

[原著論文]

## The Seductive Plots in *The Wings of the Dove*

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### 『鳩の翼』における誘惑のプロット

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#### 要約

『鳩の翼』は、1902年に書かれたヘンリー・ジェームズによる小説である。テーマは、ジェームズが繰り返し取り上げたテーマの1つである「国際テーマ」であり、主人公はこちらもジェームズ作品に頻繁に取り上げられるAmerican Girl(アメリカ娘)である。

『鳩の翼』の中で、ジェームズは多種多様な人間関係について取り上げている。主な登場人物は裕福なアメリカ娘、ミリー・シール、彼女のイギリス人の友人であり、メインで様々なプロットを作り上げる、ケイト・クロイ、そして彼女の秘密の恋人であり、ミリーが好意を寄せるマートン・デンチャーである。

この物語は、不治の病に冒されているミリーがロンドンに到着したことから始まる。ロンドンではミリーの莫大な財産によって、他の登場人物の欲望が刺激され、さまざまなプロットがミリーを待ち受けている。それらのプロットは主にミリーの富への欲求に基づいている。彼女の財産の後継者がいないので、ケイトとデンチャーはミリーを誘惑してデンチャーと結婚させるか、少なくともデンチャーがミリーから大金を相続するように計画を立てる。イギリスの貴族であるマーク卿もまた、ミリーの資産の搾取に計略を立てる。

この論文では、富、社会的地位、周囲の人間関係およびデンチャーとの関係の観点からのミリーとケイトの比較が行われる。これらの違いがミリーに対する誘惑的プロットの主な原因であるためである。ケイトはデンチャーを誘惑して彼女の思い通りに彼を操る。つまりケイトが主導権を握っているのである。これは、この小説の最大の誘惑的プロットでもある。ミリーの場合、誘惑的とは言えないが、最終判断においてケイトとデンチャーの関係を修復できないほど変化させ、ケイトのプロットは一面では失敗に終わる。

この小説は、20世紀初頭に書かれたものである。この論文は資本主義の台頭や男性と女性の変化をもたらした時代の変化、モダニティの観点からジェームズの作品を精査するものである。

**Keywords:** modernity, wealth, fortune-hunter, capitalism, London, Venice

キーワード: モダニティ、財産、財産目当ての結婚、資本主義、ロンドン、ヴェニス

## Introduction

Henry James, whose masterly works influence twentieth century literature magnificently, is born in New York City, America in 1847. According to the educational policy of his father, Henry James Sr., he and his siblings are brought to Europe in their infancy and are educated abroad. In 1855, the James family begins a three-year tour of Geneva, London, and Paris, an experience that probably influences James' later preference for Europe over his native land and his international literary point of view. Leaving Harvard Law School, he starts his career as a writer of short stories and book reviews. He continues to travel widely in Europe and he later chooses to settle in England. He becomes a British subject in 1915, a year before his death at the age of seventy-three. By the time James dies, he has written more than a hundred short stories and novellas, as well as literary and dramatic criticism, plays, travel essays, book reviews, and twenty novels, including *The American* (1877), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903), and *The Golden Bowl* (1904).

*The Wings of the Dove* is a 1902 novel by Henry James. The theme is one of James's favorite, international theme and the American girl. In it, James describes a wide and intriguing variety of human relationships.

This story is set into motion with Milly's arrival in London, which stimulates the desires of other characters there and, as a result, various plots await Milly. The entrapments are mainly based on the desire for Milly's wealth. Milly gets a terminable disease. With no successors to her property, Kate and Densher make a plan to seduce Milly to marry Densher, or at least to leave a large fortune to Densher. An English aristocrat, Lord Mark also has designs on Milly's assets.

In this thesis, the comparison between Milly and Kate in terms of the wealth, social status, and the relationship with Densher is to be explored, for these differences are the main cause of the seductive plot against Milly. Kate seduces Densher to do what she wants. This is also the seductive plot in this novel. This novel is written at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the modern era. The shifting time identifies James's works in the viewpoints of capitalism, change of male-female relationship, and modernity. From those points, this novel is explored in this thesis.

## I

### Plots against/for Milly

#### I-1 Susan Shepard Stringham's case

It is not until the third chapter that the heroine of this work, Milly Theale, an American girl, an "heiress of all ages" (I.113), appears in the story. At her first appearance in Switzerland, she is accompanied by her American friend, Susan Stringham, who is later proved to be the school friend of Maud Lowder. Mrs. Stringham is asked by Milly to travel to Europe with her, and "she had wanted, very consciously, to give something up for her new acquaintance" (I.112) and she accepts her offer on the spot from "her honor of sincerity" (ibid.). For her, Milly was "the potential heiress of all ages" (I.113). Mrs. Stringham is a faithful companion to Milly both in America and in Europe, and she pulls the trigger of the plot against Milly by introducing her to Mrs. Lowder. On the other hand, Mrs. Stringham is a writer full of fancy imagination and she creates a romance about Milly. She willingly takes the part of a major member in the self-made romance story in which she considers Milly as its heroine and as the lonesome princess. Her self-contented story has a tragic factor, resulting from Milly's background and her fatal disease. Mrs. Stringham, although benevolent to Milly herself, but she creates her own story out of Milly's fate. Eventually, she connects Milly to the next stage in England, where they are involved in another plot against Milly. At this point, she may have tried to take revenge by introducing Milly as her trophy to her old friend, who once looks down on herself for her

marriage. But her loyalty and gentle affection for Milly continue all through this story and she sometimes “registered the sublimity of her lie” (II.102) to conceal Milly’s disease condition and consults Mrs. Lowder on how she can devote herself for Milly’s sake.

### **I-2 Maud Manningham Lowder’s case**

Maud Manningham Lowder is a magnate in London society, and another heroine, Kate Croy’s aunt and Mrs. Stringham’s long friend. She is referred to as “Britannia in the market place” (I.37), or “lioness” (ibid.), and in fact, that is the case with her. She tries to seize every opportunity at her hand and make the best of every occasion and every person around her, since she “loves handling everyone” (I.248). Mrs. Lowder has no bad impression on Milly and no bad intention against her. She tries to manipulate her niece, Kate Croy to get her under her control and keep everything in her own way. She hopes to get hold of her society and continue to rein it. As for Milly, she welcomes Milly and her traveling companion and old friend, Mrs. Stringham so that they enjoy a great success in London society. At the same time, she tries to handle Densher to put him in Milly’s direction so that he doesn’t stand in Kate’s way. But this plan of hers is not only against Milly but also for Milly, for Milly might have the full life if she feels that she is devotedly loved by someone, in this case, Densher. She acknowledges that she is good at telling a lie well and she tries her best to make the best of the lie of Mrs. Stringham and herself concerning the relationship of Kate and Densher for the sake of Milly.

### **I-3 Lord Mark’s case**

An English aristocrat, Lord Mark is a friend of Mrs. Lowder, who wants him to marry her niece Kate. But he apparently falls in love with Milly, namely Milly’s wealth, who gets an insight into the true nature of him. He has a title but is not wealthy enough to uphold his honor as an aristocrat and live a luxurious life, so, in a sense, he is a fortune-hunter. He informs Milly of Mrs. Lowder’s intention to jump at Milly. He thinks that everyone at Mrs. Lowder’s party would like to jump at Milly. Everyone, as he says, includes Kate and Mrs. Lowder herself. The phrase “jump at” might well remind the readers of hunting. In the latter parts, Kate is referred to as a panther, as Mrs. Lowder is referred to as a lioness, which infer that they both are predators aiming at Milly. In revenge for Milly’s declination for his advances, he lets her know the secret engagement of Kate and Densher and breaks Milly’s heart to cause incurable harm to her. “It was his visit that she couldn’t stand – it was what then took place that simply killed her” (II.320). His evil visit to her in Venice is referred to as persistent rain there. His plot against Milly is so cruel that it might well be fatal for her.

### **I-4 Lord Luke Strett’s case**

He is an impressive, eminent and considerate physician in London, from whom Milly receives a diagnosis. She trusts him as a doctor and mentor and later she asks him to travel to Venice and attend her. He advises the dying girl to live and love. That reminds the readers of the advice of Lambert Strether, the protagonist in James’ *The Ambassadors*. He knows her condition as her attending doctor as well as her mentor who has confronted many challenging situations of his patients. He does not make a plot against Milly but he tries to enrich her life doomed to end early.

### I-5 Merton Densher's case

He is acquainted with Milly while doing his job as a journalist in America. She falls in love with him and that is one of the reasons why she hopes to visit Europe to enjoy her doomed life and add the twinkling joy and romance to her life with the reencounter with him. He is a son of a deceased chaplain and a deceased copyist. Having no relatives is what Milly and Densher have in common. Densher is so deep in love with Kate and both of them would like to marry desperately. But they have a little means to live on, and Kate is almost always exposed to the pressure from her family, her father, her widowed sister, Marion, and her dominating aunt, Mrs. Lowder. In order to escape from them, Kate and Densher make a plot in which he encourages Milly, enormously rich and doomed to die young, to marry him and bequeath a large sum of money to him at her death. It is Kate who seizes an initiative in this plan and puts spurs on him when he becomes discouraged thinking that this plan is immoral and hurts Milly and his own conscience.

In the latter part of the story, he hesitates to get involved in Kate's plot against Milly, feeling tormented by a guilty conscience. Yielding to Kate's temptation, he once continues to deceive Milly, but when Milly gets over their betrayal, he is given the last opportunity to meet Milly and he feels he is forgiven by her. He abandons the fortune-hunting plot against her and he urges Kate to give up either Milly's money or himself.

### I-6 Kate Croy's case

Kate is another protagonist in this novel, and she covers more parts of the story than Milly. She represents "the contemporary London female, highly modern, inevitably battered, honourably free." (I.50) She is "the wondrous London girl" (I.111) just as her aunt "was London, was Life" (I.60). She is also "hideously intelligent" (I.60), "masterful" (I.233). Her desire is stimulated by the wealth of Milly, and knowing that she is destined to die an early death, she makes a plot for Densher and herself to have their dream come true, which means to inherit quite a large sum of Milly's fortune. Kate is not necessarily hostile to Milly, on the contrary, she, in a sense, loves Milly and would like her to live a full life and have a wonderful romantic memory with Densher. Their relationship is referred to as sisterhood or the one of a princess and her lady. (II. 139) She encourages her secret lover, sometimes being weaved and dithering over whether or not to continue to beguile Milly, and as a last resort, she agrees to have a sexual relationship with him.

In the last part of this work, knowing that Densher has changed so much and he is secretly in love with Milly's memory, she burns Milly's letter but accepts the letter from Milly's lawyer telling Densher that Milly leaves him quite a sum of money. This audacious behavior can be interpreted to be triggered by her jealousy to Milly, and lets Densher determine to live with her with Milly's money. Recognizing their relationship has changed decisively, she says to him, "There's but one thing that can save you from my choice" (II.404), She asks him to deny his love for Milly and so does he. But she can't deny the change of his mind and can't bear to share his love with deceased Milly. She takes the money and lets Densher free from her. "We shall never be again as we were!" (II.405) Her top priority, love for Densher is lost on the contrary of her original intention and what she has got is money without love.

## II

### Plots against/for Kate

#### II-1 Lionel Croy's case

Lionel Croy is the convincing father of Kate Croy and Marion Croy Condrip. His deceased wife is the sister of Mrs. Lowder. One of his sons died of typhoid, and another by drowning. He has some ambiguous and obscure past and is in an extreme poverty. He puts pressure Kate to make her live with her aunt Mrs.

Lowder and let her family live in comfort under her influencing power and money. Although her father is so selfish and manipulative of her only for his own profit, Kate is never false to her loyalty to him. In the later part, she tries to disagree with her aunt and live with him, but he himself abuses her trust and tries to get her back to her aunt. He disappears from the story relatively early.

## II-2 Marion Croy Condrip's case

Having been so beautiful and promising a young lady of society, the early death of her minister husband leaves her impoverished with her four small children. She is often troubled with her deceased husband's sisters who frequently visit her house and stay with her. They innocently put burdens on her economically and mentally. They try to drag their sister-in-law down to their own level. But her frustration directs toward her sister Kate, who, at that time, lives with their aunt, Mrs. Lowder and seemingly spends luxurious time with their aunt. Appealing to Kate's loyalty to the family, she tries to get a tiny share of their aunt's wealth. Her lower-middle class life reminds Kate of the possible result of the marriage without money and drives her to pursue the power of money. Like her father, Marion also disappears from the story early.

## II-3 Maud Manningham Lowder's case

Mrs. Lowder is a dominating character, a born plotter, who "loves handling everyone" (I.248); having made a great marriage, she represents the epitome of the upper middle-classes and London life in Victorian times (cf. I.60: "Mrs. Lowder was London, was life"). As "a loyal apostle to money," her power is based on wealth – she's likened to "the Britannia of the Market Place" (I.37) and her house is compared to "a counting-house" (ibid.). Her symbolical status is strengthened by her characterization as a predatory animal; she is said to be "a lioness" (ibid.), and she stands in sharp contrast to Milly in that the former is likened to birds of prey: "a vulture...with her wonderful gilded claws" (I.60) or "an eagle...with a gilded beak and with wings for great flights" (ibid.), while the latter is referred to a dove, a prey for predators, Kate Croy, Merton Densher, Lord Mark, and Mrs. Lowder. This reference to a predatory animal reminds the readers of the same kind of reference on Kate. She is also referred to as a predatory animal, in whose case, the animal is a panther. What Mrs. Lowder has in common with Milly is "wings for great flights" (I.60). Milly has also the wings of the dove for great flights and also for coverage of all those around her. But different from the others, Mrs. Lowder does not aim at Milly's fortune. She would like to use Milly to get into Kate's way to marry Densher by fulfilling the role of a match maker to "put Densher in Milly's way" (I.248), as asked by Mrs. Stringham.

## II-4 Lord Mark's case

At first, Lord Mark seems to be a pleasant enough gentleman. Mrs. Lowder wants him to be Kate's future husband, and knowing Mrs. Lowder's priority, the readers recognize he's quite wealthy. Since she also wants Kate to be fairly happy, we assume that Lord Mark is nice *enough*.

And even Milly Theale initially thinks of him as lively and youthful: "[There] was such a fine little fidget of preoccupied life in him, and his eyes, at moments—though it was an appearance they could suddenly lose—were as candid and clear as those of a pleasant boy" (I.4). Fascinated by Milly's extraordinary wealth, he changed his target to Milly from Kate. Frustrated by Milly's refusal of his proposal in Venice, he reveals the secret relationship of Kate and Densher. His divulcation of their secret plot leads to Kate's eventual failure and Milly's heartbreak. Lord Mark would like to make the best of the women around him to hold the status

in the society and the luxurious life to keep appearances as an aristocrat. In that sense, he even takes advantage of Mrs. Lowder for his own profit.

### **II-5 Merton Densher's case**

He is so devoted to Kate Croy that he follows her plot for getting a fortune from Milly. He is one of James's male characters who are rather weak-willed and hesitate to express their own ideas and yield precedence in almost everything to others. We are reminded of those characters including Winterbourne in "Daisy Miller," and Ralf Touchett in *The Portrait of a Lady*, and so on. Letting Kate have her own way leads to the unexpected result of their plot against Milly and it changes their relationship irreversibly. Densher is both directly and indirectly involved in their plot and the unintended result. For fear of the change of Kate's heart, he demands the sexual relationship to her and after confirmation, he gets stuck in their plot. In this point, he can be referred to a predatory animal which tries desperately to claim what it wants at all costs. Surrendering to him physically, however, Kate has a tight grip on him. He continues to follow her instruction. Wracked with guilt from the Milly's torture in Venice, he changes gradually and eventually, he takes a chance against Kate.

## **III**

### **Plots against/for Oneself**

#### **III-1 Milly Theale's Case**

A plot is something that is consulted to others, not to oneself. If the plot is conducted for oneself, it can be paraphrased as hope, scheme, project, or vision. Milly Theale has a strong hope to live as freely as possible to her heart's content.

The heroine Milly is often regarded as a kind of victim and she forgives the plotters against herself, Kate and Densher at the final stage and leaves parts of her fortune to Densher as they have planned. But on the contrary of their initial plan, Densher changes his mind to follow Kate's plan and pleads to her to give up the fortune. Instead of doing so, Kate lets him go and she gets Milly's fortune. From the above point of view, Milly exercises her power over the couple and irreversibly transforms their relationship. Such ending is not necessarily what she wants to be. It can be said that she transcends personal emotions such as jealousy and reaches a point where she forgives everything.

Milly occupies the scenes relatively fewer than the other heroine, Kate. Milly knows her fate and tries to live up to her will. Knowing their relationship and their plot against her, Milly "turns her face to the wall" (II.321). Her heart is shattered by the grief and she refuses to meet Densher. After Lord Luke's visit, she temporarily gets well and allows Densher to visit her palace. Nothing is presented to the readers in detail. Milly's mind is only presented by Densher's remark, "She showed nothing but her beauty and her strength" (II.329). Milly's last days are also described only by Densher's impression and her real painful fear of death is not shown in the story. Milly makes her last appearance in front of Densher as if she were a real princess and "(He) had been, to his recovered sense, forgiven, dedicated, blessed..." (II.343). This is how she forgives them. Nothing is shown to the readers, which enhances an effect of the celestial beauty and strength of her mind. She exercises her power of wealth and will on them. The following part describes Milly's essence, "...she sent across toward them in response all the candor of her smile, the lustre of her pearls, the value of her life, the essence of her wealth" (II.229). Her long pearl necklace represents her wealth as well as her qualities as a princess. Her palace in Venice, where she tried to spend her last days in peace, as well as her pearl necklace also represents her wealth. They are shown, in other words, from a viewpoint of conspicuous

consumption. It is a kind of closed space. Renting such a luxurious and historical palace means that she is inseparable from her wealth. As seen in other works of James, it can be said that European cultural heritage is swept by American money. The image of dove represents both her strength and vulnerability. The wings of the dove in the title refers to the power of Milly's will and the power of her selfless affection.

With the gift of heritage, she leaves an indelible mark on them. Her memory stays in their minds for good. Her image of sacrifice, generosity, forgiveness, and goodness remains in their hearts like the wings of the dove that cover both of them.

I used to call her, in my stupidity – for want of anything better – a dove. Well she stretched out her wings, and it was to *that* they reached. They cover us.”

“They cover us,” Densher said.

“That's what I give you,” Kate gravely wound up. “That's what I've done for you” (II.404).

Milly is not conscious that she makes a plot against Kate and Densher, but her conscience and celestial determination crumble their plot. She might well save his conscience.

### III-2 Kate Croy's Case

Kate Croy is “just the contemporary London female, highly modern, inevitably battered, honorably free” (I. 40), and she is the most complex, socially capable, and intelligent character in this novel. She dedicates herself to accomplish her plot to gain the money from Milly and to be happy with Densher. She chooses no means to achieve her goals.

Kate's first plot is to fulfill their purpose to break from the past and the bonds of her family and relative (her aunt, Mrs. Lowder) and begin a new life with Densher. She can be interpreted to be highly independent but she has no way to make a living by herself. That means she has to marry in order to support herself and to help to support her father and her widowed sister with her four children. In the early chapters, Kate is about to be exploited by others, especially her father, her sister and her aunt. From such environment, she would like to escape. But the appearance of Milly gradually changes Kate's mind and her course of life.

Kate, however, does not only focuses on making a malicious and fortune-hunting plan, but she also sympathizes with Milly and tries to realize her secret desire to fall in love and taste the fulfillment of the life. Kate boast herself that “The great thing ... is that she's satisfied. Which is ... what I've worked for” (II. 332). In her, such ambivalence exists together without any contradiction. Kate has a very multi-layered and complex inside. In this regard, she might well be referred to as a very modern and unique character in this work.

At the last scene, she acknowledges her failure or defeat to Milly. She tries to prey on Milly and she inwardly disregards Milly and tries to use her. Finally, she ends up being betrayed by her own plot. This result is very ironic, but she is too smart and too proud to marry a man who is fascinated by the memories of another woman. As with his other works, nothing is mentioned in the work about her subsequent life. It is easy to guess that she will lead her own independent life based on the property she has acquired. It is certain, however, that her life is without Densher.

## Conclusion

In this thesis, the comparison between Milly and Kate in terms of the wealth, social status, and the relationship with Densher is to be explored, for this difference is the main cause of the seductive plot against

Milly. Kate seduces Densher to do what she wants him to do in order to get what she really wants, that is, wealth and happiness. Kate's plot is to deceive Milly and let her leave her bequest to Densher.

This novel is written at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the modern era. It is a rapidly-changing world. Christopher Butler defines modernity as:

The rise of our dependence on science and technology, the growth of mass culture and its influence, the invasion of bureaucracy into private life, and changing beliefs about relationships between the sexes (2).

The shifting time identifies James's works in the viewpoints of capitalism and change of male-female relationship. From those points, this novel is explored in this thesis.

The major role that takes the initiative in the plot changes from a traditional male character to a modern female character, which reflects the shifting time and modernity. As it is repeated in the story, Kate is a very modern woman who leads the plot and use her attractiveness, in other words, her sexuality to allow her lover to do as she likes. It is always Kate who makes various decisions and Densher who is rather passive and follows her instructions. Although her plot is for the sake of their happiness, she might well take advantage of him. At the very last scene, he makes a definite judgement and lets Kate have the final word.

In *The Wings of the Dove*, it is the female characters that energetically drive the story and the plot. It is the contrary pattern to the traditional plot. This is especially true of Kate, who takes initiative in the plot against Milly and seduces Densher to get involved in her plot to get some of Milly's fortune with which they achieve their goal, that is, their wealthy marriage life independent of Kate's family including Mrs. Lowder. The relationship between Kate and Densher embodies the concept of modernity described above, "changing beliefs about relationships between the sexes" (ibid.).

Milly is also the drive force to proceed the story. She, referred to as a dove, has irreversibly changed the relationship of Kate and Densher. She pulls the trigger of the romantic and realistic story of *The Wings of the Dove*.

As for the main motive, the pursuit for money, Bronner writes about wealth, and its power in his work.

The rise of a consumer culture and the wealth that accompanied it created cultural, social, and individual dilemmas. Wealth is power, and to show this intangible relationship, wealth was made tangible. The accumulation and display of goods expressed the power to manage people by directing production through consumption (20).

Therefore, the power of American wealth was obsessively turned over to the consumptions of things that conveyed one's station in life or the station to which one aspired (21).

Wealth stimulates people's minds and desires, and sometimes irreversibly adapt them for the purpose of pursuit for money. To gain what they want, they make a plot against or for others, however, they can't fully capture the whole picture of the plot, or they can't predict the result at the beginning. Their plan and its procedure will change in accordance with the shift of their minds and situations, which eventually may lead to an unexpected result. There are quite a few examples of seductive plots in *The Wings of the Dove*, and they occur in a chain and influence each other. The contributing factors of those are based on the desires for money, status, and human relationship.

The works of Henry James are written around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the era of modernity. They are often categorized into the realism. *The Wings of the Dove* has the aspects of both realism and romance. The Kate parts belong to realism, while the Milly parts to romance.

The readers should bear in mind that this work can be examined from various points of view and that the viewpoint of modernity must not be missed to fully understand the depth of his works.

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