were the last person I expected to see caught" (29; ch.34). He likens Isabel to a prey that falls in the trap of a hunter. Like an ecofeminist, James here shows a sort of oppression that befalls woman and nature. Osmond marries her for her wealth and expects her to follow his traditions. However, she could keep her independence and money. When he discovers that she "was so different, that she was not what he had believed she would prove to be" (363; ch.42), he dislikes and despises her, claiming that she has "no traditions and the moral horizon of a Unitarian minister" (370; ch.42). On the contrary, she realizes that he has no traditions nor morals when she watches him and Madame Merle "unconsciously and familiarly associated" (372; ch.42). Isabel and Osmond represent a contrasting image of a wife and husband. James's representation of patriarchy in the character of Osmond is "more complicated than such a masculine-effeminate contrast allows. James does identify expansiveness and an adventurous, freedom-loving spirit with Isabel Archer and make Gilbert Osmond the votary of restriction, domestic duty and social form – thus inverting the nature vs. culture, male vs. female conflict of many nineteenth century American novels – not even the arguably 'effeminated' Osmond rests easily in a single gendered position" (Person, 2003, p. 86). Isabel understands the meaning of freedom which is based on good conduct and social values while Osmond adopts the view of humanity as gendered in a way that exploits women.

James often employs a figurative language to reveal the implications of a character, a situation, a scene or a landscape. His persistent use of pictorial vocabulary is suitable for the title of the novel and his metaphorical speech reveals his great concern with ecological elements. For example, When Isabel leaves America to England, she has a strong desire for forgetting the past and beginning a new life. Her desire is metaphorically described to be "as familiar as the sound of the rain upon the window" (40, ch.4). This metaphor shows the strong impulse of her desire. In another situation, the image of the rain is used to express Isabel's goodness: - "She is as good as a summer rain" (48; ch.5). The text is saturated with metaphors and similes, which illustrate James's attitude towards woman and nature. *The Portrait of a Lady* is seen to be "the most metaphor-ridden novel in English....In their dialogue, all the characters flow in and out of their own metaphors....Using a second metaphor to explain a first one was helplessly shrewd" (Wood, 2012, p.5). Most metaphors are extended or blended to express characters'

attitudes toward environment. Characters' linguistic activity is "primarily metaphoric, a means of uncovering relations and similarities" (Rowe, 1976, p.226). For example, Isabel is compared to her sisters with the use of a metaphor; she is "the willowy one" (51; ch.5), which shows that she is taller than them. In addition, James explores the limits and the appeal of romance in this novel "by means of metaphor and the charm of the heroine herself" (Bloom, 1992, p.41), though he rejects romance as a moral view of femininity. These are some of the functions he employs metaphors and similes for attaining them. The images and metaphors taken from the weather and environment are sometimes associated with humans' changing moods, stages of life, emotions and attitudes towards certain actions. Bad or good weather and environment are also linked to human health. Ralph Touchett, Isabel's cousin, is sick, so he spends winters abroad because England's cold weather badly affects him. He travels to Algiers, where "one of his lungs began to heal ... he was assured he might outweather a dozen winters if he would betake him to those climates" (46; ch.5). Once more, Ralph is recommended to go to a place "as hot as Calcutta" in India (328; ch.36). James introduces such climates and refers to their good effects on one's health or sensation in order to call people for preserving them for the sake of fine human life on the Earth. He therefore derives his metaphors from the surrounding landscape and environment. For example, Isabel's voice and movements are compared to the flowing water of the river passing by Mr. Touchett's house she stays in: -- "our rustling, quickly-moving, clear-voiced heroine was as agreeable to his sense as the sound of flowing water" (59; ch.6). This is another connection between Isabel and nature. Ecofeminists seek such connections to confront oppression. Moreover, James takes some natural elements to express some qualities of human nature. For instance, Isabel's nature is compared to the qualities of a garden: "Her nature had, in her conceit, a certain garden-like quality, a suggestion of perfume and murmuring boughs, of shady bowers, lengthening vistas, which made her feel that introspection was, after all, an exercise in the open air, and that a visit to the recesses to one's spirit was harmless when one returned from it with a lapful of roses. But she was often reminded that there were other gardens in the world than those of her remarkable soul, and that there were moreover a great many places which were not gardens at all -- only dusky, pestiferous tracts, planted thick with ugliness and misery" (57; ch.6). The passage presents two opposing images of the garden: beautiful gardens and ugly gardens, concrete gardens and abstract, spiritual gardens. Not all places in the world are gardens and neither are all human souls and spirits. In Isabel's life she experiences the two kinds of gardens. The garden of Mr. Touchett's house in Gardencourt represents Isabel's pleasure and happiness before marriage but the garden in Osmond's house in Palazzo Roccanero, in Rome, stands for her misery and bad marriage. The first sentence in the previous passage is "appropriate to the pastoral pleasures of

the setting of Gardencourt where she is first seen. The final sentence figuratively anticipates the comfortless grandeur of the Palazzo Roccanero in Rome....The word 'vistas' is used in the Italian sense of a panorama, a wide-angled view, and the English meaning to describe the convergence of vision on a distant object through an avenue of trees where the object viewed is one of aesthetic beauty" (Kelly, 1999, p. viii). In another situation, the word 'vista' is used to express Isabel's disappointment after her marriage: --"she had suddenly found the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end" (363; ch.42). In the passage above, the word 'place' used in the phrase 'a great many places' is often employed in the text in the meaning of a landscape. A landscape is defined as "a setting for human activity, a stage set for a particularly important action or revelation or an aesthetic phenomenon" (Stowe, 2003, p.45). In a work of art, characters can be portrayed in "an objective social setting" (Przybylowicz, 1986, p.39), which reveals a kind of relationship and interaction between them and environment. James writes about this objective social setting, saying: "I have ever, in general, found it difficult to write of places under too immediate impression – the impression that prevents standing off and allows neither space nor time for perspective" (Hoople, 2009, p.224). James thinks that the landscape or the world around the heroine is "a place of torment, where creatures of prey perpetually thrust their claws into the quivering flesh of doomed, defenceless children of light....His novels are a repeated exposure of this wickedness, reiterated and passionate plea for the fullest freedom of development" (Bosanquet, 2006, p.275). The development of Isabel's character ranges between two landscapes: the scene at the Opera house and the scene at Saint Peter's Cathedral. The two landscapes are juxtaposed in the middle of the plot "to design a reversal of situation....the cathedral, emblematic of the spiritual, and the opera house, emblematic of the mundane; truth in the one, falsity in the other. They are conjoined to elicit the hidden contradiction in Isabel Archer's character and the change in her personality" (Stallman, 1961, p.3). At the Cathedral her hope of a better future reaches its climax while her soaring aspiration begins to decline at the scene of the Opera, which is similar to her bad marriage. The European landscape of *The Portrait of a Lady* is contrasted to the American landscape of James's *The American Scene* : the American landscape is "a site of suffering and a sign of the moral tenor and the social potential of his native land....disfigured by the complacent cynical forces and agents of industrial expansion" (Stowe, 2003, p.45) whereas the European scene is characterized by "the color and the romance of life, music, pictures, the past, the ways of the world" (Brooks, 1925, p.6). However, the European landscape is disappointing for some Americans who stay in Europe. Madame Merle, An American, living in Europe, expresses the Americans' suffering there, saying: "We're a wretched

set of people....If we are not good Americans we're certainly poor Europeans; we've no natural place here" (175; ch.19). The phrase, 'natural place', means one's homeland and environment. Madame Merle has got "neither husband, nor child, nor fortune, nor position, nor the traces of a beauty" (178; ch.19). Her boyfriend, Gilbert Osmond, another American living in Italy, has "no career, no name, no position, no fortune, no past, no future, no anything" (176; ch.19). In Paris, Isabel recognizes an American young man, Ned Rosier, who has a small fortune. However, Mr. and Mrs. Touchett are Americans who could make a great fortune and invest their money in England. A critic, Leon Edel, thinks that James has found it necessary "to create – and to show – how American women, heiresses of all the ages, responded to their destinies in a world that jilted, denied, betrayed – that made them, for all their fine will to freedom and independence, into second-class citizens in the very society that bestowed their heritage upon them" (1962, p.395). Like an ecofeminist, James explains that oppression and subordination of these American women are an effect of their disconnection from their natural world and landscape. Isabel, the heroine, moves from the American landscape into the European landscape where she suffers a lot and faces many problems, due to her inexperience and her departure from her natural place into a new landscape.

The word, 'nature', is used in various meanings and implications in the text. It may refer to environmental and ecological elements or human qualities. A human being is an integral part of nature, so human nature has common characteristics with nature. For example, Isabel's nature is said to have "a real little passionate force to see at play" and her force "is the finest thing in nature. It's finer than the finest work of art – than a Greek bas-relief, than a great Titan, than a Gothic Cathedral" (65; ch.7). Isabel herself is "a fine free nature" (65; ch.7). James makes Isabel and nature, or rather, woman and nature one thing. Like nature, she is a powerful, free and fine woman. She is described to be "fresh and natural and quick to understand" (59; ch.6), which means that she is pure, innocent, beautiful and intelligent. There are many common qualities between her nature and nature, so she loves natural scenery and landscapes – " I like the great country stretching away beyond the rivers and across the prairies, blooming and smiling and spreading till it stops at the green Pacific!" (90; ch.10). Ralph ironically comments on her remark, saying: "I'm not sure the Pacific's no green as that ... but you're a young woman of imagination" (90; ch.10). Out of her imagination the metaphor where the country is smiling springs. In many situations the author refers to human nature as something distinctive of a character or personality. For example, Isabel refuses Casper Goodwood's proposal of marriage in spite of his physical energy which is characteristic of his nature or character. His strong figure "expressed for her an energy – and she had already felt it as a power – that was of his very nature" (109; ch.13). She does not accept his proposal because she feels it will diminish

her sense of independence and freedom. The word, nature, may mean a set of human features; Madame Merle has "a face that told of an amplitude of nature and quick and free emotions" (157; ch.18). Isabel presents an opinion of Madame Merle that she "was not natural; by which the girl meant, not that she was either affected or pretentious ... but that her nature had been too much overlaid by custom and her angles too much rubbed away.... Madame Merle was not superficial – not she. She was deep, and her nature spoke nonetheless in her behavior because it spoke a conventional tongue" (171; ch.19). When Isabel asks her why Ralph hates her, Madame Merle answers, "It's an antipathy of nature" (177; ch.19). In a sense, one's behavior expresses one's nature, so Ralph hates Merle's conduct. Like an ecofeminist, James connects human nature with nature, calling for their refinement and improvement so that people can enjoy a finer life. He also links the changes of nature to changing feelings and states of characters. For example, in September, Isabel feels calm and happy because "the stale September days, in the huge half-empty town, had a charm wrapped in them as a colored gem might be wrapped in a dusty cloth" (128; ch.15). In addition, living in a quiet landscape is more healthy for humans. Isabel likes London in winter because the streets are empty and there is a little rain that "never wets you and it always smells good" (169; ch.19). However, Ralph does not like winter because his health gets worse. The author uses the bad weather to express illness or death of a character – "a period of bad weather had settled upon Gardencourt; the days grew shorter and there was an end to the pretty tea-parties on the lawn" (169; ch.19), which is a reference to the death of Mr. Touchett, whose son, Ralph, is "standing there with his hands still in his pockets, but with a face absolutely void of its usual latent smile" (182; ch.19).

James describes the weather, environment and landscape of the countries to which the characters move or travel and explains their effects on human nature. Isabel travels to Versailles, where she enjoys "a lovely weather – a kind of Indian summer, only not so good" (194; ch.20). In San Remo, on the Italian shore of the Mediterranean, she also spends a lovely time and enjoys the charm of the landscape, which has greatly influenced her feelings and emotions: -- "The charm of the Mediterranean coast only deepened for our heroine one acquaintance, for it was the threshold of Italy, the gate of admirations. Italy ... a land of promise, a land in which a love of the beautiful might be comforted by endless knowledge" (197; ch.21). In addition, Italy is the land of culture, history and knowledge, which are connected to its beautiful nature and good environment. These visits and journeys to such landscapes increase Isabel's experience and understanding of her human nature. Culture and nature are joined in a process "through which one's understanding of experience and of one's self is ... dependent on the production of narratives derived from cultural imagery" (Meissner,

1999, p.4). This is the aim of ecocritical studies which investigate the relationship between nature and culture in works of art. The natural and cultural world of Italy offers Isabel new knowledge and renews her hope of a good future. Her visit to Italy is regarded as "a peaceful interlude, as a hush of the drum and fife in a career which she had little warrant as yet for regarding as agitated" (197; ch.21). This is the beginning of her career after she inherits a large fortune from Mr. Touchett. Her cousin, Ralph, gives her some advice, especially after she becomes wealthy: - "take things more easily... Don't question your conscience so much – it will get out of tune like a strummed piano...Don't try so much to form your character – it's like trying to pull open a tight, tender young rose" (196; ch.21). He advises her not to try to change her human nature, which is likened to a tender young rose. The author here finds a new connection between woman and nature. The metaphors used here express the calmness of this period in her life. This calmness is an outcome of her visits to some charming natural landscapes. For example, Isabel and Madame Merle pay a visit to Florence where the scene and landscape are charming: - "Nothing could have been more charming than this occasion – a soft afternoon in the full maturity of the Tuscan spring. The companions drove out of the Roman gate...and wound between high-walled lanes into which the weather of blossoming orchards over-drooped ...the upper sunshine upon their slim columns and the flowering plants in which they were dressed" (222; ch.24). The sculpture and architecture show a part of the history and culture of Italy. The author blends them with its natural world to refer to the beauty of nature and environment in many places of the world and to call human beings to cooperate for the preservation of this historical and cultural heritage. This is one of the several representations of the connection between woman and nature in this narrative. Mr. Osmond's house in Florence is another example of the natural beauty, environmental charm and cultural originality; it is "an ancient villa crowning an olive-muffled hill outside of the Roman gate of Florence. It had a front upon a little grassy, empty, rural piazza which occupied a part of the hilltop....It had a narrow garden, in the manner of a terrace, productive chiefly of tangles of wild roses and other old stone benches, mossy and sun-warmed" (199,200; ch.22). The word 'rural' illustrates how James focuses his descriptions on rural landscapes and the countryside as opposed to the industrial expansion in the places where nature is exposed to degradation. In the previous description of Osmond's house the connection between nature, culture and history is well represented to attract the attention of human beings to the importance of these ancient monuments. James's ecofeminist view includes the connection between nature and culture, nature and history, and nature and femininity: -- "James comes closer to an integrated environmental vision, incorporating nature, geography, history, social dynamics, and visual qualities in his view of the land. In the process he relates land and femininity, not as a pretext for male

domination of either, but as a way of suggesting that the land be treated with the dignity due to the independent woman in his later fiction" (Stowe, 2003, p.45). Isabel is a type of the independent and free woman who is exposed to tyranny and oppression from her husband. By introducing her character James shows his attitude towards femininity and nature; he refuses the patriarchal dominance on them in many societies. Mr. Osmond imposes his dominance on his wife, Isabel and daughter, Pansy. He tries to subordinate his sister, The Countess Gemini, to his orders. He wants his wife to give up her independence and adopt his traditions, claiming that he is a traditionalist. He is a hollow and superficial man and an ideal of patriarchal dominance. He sends his little daughter to a convent in Rome where two nuns teach her to be wise and obey her father, who declares: - "I like what they've made of her. It's very charming....It's the child's nature....She's as pure as a pearl." (214; ch.22). The word, 'nature', here means the purity and innocence of the girl, who is likened to "the white flower of cultivated sweetness....how simple, how natural, how innocent she had been kept!" (272,273; ch.30). Isabel calls Pansy "a little convent flower" (225; ch.24). The idea of 'convent' is interpreted by ecofeminists in terms of their biblical explanations of the issue of oppression of woman and nature. The religious motif of convent is to "encompass the convent of creation where we are to be in right relation to our fellow-beings" (Ruether,1992, p.228). Ecofeminists take the Bible as a source for setting up some ethics for dealing with environmental devastation and woman's oppression.

The natural world includes all the natural and environmental elements on land and in the sky, so James sometimes uses the images of birds and the sky for making up metaphors and scenes. For example, The Countess Gemini, Osmond's sister, is described to have "features that suggested some tropical bird – a long beak-like nose, small, quickly-moving eyes, and a mouth and chin that receded extremely" (222; ch.24). In the following passage, where James describes the beautiful scene in Florence, he combines some natural elements on land and in the sky to show the classic grace and culture of the place: - "The sun had got low, the golden light took a deeper tone, and on the mountains and the plain that stretched beneath them the masses of purple shadow glowed as richly as the places that were still exposed. The scene had an extraordinary charm. The air was almost solemnly still, and the large expanse of the landscape, with its garden-like culture and nobleness of outline, its teeming valley and delicately-fretted hills, its peculiarly human-looking touches of habitation, lay there in splendid harmony and classic grace" (231; ch.24). This is a kind of nature writing which paints a splendid picture of a landscape. Ecofeminists study these representations of nature in literature and interconnections between nature, culture and femininity. In the passage above, James describes the landscape of Florence with its culture, which is garden-like and classic. The

sun, the air and the landscape are blended in splendid harmony and classic grace. The sun and summer in the text are often linked to moods of pleasure and happiness. Isabel likes the atmosphere and environment in Florence and makes up a good picture of its culture: - "The picture had no flourishes, but she liked its lowness of tone and the atmosphere of summer twilight that pervaded it" (242; ch.26). In a sense, the picture is natural, not artificial and its elements are taken from nature. Isabel is in a mood of happiness after she is engaged to Osmond. Her happiness is expressed in such natural elements as the sunshine, the blue sky and the splash of the fountains: - "She had always been fond of history, and here was history in the stones of the street, and the atmosphere of the sunshine....By her own measure she was very happy....The sky was a blaze of blue, and the splash of the fountains in their mossy niches had lost its chill and doubled its music" (249,250; ch.27). Like an ecofeminist, James connects nature, culture and history and links Isabel's feelings, emotions and human nature to this natural scenery to show the union of woman and nature. Isabel enjoys sightseeing historical places in Florence and other towns in Rome. She pays a visit to some Greek sculptures like the Gallery of the Capitol and the Statue of the Dying Gladiator, which provide her with the feeling of "the effect of their noble quietude; which, as with a high door closed for the ceremony, slowly drops on the spirit the large white mantle of peace....The Roman air is an exquisite medium for such impressions. The golden sunshine mingles with them, the deep stillness of the past...seems to throw a solemn spell upon them" (262; ch.28). In such descriptions the author calls for protecting these natural landscapes and historical places from degradation and pollution of industrialization.

Unlike summer and sunshine, winter and dusk are used in the text to represent moods of embarrassment, despair and sadness. When Osmond confesses his love for Isabel, she feels embarrassed and her emotions and imagination become agitated: - "Her agitation – for it had not diminished – was very still, very deep.... Her imagination, as I say, now hung back; there was a last vague space it couldn't cross – a dusky, uncertain tract which looked ambiguous and even slightly treacherous, like a moorland seen in the winter twilight. But she was to cross it yet" (270,271; ch.29). This image can be contrasted to that of summer and sunshine in Florence. Yet, the words, 'dusky' and 'winter', show the state of embarrassment Isabel feels. Her feelings towards Osmond's declaration of his love are ambiguous and uncertain. This meaning is supported by the simile that likens the dusky tract her imagination cannot cross to a moorland seen in the winter twilight. Vagueness overshadows her mind. To stop the agitation of her imagination Isabel decides to visit some countries. She travels to Greece, Turkey and Egypt, where she "found much to interest her in these countries... among the most classic sites the scenes most calculated to suggest repose and reflection" (279; ch.31). James here continues his presentation of the most

important historical places in the world. He explains how these classic sites give their visitors repose and reflection. Because these countries embrace the beauty of nature and the reverence of the past and culture, ecofeminists call for their preservation. These visits reactivate Isabel's imagination and emotions so that she becomes ready to accept Osmond's proposal: - "the girl had in these days a thousand uses for her sense of the romantic, which was more active than it had ever been. I do not allude to the impulse it received as she gazed at the Pyramids in the course of an excursion from Cairo, or as she stood among the broken columns of the Acropolis...deep and memorable as these emotions remained" (281; ch.31). Motivated by her strong impulse and deep emotions Isabel accepts Osmond's proposal of marriage. This happy occasion is expressed by the use of such natural elements as 'nightingales, wilderness, grey shade': - "She drove in the morning to the Cascine. This suburban wilderness, during the early morning, was void of all intruders, and our young lady, joined by her lover in its quietest part, strolled with him a while through the grey Italian shade, and listened to the nightingales" (293; ch.33). Isabel expresses her lover's character, using the word, nature, saying: "Mr. Osmond is pre-eminent. There may be nobler natures, but I've never had the pleasure of meeting one" (296; ch.34). However, Ralph looks at Osmond's nature in a different way; Osmond "would have been a more active, larger, freer sort of nature" (297; ch.34). Ralph objects to this marriage but Isabel does not accept his advice. Osmond has such a great effect on her that he could get through her emotions and "tap her imagination with his knuckle and made it ring" (302; ch.35). This is a strong metaphor that shows her husband's dominance on her. The metaphor is extended to make his talk to her a sort of dessert that is served on a silver plate. Her mind is this "silver plate, not an earthen one – a plate that he might heap up with ripe fruits...so that talk might become for him a sort of served dessert. He found the silver quality in this perfection in Isabel" (302;ch.35). For Osmond, Isabel's nature is perfect. However, she discovers some defects in his nature like egotism, indifference and deception. His selfishness is portrayed in this strong metaphor derived from natural elements: "under his good nature, his facility, his knowledge of life, his egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers" (367; ch.42). Under his superficial good nature his deception is latent. He wants to dominate her. He wishes that her "mind was to be his – attached to his own like a small garden-plot to a deer park. He would rake the soil gently and water the flowers; he would weed the beds and gather an occasional nosegay...he expected her intelligence to operate altogether in his favor" (368; ch.42). The metaphor illustrates that Osmond practices patriarchal dominance. When Isabel resists his domination and keeps her independence and liberty, Osmond hates her. As a result, her marital life is filled with "deep distrust of her husband – this was what darkened the world" (363;

ch.42). The image of dusk, darkness and blackness here expresses this sad period of her life: - "the shadows had begun to gather; it was as if Osmond deliberately, almost malignantly, had put the lights out one by one. The dusk at first was vague and thin....She simply believed he hated her....He had thought at first he could change herBut she was, after all, herself" (363; ch.42). What increases her mistrust is the scene in which she watches him "in more direct communication with Madame Merle than she suspected" (362; ch.42). Moreover, his sister, The Countess, uncovers the illegitimate relation between Osmond and Merle and the fact that Pansy is their illegitimate daughter. The result is that "a gulf had opened between them over which they looked at each other with eyes that were on either side a declaration of the deception suffered" (362; ch.42). The image of the gulf shows how far the distance between Isabel and Osmond is and how dark their home is: -"the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation" (367; ch.42). Love turns into hate, warmth into dumbness and home into a prison. The presentation of these hazy atmospheres is a technique used by James to render direct impressions and present inner feelings. This technique is "associated primarily with pictorial impressionism: the rendering of direct, fleeting impressions, the use of 'open air' effects, the moving around a subject and 'painting' it from several different angles...and the presentation of scenes in a hazy atmosphere" (Kirschke, 1981, p.181). The author applies this technique to the subject of Isabel's marriage and deals with it from different angles. He presents an image of an ambivalent wife and husband. He also gives a picture of a domineering husband, who is represented in the novel as an example of patriarchal dominance. He wants to deal with his wife as a doll but she wants to preserve her freedom and independence. She is an example of the modern, young woman who wants to fulfill her identity and liberty.

Isabel considers and reflects upon her past to determine what she is going to do in the future. She decides to leave Rome to England where she can visit dying Ralph and take a time of repose and reflection. The author uses some opposites of pictorial vocabulary and images of winter and vagueness to portray her state of sadness and disturbance: - "She performed the journey with sightless eyes and took little pleasure in the countries she traversed, decked out though they were in the richest freshness of spring. Her thoughts followed their course through other countries - strange-looking, dimly-lighted, pathless lands, in which there was no change of seasons, but only, as it seemed, a perpetual dreariness of winter....Disconnected visions passed through it, and sudden gleams of memory, of expectation. The past and the future came and went at their will, but she saw them only in fitful images, which rose and fell by a logic of their own" (474; ch.53). Her husband's deception and her cousin's severe illness fill her mind with dim thoughts and sadness. The author uses some natural elements like spring, winter, seasons, lands, and gleams to express

her inner consciousness. He employs contrast and antithesis of some words like 'freshness of spring and dreariness of winter, the past and the future, images...rose and fell, and sightless eyes' to depict her psychological disturbance and tension. The metaphor in the sentence, 'her thoughts followed their course through other countries', expresses the state of confusion and bewilderment she lives in. These countries are pathless, dimly-lighted, and strange-looking lands with only one season, winter, that is, coldness of her marital life and her relation with her husband. As a result, she now looks at the matters with sightless eyes, and her mind is filled with disconnected visions and sudden gleams of memory. Yet, these gleams cannot light up her mind. On arriving in London she feels terrified and finds out that the "dusky, smoky, far-arching vault of the station, the strange, livid light, the dense, dark, pushing crowd, filled her with a nervous fear. She remembered she had once liked these things....She remembered how she walked away from Euston, in the winter dusk, in the crowded streets, five years before" (476; ch.53). This shows how human psychological condition influences one's reception of the seasons. In a sense, if one is happy, one can find winter as if it were spring. Owing to her disappointment she cannot decide what to do. When Ralph asks her if she will go back to her husband, she replies:- "I don't know – I can't tell. I shall stay here as long as I may. I don't want to think – I needn't think" (488; ch.54). The author still uses the natural elements of the dusk, darkness and winter to complete the image of the heroine's dilemma.

A few days later, Ralph is dead and Isabel's mourning increases. The author expresses this solemn occasion with the use of natural elements like weather, May-time, windless, air, hawthorn and blackbird: - "The weather had changed to fair; the day, one of the last of the treacherous May-time, was warm and windless, and the air had the brightness of the hawthorn and the blackbird. If it was sad to think of poor Ralph, it was not too sad, since death, for him, had had no violence" (490; ch.55). The natural image used here is suitable for Ralph's solemn, peaceful death. Ralph's death makes Isabel rethink about her future, especially after she meets Casper Goodwood, who asks her again to leave her husband and marry him: - "You don't know where to turn. Turn straight to me" (498; ch.55). However, Isabel realizes that "there was a very straight path" (500; ch.55), which she should follow; she decides to return to Rome where she will reunite with her husband, hoping that their marital life would be reclaimed. The author lets the heroine decide her destiny because he has "focused on the fluid identifications, emotive capacities, and ad hoc reactions that allow subjects to adjust to their circumstances rather than on the behaviors that tie them to a fixed and dominating past" (Moses, 2014, p.5). The end of the novel puts Isabel on two divergent paths: one leading to a husband who hates and deceives her and the other to a man, Casper Goodwood, who adores her.

Yet, she chooses the first path, because she "eventually comes to understand her folly and returns to Osmond to live a sadder, wiser and more dignified life than offered her by the equally domineering Casper Goodwood" (Dupon, 2001, p.164). The author does not interfere in the ending of the plot; instead, he lets the heroine decide her own destiny because he has offered her the qualities of freedom and independence from the very start of the novel. She has to reconsider her life with her domineering husband. This is the technique used by James in many of his novels, which "featured a young, naïve Americans traveling to Europe, where an encounter with corruption and cynicism forced the reconsideration of their own selves and ethical values" (Domestico, 2010, p.2). In addition, James presents an image of two domineering men, who represent patriarchal dominance. By refusing to marry Casper Goodwood and confronting her husband's oppression Isabel declares woman's refusal of male domination on women and nature.

The ending is not comic because the heroine is in a difficult situation. She cannot expect whatever future is awaiting her. James thinks that "Serious writers of fiction must free themselves of the tyranny of the happy ending and the easy read....James insisted, writers and readers alike should share the pleasures of the difficult" (Griffin, 2012, p.5). However, the ending is not tragic. The heroine intends to be a good, free and dutiful wife, so she takes flight from the power, advances and insistence of Casper Goodwood and decides to return to her husband. She has a mutilated vision of her future, of the years ahead. The author has "constructed his impasse: the spirited Isabel in an impossible marriage, having made what feels like a terminal rupture" (Hadley, 2002, p.23). Isabel's bad marriage and suffering are the outcome of her stubbornness, pride, selfishness and ignorance. She could at last realize her folly and fault, and attain "a kind of self-knowledge at the close when she perceives her responsibility for her bad marriage....The character of Isabel, however, derives in part from the tradition of the self-deceived protagonist and the Moliere egotist. If the plot of *The Portrait* were a tragic plot, the flaws in Isabel's character would render her tragic. But the plot of the novel is that of tragicomedy. And Isabel, in her self-exposure and resilient optimism, is a tragicomic heroine" (Bloom, 1992, p.80). This novel is one of James's most ambitious works because it is the story of self-knowledge and the search for "a self among the pressures exerted by other and stronger selves, by conditions of time and place, by received ideas and established manners – this was James's search just as it is that ...of the young woman who is the heroine of *The Portrait of a Lady*" (Dupee, 1956, p.xiii). The heroine is placed in a situation that forces her to suffer, perceive her real nature, and discover her own self. In this novel James realizes what he calls his centre of consciousness technique and experiences "a moment of insight, an epiphany that reveals the power of art in sharp detail and comes to see how the novel can function as a vehicle for self-discovery for its audience, not through didacticism, but through a

manner of autodidacticism or autogenesis....James came to call this discovery his centre of consciousness technique" (Msisner, 1999, pp.3,4). This technique is later called the stream of consciousness technique which is followed by some modernist novelists like Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence.

Conclusion:

To conclude, Henry James is an ecofeminist, who connects woman and nature in a way that exposes exploitation and oppression dominating them. In *The Portrait of a Lady* he finds many connections between woman and nature such as nurturing, care-giving, reciprocity, protection, productivity, purity, power, beauty, freedom and freshness. This novel represents the middle period of James's writing in which his orientation is feminine. Like an ecofeminist he sides with the feminine question and defends woman's position in society. He refuses patriarchal dominance and the classical idea that a woman is an evil, irrational creature. He also objects to the view that women have no importance in society because they are unproductive.

Ecofeminism offers alternative solutions to environmental crises and makes interdisciplinary connections with such movements as ecocriticism, environmental justice, urban nature and virtual environments. As a result, James here makes use of these connections to suggest some solutions to the feminine question. These movements take nature as their primal field of study. The author presents many literary representations of nature, which explore the connection between woman and nature. The aim of his representations of nature is the revival of nature sensibility and the call for its preservation from degradation and pollution. Many landscapes, environments, natural scenes, images and metaphors derived from the natural world are used to support the ecofeminist view that in a patriarchal society that conceives of nature as female, there is a necessary connection between the development of science as the rational control of a chaotic natural world and the oppression of women as irrational creatures. James represents and articulates the boundary between the human and the non-human through the use of metaphors and images derived from the non-human to express some common qualities between them. Metaphors of landscape are given much concern in ecofeminist studies. In many images James identifies the connection between nature, culture and history. He selects some landscapes and environments from the natural world like gardens, rivers, trees, and the countryside as well as some places representing historical and cultural heritage in order to offer models for a finer life, devoid of pollution and degradation.

James comes closer to an integrated environmental vision incorporating nature, culture, history, geography and social aspects in his view of the natural world and the land. He connects land and femininity in a

way that suggests that the land should be treated with the dignity offered to an independent woman. Some words like land and place are used in the meaning of a landscape, which is defined as a setting for human activity. The word, nature, is employed in the text in different meanings like a human character or quality, homeland, and ecological elements. In many situations the author depicts the natural world in connection with human nature to show its effects on human sensations and emotions. The heroine is presented as a member of ecosystemic and human pattern of organization, calling for working together to achieve global justice and planetary health. She can confront many hardships and problems and fulfill her liberty and independence.

الملخص

المرأة و الطبيعة في رواية " صورة امرأة " لهنري جيمس :
دراسة في الحركة النسوية البيئية

صبري سعيد شعيشع

هدف البحث : يهدف البحث إلي إثبات أن هنري جيمس ناقد بيئي و أحد أتباع حركة النقد النسوي البيئي التي ظهرت في النصف الثاني من القرن العشرين و تهتم بالأعمال الأدبية التي تدرس البيئة و الطبيعة و تجد علاقة بينهما وبين العمل الأدبي و تدافع عن البيئة ضد التلوث و تدعوا إلي المحافظة علي الطبيعة و تنميتها لصالح الإنسان ، و يهدف البحث أيضاً إلي إيجاد العلاقة بين الطبيعة و المرأة في تلك الرواية حيث أن جيمس يعنتق مبادئ الحركة النسائية البيئية التي ظهرت أيضاً في النصف الثاني من القرن العشرين و تدرس العلاقات المشتركة بين المرأة و الطبيعة و البيئة و تدافع عن حقوقهم و تنادي بحمايتهم من القهر و التعسف و الإستبداد.

منهج البحث : يعتمد البحث علي تحليل النص و تطبيق مبادئ حركة النقد البيئي و الحركة النسائية البيئية رغم أن الرواية ظهرت في نهاية القرن التاسع عشر .
نتيجة البحث : توصل البحث إلي روابط مشتركة بين المرأة و الطبيعة و البيئة و وجد البحث أن كلاهما يتم قهراً و استغلالاً عن طريق الإنسان نفسه و خاصة الرجال في المجتمعات التي تؤمن بسيادة الرجل علي المرأة و يدعوا البحث إلي تعاون المرأة و الرجل لمنع التلوث البيئي و منع قهر المرأة و منحها الحرية و الإستقلال . و ثبت أن جيمس ناقد بيئي رغم أن تلك الحركة لم تظهر في عهده.

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