



New Essays on 'The Portrait of a Lady' (The American Novel)

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The Portrait of a Lady is arguably Henry James's most appealing and accessible novel. The introduction to this volume of specially written essays, first published in 1990, situates the novel in its cultural and historical context: its treatment of a modern woman 'affronting' her destiny, its relation to the contemporary controversy over 'morality' in fiction, its use of an Italian setting, and its late nineteenth century elegiac mood. It also discusses James's revisions of the novel and his late Preface. The essays that follow deal with the place of Portrait in the tradition of modern narrative, its relation to popular women's fiction on the question of marriage, the influence of James's 'family romance' and his brother William, and the character of Isabel Archer seen from a psychoanalytic point of view.



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