

Appendix**SYNOPSIS OF THE AGE OF INNOCENCE**

The main character of *The Age of Innocence* is Newland Archer, a rich, handsome, and perfectly mannered lawyer. He is about to marry May Welland, a beautiful, rich, but strictly conventional woman. At first Newland doesn't have any feeling of discomfort or dissatisfaction regarding the strict and old-fashioned conventions he finds either in May Welland or in the people in general, although he has realized that in one way or another he is different from most of the people in the society, because he has "probably read more, thought more, and even seen a good deal more of the world."

Newland begins to really open his eyes to the provincialism of the society at the very first moment he met May's cousin, the Countess Ellen Olenska, who is unhappily married to a dissolute Polish nobleman. Instead of getting pity on her, on the contrary people judge her unfairly and talk bad about her. Because of his empathy to Ellen Olenska and also to defend May from difficulties which may be caused by her cousin's deviant situation--because it is old New York tradition to include the family in everyone's affairs--Newland decides to announce her engagement to May Welland sooner than what has been settled.

Although at first it is only pity that Newland feels about Ellen Olenska; but the more he knows her, the more he admires. For the people, all about Ellen: from the way she gets dressed until the way she behaves, is decidedly improper. They cannot give her their understanding that all her improper things is caused by her living abroad, in this case in Europe, for many years. It is not because she aims to be different, but the truth is that she doesn't know about the custom of New York society.

For Newland Archer, Ellen Olenska is a sharp comparison to May Welland, or in general, to the society. Ellen has courage to speak of for herself, she has her own values and convictions, and she even interested in literature although for most of the people, literature is regarded to be a useless thing. He finds in Ellen his ideals about a woman which is based on his intelligence and taste. Unfortunately this qualities can not be found in May Welland. For May, everything has to be done exactly

Appendix

like the old conventions which has been applied for generations, there can't be any other possibilities other than that. Newland's admiration to Ellen grows more and more, until he finally realizes that he is in love with her.

Unfortunately by this time nothing can be done, although Newland and Ellen know that they are in love to each other. It is not only because Ellen is May's own cousin that has made it impossible for them to unite their love; but also Newland, ironically, has made Ellen give up her idea to get divorced from her husband like what has been counted on him to do by the family and the society in general.