

THE IMAGE OF IDENTITY IN HENRY JAMES' NOVEL "THE WINGS OF DOVE"

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Abstract: Henry James is one of the authors who made a significant contribution to the development of American Realism, which has not lost its importance in American literature since the 19th century, and is crucial even in the 20th century and serves as the foundation stone of Psychological Realism. "The wings of Dove" is a 1902 novel by Henry James. It tells the story of Milly Theale, an American heiress stricken with a serious disease, and her effect on the people around her. Some of these people befriend Milly with honourable motives, while others are more self-interested.

Keywords: Henry James, "The wings of Dove", main character, theme, structure, psyche, psychological realism, inner, portray.

I. Introduction

Literature as an art of words continues influencing the human heart for several centuries. These masterpieces leave a significant mark on the history of literary development and play an important role in the creation of new genres for the next generation. Henry James is one of the authors who made a significant contribution to the development of American Realism, which has not lost its importance in American literature since the 19th century and is crucial even in the 20th century and serves as the foundation stone of Psychological Realism.

Henry James is a writer who managed to show his style in realistic literature of the USA, as one of the skilled novelists who created stories and novels as "Daisy Miller" (1879), "Portrait of a Lady" (1881), "The Bostonians" (1886), "The Ambassadors" (1903) in the last two decades of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th century. His name was given in honor of his father, and his father was a mature public figure and theorist of his time. As a result, both children of the family became successful, and his brother William James, the founder of the "stream of consciousness" in the field of psychology, and Henry James, a literary figure, left an indelible mark on history of USA. Henry, a lover of books from childhood, was educated and trained by his family background in the leading schools and teachers of his day. Additionally, through travel to famous European capitals such as Geneva, Paris, and London, young people grew up able to communicate in multiple languages such as French, German, English and Spanish. Although at nineteen he was a student at Harvard Law School, Henry's love for books introduced him to the artistic world of Onore de Balzac, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Ivan Turgenev so much that, without completing his second year of study, he anonymously published his first story. In particular, his friendship with the leader of the time William Dean Howells became the basis of his success as a writer.

II. Literature Review

Henry James's work was not warmly received by literary critics during his lifetime, but thanks to the development of modernism in US literature, his works were able to penetrate deeply into

the human psyche and attracted the attention of literary critics for their unique approach to psychological prose works. D. M. Scura carefully studied scientific sources devoted to the author's work and, based on the results of his research, developed a reference manual. In the preface to his book, expressing his thoughts about the author's work, he notes that between 1960 and 1974 about two thousand books, articles, and dissertations were written [16; VII]. L. Edel, D. W. Jefferson, F. Dupee, B. McElderry, D. Abel, G. Patt, L. Powers, and O. Cargill are among the literary scholars who have explained their conclusions and provided in-depth scientific analysis of the interpretation. artistic and genre features of the works of Henry James, including the names of famous critics. Naturally, our attention was drawn to the fact that the author's work has become the subject of so many studies. As a result of research, we have witnessed that the author's novellas and novels have been studied from different aspects, but there is no systematic research. Therefore, in this article, we have tried to analyze Henry James's individual style comprehensively based on the short story "The wings of Dove", the artistic features of this short story, and the peculiar features in the style of depicting the human psyche.

III. Results and Discussion

James based the character Milly on Minny Temple (1845–1870), his beloved cousin who died from tuberculosis. In his autobiography James wrote of *The Wings of the Dove* as his attempt to wrap her dying in the "beauty and dignity of art".^[1] However, as he also said in the preface to the *New York Edition* text of the novel, James had to prepare the situation that was to occupy Milly for the last months of her life. He established the background of Kate and Densher's inability to marry because of a lack of money.

Though the image of a dove has traditional associations with love and peaceful harmony, specific reference to a dove's wings may connote wealth or money: "Though you lie down among the sheepfolds, the wings of the dove are covered with silver, and her feathers with shimmering gold." (Psalm 68:13)^[2]

Kate Croy and Merton Densher are two betrothed Londoners who desperately want to marry but have very little money. Kate is constantly put upon by family troubles, and is now living with her domineering aunt, Maud Lowder. Into their world comes Milly Theale, an enormously rich young American woman who had previously met and fallen in love with Densher, although she has never revealed her feelings. Her travelling companion and confidante, Mrs. Stringham, is an old friend of Maud. Kate and Aunt Maud welcome Milly to London, and the American heiress enjoys great social success.

With Kate as a companion, Milly goes to see an eminent physician, Sir Luke Strett, because she worries that she is suffering from an incurable disease. The doctor is noncommittal but Milly fears the worst. Kate suspects that Milly is deathly ill. After the trip to America where he had met Milly, Densher returns to find the heiress in London. Kate wants Densher to pay as much attention as possible to Milly, though at first he doesn't quite know why. Kate has been careful to conceal from Milly (and everybody else) that she and Densher are engaged.

With the threat of serious illness hanging over her, Milly decides to travel to Venice with Mrs. Stringham. Aunt Maud, Kate and Densher follow her. At a party Milly gives in her

Venice *palazzo* (the older Palazzo Barbaro, called "Palazzo Leporelli" in the novel), Kate finally reveals her complete plan to Densher: he is to marry Milly so that, after her presumably soon-to-occur death, he will inherit the money they can marry on. Densher had suspected this was Kate's idea, and he demands that she consummate their affair before he will go along with her plan.

Aunt Maud and Kate return to London while Densher remains with Milly. Unfortunately, the dying girl learns from a former suitor of Kate's about the plot to get her money. She withdraws from Densher and her condition deteriorates. Densher sees her one last time before he leaves for London, where he eventually receives news of Milly's death. Milly does leave him a large amount of money despite everything. But Densher does not accept the money, and he will not marry Kate unless she also refuses the bequest. Conversely, if Kate chooses the money instead of him, Densher offers to make the bequest over to her in full. The lovers part on the novel's final page with a cryptic exclamation from Kate: "We shall never be again as we were!"

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion it should be stated that "The wings of Dove" demonstrates Henry James's mastery in grasping characters' psychological depth, beautiful prose, and intricate narrative structure frameworks. Through its investigation of identity and self-discovery, the short story provides readers with a thought-provoking and psychologically complex reading experience. Through portraying characters' inner thoughts, conflicts, and transformations with psychological realism the short story offers a nuanced and introspective exploration of the human psyche.

References:

1. James, Henry (2015) [1914] "Notes of a Son and Brother". Autobiographies. The Library of America. ISBN 9788026836063. Retrieved 16 May 2023. None the less did she in fact cling to consciousness; death, at the last, was dreadful to her; she would have given anything to live - and the image of this, which was long to remain with me, appeared so of the essence of tragedy that I was in the far-off aftertime to seek to lay the ghost by wrapping it, a particular occasion aiding, in the beauty and dignity of art.
2. Flannery, Denis (2 March 2017) [2000]. Henry James: A Certain Illusion. Abingdon: Routledge. ISBN 9781351930918. Retrieved 16 May 2023. [...] images of wealth and purity are present in Psalm 68:13: Though ye have lien among the pots yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold [...]
3. The Cambridge companion to Henry James (1998) Edited by Freedman J. N.Y.: Cambridge University Press.
4. The question of Henry James; a collection of critical essays (1973) Edited by Dupee F.W. N.Y.: Octagon Books.
5. The Wings of the Dove: Authoritative Text, The Author and the Novel, Criticism edited by J. Donald Crowley and Richard Hocks (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003) ISBN 0-393-97881-8