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Teddy Duncan Jr.  
*University of Central Florida*

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# *Daisy Miller: A Study of Patriarchal Perception*

By: Teddy Duncan Jr.

Faculty Mentor: Dr. William Fogarty

UCF Department of English

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper examines patriarchal perception in Henry James' novella *Daisy Miller*. The novella does not provide objective presentations of the characters; instead, the narrative presents a subjective depiction, mostly of *Daisy Miller*, according to the inner thoughts of only one character, Frederick Winterbourne. Yet Winterbourne is not technically the narrator; his thoughts are disclosed by an unknown character in the story some time after the story occurs. Winterbourne's subjectivity being relayed through another character-narrator portrays Winterbourne's perceptions without explicitly analyzing his behavior. I argue that this complex narrative structure transparently divulges pre-established patriarchal notions that affect Winterbourne's perceptions of Daisy, thus executing a social critique. For example, Winterbourne's familial, social, and geographical circumstances construct a patriarchal distribution of information. Geneva, where Winterbourne develops his beliefs of male-female relations, has its own standards for women's behaviors that include abiding by propriety and submissiveness. Winterbourne's relatives, such as his aunt, attempt to prohibit interaction with Daisy because her behavior deviates from this template. Winterbourne subjects Daisy to oppressive classifications, and his observations of her reflect his proclivity to establish a "formula that applied to Miss *Daisy Miller*" (James 12). He holds various notions of Daisy from "American flirt" (James 12) to "young lady whom a gentleman need no longer be at pains to respect" (James 60). All of these notions and formulas result from a pre-established patriarchal metric that Winterbourne adopts and inherits via the patriarchal distribution of information.

**KEYWORDS:** literature; patriarchy; *Daisy Miller*; Henry James

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## INTRODUCTION

*Daisy Miller* by Henry James was first published in a serialized two-part format in *Cornhill Magazine* in 1878 and then in its full novella form in 1879. James tells the story of two wealthy Americans—Daisy Miller and Frederick Winterbourne—who encounter each other in the resort town of Vevey in Switzerland during the 1870's and who share a suggestively romantic interest in each other. The novella employs a third-person limited narrator with internal access to Winterbourne's mind, observing Daisy and the people around Daisy according to Winterbourne's perception. The narrator is introduced as an acquaintance of Winterbourne, making the narrator also a distant character in the story. However, Winterbourne's perception is incorporated fully into the narrator's observations, which mainly consist of his apprehensions of Daisy. The novella thus does not provide objective presentations of the characters; instead, the narrative presents an entirely subjective depiction of them according to Winterbourne's inner thoughts. While this narrative strategy portrays Daisy and the other characters according to his perception, the credibility of Winterbourne as a reporter and recorder of events is not explicitly analyzed by himself or the narrator. Winterbourne's perceptions are always explicit, and they transparently divulge pre-established patriarchal notions that inflect his perceptions of Daisy. The result of this filtered point of view is a story that reveals more about Winterbourne than the other characters.

Though it is well-known that Daisy Miller "is as much about Winterbourne as it is about Daisy Miller" (Lodge xvi), the critical focus on James's narrative technique almost always centers on Daisy. Indeed, as Lynn Wardley observes, the novella's title character was initially received as kind of representative example: "The name 'Daisy Miller' was appropriated by numerous social critics as a negative model of the American girl who flirts with 'any man she can pick up'" (240). Louise Barnett has argued that the novel's use of narratorial devices engenders the capacity for female autonomy in a male-centric, restrictive society where women are oppressed. She views Daisy Miller herself as "the most uncompromising and uninhibited of all of James's many freedom-seeking heroines, a resister of patriarchal society" (287). Similarly, Hristina Aslimoska posits that James was constructing a female character according to the Cult of the New Woman, and that "Daisy's death at the end of the novella creates an aura of heroism... instead of bending over to societal expectations, she deliberately violates and rejects

them" (80).

Yet the novella isn't as much about Daisy as it is about Winterbourne, for its narratorial perspective focuses on Winterbourne's case study of Daisy rather than Daisy herself. Essentially, though the novella announces itself in its subtitle as a "study" of Daisy Miller, it is actually a study of the observer Winterbourne and his thoughts regarding the position of women. In its examination of patriarchal thought, *Daisy Miller* doesn't so much analyze Daisy, the object of Winterbourne's "study," as it does Winterbourne, the conductor of the study, and the problematic manner in which he is conducting his work. It is this narrative perspective through Winterbourne that executes the novella's critique of patriarchy in the late nineteenth century. Winterbourne's perspective illustrates the patriarchy's structure of information distribution and how his belief system is instilled in him by his socio-geographical circumstances, effectively rendering him a vessel for the patriarchal notions of others.

However, this article will attempt to delineate the manner that the story is functioning (especially as it relates to gender and man-woman relations), according to the content of the text itself, rather than attempting to speculate on James' intention for the text. Although I will rely on James as the author of the text, and will readily admit that these characters are a construct of his imagination, I will examine them in isolation from what their creator intended on them to be and will focus on how they operate within the story. I avoid this intentional fallacy territory for two reasons: 1. Because what James may have intended for the story to be about does not determine what it is about; he may have meant for *Daisy Miller* to reveal something very different than it does. 2. Because, although I do briefly cite one of his letters, I do not know what James' intended to do and even if I did, again, his intentions do not determine the meaning of the story.

Winterbourne's study of Daisy is a form of oppression; it assembles a hierarchal construction with Daisy as the subjected and Winterbourne himself as the subjugator. James deploys this observatory study within this hierarchal structure in order to maintain focus on the internal process of the subjugator; the function of Winterbourne as observer is to disclose the subtleties and nuances of inner patriarchal thought. James develops Winterbourne's thoughts as an internal exhibition of the male gaze, which, as Patricia Johnson states in her article

on the male gaze in James' other work, "is connected to power and surveillance: the person who gazes is empowered over the person who is the object of the gaze" (39).

Meanwhile, James constructs Daisy (the object of the gaze) to be indifferent toward analysis, and even partially apathetic to Winterbourne's analysis of her. Winterbourne's relation to Daisy is one of observer to observed. According to this narrative technique, Daisy becomes an object of study that can be examined in relation to the intentions, impulses, and morals that she must abide by — whether she does or doesn't causes the judgment that is cast on her. To demonstrate the inextricability of Winterbourne's internal observations of Daisy with his overall conviction of what she is, he frequently refers to Daisy not by her name, but by her actions or her social position. He interchangeably uses the terms "Miss Miller" (James 9), "Common" (James 17), and "American flirt" (James 12), aligning her title with Winterbourne's internal observations of her. Winterbourne remarks at one point, after appointing her the title of an "American flirt," that he is "almost grateful for having found the formula that applied to Miss Daisy Miller" (James 12).

James created Winterbourne as a character influenced by James' own experiences and circumstances, effectively showing how patriarchal beliefs are distributed and subsequently embedded in someone. Winterbourne attempts to establish a formula of who Daisy is, the manner in which this is attempted is determined by the people in immediate proximity to him (friends and family) and by location (Geneva and more widely, Europe). This "formula" is a part of the patriarchal perception that is constructed according to socio-geographical circumstances. The patriarchal notions of these people and places inculcates Winterbourne's own patriarchal perception; these are the components of the patriarchal information distribution which constructs and defines his beliefs concerning women. Winterbourne uses this pre-established metric in hopes of discovering a definitive concept to confine Daisy. Winterbourne's classification of Daisy transparently and directly reflects his beliefs regarding women's status. James, by utilizing Winterbourne's "subjectivity," analyzes patriarchal belief systems in their unadulterated form. Winterbourne's classifications are instrumental to his pursuit of Daisy; he utilizes his observations to inform his "study" of her, which ultimately is to determine if he should pursue her romantically.

## **NORMATIVE GENDER ROLES AND THEIR CORRESPONDING HIERARCHAL POSITIONS**

James uses the overt subjectivity of Winterbourne to emphasize the exclusionary facets of patriarchal gender normative roles. Winterbourne deploys this gender normative metric in his perception, excluding Daisy from certain behaviors that are allowed in men. Winterbourne almost always fixates on traits that would be acceptable in a man but not in a woman. Winterbourne is constantly focused on Daisy's inappropriately uninhibited personality, a quality which, in a man, might be characterized as assertiveness or even courage. Winterbourne intervenes when Daisy displays these behaviors that deviate from normative female behavior. Daisy cannot occupy the space of male behaviors. James, in his decision to depict Winterbourne as uncomfortable with Daisy's male-oriented behaviors, is inherently questioning the basis of these roles.

Kyriaki Asiatido has noted that Winterbourne's assertiveness and enforcement of normative female behavior is granted the status of the paternal: "Winterbourne enacts the paternal role, an important role of the male lover who must protect the female from public danger and must secure her morality by limiting her access to public space" (827). Winterbourne is occupying the Victorian male role of public protector over Daisy. Hristina Aslimoska suggests that Winterbourne is imposing the "angel in the house" female position upon Daisy, which, as Aslimoska states, is a Victorian ideal in which a woman "needs to be meek and submissive wife glorify her husband, as well as a caring mother who entirely devotes herself to her children. The public sphere is not considered as suitable for the angel woman." Later Aslimoska notes that "Daisy undermines this ideal." (70) By way of example, Winterbourne exhibits this restricting behavior towards Daisy when they are on the boat headed towards the castle and he is "disappointed" because "she neither avoided his eyes nor those of anyone else" (James 28). This remark is immediately followed by Winterbourne saying that he allowed "for her habitual sense of freedom" (28). Winterbourne must make this internal allowance in order to reconcile Daisy's inhabitation of the male domain of courage or boldness. James shows through Winterbourne's paternal role of protection that typical normative gender roles serve a negative, limiting function: Winterbourne attempts to ensure that she remains outside of male-exclusive behaviors, thus normalizing her position and

consequential role as a woman.

The text discloses, through Daisy and Winterbourne's similar actions and their dissimilar treatment, that the male role permits pre-marital relations (or gossip regarding pre-marital relations) while the female role is not permitted those same relations. James instates an explicit symmetry in the text between Daisy and Winterbourne; they are reflections of each other, Winterbourne with his "charmer" in Geneva and Daisy with her gentleman in Rome (James 30). They both have some sort of flirtatious connection to one another as well as other romantic pursuits, and while Daisy is ostracized, Winterbourne is unaffected from the patriarchal society that James places him in (a society meant to illustrate the social functioning of the real, material nineteenth century Europe). Yet, when Winterbourne's position in society is stated in the beginning of the story he is considered to have "no enemies... an extremely amiable fellow, and universally liked," while Daisy is constantly being challenged and judged (James 4).

Andrew Scheiber has pointed out that James made Winterbourne's struggle external rather than internal: "Much of the tension in the story comes from Winterbourne's efforts at maintaining his own privileged position in this internalized narrative of culture" (76). Winterbourne's privileged position is defined by its relation to Daisy's lack of privilege, and his inner antagonisms (which, in turn, become the tensions of the novella) are a result of his attempt to assert and maintain this privileged position. Lynn Wardley comments on this proclivity for Winterbourne to pursue self-unity: "Responding to Daisy's adolescent incoherence by attempting to assemble her 'charming little parts,' Winterbourne does seem to seek reassurance [of] his own coherence" (240). Again, Winterbourne's male "coherence" and accompanying societal position relies on Daisy's "adolescent incoherence" that he seeks to put together.

By contrast, I think that Winterbourne "assembles" Daisy in order to understand and classify her, to assert an observatory gaze over her, rather than just to cohere himself. James adopts this hierarchical privilege in the form of the text. Accordingly, Daisy is presented as a partial static character whose existence is contingent on Winterbourne's observations of her, corresponding to her lack of insight. Her agency, then, depends on Winterbourne. This isn't to say that a text focusing on a male character means the male character is necessarily

asserting dominance over the other, less central characters. Rather, with Winterbourne as the observer, it is not so much Daisy Miller that is depicted, nor her actions, but Winterbourne's attitudes regarding her actions *as a woman*.

James assembles Winterbourne as a consolidation of characteristics that constitute patriarchal masculinity and consequently that subordinate femininity. He is mechanically cold and unspontaneous (besides the few times Daisy convinces him to do otherwise) and hyper-critical. Daisy accuses him of such behavior early in the novella: "What on earth are you so grave about?" (James 28). Winterbourne's stiff behavior is restraining and repressing to Daisy. Louise Barnett claims that his behavior is representative of patriarchy: "Winterbourne represents the masculine world which has ultimate control over the lives of women" (281). Not only does Winterbourne's rigid behavior denote repression, but his internal categorizations are also dominating, suppressing (or attempting to suppress) certain behaviors not only in himself but also in Daisy. It is Winterbourne's position as oppressive examiner within the text that attempts, and partially succeeds, to subjugate Daisy by his observation of her. The story revolves around these beliefs and how he observes Daisy according to those beliefs. The text demonstrates an honest account of Daisy's divergence from normative female behavior and the suppression and ostracism she endures in a patriarchal society due to that divergence.

The text of the novella indicates that Winterbourne must also adhere to the behavioral regulations imposed by the patriarchal standards regarding his interactions with women. Winterbourne and Daisy are both deeply affected and construct themselves according to "life-inhibiting aspects of conventionality" (Barnet 283). These aspects of patriarchal conventionality have "negative implications for the wellbeing of men as well as women" (Bareket 519). James presents Winterbourne's mere discretion as enough to absolve him of his social misdoings. These incessant exemptions that Winterbourne enjoys from the scrutiny of the public establish a typical gender hierarchy. Winterbourne is autonomous because he is a man in a male-centric society. Regardless of the circulating rumors or the "singular stories" (James 4) pertaining to his interactions with women outside of wedlock, he is still referred to as "too innocent" by his aunt, who refuses to meet the "dreadful girl" Daisy. (18)

## **SEXUALITY AND ATTRACTION DEFINED BY PATRIARCHY**

In *Daisy Miller*, certain behaviors in male/female interactions are socially scrutinized and constitute misconduct in the nineteenth century. These “improper” behaviors are all associated with sexuality. Winterbourne’s initial pursuit of Daisy is fundamentally stimulated and prolonged by his physical attraction to her, making his infatuation with her inherently sexual. This infatuation is depicted by his descriptions of her throughout the novella, such as “pretty American girl” (James 7) or the narrator’s reflection that “Winterbourne had not seen for a long time anything prettier than ... her complexion, her nose, her ears, her teeth” (8). Although he is initially captivated by Daisy because of how she looks, his interior descriptions of her and the majority of his thoughts are attempts to penetrate and understand her personality: “Was she simply a pretty girl from New York state – were they all like that... Or was she a designing, an audacious, an unscrupulous young person?” (12). Winterbourne is trying to deduct her intentions relating to her sexual behavior. Daisy’s sexuality is, in fact, a primary component of her adherence or non-adherence to the patriarchal metric that Winterbourne feels she must abide by. James reveals that Winterbourne’s pursuit of Daisy is conditional according to her compliance with the criteria that he internally imposes on her.

All of the socially and unspoken codes enforce the necessity for a young woman’s purity to remain intact, which coincides with a young woman’s *sexual* purity. This emphasis on securing sexual purity means that the sanctity of her virginity must be guaranteed until she is married. Such seemingly insignificant occurrences such as Eugenio’s “tone which struck Winterbourne as very impertinent” (James 14) when Daisy says that Winterbourne is taking her to the castle alone, is subtle evidence of this preoccupation. Winterbourne’s restrictive nature is informed by social surroundings, reflecting the tendency for a person to assimilate to the belief systems that they are in immediate contact with. This particular patriarchal belief system results in its constituents casting judgements in order to uphold virginity, which is an obvious double standard imposed disproportionately on women. Winterbourne implicates himself on various occasions in his own loss of innocence, notably when his aunt calls him “too innocent” and he retorts “My dear aunt, I am not so innocent” (18).

James places Winterbourne within certain patriarchal

norms and effectively demonstrates not only patriarchal perception, but also patriarchal attraction and how it operates. James positions Winterbourne’s judgments to function on two disparate extremities: Winterbourne views Daisy as either sexually promiscuous or inexperienced in order to justify his romantic pursuit of her. Winterbourne is participating in the Freudian idea defined by Orly Bareket as the “Madonna-Whore Dichotomy,” which she describes as the “polarized perceptions of women in general as either good, chaste, and pure Madonnas or as bad, promiscuous, and seductive whores” (519). Winterbourne’s categorization of Daisy operates within these good/bad, pure/impure, Madonna/whore binaries. James’ decision to make these characters function according to these polarizations and subsequently condemn of Daisy via the Madonna-Whore Dichotomy effectively “reinforce[s] patriarchy” and specifically constructs limitations on “women’s self-expression, agency, and freedom by defining their sexual identities as fitting one of two rigid social scripts” (Bareket 520).

Winterbourne has a definite preference against Daisy’s ostensible promiscuity, which defines, for the reader, his beliefs towards women in general. As the narrator reveals when Winterbourne sees Daisy with Giovanelli at the coliseum late at night, Winterbourne feels that “she was a young lady whom a gentleman need no longer be at pains to respect” (James 60). Bareket posits that there is a latent reason for men’s loathing of promiscuous women: “Men ... objectify promiscuous women to avoid emotional attachment, treating them with contempt” (520). James constructs Winterbourne as obsessed with Daisy’s intentions and with formulaically defining her. The ideology implicit in the Madonna-Whore Dichotomy encapsulates Winterbourne’s beliefs regarding Daisy’s actions and delineates his quasi-contempt of her.

## **THE PATRIARCHY’S MEANS OF INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION: PATRIARCHAL INTERPELLATION**

James shows, through Winterbourne’s relationship to people and places, how patriarchal interpellation occurs: Winterbourne begins to accept (or has already accepted) the patriarchal norms that are presented to him by the people and places around him and the pervasiveness of these cultural ideas. *Daisy Miller* is constructed by James so that the other women in Winterbourne’s life, his aunt and Miss Walker, are the primary contributors to the perpetuation of the sometimes brutal judgement of Daisy

Miller. These characters have submitted themselves to the notion that women are obligated to uphold a certain standard that men do not have to uphold.

For example, when Winterbourne informs his aunt that he took Daisy to the castle, she says it is damaging for her, but not for him. "Of course a man may know everyone. Men are welcome to the privilege" (James 32). Barnett explains such hypocrisy as symptomatic of sexism: "Those women who accept their circumscribed existence pay varying prices of neurotic illness, ineffectuality and hypocrisy" (381). These symptoms are present in these women, from the aunt's reluctance to associate with others (ineffectuality) to the hypocrisy present in them all. This overt awareness and submission to the patriarchal system of reasoning effectively lowers women's position in society. These women's harshness towards another woman surpasses anything that Winterbourne internally or externally says or does. Even he calls Mrs. Walker "cruel" when she refuses to acknowledge and return Daisy's departing gesture from her evening party, to which Mrs. Walker responds, "She [Daisy] never enters my drawing room again" (James 51). For someone to participate unknowingly in systematic oppression due to ignorance is vastly different from participating in oppression regardless of knowledge, like Mrs. Walker and Winterbourne's aunt do. Winterbourne confides in these women, and they are the bearers of the societal notions that inform his "study" of Daisy, as well as his notions of all women. Yet, this patriarchal thought is a societal construct that is imposed on these women, Winterbourne, and Daisy herself from all sides; dissent would likely result in a form of exile, much like what Daisy endures. Indeed, the patriarchal thought implicit in the treatment of Daisy demands adherence from all who want to remain within the exclusive society that produces such thoughts.

James further explores patriarchal interpellation through the narrator's relation to a distinct sense of geographical place. By placing Winterbourne's cultural roots in Geneva, James is posing the question of how Geneva inflected his notions of women. James illustrates how Winterbourne's opinions are frequently shaped by Genevan templates for female conduct and morality. These Genevan ideals have absolute sovereignty over his ideas of propriety and inform his understanding of Daisy (and women in general). Geneva is described as a significant place in Winterbourne's development: "Geneva having been for a long time [Winterbourne's] place of residence" (4) and evidently, he spent enough

time there to formulate his conceptions of women's conduct. Geneva was a place where "the innocent and natural association of young people is strictly controlled and even discouraged" (Barnet 282). Winterbourne repeatedly consults the Genevan template of women's conduct and morals throughout the novella. He directly refers to this template when he diverts Daisy's offer for him to watch her brother as she goes to the Chillon Castle and he, instead, suggests "I should much rather go to Chillon with you" (13). He notes after her calm response that "She didn't rise, blushing, as a young girl at Geneva would have done" (13). Daisy's behavior deviates from the behavior of women that Winterbourne encountered in Geneva, further enclosing his beliefs within a Madonna-Whore Dichotomy, ceasing to allow him to conceive of any behavior between absolute innocence or purity and absolute impropriety or impurity.

James also uses Winterbourne and Daisy to represent larger cultural values at play between America and Europe. Aslimoska explains that this symbolism is evident from the first scene of the novella: "James highlights the differences between the American and European societies via the description of the atmosphere of Vevey ... the Americans are pictured as noisy and carefree, the Europeans are formal, reserved and disciplined" (71). The location-based structure of patriarchal information from Geneva to Winterbourne further plays into a wider structure within the text that operates on the differences between "cultivated" European conduct and "uncultivated" American conduct. These differences, again, relate to the structure of Winterbourne's position as observer. The only way he achieves cultivation, or refinery, is in relation to Daisy's lack of cultivation, which in a broader sense plays into the relation between the cultivation of Europe against the lack of cultivation in America. The text also explores American innocence against the rigidity of European values, but this cultural disparity of innocence can only be extracted from an objective perspective, from what is surmised outside of Winterbourne's perception. Daisy is, or could be, seen as merely an innocent girl.

Henry James, in a letter to Elizabeth Lynton, a suffragist and fellow novelist, called Daisy Miller a "light, thin, natural, unsuspecting creature" and "above all things *innocent*" (Jobes 84). But, with Winterbourne as mediator, her innocence is instead translated into uncultivated manners and an almost primitive ignorance of permissible behavior for women, a harmful and almost calculated innocence. Further, Winterbourne constantly

revises attributes that are conventionally viewed as ordinary attributes of a person, and according to his own, or his relatives', or Geneva's, pre-established evaluation of women's conduct. This behavior occurs to the extent that Winterbourne partially succeeds in drowning out the subtext of Daisy's innocence. Eclipsing Daisy's innocence with Winterbourne's repository of patriarchal concepts was undoubtedly James' intention, as he says in the same letter to Elizabeth Lynton, "[Daisy was] sacrificed, as it were, to a social rumpus that went on quite over her head & to which she stood in no measurable relation" (Jobes 84).

James's characters insist on subordinating women via their impressions of Daisy, declaring that she is under the jurisdiction of social laws that are constructed purely for women. This standardization of women's actions is implicit in male-female relations as well women's views of each other. Everything that Daisy endures is the embodiment of the social enforcement of this standardization. Winterbourne solidifies and makes apparent the presence of this standardization via his perception of Daisy. He thinks of her only in relation to himself. He never inquires of her life beyond the effect it may have upon his relationship with her. Even at the end of the story following her death, she is still upheld to these skewed standards. When Mr. Giovanelli, the Italian gentlemen that Daisy befriended in Rome, speaks to Winterbourne about her after her death, he says "If she had lived, I should have got nothing. She never would have married me, I am sure" (James 63). He is only concerned with what she could have given him, with what he could have "got" from her. His grief is measured according to what he could or could not have potentially received from her if she wouldn't have died. This erasure of Daisy's autonomy epitomizes the subservient position to men that is imposed on women within the story.

## CONCLUSION

Without ever attempting to understand in earnest Daisy's perspective, *Daisy Miller* studies Winterbourne's perception of Daisy. James refuses to portray Daisy's intentions, instead relying on Winterbourne to dispatch speculations of her movements; Winterbourne is thus an imperative middle man in this narrative between the events of the plot and the depiction of those events. Winterbourne's examination inverts the ordinary conventions of integrity and character — Daisy is subjected to criteria that deviates from what is normally thought of as good moral behavior. Winterbourne

expects timidity from a woman, for that is the societal expectation imposed by patriarchal thought. There are many instances of this critical backwardness; for example, when Winterbourne announces that he has to go to Geneva the day following their castle excursion, Daisy calls him "horrid" (James 29) and he, in a strange confessional moment, remarks to himself that "no young lady had as yet done him the honor to be so agitated by the announcement of his movements" (James 30). This thought does express the strength of the attachment between two people, but it also suggests a neurotic and dominating desire for dependence. Winterbourne finds a certain enjoyment in being called "horrid," registering Daisy's frustration as a sort of play thing for his egocentric agenda. A woman is viewed, according to the internal movements of Winterbourne's mind, as auxiliary to a man.

The manner in which James constructs the text forces an examination of Winterbourne's own partiality toward Daisy, and we can further examine the socio-geographical conditions that form his patriarchal perception. We learn much more about Winterbourne and patriarchy than we ever do about Daisy. This point of view renders Winterbourne as a transparent character and Daisy as an opaque character; as a result, the text reveals more about Winterbourne than it does Daisy via the immediacy between the text itself and Winterbourne's consciousness. All information about Daisy Miller is mediated and dispatched through Winterbourne, and since his mediation is subjective, it is also unreliable, making any conceptions of Daisy Miller mere hearsay speculations. Only Winterbourne can be understood without doubt, as his perception is explicitly disclosed. Further, what can be extracted from Winterbourne's character is a patriarchal perception that is related to, and informed by, particular locations (namely Geneva and vaguely Europe as a whole) and the inhabitants of those locations (namely Winterbourne's aunt and Mrs. Walker). These patriarchal perceptions are blatantly shown through the characters who inform Winterbourne's perception. We also see these norms at play in Winterbourne's ceaseless internal inquiries into Daisy's character and motives, the disproportionate (when compared to males) protection of her innocence from varying forms of "impropriety," and the repression of any deviance from her normative role as a woman. Henry James uses Winterbourne as the representation of patriarchal distribution of thought and of the imposing force that patriarchal perception has on the lives of women.



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