

HENRY JAMES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LITERARY PRINCIPLES OF THE NOVEL

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ABSTRACT

*We can safely say that the actual establishment of the literary principles of the novel as an art form started with Henry James's article "The Art of Fiction" which he published in the September 1884 number of **Longman's Magazine**. This paper tries to prove that before this article the only consideration of the novel existed in hasty reviews in both the English and American periodicals. It also tries to prove that this classical article can be considered an indirect reply to the misunderstanding reviewers of James's works. The paper also refers to some **Prefaces** of Henry James which together with his article "The Art of Fiction" can be considered as the proper establishment of the main principles of the novel. These principles can be summed up in the following:*

First, James explained the relation between character and incident in the novel and emphasised that each should illustrate the other.

Secondly, he qualified the main requirements of a good story as having a theme, subject matter, and what he termed "the data of the novel", and insisted that it must be considered as an organic whole.

Thirdly, James was the first critic who defined the psychological implications of ordinary simple events and said he could find "dramas within dramas" in them.

Above all, James defined the relation between Life and Art and emphasised that if Art takes from Life, it does not merely report but should create in order to give form and meaning.

We can safely say that the actual establishment of the literary principles of the novel as an art form started with Henry James's classical article "The Art of Fiction" which he published in the September 1884 number of *Longman's Magazine*. This paper tries to prove that before this article the only consideration of the novel existed only in hasty reviews in both the English and American periodicals. It also tries to prove that this classical article can be considered an indirect reply to the misunderstanding reviewers of James's works. The publication of this article has, in fact, an interesting story that goes back to the year 1882. In this year we find an acrimonious attack on both James and his fellow 'realist' and admirer Howells. This was caused mainly by an article that the latter contributed to the American periodical *Century Magazine*, for November 1882, entitled "Henry James, Jr." This essay had an extensive influence on James's English reputation. Howells's enthusiastic elevation of James, accompanied as it was by summary rejection of certain giants of English fiction, brought forth a flood of opposition from the English periodicals. Moreover, Howells gave a new status to James by speaking of him as the founder of a new 'School'. (Here was something larger to criticise and the critics found a better opportunity to speak their minds).

Howells's essay began with a biographical sketch and some remarks about the slowness with which James was being taken up in America. This tardy reception was due, he said, to the novelist's tendency toward increased analysis and to the mistaken resentment aroused over what Americans supposed to be an 'outrage' to the American girl in *Daisy Miller*. Here, Howells defended James's main concern, the analytical treatment of 'character', and urged that James had really been sympathetic toward Daisy.

The English critics were not interested in justice or injustice to American womanhood, but it was that microscopic analysis of character that concerned them more. Howells, in his definition of James's method, gave them good points which they answered fully and openly. He brought up the universal acceptance and dominion of the new 'school' rather in the form of a question; "Will the reader be content to accept a novel which is an analytic study rather than a story, which is apt to leave him arbiter of the destiny of the author's creation?"

The remarks which drew fire from the English critics were the following: "The art of fiction has, in fact, become a finer art in our day than it was with Dickens and Thackeray". He explained how the new school whose 'chief exemplar' was James,

studies human nature much more in its wonted aspects, and finds its ethical and dramatic examples in the operation of lighter but not really less vital motives; the moving accident is certainly not its trade; and it prefers to avoid all manner of dire catastrophes.

This explained the critics' rage against such judgement for it was the 'moving accident' that they admired most in Dickens and Thackeray and the lack of which they complained about in James. R.L. Stevenson in his article "A Gossip on Romance", contributed to the first number of *Longmans's Magazine* of the same month,¹ expressed how he admired the famous physical attack in *Vanity Fair* and how,

1. November, 1882.

If Rawdon Crawley's blow were not delivered, *Vanity Fair* would cease to be a work of art. That scene is the chief ganglion of the tale; and the discharge of energy from Rawdon's fist is the reward and consolation of the reader.

In fact, and as a writer in the *Saturday Review*² remarked, Howells's essay was a coincidental answer to Stevenson's article which expressed, as we shall notice from the other articles on the same subject, the general demand of the age for romance and adventure.

In the "Gossip", Stevenson had defended the 'natural' desire for incident, in opposition to the interests of those who liked "to remark and dissect" and who thought it clever to write "a novel with no story at all, or at least a very dull one". He started his essay with an emphatic statement:

In anything fit to be called by the name of reading the process itself should be absorbing and voluptuous; we should gloat over a book, be rapt clean out of ourselves, and rise from the perusal, our mind filled with the busiest, kaleidoscopic dance of image, incapable of sleep or of continuous horrible thought.

Thus Stevenson, with his Scottish love of adventure and romance, expressed his own early preference for stories which began with a hint of romance - in "an old wayside inn where, 'towards the close of the year 17 ...', several gentlemen in three-cocked hats were playing bowls". Children read story-books, "not for eloquence of character or thought, but for some quality of the brute incident". Before dealing with his adult preference he made a useful definition of drama as "the poetry of conduct" and of romance as "the poetry of circumstance". Both of these the adult mind found afforded effective satisfaction, but it was the poetry of circumstance whose satisfaction was more constant. Though conduct might be three parts of life, there was a vast deal in life and letters where the interest turned not upon what a man should choose to do but on how he should choose to do it. And it was out of this material that, Stevenson held, "the most joyous of verses, and the most lively, beautiful and buoyant tales" were built. Stevenson had in mind here particularly *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Arabian Nights*, tales whose interest is entirely external, exciting action.

Stevenson emphasised the interdependence of the dramatic and the pictorial, the moral and the romantic interest in the highest forms of art. Neither situation nor passion existed for itself but each inhered indissolubly in the other. Yet as James's school, "aping the creative", ruthlessly discarded incident and romance, so other writers either omitted character and drama altogether or subordinated both to romance. Neither kind produced the highest form of art. If one or the other pair was to be omitted, Stevenson preferred it should be character and drama, for it was not character but incident that wooed us out of our reserve.

Here it is necessary to take up two of Stevenson's points: first, his charge against James and his school that they dispensed with incident; and secondly, that the omission of character and drama is preferable to that of incident and romance.

2. "The Modern Novel", LIV, (11 Nov. 1882), pp. 633 f.

It is true that James's main interest lay in the exposition of character, but it is quite impossible to do this without using proper and ample "incident". It is only in their understanding of the nature of incident that Stevenson and James differed. For Stevenson incident was essentially violent, if that is not too strong a word, but for James the conflict of most minds held enough incident to justify the writing of a novel. For instance in *The Portrait*, where Osmond picks up the coffee-cup from Madame Merle's mantelpiece and dryly remarks, when she asks him to take care, that it already has a crack in it, there is enough incident to set the mind into "dramas and dramas"³ of inner action. Through Madame Merle's mind runs the course of her shameful history with Osmond. She has always worked for his interest but now that she has failed in subordinating Isabel to his will he announces through the symbolism of the crack, the breach in their relations: "Have I been so vile all for nothing? she vaguely wailed"⁴. It is not only psychological incidents that occur in James's books but there are also many journeys in Europe and meetings with international people, marriages and fallings in love-incidents which though not violent, nevertheless are still incidents. Moreover, the view must be stated that in the novel the human interest should absorb everything else. Everything in the novel should illustrate character and thus incident should be mainly illustrative. Nothing should divert our thought from the characters. This is not to say, of course, that romance has not its own charm, but it is a genre in itself and it must therefore be judged on its own terms.

But for the critics the matter was different. The critic of the *Saturday Review*, for instance, "most cordially" shared Stevenson's views about the violent nature of incident. He added his complaints about this "modern school of fiction" that Howells talked about, and which lacked "incident, romantic event and complication, the grand situations" that "require imagination, and our age, with all its many and brilliant qualities, is not preminent in imagination". He explained how it was only when the romantic descended to the sensational, and Ouida and Miss Braddon became its high-priestesses, that the intelligent readers turned away from romance in disgust and had to accept the modern novel with its "monotony with all the uncompromising plainness of photography". The Reviewer ended with an assurance to Stevenson that "the love of romance is surely not dead, but sleepeth only". He pleaded with him to revive it since he had "a vein of it, had a good training, for he had drunk largely of the genuine waters", and had "steeped himself in the spirit of the 'King of the Romantics', in the spirit of Walter Scott".

A major literary argument was in progress, and in the critics' minds James became firmly linked with Howells. The *Manchester Guardian* referred to the *Century* where "Mr. Henry James writes on Venice, and Mr. W.D. Howells writes on Mr. Henry James. Really these American Novelists take one another just a trifle too seriously".⁵

The following day *The World* cruelly criticised James's style:

Mr. Henry James Jun. writes of "Venice" in his usual tepid inveterate, Captain's biscuit style; and Mr. W.D. Howells writes of 'Mr. Henry James

3. James gave the same words in "The Art of Fiction", which will be dealt with later.

4. *The Portrait*, 1921, ii, p. 296.

5. (Tuesday, 7th, November 1882), p. 7.

Jr.' and places him at the head of the 'new school' of fiction, which is, it seems a very fine thing. Poor Dickens and Thackeray are kicked out of court.⁶

Francillon of the *Graphic*, who had labelled the 'new school' as early as 1880,⁷ reviewed Howells's *A Modern Instance* in 1882,⁸ and took the opportunity to attack James. Howells's book, Francillon said, was "a typical novel of the newest fashion"; it was written "in the celebrated manner of Mr. Henry James, Junior, which consists of saying nothing in a great many words".

Similarly, an English book on American Literature, published in 1882, linked the two. The writer declared that Howells and James "together ... stand in peril of betraying their mission by overworking their mines".⁹

Blackwood's of January 1883 was harsher to Howells than to James, the basis of its attack being Howells's allegation that the "art of which he is a professor is finer than the art of Thackeray".

Blackwood's held that,

the punishment which he prepares for himself is so prodigious that it becomes ridiculous. But no one we believe, will be cruel enough to make the suggested comparison, and measure Mr. Howells against Thackeray. He is so far safe in the inferiority of his stature.

As for James, the reviewer had no doubt that,

even in America, the old gods will outlive the temporary dazzling of Mr. Henry James's fine style, and delicate power of analysis, and even the setting down given to them by the critics.

The most caustic attack, however, was included in an article called "American Novels" in the *Quarterly Review* of the same month. The reviewer began his remarks on James by contrasting the "charm and beauty" of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Louisiana* with the "artificial mannerisms" and "tawdry smartness" of *Daisy Miller*. After the good reception of *Daisy Miller* both in magazine and book form and which even defended James against his misunderstanding American critics,¹⁰ now we notice a change of attitude. In *Daisy Miller*, the *Quarterly* now noticed that James had pretended to show "the secrets of American life and character", but had failed. *Daisy* was not typical. The reviewer satisfied himself by attributing James's inability to accomplish his task to his being of Irish and Scottish descent, and not even living in America. From this point he proceeded to an attack on James's books which he found were in no sense "stories". As for Howells's statement about Dickens and Thackeray, the writer pointed out indignantly that American journalists constantly made reference to Dickens's characters, whereas no one referred to - or even remembered the names of - Howells's personae.

6. XVII, (8th, November 1882), p. 479.

7. The *Graphic* did this in an incidental remark in a review of George Fleming's *The Head of Medusa*. (11th, December 1880), p. 595.

8. XXVI, (25th, November 1882), p. 583.

9. John Nichol, *American Literature, An Historical Sketch 1620-1880*, Edinburgh, 1882, pp. 389 f.

10. See *Sunday Times*, (8th, June and 14th, July 1878); *Academy*, (6th, July 1878), XIV, p. 11; *Nonconformist*, (10th, July 1878), XXXIX, p. 686, and *Guardian*, (12th, June and 10th, July 1878), XXXIII, pp. 833 and 972.

In fact the whole of the Quarterly article was scarcely distinguished for perceptiveness or logic. It also showed a conservatism and national pride in the English evaluations of James. Thus as the *Century* article had antagonised both aspects of the English mind, it retarded James's reception abroad. The *Quarterly's* attack proved that Howells's fears for James, expressed in a letter to Thomas S. Perry from Florence on 13 March, 1883, were realised: “-I have been scarcely if at all troubled by the row about me, and have been chiefly vexed because it includes James”. And to Charles Dudley Warner he wrote on 4 March, 1883, expressing his intention of writing another paper to explain what he said about Dickens and Thackeray: “Some times I think it would be amazing to go over the whole affair, not omitting special consideration of the *Quarterly Reviewer*, who jumps up and down with rage”.¹¹

Arthur Tiller's article “The New School of Fiction”¹² showed a fatherly tolerance toward James which was deliberately designed to mitigate the rough handling of the *Quarterly* reviewer's feelings, and yielding to none in his admiration for novelists who before all things were story-tellers, at the same time he professed himself an admirer both of James and Howells, “a qualified admirer, it must be admitted, but still an admirer”. With this reserved admiration Tiller echoed the same structures of the *Quarterly* reviewer concerning “absence of plot, over-analysis, and laboured realism” which he found best illustrated in *The Portrait of a Lady*. In these two articles two major principles of fiction were mentioned and discussed not only explicitly but also implicitly throughout the criticism of James.

To Howells's question “Will the reader be content to accept a novel which is an analytic study rather than a story which is apt to leave him arbiter of the destiny of the author's creations” - all the critics “emphatically”¹³ answered in the negative. We can directly state that the reviewers suffered from the start from a misapprehension of the principle which was Howells's main point.

The truth is that he did not deny James the existence of a most life-like story - a story of course which was not artificially complete. He only meant to stress the thoroughness of the character analysis that helped any reasonable reader to know the destiny of the characters in the end without the author's artificial rounding off of his puppets. Naturally the value of a James novel does not depend merely on the story, but mainly on the fine delineation of character exhibited - but still through the story. One wonders how there could possibly be delineations of characters without a story to hold them together and show their relationships. Besides a James story had the qualities of a good story, especially suspense and an inner subject. We never know what will happen next and there is an idea, a *donnée*, around which the novel is built - the international theme or the innocent soul enriching itself in experience by mixing with the sophisticated. And with the action so intimately interrelated with character we have not only an outward but also a psychological and emotional story.

11. *Life and Letters of William Dean Howells*, ed. Mildred. Howells, New York and London, 1928, i, pp. 337 f.

12. *National Review*, i, pp. 257 f. (April 1883).

13. Both the *Quarterly's* and *Temple Bar's* vii, (March 1884); pp. 383 f. reviewers used the word “emphatically”. Tiller used ‘boldly’.

But the reviewers were only interested in a series of “striking”¹⁴ incidents full of complications and romantic events and ending with a complete rounding off of the characters. The most important thing for them was to have a definite ending; for they were so much against using their minds to perceive such an ending from James’s subtle hints and suggestions. Moreover, they wanted narrative to go quickly and never to be checked by analysis of thought or motive - James’s most powerful art in combining both analysis and story, as for example in the great scene of Isabel’s vigil¹⁵, was not only underrated, but also considered dull and uninteresting.

James was also criticised as a “realist” dealing with commonplace subjects and characters. Tiller went so far as to call James’s characters “essentially commonplace”. Such a charge is very unfair. James to be sure created characters like Catherine Sloper of *Washington Square*, intentionally commonplace; but if Tiller considered that, for instance, Rowland Mallet or Isabel Archer fell into this category, his notion of such an adjective must have been a very strange and exceptional one. It was James’s care to endow his favourite characters with fine intelligence and high morality to make them worth saving from the frustration and waste of life, and thus he made them far from commonplace. But Tiller could only see them as such and attributed James’s interest in the commonplace to the effect of Zola and others of the realist and naturalist schools.

Karly Hillebrand carried on this point of James’s realism in his article “Old and New Novels”¹⁶ in which he revived the objections to Howells’s opinion of Dickens and Thackeray. James was included, as a matter of course, among the “North Americans” in whom “this ignoring of the past and forgetting of all proportion show themselves most crudely”. This was for Hillebrand the result of their “theoretic critical way” which both James and Howells took from Zola and the other realists and naturalists, so never learning the art of “wise omission”. This showed a great misunderstanding of James’s analytical method which was far from mere reportage and never cared to accept environment and heredity as decisive factors in the formation of the personality. This of course, was what the de Goncourts and Zola with his experimental novel largely did accept.

The *Temple Bar* also agreed that James was “up to a certain point highly realistic”. The whole article had the tone of just wrath toward a young upstart that had characterised the *Quarterly* piece. The reviewer expressed impatience with James’s over-analysis:

He never leaves us alone for an instant, he is forever labelling, explaining, writing; in vulgar phrase, he is too clever by half. And this perpetual cleverness defeats its own ends; it is wearisome and confusing for all its brilliancy.

But it was different with Thackeray;

We devour, breathless, whole pages of that “old fashioned” and “intolerable” writer ... without pausing to trouble our minds about ethics and aesthetics.

14. From the *Quarterly* reviewer’s article.

15. The scene where we get the account of three years of Isabel’s married life through her meditations. See the *Portrait*, ii, pp. 163-180.

16. *Contemporary Review*, XIV, (March 1884), pp. 388 f

Thus the reviewer put it quite frankly that it was James's concern with these "ethics and aesthetics" in the most microscopic analysis of character and situation that was greatly responsible for his unpopularity. He left no doubt about that in saying that James's concern with "fine problems" and "superabundance" of character analysis were tolerable in his short stories but definitely not in the "larger novels".

Qualified Acceptance:

In all this there was only one article which was at all remarkable for sympathy with the aims of the two American writers. This appeared in *Macmillan's*¹⁷ in August of the same year. James and Howells had trained English readers, the critic believed, "to take in more delicate and minute shades of thought". Of the two, James was the "more distinguished"; he set higher standards for himself and had Stendhal's "passion for piquancy and the avoidance of everything commonplace or *commu...* James must have liked such remarks. Nevertheless, the reviewer concluded that it was doubtful whether James's type of work would ever thoroughly capture the English imagination. The reviewer assured Howells that he was speaking to "reluctant ears" when he said that the time for the novel of "incident" had gone by, and that the novel of "character" was all that remained. There was a romantic strain in the English character which would not let them believe this:

After all, imagination, and imagination of a stormy and expansive kind, ranging over a wide field, and recoiling from no height of passion and no depth of pathos, has been the characteristic of the English mind from the beginning.

The critic went on to explain that the nation that spoke through Chaucer in its youth and produced Shakespear and the Elizabethans in its early maturity, and which after the diversion of the eighteenth century, broke with Richardson and Sir Walter Scott into a fresh world of pathos and adventure, was scarcely likely to subdue itself to the exclusions and restrictions and reserves in which the American school found its strength.

James himself maintained a dignified silence through all the criticism, expressing his disgust for the critics of the periodicals only in his letters to his friends. His classic article, "The Art of Fiction", published in the September 1884 number of *Longman's Magazine*, may be considered an indirect reply, even though the immediate inspiration of the essay was a lecture delivered by Walter Besant at the Royal Institution the preceding April¹⁸. Besant had talked rather arbitrarily about the "laws" of fiction, and had stressed, like all James's critics, the importance of "story", "adventure" and "surprises". James was very pleased to see a serious examination of the novel which gave that genre its due respect, but he thought that Besant's requirements were altogether too rigid and formal.

James stressed that there was no such distinction between the "novel of character" and the "novel of incident", any more than between the novel and the romance. The

17. L. (August 1884), pp. 250 f.

18. This lecture was published in book form in the same year. There is a hint in the lecture that shows that it was itself inspired by Howells's notorious article on James. In his remarks on the importance of "story" Besant made it clear that he was answering that "school which pretends that there is no need for story".

only useful classification was “into the interesting and the uninteresting.”¹⁹ And to “produce the illusion of life” was the beginning and end of the novelist’s whole effort. If a novel had life it mattered little whether it was a novel of manners or adventure was realistic or romantic; the important thing was not how it resembled other novels but how it differed from them. For it was alive precisely by virtue of the difference, by virtue of the particular vision of experience embodied in it. The only definition of the novel for James was that it was “a personal impression of life”. He left the choice of subject matter and manner of treatment entirely too the individual artist, asking only that the work be “interesting”. As to such elements as “story”, “description” and “dialogue” he argued sensibly that a good piece of fiction was an “organic whole” in which these elements were inevitably and inextricably blended:

I cannot imagine composition existing in a series of blocks, nor conceive, in any novel worth discussing at all, of a passage of description that is not in its intention descriptive, a touch of truth of any sort that does not partake of the nature of incident, and an incident that derives its interest from any other source than the general and only source of the success of a work of art - that of being illustrative.

Thus “incident”, for instance, was no more than the illustration of “character”.

Incident and Story:

Above all, James answered that major demand for romance and violent action with the retort that for him it was incident enough “for a woman to stand up with her hand resting on a table and look out... in a certain way”; or “When a young man makes up his mind that he has not faith enough, after all, to enter the church, as he intended”. He quite agreed that such incidents were neither extra-ordinary nor startling but this did not prevent them from being still incidents.

Then he elaborated on the question of “the story” and, in assuring Besant that there was no “school” which urged that the artistic treatment was more important than the subjects, he meant also to answer the different critics who criticised Howells’s statement on that matter. “The story”, James explained, “if it represents anything represents the subject, the idea, the data of the novel”; and so “the story and the novel, the idea and the form, are the needle and the thread, and I never heard of a guild of tailors who recommended the use of the thread without the needle or the needle without the thread”. He did not approve of Besant’s contention that a story should consist of “adventures” - for what after all was adventure? For James, the writing of an article or the rejection of an English duke by a Bostonian nymph²⁰ was adventure enough:

19. In his revision of the essay for inclusion in *Partial Portraits* 1888 James changed this sentence into: the only classification of the novel that I can understand is into that which has life and that which has it not”. Thus James emphasised the vividness of the novel.

20. James is answering here Andrew Lang who devoted an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, (30th, April 1884), to Besant’s lecture. Lang implied that the majority opinion was in favour of both Besant and Stevenson in their championship of the story; “We all wish both of them ‘more power’ and are ready to welcome more stories as good as ‘The New Arabian Nights’ and ‘This Sun of Vulcan’”. For himself the story was certainly “the thing” and he preferred “for sheer sensual enjoyment, a book like ‘Margot La Balafree’ to all the Bostonian nymphs who ever rejected English dukes for psychological reasons”. This is obviously an implied condemnation of James though, to give Lang his due, he added that to be fair it was a matter of taste.

I see dramas within dramas in that, and innumerable points of view. A psychological reason is, to my imagination, an object adorably pictorial; to catch the tint of its complexion - I feel as if that idea might inspire one to Titianesque efforts. There are few things more exciting to me, in short, than a psychological reason, and yet, I protest, the novel seems to me the most magnificent form of art.

To illustrate his meaning he elaborated on how there was for him as much story in Edmund de Goncourt's *Chérie* as in "the delightful story of *Treasure Island*"; the first with its psychological account of a little French girl who lived in a fine house in Paris, and died of wounded sensibility because no one would marry her, and the second with its violence in murders, mysteries, islands of dreadful renown, hair-breadth escapes, miraculous coincidences and buried doubloons. James even criticised de Goncourt's tale for its failure to trace "the development of the moral consciousness of a child" which would have more enriched its "story". And so,

The moral consciousness of a child is as much a part of life as the islands of the Spanish Main, and the one sort of geography seems to me to have those 'surprises' of which Mr. Besant speaks quite as much as the other.

James also seems to answer the many misunderstanding reviewers of his method who compared it with the French realistic and naturalistic schools. He always stressed the fact that his method was far from mere "reportage" but the artist's main concern was "to reproduce life" in the sense of creating and not simply copying it. Art was not life, not nature. What the artist aimed at was the production of an "illusion". This was, and always would be, James's answer to the realists. In all his criticism James expressed his belief that realism and reality were not to be automatically equated one with the other, for reality, he said, had "a myriad forms", and the artist produced his own vision of it. He then answered Walter Besant who, in his essay, simplified the issue down to a rule that everything in fiction that was invented and was not the result of personal experience and observation was worthless. To this rule disqualifying the artist from dealing with any subject outside his own direct experience, James replied with a reference to a personal acquaintance, "a woman of genius", who contrived to give in one of her stories a particularly good impression of the nature and way of life of French Protestant youth.²¹ Yet she had seen them only for a moment, when she saw into a room in which some young Protestants were seated at a table after a meal: "The glimpse made a picture; it lasted only a moment, but that moment was experience". This vision and her own ideas were converted into a concrete image, and the result was, James stressed, "a reality".

As the forms of reality depend on the vision of the artist, so the measure of reality differed accordingly. In this he agreed with Maupassant who in his preface to *Pierre et Jean* commented that it was absurd to limit the novelist to only one reality of things, since the particular way we see the world was our illusion about it. James expressed the same belief in a metaphor in his Preface to *The Portrait*, where he said that:

The house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million - a number of possible windows not to be reckoned, rather; every one of which has been pierced, or is still pierceable, in its vast front, by the need of the individual

21. She was Anne Thackeray in *The Story of Elizabeth*.

vision and by the pressure of the individual will. These apertures, of dissimilar shape and size, hang so, all together, over the human scene that we might have expected of them a greater sameness of report than we find. They are but windows at the best, mere holes in a dead wall; disconnected, perched aloft; they are not hinged doors opening straight upon life. But they have this mark of their own that at each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other. He and his neighbours are watching the same show, but one seeing more where the other sees less, one seeing black where the other sees white, one seeing big where the other sees small, one seeing coarse where the other sees fine. And so on, and so on; there is fortunately no saying on what, for the particular pair of eyes, the window may not open; 'fortunately by reason, precisely, of this incalculability of range. The spreading field, the human scene, is the 'choice of subject'; the pierced aperture, either broad or balconied or slit-like and low-browed, is the "literary form"; but they are, singly or together, as nothing without the posted presence of the watcher-without, in other words, the consciousness of the artist. Tell me what the artist is, and I will tell you of what he has been conscious. Thereby I shall express to you at once his boundless freedom and his "moral" reference.²²

Again, particularly in the preface to *The Spoils of Poynton*. James contrasted the artist's creative activity with the clumsy working of life and showed how hearing more than a snatched piece of conversation containing the gist would obstruct the creative process:

There has been but ten words, yet I had recognised in them, as in a flash, all the possibilities of the little drama of my "Spoils", which glimmered then and there into life; so that when in the next breath I began to hear of action taken, on the beautiful ground, by our engaged adversaries, tipped each, from that instant, with the light of the highest distinction. I saw clumsy Life again at her stupid work.²³

This dislike of the clumsy working of life was constant with James and even grew upon him. From this we see how James wholly realised that Art was not simply reporting facts. As Stephen Spender points out,

James better than any other novelist realised ... that Art, which is merely a reflection of life, is either not Art but rapportage, or else Death Art. Constructive and living Art is always struggling against a stream of mere phenomena in order to create life.²⁴

There is also another point in "The Art of Fiction" in which James remarked on the importance of "selection" in Art. In directly answering Besant on this point he indirectly assured Hillebrand that for him "Art is essentially selection, but it is a selection whose main care is to be typical, to be inclusive". James meant that there was no forbidden ground for art - it should take both the ugly and the beautiful, the sad and the happy - and the artist's attitude towards his impressions should be "to take a great many in order to select a few", and "to work them up as he can".

22. *The art of the Novel*, New York and London, 1953, pp. 46 f.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

24. *The Destructive Element*, 1935, p. 56.

Thus we can easily conclude that Henry James not only in his article "The art of Fiction", but also in his prefaces established the main principles of the novel to be the following:

First, he explained the relation between character and incident in the novel and emphasised that each should illustrate the other. Secondly, he qualified the main requirements of a good story to have a theme, a subject matter, what he termed "the data of the novel" and to be considered as an "organic whole". James was also the first critic who defined the psychological implications of ordinary simple events and said that he could find "dramas within dramas" in them. Above all, he defined the relation between Life and Art and emphasised that if Art takes from Life it does not merely report but should create in order to give form and meaning. For James, art intensifies, gives power, extra importance, greater truth and greater inner reality to what well may be ordinary and everyday things.

هنرى جيمس وإرساء القواعد الأدبية للقصة فنا

الدكتورة : عقيلة محمد المتولى رمضان

ملخص

لاشك فيه أن الكاتب الروائى والناقد « هنرى جيمس » هو المؤسس الحقيقى لمبادئ القصة فنا .
يثبت هذا البحث أن هذا الأساس قام بالفعل عندما نشر هنرى جيمس مقاله الكلاسيكى « فى النثر » فى عدد نوفمبر سنة ١٨٨٤ مجلة لونغمان .

وقبل هذا المقال لم تحظ القصة بأى اهتمام سوى فى صورة استعراضات سريعة فى المجلات الإنجليزية والأمريكية ويشير البحث أيضا إلى بعض المقدمات التى كتبها جيمس لرواياته وفيها ثبت الكثير من المبادئ التى أشار إليها فى مقاله السابق .
ويمكن تلخيص هذه المبادئ فيما يلى :

١ - إنه ليس من الصواب أن نعرف القصة بقولنا « قصة أحداث » أو « قصة شخصيات » ، إنما التعريف الحقيقى للقصة يجب أن يكون « قصة شيقة ومقنعة » ، وأن الصلة بين الشخصية والحادثة يعتمد على توضيح كل منهما الآخر .

٢ - حدد جيمس المتطلبات الرئيسية للقصة بأن تحوى فكرة رئيسية أى موضوع أو ماسماه « مجموعة المعلومات » ، وأن تعتبر القصة كائنا عضويا متكاملًا .

٣ - لاشك أن جيمس كان أول ناقد جاد حدد المضمون السيكولوجى فى الأحداث العادية . وقال :
إنه يمكن للكاتب أن يجد فيها أحداثا وأحداثا وتفاعلات داخلية مختلفة .

٤ - وأهم شئ أن جيمس عرف الصلة بين الحياة والفن ، وأكد إن الفن لا بد وأن يأخذ مادته من الحياة ، ولكن ليس فى صورة مجرد سرد لأحداث الحياة كما هى ؛ ولكن يجب أن تكون هناك عملية خلق وإبداع لاعطاء هذه الأحداث العادية شكلا فنيا ومضمونا ومعزى .

How did Henry James influence the development of the novel? Henry James was a key transitional figure between literary realism and Modernism. James was interested in human behaviour and the inner workings of the mind. In his novels, he employed Modernist techniques such as stream-of-consciousness narration to explore the psychology of his characters, focusing in particular on the effect of external events on individual consciousness. Henry James spent the last several years of his life in Great Britain. In protest of U.S. neutrality in World War I, James resigned his U.S. citizenship and became a British subject in 1915. He died of pneumonia on February 28, 1916, a year before the United States entered the war. Early life and works.