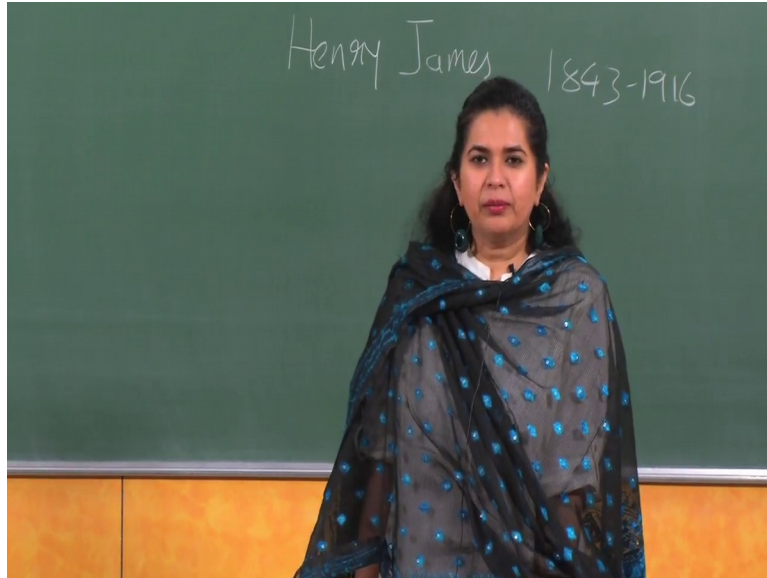


Literature for Competitive Exam
Prof. Aysha Iqbal
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

Module – 05
Lecture – 19
Henry James

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Welcome back. So, Henry James and his position in American Canon. So James was born in 1843 and died 1916, he was born in New York one of the greatest American writer ever, almost the father of modern American novel. He was educated at Harvard law school and lived most of the time in Europe even in his, during his formative years.

During the First World War he expressed his ardent sympathy for England and was naturalized a British citizen in 1915 born an American, became British in 1915. His major works are *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Ambassadors*, *The Golden Bowl*, *Wings of Dove*, *The American*, *The Europeans*, *The Bostonians*, *Daisy Miller* and he also wrote short stories and travelogues. His essay art of fiction is a classic now; I will be talking about that many a time you will get your some passages or extracts from that essay and a work of criticism the art of the novel is also extremely small. He wrote autobiographies or memoirs a small boy and others notes of a son and a brother.

The middle years which was published posthumously, also wrote a play *Guy domville*, which was not all that successful and he also wrote a biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne,

just titled simply Hawthorne. Regarded as the greatest of all American literate novelist specially and along with Melville and Walt Whitman he is credited with the flooring of New York as distinct from the efflorescence of New England. He was influenced by the works of Henrik Ibsen, Hawthorne of course, Turgenev the Russian author, Balzac Barbey and Emilee Zola, Flaubert also George Eliot so, many of these bearing Nathaniel Hawthorne are Europeans and English authors.

There have been a number of works on James now that itself tells you how important and what is his position. So, Richard Liebmann Smith has written the James boy. The James boys a novel account of four desperate brothers, the James boys David Lodge has written a book on him and Colm Toibin the award winning British writer has written the master, not to be confused with the movie of the same name, but the master is the is a novel based on Henry James and other writers who have written on him include Emma Tennant and Michelle Hentz he is known for his tentative and obscured style.

He often felt and often said rather, character is action and this is a code that I that is often attributed to Henry James. Character is action, remember that. His subjective school or interior school of fiction sort of anticipate the works of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Marshall Prue. He famously said that I have the imagination of disaster and see life as indeed ferocious and sinister, he also says we are each the product of circumstances and there are tall stone walls which fatally divide us that is his worldview although a rich man very successful author but, that is his worldview.

In James's novels his protagonists are generally robbed of one thing they desire most, and what do they desire? A profound oneness with another, but this is something that is denied to them. His novels are full of tension between certain types and individuals and he takes great delight in exploring these tensions, what is the type and then busting the myth. The danger of befalls those who are not fully self aware and socially conscious those who live delusional lives. His novels are mostly based in New York, London, Paris and Rome last class we did Herman Melville whose terrain was very different, James is a city man and he writes about where its different kinds of people.

He is a novelist of manners and social conventions. He wrote an short story called or novella called a Washington square which were, which was adapted in a movie called the heiress. Do look it up and see what people do to each other how personalities and

characters are transformed by one act of cruelty. Quite like Jane Austen, but then Jane Austen always led his penetrating psychological insight. So, James like Austen he focuses on a very narrow sections of society the rich Americans, aristocratic Europeans and then he also discusses and analyzes probes into the relationships and thought processes.

His characters are eloquent, but self destructive. *Innocent abroad* that is one thing and you see that is a title of a novel by someone else. But the characters in James are always innocents abroad and who are the innocence the Americans, they are millionaires, but repressed, they are aesthetes they are refined many characters are weak willed and then ultimately they have to face up to a moral responsibility. Great tension in his novels between Americans and Europeans, for him Americans lack complexity and Europe is full of complexities, Americans are you know you see what you get there.

But, Europe is artificial with suffocating manners people Americans are innocent Europeans are pleasure seekers. So, it is between these tensions that he generally works. His novella *daisy miller* is about a young American woman who is travelling in Europe she is a charming; but reckless, she is not bothered she not artificial enough to bother about her so called reputation and good name. We mostly see her through her admirer lord winter burns point of view because she is so relaxed, so friendly, so cheerful, so charming her manners attract the wrong kind of attention.

So, this is one kind of a theme that recurs in various forms in all the works of Henry James. He was majorly concerned with the so called Judas complex. In all his works he showed a, you know profound belief in mans capacity to overcome lives injustices by understanding and facing reality. He wrote, famously wrote the portrait of a lady in 1909 which he describes at the conception of a certain young lady affronting her destiny. Now, what is affronting her destiny? a costing your destiny, but then in what way characters are Isabel archer, Ralph Touchett, lord Warburton, Casper Goodword, Gilbert Osmond and so on and of course, the famous Madame Mearl. Now, those are the characters here and you can see he basically deals with the lives of the aristocrats, the rich, the lords, the ladies, the counts, the countess. I was telling you about the art of the novel his work of criticism and the preface of all his novels are extremely important now remember one interesting thing about Henry James is when you read the preface to one of his novels he hardly ever talks about the plot of the novel like its generally done other writers novelists

may try to interpret or comment on their work not James; when he writes his prefaces he writes about anything, but his current novel.

At one point or at in one form James is believed to have presided over the transformation of the Victorian novel into a modern novel and laid the foundations of modern criticism of the novel one of the greatest literary critic ever. His one of his principal contribution to criticism is to make writers and critics conscious of the narrative method and the so called point of view. He maintains control through the third person narrative; however, readers also get the experience through the consciousness of the character which is a very modernist feature sort of anticipates stream of consciousness. Remember modernist novel modernism has some free some for preoccupations one is complexities of its form, representation of inner consciousness sense of nihilistic disorder and also freeing the art from the determination of the plot.

James's novels are indicative of all the features of the so called modernism. He calls himself a chronicler of his characters lives. So, they are very inward looking works introverted novels we often find a closeness between the author and his characters and characters assert deep psychological in depth critics have also called Henry James's world, a Janus faced world two face. James agree with niches formula of the modern tragedy there is an the conclusion is that believe in a paradoxical duplicitous world which is doomed to end tragically. In his preface to the golden bowl he saved the impersonal author is present to give some near individual view of the business. So, the impersonal author and his deputy or delegate is present to give some near individual view of the business. It is important to understand that James is always interested yet detached his characters go through plenty of interior monologue.

Something that open the door to modern fiction such as James Joyce's Ulysses a refined version of this is called stream of consciousness technique that we will be doing plenty of it we are going to do soon in our subsequent classes. One work that I wanted to stress upon is the art of fiction which was published in 1884, he argued here that the fullest possible freedom in the novelist choice is that of theme and treatment, a novelist should be given how he treats the theme and he should be given a complete freedom. He also marks a crucial shift of realist friction towards the Victorian novel realist and Jameson novels a shift towards psychological realism and ultimately towards modernist fiction throughout he argues for the novels significance and not just an entertainment.

In art of fiction he contends experience is never limited never complete it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness and catching every airborne particle in its tissue it is the very atmosphere of the mind these are the kinds of course, that you may find for your exams. Constantly probing into the basic terms of the critical discussions of life representation experience, reality, plot, consciousness famously says what is character, but the determination of incident what is incident, but the illustration of character.

Quite close to or you may also compare with EM Forester and his aspects of the novel Forester who wrote aspects of the novel in 1927 he discriminates between flat and round characters. Remember a flat character is a type a stock two dimensional flat character is presented without individualizing details can be described in a single phrase. Round character is complex in treatment and motivation represented with settle peculiarities such a character is difficult to describe you cannot say good or bad capable of surprising us. Likewise Henry James gives us the notion of telling and showing characters in telling character the author intervenes in order to describe and to comment on the motives and dispositional qualities of the character in the way Jane Austen does.

In showing which is also called dramatic method, readers have to interpret and infer what motives and dispositions lie behind what characters do, James is quite close to Flaubert in this Gustave Flaubert the great writer the of the great novel Madame Bovary. Both Flaubert and James they consider telling you know to tell the readers or the audience what to think is a violation of artistry and they recommend only showing character and the writers job is to write objectively and impersonally.

I am giving you all these terms they because they may appear in front of you and you should be able to distinguish between whose and what so faster talked about round and flat characters James talks about telling and showing characters. James is also for example, portrait of a lady can be seen as coming of age or bildungsroman kind of a novel which is a German term for formation novel and upbringing or educational novel refers to a novel which is an account of you the youthful development of its protagonist. The best known example of bildungsroman of course, German novels and the greatest of them all Goethe's Sorrows of Young Werther, coming of age novel where there is a discovery a revelation and growth is complete. So, likewise daisy miller and portrait of lady portrait of a lady they can be considered James's version of Bildungsroman.

Remember innocence in James is constructed around a series of innocent characters whose perception of the real is suddenly transformed in an epiphanic insight into an evil concealed behind the mask of social civilized aesthetic being. The vision of James's character is blinded by the personal and cultural innocence and this recognition awakens their conscious out of its submersion in mundane social realism or the lure of aesthetics. James lived in London for several years before becoming the British citizen and he says London is on the whole the most possible form of life.

It is the biggest aggregation of human life the most complete compendium of the world you may not agree with this, but that is what Henry James is he was fascinated by London's bustle and density and also depths of customs and manners and chose London as he was he considered himself an aesthete and a realist and he thought that is the best way of life, the best place to be. And for more on London and Henry James you I recommend you read the notebooks of Henry James which was published in 1947 and he says oh yes the United States a country without a sovereign without a code without a nobility without any army, without a church or clergy without a diplomatic service, without a picture peasantry, without palaces and castles or roving's, without a literature without novels, without cathedrals, without sport, without fox hunting or country gentlemen this is what he found in England. United States had nothing what England had to offer him.

So, again this phrase sort of you know differs from the theme the corrupt Europe and innocent America, but then the English people are always good most of the time in the English are good people in James. So, when he talks about the corrupt and decadent Europeans England as had a special place in his heart and it has to be exempted. James also has his notion for art for art's sake. So, now see we know that aesthetes they believed in crowding once life with maximum sensations, but in James he repudiates the art for art's sake mode in spite of living and depicting in the lives of extremely wealthy. But one thing you have to remember freedom in James is impossible without independence from money and materialistic things the most important is with the because we have already consider a new critics R P Blackmur who wrote an essay Henry James in 1948, he observes that James's work constitutes a single anarchic rebellion against society against the laws of society in the combined names of decency innocence candour, goodwill and the passionate heroism of true vocation.

Remember, so we have already done plenty of new criticism and therefore, it is important to know what Blackmur has to say about Henry James although Henry James is not a new critics remember that Henry James was extremely influenced by George Eliot particularly her magnum opus Middlemarch and if you read the portrait of a lady you will find that a lot of indebtedness to George Eliot's Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda. So, like Eliot James shaved his men from the portrait of a lady to be wealthy and influential landowners burdened by tradition and you find such characters in Middlemarch also.

And the second is there is an outspoken man of his time willing to ignore social conventions. So, you have Ladislaw in Middlemarch and the industrialist Goodwood in portrait of a lady, but then each heroine prefers the third suitor and older scholarly and aloof aesthete. So, these are the character of Casaubon in Middlemarch and Osmond in a portrait of a lady. James had reviewed Middlemarch very enthusiastically and he says of his heroine Dorothy marries enthusiastically a man whom she fancies a great thinker and who turns out to be an arid pedant, just so, does he have Isabel wed. So, that is what how he his heroine Isabel Archer also ends up marrying someone like the kind of character that his heroine had married.

So, thank you very much and in our next class we will be starting with exercises based on American literature.