

American Literature & Culture
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Mod 01 Lecture Number 06
Henry James: The Portrait of a Lady – Chapter 1 to 20 continued (Lecture 6)

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(Professor – student conversation starts)

Professor: So Henry James, *The Art of Fiction* while talking about *The Portrait of a Lady* we will also refer to his literary criticism as reflected in his *The Art of Fiction*. Now the very opening line of this essay, it's a response right? What is *The Art of Fiction*? It is responding to whom?

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Student: Mr. Walter Besant

Professor: Mr. Walter

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Professor: Besant, Ok and Mr. Walter Besant makes certain comments about writing fiction and how to judge a work of fiction how, what the form should be like. So that's the basic premise of it and he says in the very opening line is;

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Professor: only a short time ago it might have been supposed that the English novel was not what the French call discutable? Discutable, now what is discutable?

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Professor: Discussable, Ok

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Professor: Ok

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Professor: not arguable or debatable, in other words it cannot be theorized, that is the idea. That English novel just doesn't have the kind of substance in it which can be put to theory, the theory can be applied. That's the basic idea. Now European novels, yes, you can, that's the, that is the whole thing, so why this so-called inferior state or status of English novel? Does he give any reasons?

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Student: He said it starts with how art earlier was considered evil, like

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Professor: True.

Student: In ancient times

Professor: Well, look at the second line Literature should be either instructive or amusing. That is didactic, you know what is didactic? Preaching, teaching something, sending a message or amusing, so that is the work. That is the job generally it was felt, that's the role of literature. And therefore when something instructs or amuse instructs or amuses what does it mean? It cannot be. It has to be taken at its face value.

There are no hidden embedded meanings to it. There cannot be any theory. So this is what, this is the position that the English novel held till Henry James came along. Ok so, literature need not have any theory particularly the literature written in the English language. Therefore we are talking about the English novel. He is not making any distinction between American novel and English, yeah and the so-called novels published in the Great Britain. He is not talking about, English novel written in the English language, that's it.

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Professor: And there in many minds an impression that these artistic preoccupations, the search for form, contributed to neither end, interfere indeed with both. They are too frivolous to be edifying.

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Professor: Ok, so novel as a genre is a frivolous genre and that's what most people believe in. Even today people who are not into these things, "What are you doing?" You know, many fathers or mothers may be reprimanding their daughters, what are you doing all day long, reading a novel? Watching a movie? Can we explain to them, people who really are not into this, that novels and cinema can also have theory? Is it possible to, I mean, is there any worth to literature that is the basic question. Is there any worth to novel? Ok is there any value to these things?

Cinema, most people even today are dismissive of it. Right, what is this cinema, what are you, you waste time, right? That is the general notion attached to these things. Henry James says that its, that's not the case. Ok. Literature and particularly novel can also be theorized and can be theorized well. That is, that's what, what he means basically by the art of fiction. Does it echo to anything else? This idea of responding to a critic; yeah, say.

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Student: Introduction

Student: He talks about, it is not people criticize literature as just being (()) or just a story and cannot possibly compete with real life and his argument is that, it is, it is historical. It is like, doesn't necessarily have to be, you know factual but the author's job is as important as a historian because he is a novelist, he is capturing the spirit of the age and all.

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Professor: The spirit of the age is important, Ok so he talks about how literature can have a definite form Ok, can have definite theories attached to it because it is also a very, and then he gives a variety of reasons. I am asking you. Is there any critic that you can feel being referred to here, Gayatri? Go back to your literary criticism, this kind of debate over form of literature, where have you seen it before?

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Student: Goethe

Professor: Goethe?

Student: (())

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Professor: Yeah, no responding to something, nature of literature and poetry and then responding to it? Well Plato said that poetry should be banished, yeah. Have you read that?

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Student: Yes

Professor: Have you ever been exposed to

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Professor: so there was this Greek philosopher Plato and his argument was that poets are all liars and they just pretend to represent the real world in their works, that actually they are just useless and worthless creatures and his conclusion is that poet should be banished from the ideal republic and all this is contained in Plato's *The Republic*. He wrote a book called *The Republic*. This is on art of running a civil society and Greek politics, you remember that. And then Aristotle responded to it. Actually this thing echoes that. You are saying something about a work of art or literature and there is another responding to it. Philip Sidney also does, Philip Sidney also responds to someone called Steve?

Student: Gosson

Professor: Gosson, Steve Gosson, Ok because who has recently written a work called *Abuse of Poetry*, right and this that is Philip Sidney's response, *An Apology for Poetry*. You remember all these things? Ok at least you should remember. So this is, this is defending literature and novel as a work of art in the same vein. So this also is what I am trying to say this is not some random guy writing against the art of novel and some other Henry James responding to it. This is an established tradition, literary debating a work of art.

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Professor: Ok let me take you to this, The “ending” of a novel is, do you get that, The “ending” of a novel is, for many persons, like that of a good dinner, a course of dessert and ices, and the artist in fiction is regarded as a sort of meddling doctor who forbids agreeable aftertastes. What does this mean?

You know he is talking about a novel ought to be good but they would interpret this term in the fashion of their own which indeed would be very considerably from one critic to another. One would say that being good means representing virtuous and aspiring characters, and here once again

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Professor: we come to Henry James' favorite theme characters, yeah? And he always talks about characters; see many people find his novels long and meandering but then he is not really interested in plot and he calls them, his, all characters are like his children. Ok, and he has to do something with them but he allows them to do whatever they want to do. Ok, so therefore think kind of, you know, interest in character, so it is not, definitely it's not that he is interested in portraying good noble characters, noble people. Ok, he is interested in characters but not necessarily good people, that characters have to be always good people, virtuous people only then there is worth of novel, otherwise all novels are bad, immoral. You remember Plato saying, calling poetry immoral, yeah. It fosters immorality in society. That's not the case.

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Professor: What he says, and again look at it, aspiring characters, placed in prominent positions. Another would say that it depends for a “happy ending” on a distribution at the last of prizes, and look at the interesting way, pensions, husbands, wives, babies, millions, appended paragraphs and cheerful remarks. What does this mean? Happy ending, the notion of happy ending;

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Professor: happy ending subscribe to

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Professor: some kind of poetic justice? What is it?

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Professor: yeah Rukma?

Student: The good are rewarded.

Professor: With what?

Student: Happiness

Professor: Yeah happiness of what kind? And he gives you a list of happinesses Ok and list of happinesses could be the right husband, the right wife Ok, pensions, endowments, inheritance, legal battles, won battles and millions and babies and prizes and what not. These are the so-called happy endings.

Jane Austen is a classic example, happy ending. You know you get a husband along with his millions and babies also, Ok that's a happy ending and this is what he means, this is the, this he doesn't subscribe to this notion of happy ending. Now how does; so I am giving you the spoiler here, how does the novel end here, in our particular novel? Yes, Sona?

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Professor: I have never seen

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Professor: any Henry James novel ending on this typical happy note, getting the husband you want, getting the wife you want, getting the millions you want. So far, haven't come across any such thing. The Dickens yes, Thackeray yes, Jane Austen, several contemporary writers also

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Professor: but never a Henry James. That is his world view. So how does the novel end? Sona, have you read that? Read that point. Ok, who does she marry?

Now we are at Florence. Gilbert Osmond, we have been talking about this for a long time. So from where we ended last time, you know, she has refused all her suitors. Caspar Goodwood , Lord Warburton, she had this long debate with her cousin Ralph Touchett about the appropriacy of her refusal and now 6 months have lapsed and she is in Florence. So the house imagery now, we should be talking about the house imagery.

Go to chapter 22. Chapter 22, the opening lines, Pragma, have you been reading the novel? Yeah.

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Professor: On one of the first days of May, some 6 months after old Mr. Touchett's death, a small group that might have been described by a painter as composing well was gathered in one of the many rooms of an ancient villa crowning an olive-muffled hill outside of the Roman gate of Florence. The villa was a long. Now long villa, isn't it a rather unusual description or adjective, long villa, Ok anyway. Was a rather long, rather blank-looking structure, do you think he is dropping clues about the place? Well, Ok blank-looking structure with the far-projecting roof which Tuscany loves and which, on the hills that encircle Florence, when considered from a distance, makes so harmonious a rectangle with the straight, dark, definite cypresses that usually rise in groups of three or four beside it.

The house had a front open upon a little grassy, empty, rural piazza which occupied a part of the hill-top; and this front, pierced with a few windows in irregular relations and furnished with a stone bench lengthily adjusted to the base of the structure and useful as a lounging-place to one or two persons wearing more or less of that air of undervalued merit which in Italy, for some reason or other, always gracefully invests anyone who confidently assumes a perfectly passive attitude--this antique, solid, weather-worn, yet imposing front had a somewhat incommunicative character.

And this house, this villa belongs to

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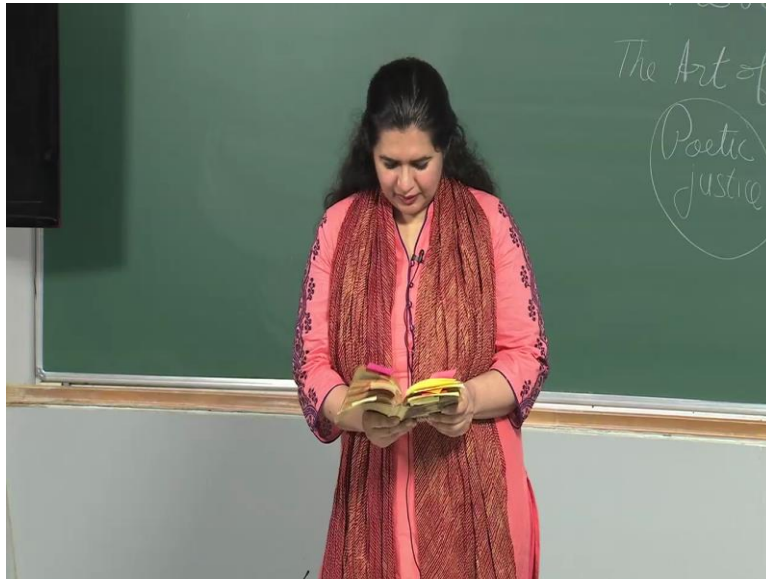
Professor: Gilbert Osmond. Ok, what clues are we given about the, see it is not just about the villa he is describing. It is very clear but the places and spaces and cities have a life of their own in Henry James, in the many, in works of many writers. So what, what attributes are coming forward now? Yes Pragya?

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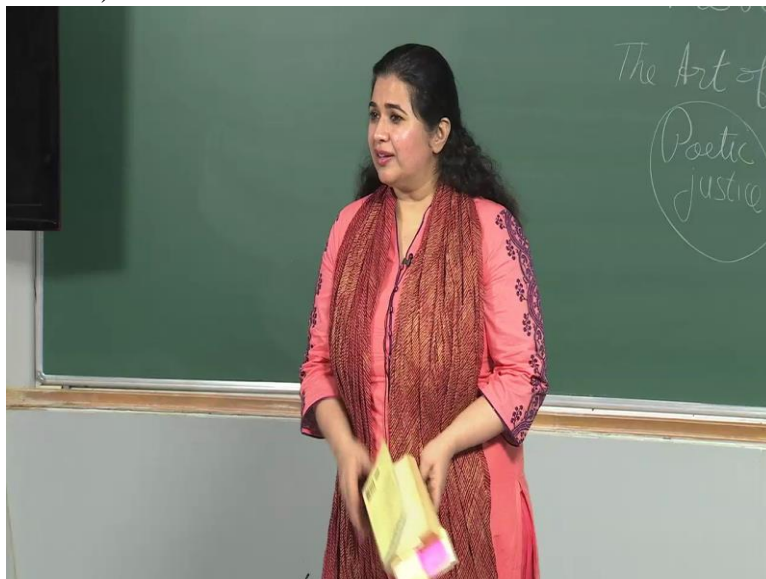
Student: Incommunicative

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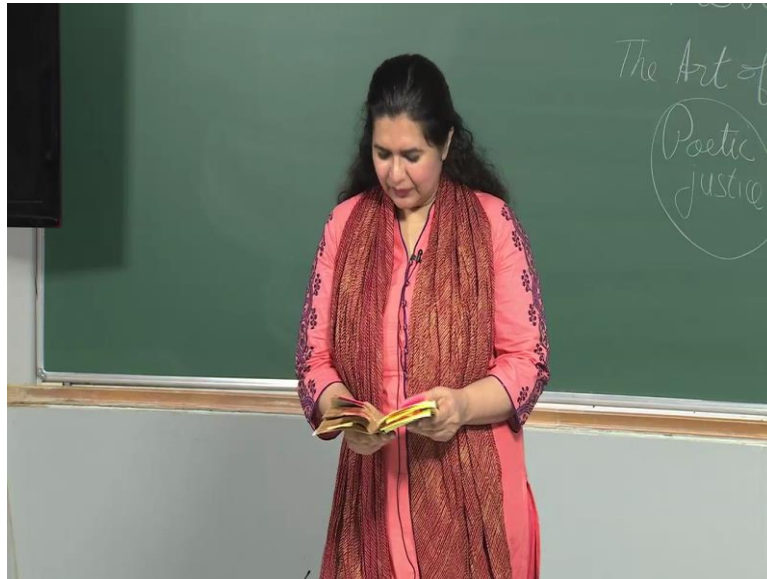
Professor: Incommunicative, read on. It was the mask not the face of the house.

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Professor: Now the house has a face? And this, if you go by that analogy that a house has a face, this face had a mask on it. Now what kind, what kind of an analogy is this? The fellow, the person who lives in this house, wears a mask? Yes. The person who lives in the house is uncommunicative. Ok, he wears a mask.

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Professor: It had heavy lids, but no eyes. Now what kind of the face does this appear to be? The face with a mask heavy lid, enigmatic right but when we see heavy lids and no eyes, just look at the, yeah, deceptive, eyes are what, mirrors to the soul? Yes so here when you feel that this person is just shutting his eyes, his place is so heavily lidded, so enigmatic, full of intrigue, enigma, mystery. Is it a place you can trust? Not really. Ok that's the clues that he is throwing away.

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Professor: The house in reality looked another way, Ok it is like turning away your face, the house looks another way, it's wearing a mask, it is heavy lid and it turns its head in some other direction, it is looking the other way, looked off behind, into splendid openness and the range of the afternoon light. In that quarter the villa overhung the slope of its hill and the long

valley of the Arno, hazy with Italian color. 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.

The parapet of the terrace was just the height to lean upon, and beneath it the ground declined into the vagueness of olive-crops and vineyards. It is not, however, with the outside of the place that we are concerned; on this bright morning of ripened spring its tenants had reason to prefer the shady side of the wall. The windows of the ground-floor, as you saw them from the piazza, were, in their noble proportions, extremely architectural; but their function seemed less to offer communication with the world than to defy the world to look in. Ok, so this is the house that Gilbert Osmond lives in. He actually turns his face away from the world. And if you have read even somewhat, this is what, chapter 22, so I am just assuming that you have read this, all this. So what happens now? Who is the host here?

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Student: Osmond

Professor: Yeah Ok go to page two

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Professor: skip a page, couple of pages here. The door opened into a vaulted ante-chamber, as high as a chapel and paved with red tiles; and into this antechamber a lady had just been admitted by a servant, a lad in shabby livery, who was now ushering her toward the apartment in which our friends were grouped. The gentleman at the door, after dropping his exclamation, remained silent; in silence too the lady advanced. He gave her no further audible greeting and offered her no hand, but stood aside to let her pass into the saloon. As she, at the threshold she hesitated. "Is there any one?" she asked. "Someone you may see."

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Professor: Now, this gentleman, we have not yet been introduced to, but this is Gilbert Osmond. Who is this lady? Not Isabel. If she is meeting him for the first time, how can she just boldly walk into the villa and ask him is there anyone in? Who could it be?

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Student: Madame Merle

Professor: Of course it has got to be Madame Merle; next few lines tell you that. "Someone you may see." She went in and found herself confronted with the two nuns and their pupil, who was coming forward, between them, with a hand in the arm of each. At the sight of the new visitor they all paused, and the lady, who had also stopped, stood looking at them. The young girl gave a little soft cry: "Ah, Madame Merle!"

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Professor: And Madame Merle walks into, so the enigmatic Madame Merle, she walks into the setting, Ok and this, there is a little girl, we had been talking about this girl Pansy, who her father often refers to as his pearl. Ok, now who was pearl? Literary pearl, I am not asking what is pearl; I am asking who was Pearl?

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Professor: Famous literary character

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Professor: you remember I told you once while introducing Henry James that Henry James had written the biography of Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne, who is the author of *The Scarlet Letter*. In *The Scarlet Letter* the heroine Hester Prynne commits adultery. The result of that adultery is a daughter called Pearl. Here, so we were talking, we often talk about literature and its inter-textuality, yeah? So no one is going to say that, now I am often asked this question, what is inter-textuality?

This is a very prime, this is a prime example of inter-textuality, 2 writers...now Henry James and Nathaniel Hawthorne, yeah, yeah he was extremely influenced by the writings of

Hawthorne. He went to the extent of writing a biography of his and in this novel; he calls this little girl his Pearl. He is not naming her Pearl, her name is Pansy, Ok, does pansy as a flower has any kind of connotation?

When do you offer a pansy?

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Professor: When do you use, I mean

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Professor: roses have a definite connotation. You are watching *The Age of Innocence*, right, where you have flowers of all kinds there. And in the opening scene I told you, look at the way our rose bud is blooming. Ok, so flowers; see every image has a kind of, some kind of a suggestiveness, or suggestion in it. So here also names have some kind of relevance in them. So when you have Pansy; it's not for nothing that she is called Pansy,

Student: Avery meek

Professor: A very meek kind of a flower so

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Student: Oliver Wild, Oscar Wilde

Professor: Oliver Wild?

Student: Sorry, Oscar Wilde, I think, I don't know if he uses the word pansy but

Student: That was dandy

Professor: Dandy

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Student: It is a connotation of

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Student: Yeah it is an insult

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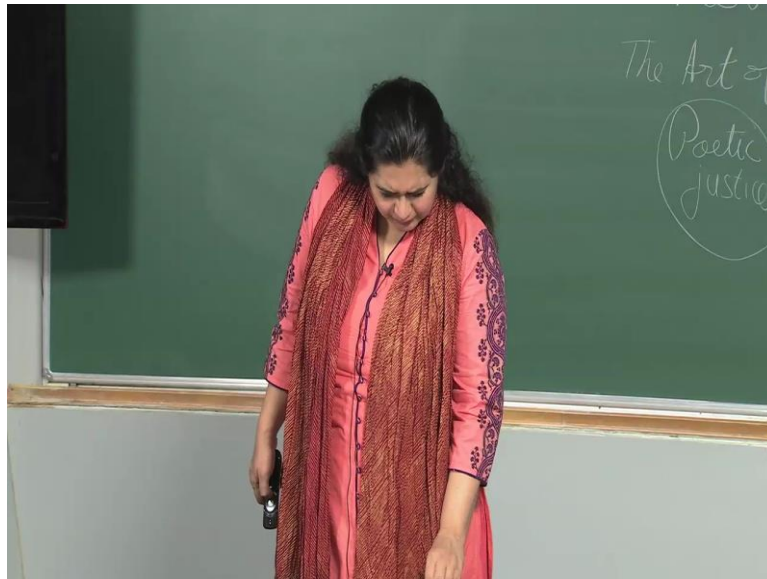


Professor: Yeah, but I am very sure that's not the illusion here. Ok, so homosexuality has got nothing to do with Pansy, yeah. Pansy actually means, you know, weakling. Yeah, very feminine, extremely weak, ok, nothing extraordinary about it. It is not this girl before she commits suicide, Hamlet's Ophelia Ok, she gives pansies to people, remember? When she goes raving lunatic and she goes around giving flowers to everyone around in the court, here are a few pansies for you, it's like mourning. She gives it to Gertrude, the Queen Mother. So pansy has all kinds of connotations here. It is definitely not for its beauty. Some raving

beauty, it is not a rose. When you want to name your daughter, for suggestion of beauty, extraordinary beauty you call her Lily or Rose. Pansy is ordinary, meek, submissive.

So this is the kind of father you have. Ok, you have a father who calls his daughter his Pearle, which is Henry James homage to Hawthorne of course and then he names her Pansy. He lives in a villa which is very dreary, the very, it is like how does she describe, how does he describe it?

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Professor: It's opening to the vaulted ante-chamber, as high as a chapel and paved with red tiles; dark alleys, Ok, not too well lit, not too bright, quite depressing, and here she is introduced to? She has already been introduced to Gilbert Osmond. Have you been given that

kind of a reference? Because once when they first meet each other in the novel, not before the novel happened but when they meet each other, is there anyone she asks? That means they have known each other for quite a long time. Ok, is Henry James giving you some clues here about them?

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Professor: Anu, any comment here?

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Professor: What could be the relation between Henry James

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Professor: you have seen

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Professor: the reason that I did Edith Wharton's Age of Innocence with you today, how men and women who are in formal situations, formal social situations, how they greet each other? How do they greet each other; extremely formally. Ok, I think you made a point that she extends her hand and to be kissed or they shake hands or they, there is a way of getting introduced to each other, Ok. He bows down to his fiancée also, that's at one point. So that's a formal social situation.

Here do you think there is any touch of formality? She just walks in and asks, is there anyone here? What kind of, what does it tell you? She is familiar with the surroundings. And this is a

woman who doesn't have any male escort, she is just, she is a free agent. Ok, she travels in and out of Europe and America and all over the place. See when we talk about travelers in Henry James and Edith Wharton; they travelled only two continents, Europe and America, that's it. So we can't...and they would call themselves extremely well travelled and well exposed people but that's very (()) and (()), Europe and America and that was pretty well traveled person according to the standards of those times. So we have to bear all these things in mind. Ok.

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Professor: "Ah, Madame Merle!" The visitor had been slightly startled, but her manner the next instant was none the less gracious. "Yes, its Madame Merle, come to welcome you home." And she held out two hands to the girl, who immediately came up to her, pretending,

presenting her forehead to be kissed. Madame Merle saluted this portion of her charming little person and then stood smiling at the two nuns.

So the child has been brought up by? Nuns, Ok not up by two nuns, these two nuns have come to, have escorted the child to, who is not really a child, Ok , she is a little, you know, an adolescent, a teenager so Gilbert Osmond has teenage daughter and she is brought here, presented to Madame Merle, it looks like all of them here know each other. The idea is that Gilbert Osmond should be married off to Isabel Archer, yeah.

But why should she marry, if you have read the novel that far? You know that they end up getting married. So that's the Act 2 of the novel. So Act 1 is she is refusing, she has been travelling from America to US to England and then she meets these men, she refuses, she turns them down, she turns down proposals by very eligible bachelors.

Act 2 is when she arrives in Florence, yeah.

Student: (())

Professor: She is the one who,

Student: Why does she want (())

Student: Money

Professor: Money, so

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Professor: And what does Isabel have by now, to answer your questions?

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Professor: what have we been talking about all this while, there are two important things?

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Student: Money and (())

Professor: Money and marriage.

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Student: He doesn't have any money

Professor: He doesn't have any money,

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Professor: look at his just disintegrating villa that he is occupying and the very fact that Henry James tells us that the caretaker of this house is dressed in a shabby livery, shabby kind of a uniform, not shiny, these are the clues that you have, so what does it tell you about his financial state?

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Student: Madame Merle described him as someone makes indolence look like an occupation
Professor: Exactly,

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Professor: So she has described Gilbert Osmond in extremely romanticized ways that he is, he does nothing and it's made very clear that he doesn't do anything. He has no profession; he is a painter but not a brilliant painter so he is not going to end up becoming de Vinci, just because he is living in Florence. So don't think he is going to sell his paintings for millions, that's not going to happen. He is not but there is an aura about him. He is, he is indolent, he is lazy and he makes laziness look like a full time profession, yeah. Now Isabel's is intrigued, she wants him, she is the one who brings these two people together, yeah but why?

Yeah now Sona is asking a very logical question that if a woman loves a man, Gilbert Osmond, why should she introduce the man to someone like Isabel Archer who is younger, prettier and way wealthier; why should she do that.

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Professor: Now yesterday

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Professor: I have been talking about *The Wings of Dove*, where this woman who is, there is a dying woman, the American woman the heiress and the lover of this particular man, she arranges the wedding of her best friend and her lover so that they can inherit the money eventually. Did I answer you?

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Professor: The entire idea is it is a setup for Isabel Archer to fall into this trap. So she is definitely presenting all the facts. Gilbert Osmond doesn't work, yes. He has no money, yes. He is lazy and indolent, he is bright. He is brilliant. He is a charmer in other words; he is a great father, yeah.

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Student: She describes him as a great father.

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Professor: She also describes him as a great father. He is a man that many people, that people generally love talking to. And at this stage I mean how much has she inherited? Do you know the figures?

Student: 70000 pounds

Professor: And convert in today's currency.

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Professor: What does it come to? Who is good at maths? Anu, are you good at maths, not at all, yeah?

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No, please 70 lakhs is nothing in today's terms.

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Student: Today's terms as in

Professor: Those days. I mean

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Professor: if you convert the whole money into today's terms and then apply, so it is 70 lakhs, those days?

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Student: 7 crores.

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Professor: 7 crores those days, when are we talking, almost 200, 150 years back?

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Student: No it is 70 lakhs; 70000 pounds now would be seventy lakhs in rupees.

Professor: Ok, and less, whatever, even if it is 70 lakhs or 7 crores;

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Professor: just apply to those days. It's like never ending wealth. It's like a wealth that will never end even for your couple of generations. And this is the kind of money she has inherited from Ralph Touchett and this is the kind of money that people like Gilbert Osmond want for themselves. Ok, he doesn't do anything; he has a daughter to support. She has been in a nunnery all this while; why in a nunnery?

Well, high society people, that was one of the features of European, not Americans, Ok. This is a very typical European aristocratic way of raising their daughters especially, the daughters

are raised in nunnery, Ok so that when they come of a marriageable age, you can present in a, there is so-called debutante, they debut, they are presented at balls and all where young men can approach them Ok they are, in other words they are now in a marriage market? And what's the best way to present your daughter at the wedding market, marriage market, to project her as a?

Student: Chaste

Professor: Chaste virgin, yeah and how do you prove her chastity and virginity? This is a child who has been untouched by shadows of any, by any male shadow? Yeah, she grew up in a nunnery, that's it. That is a proof of her chastity, Ok, that's European feudal society for you. And in walks Isabel Archer who has got nothing to do with, can you draw parallels between her and Countess Olenska, Edith Wharton; someone who is always questioning conventionalities and conformalities, social conformalities.

We have been doing The Age of Innocence, Scorsese's The Age of Innocence for the film class today. So that's the writer. When a girl like this is introduced, so that's the whole setup. This is a man, please

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Student: (()) she wants to get rid after that?

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Professor: They don't want to get rid of Isabel at all. It continues. Is Madame Merle married to Gilbert Osmond? They don't want marriage. They want money.

Student: She will stay as mistress.

Professor: She will. Yeah, the idea is very clear when, that's what I am telling you, social conventions are not at all observed when Madame Merle enters this villa, right? He doesn't extend his hand or bow to her, he doesn't kiss her hand, the way a gentleman would treat a lady. That means there is always, this is a straight clue, direct clue that there is something already going on between a, and no lady or no gentleman of those times would meet like this. What does it tell you, that there has been an adulterous relationship going on between them, perhaps it has been going on even when Monsieur Merle was alive, and she is Madame Merle and Ralph Touchett says very pointedly, she was once married to Monsieur Merle, Ok so Isabel asks, remember? And who was Monsieur Merle? He was Madame Merle's husband, Ok that's his identity. And it is believed that he is dead, or maybe he isn't, Ok who knows.

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Student: (()) after that Mrs. Touchett makes it a point to say, I was faithful to him, it is almost like, unlike you and the narrator explains that Madame Merle understood that that was directed at her

Professor: Yeah

Student: Again that's the point (())

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Professor: Madame Merle's many philanderings, Ok she is a woman like that. She doesn't need marriage, she doesn't want, all these are middle class moralities happening, that you love a man and you want him all to yourself. These, Nayantara what is this secret of intriguing smile? Say something. I am very sure

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Professor: something naughty is cooking up in your little head,

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Professor: so let's get out of...no?

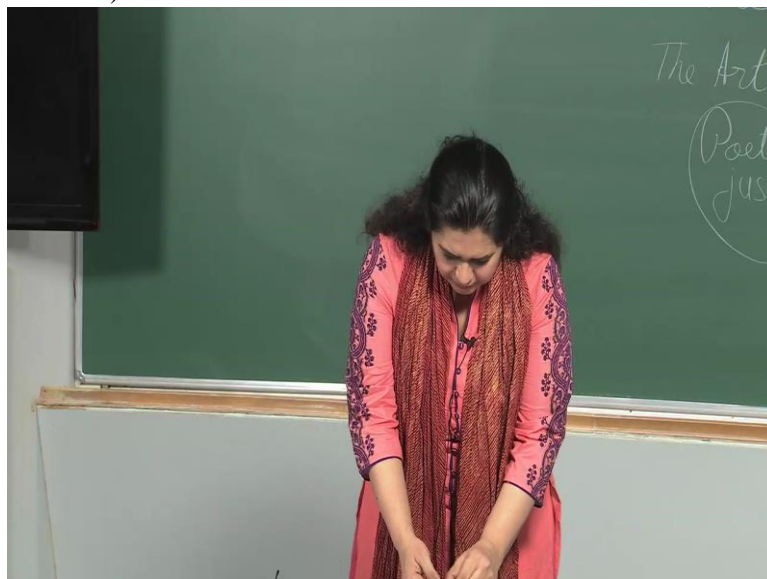
Ok Madame Merle is definitely not looking for a husband, she has had her share of husbands, what she wants is money. And you remember there was a point when she admits, that I want...what's the use of my talents and my accomplishments and et cetera et cetera when I have no money? At 45, I have to display my talents again and again, remember? She says that. Whereas you have youth, you have beauty, you have money. In other words, you have everything.

All you need is a good husband and you have turned down the best of men and let's see. And that's what Ralph Touchett means we are all going to be spectators of your career. Ok, that's what, you refused Lord Warburton, and you refused someone like Caspar Goodwood, both these men represent something, some virtue. Caspar Goodwood has other kind of virtues, Lord Warburton is very visibly full of virtues, Ok and who do you choose, an adulterous male and now again, a spoiler, who do you think is Pansy's mother? Madame Merle.

Ok, so you see there is an intrigue here, this is a setup and this is something. Now what are we leading with towards now with all this information, the theme of betrayal. You asked me why should she do that. She is betraying; she is betraying her friend for money. Isabel Archer trusts this lady. Isabel Archer who has gambling in her blood, her father has gambled away his fortune and suddenly she comes into this inheritance. Ok, she anyway has gambling in her DNA, and she meets this person and she forms all her impressions though Madame Merle who leads her into deceit. Ok, so again the theme of betrayal in Henry James.

, one more section and then we will call it a day. I am on chapter;

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Professor: the next chapter should be 23. Please look at chapter 23.

She had mentioned to Isabel, she as in Madame Merle, skip a few lines, most of the people the girl would find it well to "meet"--of course, she said, Isabel would know whomever in the wide world she would--and had placed Mr. Osmond near the top of the list

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Professor: Now this lady who knows several people in Italy, she has placed Gilbert Osmond on the top of the list, it is like must-meet people, must-see people, Ok. He should, she should be introduced to Gilbert Osmond. And then Gilbert Osmond with his considerable middle-aged charms, he will take over.

Why does Isabel choose him? Again psychologically, psychological realism

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Professor: of course she is nudging,

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Professor: she is doing that very well. But then she is nudged towards Lord Warburton and she is nudged towards Caspar Goodwood by Henrietta so why this?

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Student: Madame Merle, she is trying to have this fascination with his pretentious manners, all that which Osmond has.

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Student: And he is a charmer. So kind of, she gets that from Madame Merle I think.

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Student: She gets so fascinated with the way she behaves

Student: Madame Merle is like a mentor

Professor: Yes

Student: Mentor

Student: Yes and because she kind of saw some of those manners of Madame Merle in Osmond also.

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Professor: He was an old friend of her own; she had known him these dozen years; he was one of the cleverest and most agreeable men--well, in Europe simply. He was altogether above the respectable average; quite another affair. He wasn't a professional charmer--far from it, and the effect he produced depended a good deal on the state of his nerves and his spirits. When not in the right mood he could fall as low as any one, saved only by his looking at such hours rather like a demoralized prince in exile.

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Professor: So this is how he is described. He is a prince in exile, what a romantic figure!

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Professor: But if he cared or was interested or rightly challenged, and rightly challenged, by the right sort of woman, Ok, so this is the man who needs challenges. All this makes him very attractive in Isabel, Caspar Goodwood needs no challenges, Ok he has his life chalked out very well. Ok, Lord Warburton is extremely open; he is not a challenge at all. This man is a challenge.

What sort of a man could he, then felt his cleverness and his distinction. Those qualities didn't depend, in him, as in so many people, on his not committing or exposing himself. He had his perversities--which indeed Isabel would find to be the case with all the men really worth knowing--and didn't cause his light to shine equally for all persons. Madame Merle, however, thought she could undertake that for Isabel he would be brilliant. He was easily bored, too easily, and dull people always put him out; but a quick and cultivated girl like Isabel would give him a stimulus which was too absent from his life.

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Professor: In other words if a woman like Isabel comes into his life, he would change for the better. There would be, yeah there is nothing this that this man can't accomplish. But he gets bored too easily. Yeah and he needs the right woman, and do you think Isabel takes the bait? Perhaps she, there is a touch of vanity in her. Yeah, Lord Warburton too, easy, Caspar Goodwood too prosaic, not romantic enough, Ok but this man so supremely romantic, the prince in exile bored easily and to keep him interested and stimulated will keep her on her toes, so she likes challenges and that's the reason.

(Professor – student conversation ends)