DAISY MILLER:
A Contemporary Application - Feminist Theory and What it Feels like to be a Girl.

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in English

By

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Abstract

*Daisy Miller:*
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In this article, I will be using a Post-Structuralist theoretical lens, to explore Henry James’ 19th century novella *Daisy Miller* in the contemporary feminist setting. We will look at Daisy as an example of what women have been striving for throughout history, and how her example may or may not be used to further develop the position of women in the contemporary society. While James’ novella outlines the constructs and limitations of European high society in the 19th century, have we as women moved any closer to destabilizing the inequality prevalent throughout our society in the 21st century? Daisy Miller is a 19th century feminist figure, a blueprint – and her story is rooted in Post-Structuralism. This novella lends itself to fluidity rather than set gendered spaces. She is a classic literary example of what women today continue to rally for – equality and recognition in a patriarchal social environment. Applying this tale to a contemporary setting and contemporary historical moments such as the Women’s March, we are able to evaluate the current state of feminism, what it means to be a feminist, and how our society is accepting and/or rejecting these ideals.