

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Conflict of Moral Values in James' *The Wings of the Dove*

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This thesis entitled "Conflict of Moral Values in James' *The Wings of the Dove*" submitted to the Central Department of English Tribhuvan University by Mr. Shalik Ram Acharya has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research work focuses on Henry James' *The Wings of the Dove* to examine the conflict of fading moral values of the nineteenth century European society due to emerging liberal attitudes. The two young lovers Kate Croy and Merton Densher are in conflict regarding the moral codes of the nineteenth century. As a result, their relationship meets a catastrophic end. The work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter gives a general introduction to the work. The second chapter makes the study of nineteenth and twentieth century moral and social values. The third chapter analyzes the text to reveal the conflict. The fourth chapter is the conclusion of the work.

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I. Introduction

Life and Works of Henry James

The American author Henry James, who was born in America in 1843, was one of the major novelists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His childhood was spent in the city and in Albany and then, between the ages of 12 and 17, in Europe. He was privately tutored in London Geneva, and Paris. This American education began at school in Newport. James entered Harvard Law School in 1862, leaving after a year. In 1864 his family settled in Boston and then in Cambridge. That same year he published his first story and early reviews.

James published his first novel, *Watch and Word* (1870) in Cambridge. This novel talks about American life in a specifically American setting, the upper-class worked of Boston, its suburbs and Newport. Also in 1875, *Transatlantic Sketches*, *A Passionate Pilgrim*, and *Roderick Hudson* appeared. *Transatlantic Sketches* is a travel book, is a *Passionate Pilgrim*, which anticipates the theme of the European impact on what James repeatedly identified as the "American state of innocence"(526). *Roderick Hudson* is a fiction on the same theme. His works deal largely with the "impact of Europe and its society on Americans"(Hall 526). James's disengagement from America was a long process. He wrote in the introduction to *The Wings of the Dove*:

I saw my parents homesick, as I concerned, for the ancient order, and distressed and inconvenienced by many of the more immediate features of the modern, as the modern

pressed about us, and since their theory of a better living was from an early time that we should renew the question of the ancient on the very first possibility I simply grew greater in the faith that some how to manage that would constitute success in life. (9)

The impact of his short novel *Daisy Miller* (1879) brought James fame in Europe and the United States. It was his first popular success. Beach explained the novel in this way:

The whole idea of the story is the little tragedy of light, thin, natural, unsuspecting creature being sacrificed as I were to a social rumpus that went on quite over her head and to which she stood in no measurable relation. To deepen the effect, I have made it go over her mother's head as well. (234)

James repeated the same effect, and intention, in several other novels and stories. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, for example, the effect is similar but more intricate. James mentions his "Americano-European legends" as one of the impulse of his work (*Critics on Henry James* 236).

Between 1879 and 1882 James produced his first major series of novels. They were the *Europeans*, *Washington Square*, *Confidence*, and *The Portrait of a Lady*. By 1886 a 14- volume a collection of his novels and tales were published. He wrote *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima* in 1886, while living in London. Both are social dramas. *The Aspern Papers*, the short novel *The Reverberator*, and "A London Life" appeared the following year. *The Tragic Muse*, one of his most ambitions

novels, was serialized in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1890. During his tales career (1898), James wrote *The Two Magics* (1898), a collection of stories that includes his novella *The Turn of the Screw* and the short novel *In the Cage*. Afterwards he produced great works. They include *The Awkward Age*, *The Sacred Fount*, and *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl*.

Style and Themes of Henry James

James is one of the major figures of trans-Atlantic literature. His works frequently juxtapose characters from different worlds—the Old World (Europe), simultaneously artistic, corrupting, and alluring; and the New World (United States), where people are often brash, open, and assertive—and explore how this clash of personalities and cultures affects the two worlds.

He favored internal, psychological drama, and his work is often about conflicts between imaginative protagonists and their difficult environments. As his secretary Theodora Bosanquet remarked in her monograph *Henry James at Work*:

When he walked out of the refuge of his study and into the world and looked around him, he saw a place of torment, where creatures of prey perpetually thrust their claws into the quivering flesh of doomed, defenseless children of light... His novels are repeated exposure of this wickedness, a reiterated and passionate plea for the fullest freedom of development, unimpered by reckless and barbarous stupidity. (11)

His earlier work is considered to be realist because of the carefully described details of his characters' physical surroundings. However, throughout his long career, James maintained a strong interest in a variety of artistic effects and movements. His work gradually became more metaphorical and symbolic as he entered more deeply into the minds of his characters. In its intense focus on the consciousness of his major characters, James's later work foreshadows extensive developments in 20th century fiction.

The prose of James's later works is frequently marked by long, digressive sentences that defer the verb and include many qualifying adverbs, prepositional phrases, and subordinate clauses. James seemed to change from a fairly straightforward style in his earlier writing to a more elaborate manner in his later works. Biographers have noted that the change of style occurred at approximately the time that James began dictating his fiction to a secretary.

Henry James was afflicted with a mild stutter; he overcame this by cultivating the habit of speaking very slowly and deliberately. Since he believed that good writing should resemble the conversation of an intelligent man, the process of dictating his works may perhaps account for a shift in style from direct to conversational sentences. The resulting prose style is at times baroque. His friend Edith Wharton, who admired him greatly, said that there were some passages in his works that were all but incomprehensible. His short fiction, such as *The Aspern Papers* and *The*

Turn of the Screw, is often considered to be more readable than the longer novels, and his early works tend to be more accessible than his later ones.

The Turn of the Screw, however, is itself one of James's later works. Generalizations about the "accessibility" of James's fiction are difficult, at best. Many of his later short stories—"Europe", "Paste" and "Mrs. Medwin", for instance—are briefer and more straightforward in style than some tales of his earlier years.

For much of his life James was an expatriate, an outsider, living in Europe. Much of *The Portrait of a Lady* was written while he lived in Venice, a city whose beauty he found distracting; he was better pleased with the small town of Rye in England. This feeling of being an American in Europe came through as a recurring theme in his books, which contrasted American innocence (or lack of sophistication) with European sophistication (or decadence)—see, for example, *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Ambassadors*, and *The Golden Bowl*.

He made only a modest living from his books, yet was often the houseguest of the wealthy. James had grown up in a well-to-do family, and he was able to enter into this world for many of the impressions and observations he would eventually include in his fiction. (He said he got some of his best story ideas from dinner table gossip). He was a man whose sexuality was uncertain and whose tastes and interests were, according to the prevailing standards of Victorian era Anglo-American culture, rather feminine. William Faulkner once referred to James as "the nicest old lady I ever met." In a similar vein, Thomas Hardy called James

and Robert Louis Stevenson "virtuous females" when he read their unfavorable comments about *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in Percy Lubbock's 1920 collection of James's letters. Theodore Roosevelt also criticized James for his supposed lack of masculinity. When James toured America in 1904–1905, he met Roosevelt—whom James dubbed "Theodore Rex" and called "a dangerous and ominous jingo"—at a White House dinner. Oddly, the two men chatted amicably and at length, as if they were the best of friends.

It is often asserted that James's being a permanent outsider in so many ways may have helped him in his detailed psychological analysis of situations—one of the strongest features of his writing. He was never a full member of any camp. In his review of Van Wyck Brooks' *The Pilgrimage of Henry James*, critic Edmund Wilson noted James's detached, objective viewpoint and made a startling comparison:

One would be in a position to appreciate James better if one compared him with the dramatists of the seventeenth century—Racine and Moliere, whom he resembles in form as well as in point of view, and even Shakespeare, when allowances are made for the most extreme differences in subject and form. These poets are not, like Dickens and Hardy, writers of melodrama — either humorous or pessimistic, nor secretaries of society like Balzac, nor prophets like Tolstoy: they are occupied simply with the presentation of conflicts of moral character, which they do

not concern themselves about softening or averting. They do not indict society for these situations: they regard them as universal and inevitable. They do not even blame God for allowing them: they accept them as the conditions of life.

(121)

It is possible to see many of James's stories as psychological thought-experiments. *The Portrait of a Lady* may be an experiment to see what happens when an idealistic young woman suddenly becomes very rich; alternatively, it has been suggested that the storyline was inspired by Charles Darwin's theory of sexual selection. The novella *The Turn of the Screw* describes the psychological history of an unmarried (and, some critics suggest, sexually repressed and possibly unbalanced) young governess. The unnamed governess stumbles into a terrifying, ambiguous situation involving her perceptions of the ghosts of a lately deceased couple—her predecessor, Miss Jessel, and Miss Jessel's lover, Peter Quint.

The Novel: *The Wings of the Dove*

Kate Croy, 25 years old and very beautiful, meets in London with her wretched reprobate father, Lionel Croy. Her mother had died a few years previously and she has lost two brothers. She offers to come to live with him and take care of him. But her wealthy widowed aunt, Mrs. Maud Manningham Lowder, has offered a comfortable wealthy existence to her in exchange for her renouncing the company of her father (Kate had lived with her since her mother's death.) He insists, nobly, that she give up seeing him and take up the aunt on her offer. Kate has inherited a small

income from her mother, which her father wants to share in rather than seeing it shared with her impoverished widowed sister, Mrs. Marian Croy Condrip (who has four children). He disapproves of her boyfriend, Merton Densher.

Kate meets with Marian in her "blighted home"-- Marian also encourages her to follow Maud's wishes, in hopes that there will be future financial benefit for Marian as well. Maud had approved of Marian's marriage to a poor parson and was unforgiving to her. Marian notes that Maud is arranging Lord Mark for Kate.

Merton and Kate meet furtively in Kensington Gardens. They had first met at a party, then on the Underground. He is a journalist working in Fleet Street. Maud is planning to write him-- he isn't good enough for Kate in Maud's eyes-- but Kate says he must meet with her. Kate reviews her own family's degradation and mishaps, her father's unspecified wicked deeds. Merton presses her to marry but she wishes to wait until the time is right.

Merton comes to Lancaster Gate, the locale of Maud's overly ornate residence. She likes him, does not stoop to explicitly forbidding his association with Kate, but indicates her plans for Kate to marry a "great man" (i.e., wealthy or famous). He makes plans to go on a journalistic assignment in America. Kate proclaims her love and engages herself to Merton forever-- he reciprocates this vow and they agree to keep the engagement a secret.

Miss Milly (Mildred) Theale is a wealthy 22 years old angelic heiress and orphan from America with virtually no living relations. She is vacationing in Switzerland with her older companion, Mrs. Susan Shepherd Stringham, a widow from Vermont. Susan senses a premonition of doom in Milly. Is Milly sick? Milly won't discuss her specific concerns or symptoms, though she had seen a doctor in New York. Milly decides they should go to London. She had met Densher in New York while he was working there and she wishes to look him up in London. Susan knew Maud when they were at the Vevey School together.

At Maud's, Milly meets Kate and Lord Mark-- Milly and Mark chat. Milly admires Kate tremendously-- finds her a wondrous handsome girl. Mark had held office in the House but lost his seat, and had no other apparent accomplishments-- but Maud believes in him, and he is working Lancaster Gate for all it is worth.

Milly learns from Maud through Susan of a latent interest between Kate and Merton and asks that Milly and Susan do nothing to encourage this relationship-- Milly is intrigued to enter into this conspiracy. Susan says to Milly "My dear child, we move in a labyrinth." Susan and Milly visit Marian, who confides to them that Merton actually loves Kate. Later, Susan and Milly discuss Merton's lack of fortune and his exceptional abilities. Milly concludes that Kate does not love Merton, else Marian would have mentioned it.

Maud, Kate, Milly, and Mark visit a great house named Matcham owned by Lord and Lady Aldershaw. Maud is friendly to Milly and invites

her to come and stay with them at Lancaster Gate. Mark leads Milly to a painting by Bronzino of a woman they all feel looks like Milly and who lacks joy. Milly is reflective and moved to tears, presumably thinking of her own mortality. The Aldershaws join them.

Milly confides in Kate her plans to see the great physician, Sir Luke Strett, and asks for her silence on this. Milly will not discuss the specifics of her illness. Kate escorts her to the physician for the first visit. What is the diagnosis? He says he will take care of her and advises Milly to live life. Subsequently, Milly makes light of her medical condition to Kate.

Maud asks Milly in confidence to determine from Kate whether Merton has returned from America. Milly explores Maud's attitude and motive to her. Later, Milly and Kate discuss Maud's intention to unite Mark and Kate. Kate calls Milly a dove and tries to warn her away, saying she may very well loathe her yet.

Milly visits the National Art Gallery and encounters Kate there with Merton, freshly returned from America. She invites them to lunch. She believes Merton to be in love with Kate.

Merton and Kate plan for him to come to visit at Maud's, ostensibly to see Milly. There he privately meets with Kate, but she again counsels patience. Kate says Milly loves him and suggests they use this to their advantage. Milly's best friend is Kate, and Kate thinks Milly will do all she can to help her. Merton is unsure and uneasy with this plan of exploitation. Kate's love for him has been concealed from Maud and Milly.

Merton and Susan dine at Maud's with Kate and two men. They talk about Milly's health (she is indisposed and did not come). Merton is disturbed that Kate wants him to make up to a sick girl. Merton is introduced to Mark. Maud encourages Merton to pursue Milly-- she believes Merton to be bribable and seems to expect him to perform according to her wishes. Maud cunningly guarantees through Susan to Milly that Kate does not love Merton.

Merton visits Milly, but she claims to be all right. She is planning to go to the continent but assures him she will return. Kate arrives but leaves shortly.

Dr. Strett has visited Susan and given his report. He suspects but has not confirmed a diagnosis different from what Milly suspects-- we do not learn what it is, though it seems ominous.

Susan and Maud discuss Merton and Kate-- Maud acknowledges to her that Kate cares for him but asks Susan to keep this from Milly. Maud says Merton is not good enough for Kate but implies he is for Milly.

Milly visits Dr. Strett. She announces her plans to go to the Tyrol and Venice in 2 weeks. She is interested in Merton.

Milly and friends are now in Venice-- she stays in a leased palace, the Palazzo Leporelli, and is guided by Eugenio. While she is alone, Lord Mark shows up unexpectedly. She confesses to him that she is very ill and wants to die there. He wants her to be loved more and asks her to love him [and presumably marry him], though rather awkwardly and without passionate conviction-- she declines his offer. She tells him that Maud

wants him and Kate to marry. He counters that Kate is in love with Merton. She denies this possibility, based on Kate's lack of comments to this effect-- he challenges Kate's honesty and then leaves.

Merton dislikes his rundown hotel and his frustrating and duplicitous existence. Milly wants to come and visit him there. Kate wants Merton to tell Milly that Kate dislikes him. Kate and Merton discuss Mark's offer of marriage to Milly and Merton's possible love for Milly. Merton longs to have Kate express her love for him by coming to his hotel, but she declines.

Susan encourages Merton to be faithful to her sweet friend and encourages him to do something to promote his relationship to Milly. Milly throws a party that includes Dr. Strett. Kate speaks to Merton admiringly of Milly-- she is a dove. Kate plans to leave town while Merton is maneuvering to marry Milly. Merton agrees to keep up the act if she will come to his hotel room, and this time Kate consents. She honored this promise, and now leaves with Maud for London. Merton debates his actions with Milly and with himself, wanting somehow to remain faithful to Kate. Milly wants to live-- and to visit him with Susan. Why has he stayed, she asks? First he says it was to write a book, then that it was because of Milly.

Merton worries that his deception, if it is discovered by Milly, might end up killing her. He goes to see Milly but is turned away at the palace. Mark had come to see Milly-- Merton sees him at a nearby restaurant. For 3 days he is left by himself, then Susan comes to his hotel.

Susan tells him of Milly's withdrawal-- she has turned her face to the wall and is dying. She wants him to come to Milly and to deny what Mark has accused him of (an act of revenge on Mark's part), namely that he and Kate have been engaged all along. He must have learned this when proposing to Kate.

We next encounter Merton in London in December. He had seen Milly for only 20 minutes-- she was dying and did not ask him about his relationship to Kate, but only wanted to be with him that last time. He was saved from having to deny his love for Kate. She showed no sign of believing that she had been misled. He visits Kate-- she realizes that he fell in love with Milly but believes their plan has been a success, that "she won't have loved you for nothing." They discuss Mark's visit to Milly and he says this is what has led her to give up and be on the verge of death.

Maud remains unaware of Merton's relationship with Kate-- Susan has not divulged his secret. Merton was unable to bear staying with Milly until she died. Merton meets with Kate, wants her to marry him, but she still wants them to wait, unless perhaps he has learned of a bequest.

Merton walks to Dr. Strett's house and encounters Maud there with Mark waiting for her in her carriage (is he courting her?). She tells him that Milly has died ("our dear dove ... has folded her wonderful wings... or she has spread them the wider"). Kate has left her aunt against Maud's wishes to be with Marian on Christmas Eve-- their father has come to her for help.

Merton meets with Kate in Marian's dreary home. He has received a letter from Milly-- written earlier when she was better but delayed until Christmastime to be mailed-- he has not opened it. Merton again presses Kate on how Mark could have known about the engagement. Did she know Mark was returning a second time to Venice? -- she says no. Mark had been convinced after his first visit to see Milly that Merton truly loved Milly, and this improved Maud's view of Merton. Mark needs money. Kate never states explicitly that she told Mark of the engagement. They consider the letter from Milly – Kate concludes Milly has made Merton rich and cruelly tosses the unopened letter into the fire.

Two months later Kate comes to Merton's room. Their relations are now less passionate. He regrets not knowing what was in Milly's letter – a priceless pearl cast before his eyes into the fathomless sea. He has received an envelope of money from New York and sent it to her unopened, as a test – and she has opened it, disappointing him. He refuses to have anything to do with the money and challenges her to marry him without it or to lose him and have her freedom and the money. He wants to escape any knowledge of the tainted money. She believes him to be afraid, and suggests that although he did not love Milly before her death, that he did so after her death. She asks if he is in love with Milly's memory and suggests he no longer wants any other love. He offers to marry her immediately "as we were" but she, leaving, says "We shall never be again as we were."

Literature Review

Many critics with reference to different creations have criticized Henry James, a prolific writer of novels, in many ways. He is called to be the novelist of international theme, has also been called a dramatist of psychology and discrimination. His *The Wings of the Dove*, which is considered to be one of the founding novels of modernism, has caught the critical attention of numerous critics since its publication in 1902.

Laurence B. Holland views James's fiction as imbued with the theme of morality. For the American, Henry James stands safely remote and stern in judgment on his fictive world and on the actual world its images, and, line most moralistic criticism. We find, "tangible social relatives and moral complexities in James's fiction dissolve almost at once into ethical choices between utterly opposed moral alternatives"(549).

Taking morality as the typical theme of James, Herbert Read comments on one of the major characters of *The Wings of the Dove* as he says, "Kate Croy, who threatens to dominate the novel by the forcefulness of her characters, is more than a foil to Milly's lustful innocence: she represents the moral ambiguity of a diplomatic approach to life"(Read vii).

Many of James's critics have denounced the plot of novel as morally bankrupt. For example, an early critic, Van Wyck Brooks accuses James of proffering the "fruits of an irresponsible imagination" in the novel, thus "abrogating his moral judgment," evidence "the gradual decomposition of James's sense of human values" (124)

Kimball, speaking about the plight of the heroine of the novel says that the central situation in *The Wings of the Dove* is not Milly's passive suffering in a world of uncomprehended evil but rather her desperate effort, which is never passive, to achieve however briefly and brokenly, the sense of having lived and even further to live beyond death (267).

Water F. Wright, in his essay "Betrayal and sorrow: *The Wings of the Dove*" has noted the reality of the modern world that money than possessor of it is loved and praises the forgiveness of Milly resembling to Christ and says:

The novel is, on the one hand, the longing of the human spirit to be free, and on the other hand, the human predicament. We have become immersed in a world of ugliness of animal strife and indeed of animal fears and we have realized that we must accept the predicament even while seeking the most ethereal freedom. (231)

Thus, the novel reflects the human nature to be free while accepting the human reality at the same time.

What Dorothy Krook, one of the critics of James says about the novel:

The principle tragic theme of the *Dove* . . . Is the impact of the worldly world upon the unworldly- its power to undermine, reduce and in this instance finally to destroy those who cannot accommodate themselves – to its values . . . this work of destructions the characteristics virtues of the victims

themselves, their innocence, ignorance and good faith, their generosity and tenderness . . . Impossible for the victims to recognize the rapacity and ruthlessness in the charm, the intelligence and the brilliance and being unable so much as to recognize then, they are of course left helpless against their destructive power. (200)

In this way, the novel depicts the predicament of the major characters.

Andrew Sanders in his *Short History of English Literature* says that "English fiction in the last two decades of the nineteenth century has all too frequently been seen as dominated by the work of the subtle, demanding, expatriate American, Henry James"(459).

R. P. Blackmer, in his essay "Dramas of the soul in Action" in introduction to Henry James regards *The Wings of the Dove* as a spiritual drama and says:

. . . the poetry is the poetry of the soul in action... poetic drama(s) of the inner life of the soul at the height of its struggle, for good and for evil, with the outer world in which it must live and to which it must respond, the world which it must deny, or renounce, or accept. (504)

He further adds that Milly Theale looms on the consciousness of the other persons as an image of moral beauty strikes them as conscience (the argentite of in wit), and teaches a new possible, impossible (James's own Phrase) mode of love in which conscience and moral beauty are joined (507)

Ernest Sandeen in his essay, *The Wings of the Dove and The Portrait of a Lady: A study of Henry James's Later Phase* says that it is the characteristic of James's maturity in the wings . . . to emphasize the complexity and the limitations of human behaviour. These novels have the idea of treachery, the 'Judes complex.' (5720)

Christof Wegelin, in his essay "The Lesson of Spiritual Beauty" takes the novel as the story of the European experience of an America and says:

As far as the wings of the dove in Milly's story it is a peculiarly American tragedy, the ravishment of innocence, of moral beauty, by a worldliness so knowing that it has forgotten the knowledge of innocence . . . *The Wings of the Dove* is no allegory on a Biblical subject. It is a drama not of unambiguous conflict between heaven and hell, but of the contrast between two kinds of human ethics . . . the contrast between the simplicity of American idealism and the complexity of English empiricism. (523)

J.A Ward, in "Social Disintegration in *The Wings of the Dove*" regards the novel as a record of the reality of greed with its mechanics of intrigue and duplicity which is the main cause of social destruction and says that Milly Theale's death is the death of a civilization. The gray of a London dominated by materialism and the black of Venice traditionally malign combine to kill her (533). He observes:

. . . as observer and historian of the western world, Henry James developed from a chronicler of national differences to a prophet of a social disintegration international in scope. James's later novels reflect . . . his vision of the impending collapse of western civilization, of this overwhelming, self defeating chaos or cataclysm toward which. The whole thing is drifting. (529)

Sallie Sears in his critical essay "The Negative Imagination: Form and Perspective in the Novels of Henry James" writes about *The Wings of the Dove* that:

In the broadest sense the novel is an "anatomy of guilt" of the causes, then the consequences of deliberate, conscious violation of another human beings existence for the sake of personal gain. . . . The real subject of the book . . . is neither the deceived nor the deceiver who is studied but rather the changing of manipulation, of the circumstances that give rise to it and of the effects it has upon both victim and victimizer. (551)

The critics have said and pointed out many things on *The Wings of the Dove* in which they have explored many positive and negative aspects of human life. They have especially explored the evil side of human life rather than good ones including other many psychological plights of modern living, of life like 'isolation', 'alienation. 'moral decay,' 'victimization,' 'greed,' 'intrigue', 'exploitation of innocence', 'destruction

of civilization', 'materialism and its bad impact on humanity', 'money and its bad aspects on human life' etc. The critics have also emphasized on 'love for freedom and some good aspects like 'sacrificing one for others,' learning and understanding, the civilizations on first hand, helps people to understand the world.

II. Late 19th and 20th Century Morality: Historical Viewpoint

The Concept of Morality

The word "moral" comes from Latin word 'mores' meaning habits and characters. In this sense, morality deals with habit and characters of human beings living in society. The knowledge of moral science pertains to the distinction living in society. The knowledge of moral science pertains to the distinction between right and wrong or good and evil in relation to actions and volitions of a person. The concept of morality comes under the province of ethics. Ethics as a normative science seeks to define moral ideas. It is concerned with the idea or standard to which conduct should conform. In *Encarta Encyclopedia* ethics is defined thus, "Ethics as a branch of philosophy is concerned with norms of human conduct"(I). Ethics as a normative science, seeks to explain the facts of moral life by reference to an ideal, according to which we ought to live. Moral judgments are also accompanied by sense of duty, oughtness or moral obligation. The end or aim of the ethics is to define the nature of the highest good of a member of society. It investigates the nature of *Summum Bonum* which is the highest social good. Though ethics is not a practical science, it deduces certain duties and virtues from the notion of supreme good, which may guide a man in the regulation of his conduct. In this connection John S. W. Makenjie in his book *A Manual of Ethics* says:

Hence, when we say that the study of ethics is concerned with Rightness or goodness of human conduct, we mean that it is concerned with the consideration of the serviceableness of

our conduct for some end or ideal at which we aim, and with the rules of general principles by which our conduct to be directed in order that this end may be attained. (2)

The freedom of the will, immortality of the soul, and the existence of God are the postulates of morality. Ethics deals with the moral ideals related to the question of ultimate reality. Is the moral idea real? or, is it mere creation of human mind? If it is mere creation of our fancy, it cannot inspire and elevate us. The moral ideal inspires and elevates us only because it is the expression of the supreme Reality. It is eternally realized in God. God maintains and conserves the supreme values to achieve which we constantly make efforts. Jonh S. Mackenjie in *A Manual of Ethics* writes, "If we understand by God a power by which the supreme values are maintained or achieved, the belief in such a power would be an encouragement to us in our efforts" (406).

Morality implies the freedom of the will. A man freely chooses what is right or wrong Man is free in his voluntary actions. Therefore he is responsible for his actions which constitute his conduct. It is fundamental assumption of ethics that men are morally responsible for their actions. If it were not true, moral judgments would have no justification. Man is believed to be endowed with reason which is a moral faculty passing "judgment upon actions to the tribunal of conscience" (Mackenjie 149). The concept of the freedom of the will presumes that by the proper use of reason a man realizes and religion lies in the moral ideal in life.

The relationship between morality and religion lies in the fact that both prescribe rules for conduct. Morality emphasizes the relation of the individual to the society, while religion emphasizes the relation of the individual to God. To strengthen morality, religion and religious concepts are needed. The concepts like the existence of God, purity of human nature, and freedom of the will are also found abundantly in religion. There is a huge overlap between morality and religion. These lines quoted from *Encarta Encyclopedia* speak in the same vein:

Depending on the social setting the authority invoked for good conduct is the will of deity, the pattern of nature, or the rule of reason. When the will of deity is the authority, obedience to the divine commandments in scriptural texts is the accepted standard of conduct. If the pattern of nature is the authority, conformity to the qualities attributed human nature is the standard. When reason rules, behavior is expected to result from the rational thought. (II)

This proves that human beings are supposed to follow the accepted good conducts in society.

Nineteenth century Victorian period is considered to be the most remarkable period in the history of England. In this period, England was developed by modern science and technology and it was fully industrialized and commercialized. It was floating on materialism and liberalism. It was also an age of intellectual developments. Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and John Stuart Mill are the representatives of this

period. There followed democratic reformation, educational expansion and technical progress. These things brought a radical change in the thinking of modern man. People began to question the earlier accepted social mores as the new era helped them to make life much better.

However, on the matters of moral behavior, the Victorian society was very strict in spite of materialism and liberalism. Mid-Victorian society was still held together by the cement of Christian moral teaching, and constricted by the triumph of puritan sexual mores. It laid a particular stress on the virtues of monogamy and family life, but it was also publicly aware of "flagrant moral anomalies" throughout the social system (Sanders 400). Elderly people had a strong sense of deference to the conventions, while the younger generation found these conventions ludicrous. Talking about the strict moral and social values of this period, Edward Albert says, "It was thought indecorous for a man to smoke in public and for a lady to ride a bicycle" (367).

James is a literary figure who appeared on the literary scene of the English speaking world at the end of the Victorian age. Indeed, it is in the second half of the nineteenth century James stood as a prominent literary figure dealing with changing norms, values, ethos, tempos and ways of thinking.

During the novel's publication in 1902 the moral convention was still powerful in England. Social, cultural and religious norms bred moral concepts in the Victorian society that limited the freedom of younger generations. As this generation yearned for more freedom and liberal

values, it severely faced the conflict between tradition and liberal modern ways of life. In this context, some critics who have been working on the relationships of history, context and text can be pertinent to discuss, Joan W. Scott argues, on "multiculturalism and the politics identity," "the production of knowledge is a political enterprise that involves a context among conflicting interest" (1).

The twentieth century brought changes of a rapidity and magnitude unmatched in any preceding century. The major forces that shaped history after 1900 were a fulfillment of trends already apparent before that date. What made the twentieth century unique was that of changes in moral, social, culture and political values. Vicissitudes in the life of nations, strokes and tensions that had a relatively local and limited effect in earlier times produced wider and wider repercussions after 1900 as transport was accelerated and communication became almost instantaneous. The events of the twentieth century demonstrated that it was no longer possible for any people, however remote or isolated, to line to itself.

Twentieth century is considered to be an important period because this is the century of democracy, human rights and personal freedom; the two World Wars are responsible for bringing about the achievements. People began to question everything of the earlier times. In this sense, it is in this century that the root of 'modernism begins to take root. Many critics agree that it involves a deliberate and radical break with some of the traditional bearers not only of western art, but of western culture in general. In this regard, M.H. Abrams writes: "important intellectual

precursors of modernism, in this sense, are thinkers who had questioned the certainties that had supported traditional modes of social organization, religion, and morality . . ." (167). So, people sought for material comfort, personal happiness and liberty by challenging earlier strict Victorian values. And thus there started a conflict between earlier and modern values.

'Conflict' is a situation where individuals of groups are having difference in views and needs. It is a situation of opposition or antagonistic interaction based on scarcity of power, resources, political social position and differing values structure. Conflict occurs in different situation, between and among members of family between older generation and younger generation, between labor and management and even within a single mind in *The Wings of the Dove*, the conflict occurs between traditional values and modern liberal values.

Many writers protested against the deadening effects of the conventions. Carlyle and Mathew Arnold, in their different accents, were loud in their denunciations. Thackeray never tried to satirize the snobbishness of the age. In poetry, the pre- Raphaelites led by Swinburne and William Morris proclaimed "no morality" but that of the artist regard for his art (Albert 368). By the vigor of the methods Swinburne horrified the timorous, and made him rather ridiculous in the eyes of sensible people.

Likewise, in the 20th century, economic progress, industrious development, population growth, urbanization and warfare completely

affected western culture which remained secular and materialistic. But the convention still remained strict, the so-called Georgian poets, novelists of the early 20th century often showed timid, conventional and religious in nature. Consequently they hated Victorian science because science made them feel sad towards religious beliefs. W.B. Yeats sought for new religion "almost an infallible church of poetic tradition" (1127). Twentieth century also shows the fall of values of the nineteenth century which can be summed from W.B. Yeats following lines in "The Second Coming:"

Turning and turning in the widening gyre. The falcon can't
hear the falconer; things fall apart; the centre can't hold; Mere
anarchy is loosed upon the world . . . " (Line 1,2,3)

This piece of poetry of Eliot reflects the disintegration of social, cultural, religious and moral values.

Moral Values

In the Victorian period, even if there was scientific, technological and industrial breakthrough, it gave rise to middle class. It had strict moral values. In short, Victorian England balanced liberal and moral values in the same boat. Among various genre of literature, novel became one of the effective means of to present a picture of life lived in a given society.

Because of the influences of liberalism, the literary personalities projected the fundamental problems faced by needy group in the society. They did not imitate the action of aristocrats, ideal gallantry and beauty. On the other hand the industrial revolution caused great unhappiness for middle class people. Consequently, rich people were getting richer and

richer and the poor were getting poorer, so, the novelists revealed Victorian oddities, extravagant style, and unhappy circumstances of middle class people. Charles Dickens revealed "eccentrics, hypocrites, social climbers, bureaucrats, roisters" (1051). Victorian England was industrialized and commercialized which had created new, moral values such as education for them was, "the instruction of the intellect in the laws of nature"(982). They regarded the fashioning of the affections and harmony with the laws of society. People strictly adhered to their social status which apparently created a gap between high class and low class.

During the twentieth century the strict moral values of the eighteenth century were shattered. During the eighteenth century thinkers became optimistic that by adopting the universal values of science, reason and logic, they could get rid of the myths and holy ideas that hindered humanity from progress. They thought this would free humanity from superstition misery, religion and all irrational behavior. But these moral values of eighteenth and nineteenth century brought war which made human beings selfish and miserable bringing fragmentation and chaos, everything was falling apart. So, modern artists began to take for some external values that would bring harmony and happiness beyond such chaos.

Looking for inner truth beyond appearances, writers such as D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and W.B. Yeats attempted to create a new centre by drawing upon exotic myths made known to them through recent discoveries in anthropology and translations of the text of eastern

religions and tribal myths. Yeats wrote down his vision of vast historical cycle of time in his poem "The Second Coming," "turning and turning in ever widening spirals" (Line 2). He did not see the truth and moral values brought about by scientific and technological advancement, but it only added to misery, chaos inhumanity. So, James represented in his works the heroes, dames and fairies from Celtic myths and folklores to restore peace, harmony and order.

Similarly, D.H. Lawrence, in his novels and short stories, filled the post- Nietzschean void with "Primitive" gods, goddesses and the energies; the sexuality of the virgin and the gypsy, the sun, the shake, the dark skinned Native. Modern thinkers valued psyche which brought forth the truth or reality. James Joyce and Virginia Woolf emphasized on "Stream of Conscious" which replaced the 18th and 19th century norms of morality. T.S. Eliot projected the modern world as fragmented, thus, was in search of reintegration. He turned towards primitive moral values such as history as a myth. The modern writers lamented for the loss of human values and degeneration.

In this way, while going through the 19th century and early 20th century moral values, the thinkers of this society are seen in a dilemma because of liberal moral values on the one hand and on the other hand they are also affected by moral traditional values. Sometimes they attack the Victorian aristocratic norms when they cannot follow them because of material quest. At the same time the liberalism does not show any respect for traditional social moral values. They lament for the loss of these moral

values which provide, beliefs, sympathy and contentment. So, the 19th and 20th century artists are rolling around liberal and traditional moral values. Whereas, the writers of early 20th century did not see any hope of creating moral values with the breakthrough of science, technology and industrial revolution but caused only loss of faith, moral values chaos and war so; they valued myth, and human psyche as the means of regenerating human moral values through integration and faith.

Ethical Values

Ethics is the discourse of respect for the law. All the critical schools, semiotics, deconstruction, feminism, Marxism and psychoanalysis have redefined the term in their own context of school. Virtually all the leading voices of the theoretical era has organized their critiques of humanism as exposition of ethics, revelations of the transgressive and rebellious. On the other hand the leading philosopher of nineteenth century, Nietzsche has announced the truth of ethics:

A mere fabrication for purpose of galling: at best, an artistic fiction; at worst, an outrageous imposture. Thus, the ethics has been understood as the agent of repression humanism and of post- modernism anti- humanism. It is a self- disguising power. (10)

On the basis of above mentioned assertions, ethics can be summed up as the arena in which the claims of otherness- the moral law, the human other, cultural norms, the good in itself etc are articulated and negotiated. While observing the ethical values of Victorian and early twentieth

century, ethics seems fading because of expansion of science, technology and industrialization which gave new mode to ethics. In these two periods, the deterioration of working class and rise of middle class created economic gap. As a result ethics became the power to rule over the needy people. Desperate and anguished and being fed up with strict ethics of Victorians and modernists, the writers, such as Tennyson William, Hopkins, Carlyle, T.S. Eliot, T.E. Humle, Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats gave emphasis on the traditional ethics- beliefs in traditional culture, religion and law and expressed their sad and desperate feeling and worries for present world. All this shows that the Victorians and early modern writers are rolling back and forth between morality and liberality. Neither the liberality nor the morality seems completely acceptable for them so, this age was full of conflicts and anxieties. The Victorians were narrow-minded, sexually priggish, and put emphasis on social respectability which reflect the picture of ethics of Victorians and early 20th century England. This shows the prevalent social and moral values of the time. This also depicts people's attitude towards morality and social rules at that time.

Culture

Edward B. Taylor defines culture as, "taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (225). Like, ideology, culture, does not refer to material objects, is used broadly such as, aristocratic, youth culture, literary texts are cultural by virtue of social values, contexts

that they have themselves successfully absorbed. Text embodies culture, if the surrounding is removed, text can't be figured out. Text absolutely depends on culture for its completion. If an exploration of a particular culture will lead to a heightened understanding of work of literature produced within that culture, so too a careful reading of work of literature will lead to a heightened understanding of the cultures within which it was produced. So, the culture is the servant of literary study, but in a liberal education, literary study is the servant of cultural understanding. The 19th century thinkers and society was rolling on these two different ways of studying culture and literature because of different movements forwarded in 19th and early 20th century such as, Methodology movement, Oxford movement, reformation, concept of liberal education perfection of intellectual culture is related to "cultivation" (Carlyle 227) and the internalization and practice of a code of conduct have great significance. Pope's poem "Epistle to doctor Arbuthnot" reveals this code of conduct; similarly Shakespeare's play, *As You Like It* articulates cultural codes of behavior- courtship, dignified social behavior of characters. Stephen Greenblatt argues, "Art is an important agent then in the transmission of culture. It is one of the ways in which the roles by which men and women are accepted to pattern their lives are communicated and passed from generations to generation" (228). *The Faerie Queen* by Spenser shows the aristocratic code of conduct prevalent in 19th C. Spenser says about *Faerie Queen* "To fashion a gentlemen or noble person in virtuous and discipline" (Line 23).

All the individuals are constructed by culture which presents cultural values. Works like *Dickens' Great Expectations* and Eliot's *Middle March* brilliantly explore the ironies and pain, as well as the inventiveness of particular adjustments. On the other hand liberal arts do not emphasize culture as guiding agent of literature, rather, they focus on history and art itself the guiding factor of culture. The 19th century and 20th century culture is also in dilemma, being ruled between liberalism and morality. By using irony, satire or other forms of figure of speech, the 19th and 20th century writers reveal the culture of a society within which the characters are bound. In 19th century, there was cultural hierarchy such as aristocratic, middle class people's culture. In the same way because of war and other industrial development, in 20th century, humanity was lost; as a result, psychic expression became the dominant culture to depict in art. As culture is a set of accepted beliefs and customs, it is associated with morality and social values. The writers represent such things in their works of art.

Cultural Values

Culture is a 'term' which is associated with the ideas, belief and customs that are shared and accepted by people of society. Every society has cultural values. Likewise, Victorian society had its own cultural values that the liberal and moral minded people shared. This is the period of rapid change of society because of leading industrial power which stress the nationalists pride but it also produces social stresses, turbulence, and widespread anxiety. Because of expanding wealth, the middle class people

expanded and became powerful both economically and culturally. As a result, it deteriorated the rural England. It created economic gap between the rich and the poor. Consequently the cultural values were also rolling between the rich and the poor. It engendered "sectarian controversy, doubt about the truth of religious belief, and in some instance, a reversion to strict biblical fundamentalism" (Smith 329).

In Victorian period narrow- minded beliefs, sexual priggishness, the determination to maintain feminine "innocence" are the cultural views expressed by the expanding middle class society. It had roots with Puritanism. So, it did not encourage people to be liberal in religion, and superstitious belief was prevalent in Victorian society. Thomas Henry, Huxley, Carlyle condemned the Victorian materialistic values as the social norms as they advocated for reason and rationality.

Some Mid-Victorian England thinkers spoke for liberal Christianity while others spoke against it. Davis Daiches comments.

The lines of battle were drawn: on the one hand there was liberal Christian like Thomas Arnold who fastened on the ethical significance of Christianity and minimized the importance of ritual. On the other, there was Newman for whom the long history of church, the lives of saints, and the reasoning, internal collisions and the decisions of theological schools acted out and summed up the meaning of Christianity, for which theology and dogma provided the background for devotion. (1963)

This kind of view and religion of thinkers manifests the controversy on religion because of Oxford movement and other reformation activities. Carlyle asserted, "Christian virtues of renunciation and self-discipline are spiritual view of reality" (961). So, during Victorian period, liberalism, humanism, and historical and psychological interpretation of religion got influenced.

In twentieth century, there was loss faith in science, so, the thinkers of this century hated Victorian science which brought World Wars, they believed in religions. W.B. Yeats hated Victorian science. He felt that it had made beliefs in orthodox Christianity impossible so, he continually sought for a new religion for cultural integration. In 20th C, as there was fragmentation in the loss of faith, and chaos was widespread, the thinkers sought help in religion turning back to traditional thinkers. W.B. Yeats, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot saw the modern culture being barren, for its fulfillment they included eternal reality which was possible through the human psyche and religious faith. Religious solution was the solution of all ills of modern culture. W.H. Auden became "involved for solution in personal and religious contemporary ills" (1136). The modern culture had full impact in social and literary field at the time. The apparent collapse of public standard of significance, new notion of time, and new notion of consciousness were the values of 20 century. E.M. Forster, D.H. Lawrence and Joseph Conrad revealed the ills of society. They spoke up against society. Forster said, "great society is always the enemy: only the little

society" (1155). Likewise Conrad comments, "society is necessary, yet inevitably corrupt" (1156).

Representation

Representation is closely related term with literature because literature is the representation of life and man is considered to be the representation of animal. Representation is always of someone or something by something to some one. Aristotle defined "all the arts-verbal, visual and musical as modes of representation" (*Poetics* 11). Plato and Aristotle, both regarded literature as simply one form of representation. Aristotle even defined human activity as "representation since antiquity has been widely used and discussed; in modern era representation has not only been implied in literature but also in political theory" (*Poetics*11).

Representation is an extremely elastic notion which extends all the way from a stone representation of a man to a novel representing a day in the life of several Dubliners. Representation, on the other hand, differs from one another in three ways, in object, manner, and means. The means of literary representation is language but there are many ways of employing that means as there are many ways of depicting a tree. Some of them may become institutionalized as style or genres and like codes, are social agreements. These "mini-codes" associated with styles of representation are usually called "conventions" values and ethical values. Thus, the cultural values, ethical values of Victorian period and the twentieth century are the representation of concerned period. An example

of literary representation can be taken from the poem "My Last Duchess," written by Robert Browning. It provides an interesting case study because it draws together so many different conventions of literary, lyric, dramatic, and narrative, and because it reflects as well as on others modes of representation, including the pictorial and political which has a direct bearing on morality.

Victorian snobbishness and satire on it, and the Victorian thinkers "no morality" in Victorian period are the representation. The changing norms, values, others, tempos and way of thinking of Victorian and early 20th century are the different forms of representations which reveal the conventions or ideology of the particular society.

Ideology

Ideology is a broad term which is used to designate some kind of coherent and rigidly held system of political ideas. In this sense, ideology is a distinctly pejorative term, usually identifying someone who wishes to impose an abstract, extremist, intellectual, and political obsession on a moderate mainstream political system. Mannheim on ideology has remarked, "A society is possible in the last analysis because the individuals in it carry around in their heads some sort of picture of that society." (64). In this sense ideology can be defined as managing social contradictions and reproducing class relations. Marx and Engels use ideology to talk about the specific forms of consciousness, appropriate to specific kind of society, or to specific class interests. So, ideology

designates a rich system of representation which encourages man and women to see their place in the society.

Marx represented ideology as a 'superstructure' of the concurrent socio-economic system is the 'base'. Engel described ideology as a "false consciousness" and many others have described it as constituted largely by unconsciousness prepossessions that are illusory. In 19th century, with the emergence of bourgeois and proletarian it created certain false consciences for both bourgeois and proletariats. In course of time, the people of a society internalize this ideology. Consequently it becomes the social norms, cultural and ethical value. So, ideology reflects the socio-economic historical background of a society. Ideology describes the belief in Christian moral teaching, and on the other hand the puritan sexual mores, -- and these are ideological beliefs of Victorian period. Elderly people's deference to the ideological conventions and the younger generation's ludicrous view go into the creation of ideology of that particular age.

In the same way 20th century secularism and materialism are the conventions followed by all; due to this there is a widespread disappearance of western civilization. There is however emphasis on materialism and these are the ideological convention of the day. Nationalism and militarism and different interpretations of Christianity are the by-product of technological breakthrough of 20th century and the express of nothingness and turning back to traditional values are moral belief of great thinkers of 20th century. These too are the ideological

reproductions that affect the 20th century society. Twentieth century is an important period because this is the century of democracy, human rights which produced new ideology by breaking some of the traditional conventions.

Influence

Influence is a term which indicates the study of anything from religious myths to historical events. But after Harold Bloom's serious studies on "the anxiety of influence," it is used to affiliate the past and present literary texts or their authors. This literary term is grounded in 19th century philosophical nations; this tradition regards literary influence as a benign, even reverential, endorsement of humanism. The writers of 18th century claimed that canonical writes are the precursors for new writers. Alexander Pope said, "writers should seek the influence of canonical masters" (187). So, the literary text even now takes the influence of the traditional ideology. Even Walter Jackson Bale accepts, Bloom's that influence as discontinuous relation between past and present literary texts, the influence came to be mature in 18th century so, they were suffering from the "burden of the past," which shows the loss of self- confidence Bloom says that the new writers can not get rid of canonical writers. He says.

the poet, locked in Oedipal rivalry with his castrating precursor; will seek to disarm strength by entering it from within, writing in away which revises, displaces and recasts the precursor poem; in this sense, all poems can be read as

rewritings of other poems, and as 'misreading' or misprisions of them, attempts to fend off their overwhelming force so that the poet can clear a space for his own imaginative originality. (Eagleton 1983).

In this way, the interpretation of one poem is the interpretation of other poem. Reading is always misreading. So, the work becomes a whole version of "bloated completion" of the earlier work (Bloom 312). Bloom's depiction of literary influence thus turns personal as well as public history into a ceaselessly volatile or 'murderous' zone of psychic warfare.

In 19th century literature was not considered as non-alienated discourse but it was really influenced by aristocratic "bourgeois." Thus, Bloom's anxiety reveals the cold war in literary tradition. Bloom's theory effectively confesses its own anxiety over the loss of literary influence resulting from the excision of authority in the modernist era, an excision notably exploited by early 20th century writes like T.S. Eliot and Ezra pound.

Value / Evaluation

Generally a value is defined in terms of worth. Oxford English dictionary defines value "The equivalent (in material worth) of a specified sum or amount." (179). The term 'value' has maintained two related but more or less distinct senses. One is material or monetary equivalent in exchange of something. In the broad sense 'value' is not monetary, but a more abstract matter of relative quantity or measure.

In literary theory, it is noticed that there are some special values or sources of interest e.g. market value, use value, historical interest, and personal interest, political or ideological interest. This special value is the essential literary value or its value as work of literature which resides in the text's structure or theme or contents. In short, value is general name given to a variety of different positive effects. On the other hand, in relation literature, evaluations are commonly thought of as the specific acts of individual people. So, all the feature of evaluations is self- evidently related to its value. The evaluation of a work is seen as a continuous process.

In this way, the texts bear the features of culture and on the basis of culture; all the texts mark the prior valuing and evaluation. H.H. Smith says: "As indicated, evaluation can be understood as embracing a wide range of forms or practice, not all of them public or overt, not all of them individual and certainly not all of them verbal" (182). Current conceptions of literary evaluation emphasize two important features of those judgments obscured in traditional analysis. The first is that when we offer a verbal judgment of text, we are always doing so in some social or institutes context. The second is that the 'force' of our judgment in every sense that is, their meaning and interest for other people and their power to effect them current conceptions of evaluation also emphasizes the significance of the tacit assumption evaluators make when producing value judgments, such as in *Jane Eyre* by Emily Bronte.

On the basis of the theoretical framework outlined in the second chapter, the third chapter analyzes the text at a considerable length. It analyzes the major characters' activities, their conflict regarding traditional and modern way of life. It sorts out some extracts from the text as evidence to prove the hypothesis of the study – that the novel dramatizes the conflict between the fading moral values and that it embraces liberal values.

III. Conflict of Moral Values in *The Wings of the Dove*

The present research is a study of Henry James's famous novel, *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), which was written during his later career. This study attempts to examine the conflict of moral values and attitude of the nineteenth century and the emerging modern liberal attitude of the twentieth century European society. The novelist dramatizes this conflict through the young lovers, Kate Croy and Merton Densher. They are torn between still existing moral codes and liberal modern ways of life.

Although Merton is witty, handsome and idealistic young man, he cannot get Kate's aunt's consent to marry Kate because of his poor economic condition. Even Kate is not willing to abandon money and status to be with Merton, but she is willing to do morally questionable things when she consents to Merton's scheme to get hold of a fortune from a terminally ill American heiress, Milly Theale.

The Wings of the Dove is a classic example of Henry James's tales that play off the naiveté of an American protagonist abroad. In early 20th century London, Kate Croy and Merton Densher are engaged in a passionate, clandestine love affair. Kate is desperately in love with Merton, who has all the qualities of a potentially excellent husband. The only thing he lacks is money, which ultimately renders him unsuitable as a mate. By chance, Kate discovers a young American heiress, Milly Theale, who suffers from a mysterious and fatal malady. Then Kate Croy hatches a plan that can give all three characters something that they want – at a price. Kate and Merton plan to accompany the young women to Venice

where Merton, according to Kate's design will seduce the ailing heiress. The two lovers hope that Theale will find love and happiness in her last days and – when she dies – will leave her fortune to Merton, so that he and Kate can live happily ever after. The scheme that at first develops as planned begins to founder when Theale discovers the pair's true motives shortly before her death. Merton struggles with unanticipated feelings of love for his new paramour, and his guilt obstructs his ability to avail himself of Theale's gift. Thus, James deftly navigates the complexities and irony of such moral treachery.

The values of the 19th century and the emerging modern liberal attitudes of the 20th century play a pivotal role in the life of young lovers, Kate Croy and Merton Densher in a European society. In the novel, Kate and Merton are torn between morality and liberal modern ways of life. Merton is unable to get Kate's hand because of his poor economic condition.

The characters' attitude towards their life, society, and relatives verifies the fading moral values of the nineteenth century. Kate Croy, a twenty-five-year-old educated woman, has no mother and lives with her aunt, Mrs. Maud. She wants to take care of her father and live with him. But Maud, a selfish and money-minded woman prevents her from staying with her father. The materialistic attitude is seen through his lust for greed when her father insistently seems to share her wealth inherited from her mother. The narrator says:

He had written her he was ill, too ill to leave his room and that he must see her without delay. If this had been, as was probable, the sketch of a design he was indifferent even to the moderate finish required for deception. He had clearly wanted, for the perversities he called his reasons, to see her, just as she herself had sharpened for talk . . . (23).

Mrs. Maud does not agree to let Kate marry Merton thinking that he is not suitable for her because of his low economic status, though he is a educated journalist. She evaluates him in terms of his family background and wealth. She seems morally strict. She wants Kate's husband to be great and wealthy and having strong moral behavior and she says, "I want her to marry a great man. That was all but, more and more, it was enough; and if it had not been her next words would have made it so. And I think of her what I think" (65).

Maud's social vanity is illustrated through her attitudes towards Merton. She is proud of her high status in society. She does not want to be reminded by Merton's marriage with Kate. Her view is illustrated through this extract:

He designed to be perfectly simple, yet in the midst of that effort a deeper apprehension throbbed. Aunt Maud clearly conveyed it, though he could not later on have said how, "You don't really matter, I believe so much as you think and I am not going to make you a marry by banishing you. Your performances in the park with Kate are ridiculous so for as

they meant as consideration for me: and I had much rather see for myself – since you're in your way, my dear young man."

(66)

At this, Densher feels hurt by Maud's remarks. For Maud money is everything which symbolizes social status and personality. She believes that money and status count much. Adopting modern way of life and abandonment of traditional values are clear through Merton's view on Maud:

It is everything; everything she thinks it. It's the probability – I mean as Mrs. Lowder measures probability – that I may be prevented from becoming a complication for her by some arrangement, through which you shall see me often and easily. She is sure of my want of money, and that gives her time, she believes in my having a certain amount of delicacy, in my wishing to better my state before I put the pistol to your head in respect to sharing it. (68)

Kate seems to fall in love with Merton. But neither can she internally accept him as her true lover nor she can openly declare him that she cannot marry him. It is because of her aunt's strict sense of morality which creates gap between herself and Merton in terms of economic and social position. However, Kate gives different view about the way of life, she wants to be free, and she resembles a London young girl who has no boundary and no strict moral cultural rules. With her high ambition she Kate tells her lover, "I shall sacrifice nobody and nothing and that is just

my situation, that I want and that I shall try for everything" (24).

According to Kate male know nothing but what women show them. The narrator describes her statements:

This was one of the speeches, frequent in her, liberally, joyfully, intensely adopted and, in itself, as might be, embraced, drew him again as close to her, and held him as by, as their conditions permitted. "Then that's exactly why we've such an abysmal need of you. (75)

Kate and Merton usually meet with each other in Lancaster Gate where Maud has a big castle. The part of England which is in the center of Lancaster Gate which leads Kate and Merton to materialism. Its art has degenerated to the colossal vulgarity of Maud Lowder. The England of Maud Lowder has found the aristocratic legacy of manners at odds with the material drive and has thus drained it of content. Maud is "the most remarkable woman in England" (182) because she sets the love for money and aristocratic assumption because she is "unscrupulous and immoral" (184). Maud is for outdated elegance of the past time. She tries to sound much superior and higher by sticking to the fading moral values.

Money which guides the major characters is the controlling force in *The Wings of the Dove*. In the London world the economic drive is the normal motivation. Milly recognizes early that her English friends "appeared all . . . To think tremendously of money" (201). Economic values subvert human values throughout, not just in Kate's identification of Milly with her wealth, the easy assumption that leads to the central action of the

novel. This assumption, that the money is everything, has systematically reduced all quality. For example, Kate's father and sister reject Kate's offer of family loyalty in favor of her potential cash values as Aunt Maud's Ward. Aunt Maud visualizes Kate as a financial hold:

I have been keeping (Kate's presence) for the comfort of my declining years. I have watched it long; I have been saving it and lifting it, as you say of investments, appreciate, and you may judge whether, now it has begun to pay so, I'm like to consent to treat for it with any but a high bidder. (210)

Since Merton cannot compete with Milly, Kate and Maud in terms of money, he seems to be neglected and becomes inferior to them. They want to take advantage of his poverty either by warning or making him fall in love on purpose. Milly to Maud also has negotiable value as a bribe to Merton" the pieces fell together for him as he felt her thus buying him off, and buying him . . . with Miss Theale's money" (268).

The relationship between Kate and Merton gradually becomes corrupted through association with the acquisitive drive. The natural has been made unnatural as she offers to pay his price which he had already paid. So much so that Kate's visit to Merton's room is thought of by both as a payment for services rendered. Merton fondly thinks, "The forces of the engagement, the quantity of the article to be supplied, the special solidity of the compact, and the way above all, as a service for which the price named by him had been magnificently paid . . ." (301)

Kate, before she formulates her plan, predicts that "Milly would pay hundred percent even to the end, doubtless through the nose . . ." (304). Milly, though she is morally detached from her wealth and is innocent in spite of her millions, dies a victim of economic competition as she cannot adjust herself to the London world. She cannot get comfort around the friends running after her money. It is particularly significant that Milly's great deed consists of a bestowal of her money. It is an act of love, an expression of forgiveness, and a transcendence of self.

Nevertheless, since money is the destructive force in the novel, which leads characters towards liberality and downwards in terms of moral and traditional values. It is appropriate that the practical result of her gift is to serve Kate and Densher, for it was a want of money that kept them from marrying in the beginning:

Of the strength of the tie that held them we shall sufficiently take the measure: but it was meanwhile almost obvious that if the great possibility had come up for them it had alone so, to an exceptional degree, under the protection of the famous law of contraries. Any deep harmony that might eventually govern them would not be the result of their having much in common having anything in fact but their affection: and would really find its explanation in some sense, on the part of each, of being poor where the other was rich. (47)

Milly is not corrupted by her money, yet the possession of money causes her destruction. Money destroys those who are associated with it, those

who have it, those who desire it, those who crave for it because it makes selfish and more liberal in terms pursuing materialistic life by casting aside the moral and traditional values.

Thus one's moral stature is determined by the degree to which he is free from money. Maud Lowder is surely damned from the beginning; and Kate demonstrates her own damnation at the end when she rejects spirit for matter, when she burns the unread letter of grace but rips open the envelop containing the cheque:

She had laid on the table from the moment of her coming in the long envelop. Substantially filled, when he had sent her enclosed in another of still ampler make. He had however not looked at it his belief being that he wished never again to do so; besides which it had happened to rest with its addressed side up. So he saw nothing, and it was only into her eyes that her remarks made him look, declining any approach to the objected. "It's not my seal, my dear; and my intention which my note tried to express was all to treat if to you as not mine.

(399)

In giving her the money, Merton gives Kate her freedom. The ambiguity of her being poor spiritually and rich materially and enslaved morally leads her towards moral conflict. Milly grows dependent on money only when social pressure compels her to buy the sanctuary of Palazzo Lepovelli and the protection of Eugenio. She uses her wealth as "a

counter move to fate" (350). Yet she gains her lasting salvation only when she renounces money utterly.

In the Book VI the strain of appearance drives Milly to art in rented Venetian palace. It is elegant and adequate in its beauty. It has inherent traditional values. Its silhouette profoundly reflects nothing of the Europe of the early twentieth century. James dramatizes the meaning of Venice in the modern world: it is like London has made the sacrifice of art to matter. This shows London has become the central place for creating ambition ignoring moral values. So the palazzo Lepovelli has made the same relation to the controlling ethos of Venice as does Matcham to that of London, "Palazzo Lepovelli held its history still in its great lap, even like a painted ideal, a solemn puppet hung about with decoration" (367). The imagery suggests artificiality and sterility. For the essential Venice is better represented by the shady commercialism of Eugenio and Pasquale. Although granted a luster by Susan Striugham's journalistic imagination and by Milly's presence, the old palace along the ground canal is but a relic of a decayed past.

Thus the moral, traditional values have been replaced with material quest and modern way of leading life. The characters do not turn their mind back to tradition but towards freedom of the modern time. The world has now become the symbol for materialism which has led humanity to different forms of evil. The Venetian past is present not in its beauty but evil. The past had intact social values. Merton Densher, the man of intellect sees the Venetians of the present as, "Members farces in whom

vacancy was but a nest of darkness – not a vain surface, but a palace of withdrawal in which something obscure, something always ominous, indistinguishably lived" (370).

Thus Venice is a place having tradition of immorality¹ especially in commercial matters. When Lord Mark awakens Milly to the monstrous plot against her, the Venetian scene reflects the personal catastrophe and gives it extensive dimensions. The great black storm means tumult and cataclysm, "It was a Venice all of evil that had broken out . . . a Venice of cold lashing rain from low black sky of wicked wind raging through narrow passes, of general arrest and interruption" (375).

Due to commercialism and value for economic break through and loss of traditional cultural and moral values, the Piazza San Marco, a great art, a symbol of European civilization as a whole, is darkened to blackness and overwhelmed by violence, "The whole place, in its huge elegance, the grace of its conception and the beauty of its detail, was more than ever like a great drawing-room, the drawing-room of Europe, profaned and bewildered by some reverse of fortune" (378).

Through Milly's developing awareness of the irrelevance of the art of the past to modern life, James dramatizes the disintegration of civilization. Throughout the novel he reveals the ever widening fading morality and traditional values. Deprived of access to meaning through art or manners, Maud Lowder derives her motivations and morality from British culture in general. We find her in the beginning as we find her in the end a loyal apostle to money. But Kate, Merton and Milly are, in the

beginning, undefined by status or creed. The novel records their efforts and decisions toward achieving identity. But for each due to rallying between liberality and morality the existing situation is inadequate.

Kate's personal qualities are great; she esteems family loyalty over private gains and moral freedom over moral commitment. But her father, her sister and her aunt comprise for her a world in which selfhood and vulgarity set the tone, in which the material urge is unrefined by sentiment or sensibility. The London world can be understood only in terms of money. To pursue magnificence, Kate has no choice but to accept the code of Aunt Maud. Her efforts to reconcile with the human value of love and the barbaric value of money fail. Therefore, when she seeks her own image in Merton's mirror in the novel's final scene, she signals her separation from her lover, whose own renunciation of money forces Kate to retreat to the damning securing of wealth.

Kate's initial conflict is between acceptance of family poverty for the sake of loyalty and acceptance of Aunt Maud's wealth for the sake of magnificence. In "her actual high retreat" about Maud's counting house, she is precariously detached and uncommitted" (364). Kate's relation to Maud forecasts Milly's eventual relation to Kate. But when Kate descends she reconciles with the standard of Maud with her love for Merton, and thus becomes converted in society; whereas Milly holds firm to her personal values, her moral integrity.

What we find in Kate is a great will, who accepts and then uses society on its own terms. Her object is money and her method is manners.

Once she initiates her plot, from the moment she decides not to tell Milly about her engagement to Merton. She remains inflexible. To Merton, Kate is "deep" a whole library of the unknown, the uncut," but ironically there is nothing beneath the surface but the will, the moral intelligence has surrendered itself to money" (381).

Merton is a forerunner of a dominant character type of modern literature. He leads to Eliot's Prufrock, Conrad's Heyst and Green's Scobie. He is non-heroic yet perceptive man. He is driven to self understanding by his weakness of will and horror of ugliness of modern society. Like Kate and Milly, Merton plunges into the abyss which for him as for others is both internal and external – the private depth and the social depths. If Milly's descent to the abyss reveals spiritual love and Kate's reveals only will, Merton's reveals a capacity for sanctifying grace. For he always remains weak. His suffering is most acute when he is isolated after his moral rejection of Kate. When Sir Luke leaves the dying Milly to Merton alone, the physician's unspoken plea that he love Milly leads Merton to ask himself, "Into what abyss it had pushed him" (384).

By various vague and nameless deeds Kate's father has brought the family, which includes the four small children of her widowed sister, into dishonor and financial collapse. Her wealthy aunt is willing to rescue Kate on the explicit condition that she renounces all contact with her father and on the unspoken condition that she marry a man of the aunt's choice. At this Aunt Maud says, "I want her to marry a great man that was all; but

more and more, it was enough; and if it had not been her next words would have made it so. And I think of her what I think" (65).

This shows she has no freedom even to choose her life partner. She has been manipulated and led by her aunt. It shows strict moral values being imposed on her. Kate herself is beautiful, proud, poor but covetous of wealth and in love with a penniless man not of her aunt's choice. She is also painfully conscious of the responsibilities and obligation and "the part not always either uplifting or sweetening, that the bond of blood might play in one's life" (86). She is not free from his bond – as Milly says, "That is all my virtue." She murmurs to Merton "a kind little family feeling. I have small stupid piety – I don't know what to call it" (98). Finally she occupies a unique position within the family complex, with her youth, her pride, her presence and the magnetism that makes her appear "more 'dressed' often with fewer accessories, than other women or less dressed, should have occasionally require with more" (369). She is the one piece of solid collateral the disgraced and the distressed family possesses; they are tangible asset whose worth to them is the price it will bring at barter. In this context, she repeats to Merton, "It's the value- the only one they have . . . It makes me ask myself if I have any right to personal happiness, any right to anything but to be as rich and overflowing, as smart and shining, as I can be made" (332).

So the theme of fading morality and emphasis on materialism revolves round the novel. The relationship between characters is not of human relation but of material intimacy. A fellow human being not as a

person but as an object for use is present from the beginning of the novel. It is more horrifying because of its context within the family setting, where the distortion and reversal of roles are so severe. The fading moral and traditional values in nineteenth and early twentieth century are so much prevalent due to lust for money. There is selfish behavior even among family members because of hunger of material comfort, which can be clearly clarified through these lines:

The image of her so compromised and compromising father was all effectively to have pervaded her life, was in a certain particular way to have tampered with her spring; by which I mean that the shame and the irritation and the depression the general poisonous influence of him, were to have been shown.(553)

Her sister is abject, her father is full of folly and cruelty and wickedness. Her aunt is unscrupulous. It is sufficient for the evil of the day that Kate exists in contiguity with them, that she is the prime object of their various designs. She accepts not only their right to use her but also, by extension, any one's rights to use anyone who might be in a passion to be useful. The acceptance of this principle is the primary distortion of human values in the novel.

Thus Kate is under pressure from all the members of her family not to be "selfish" that is not to marry a penniless man or to put it another way, not to marry a man she loves since he is not only penniless but also feels that the "inner most fact . . . of his own consciousness" is his "private

inability to believe he should ever be rich" (389). Looking at herself in the mirror, she meditates upon the possibility of at least a partial escape from this family torture. But she is aware of her power to be free; "If she saw more things than her fine face in the dull glass of her father's lodgings she might have seen that after all she was not herself a fact in the world. She did not hold herself cheap, she did not make for misery" (891). She is in dilemma whether to accept family values or to be with Merton marrying him according to her choice. Her dilemma rapidly becomes acute, she has accepted her position. At the same time it is only she who can preserve their collective dignity. In order to preserve means "to prefer an ideal of behavior – than which nothing ever was more selfish – to the possibility of stray crumbs for the four small creature" (387). She wants to preserve her family dignity by abandoning her love. She says: "I did it to save myself to escape" (394). In this way, the novel dramatizes the conflict between the fading moral values of the nineteenth century and the emerging liberal attitudes of the early twentieth century.

The Wings of the Dove treats the collapse of western civilization than *the Ambassadors*. *The Ambassadors* deals with the last gasping break of the old order. By the time of *The Wings of the Dove*, old order is dead; it is only visible in its decay. James's *The Wings of the Dove* reflects what his notebooks and letters often state: "His vision of the impending collapse of Western civilization, of this overwhelming, self-defeating chaos or cataclysm toward which the whole thing is drifting" (207)

The sense of this novel is the western world; the New York home of Milly Theale and the London and Venice settings embrace the moral as well as the geographical limits of western culture. The England which has its center in Lancaster Gate is given over completely to materialism. It's out has degenerated to the colossal vulgarity of Maud lower in whom there was a whole of Britannia , the side of her florid philistinism, her plumes and her trains, her fantastic furniture and heaving bosom, the false gods of her task and false not of her false" (97).

The natures of the circumstance in the novel keep her in confusion or in dilemma. Neither can she live without family values nor being poor. It means that she does not want to give up Merton, yet she does not want to be poor, and she would be poor if she married Merton. She does not want to be dishonorable. She does not want to see her family fortune and honor turn to mud. So, if she chooses anyone alternative means, she should give up another alternative.

On the other hand, it is moral personality of Merton in which intellect, sensibility and passion co-exist with a fatal moral indecisiveness that is chiefly brought out in Book XII. Merton contrives nevertheless to talk himself into the necessity, the desirability, the simple decency of doing so:

It was not so much that he failed of being the kind of man who 'chucked,' for he knew himself as the kind of man wise enough to mark the case in which the chucking might be minor evil and the least cruelty. It was that he liked to much

every one concerned willingly to show himself merely impracticable. He liked . . . Milly . . . Kate and all ... he had never know himself so generally merciful. It was a footing, at all events, whatever accounted for it, a which he would surely be rather a muff not to manage by one turn or another to escape disobliging. (38).

The moral indecisiveness appears conspicuously at another crucial point in the story, reflecting on the fearful implication of Kate's design. This fearful design of Kate appears clearly in Book X which is the most challenging situation of Merton's life. Merton tries to give away the money to the living person he loves. But Kate also does not accept money which shows their devotion to Milly and their own acceptance with each other. But, when Merton awaits Kate's decision, the novel evokes as a memory the earlier assignation, never described in Merton's room: "Strange it was for him than that she stood in his own room doing it, while, with an intensity now beyond any that had ever made his breath come slow, he waited for her to act" (404).

As before, Kate consents, determined if she can to prevent the waste of their passion, but consenting only on one condition, "Your word of honor that you are not in love with her memory" (404). Merton squirms in making an exclamation which tries to hide the memory that now possesses him. But within that exclamation Kate "sees instantly the truth that separates them; Her memory's your love; you want no other" (405) when Merton offers again to marry her and stands without moving, awaiting her

answer Kate "turned toward the door, and her headshake was now the end" (405). She has withdrawn from a passion which is spent. They have gone on anguished withdrawal into the sterile isolation of their lives apart while paying a desperate tribute to the passion.

At the end of the novel, when Kate openly takes away her hand from Merton's life, he is in deep ruin. He is left with the memory of "act of splendid generosity (386)" performed by Kate in his rooms in Venice. Both have the memory of the marriage they had hoped for. And each has the memory of money which sits on the table as the novels end, "untouchable and immaculate" and each has the memory of the American girl who made on the occasion of her party a "brief sacrifice to society" (295) in world in which can't make the most out of its money. Every attempt they have made at the end to salvage them at the same ruinously divided and destroyed them at the same time. The double burden of this double recognition is carried by Kate. Kate says simply: "we shall never be again as we were (405)." It shows that Kate is in dilemma throughout the novel and is forced to sacrifice morality by withdrawing herself from marriage. Kate gives up Merton to preserve the social status and her liberality which can be saved only by being rich but this issue differs for Merton. She wants to be liberal and rich at the same time which shows moral conflict. She peruses magnificence which is possible by accepting Aunt Maud who is very much strict in moral values and about her status as aristocratic woman. In course of time money becomes the object for Kate which makes Merton plunge into a abyss which is the loss of morality

brought in Victorian period because of liberality which is brought about by running after materially. So, moral commitment has subverted moral freedom in Victorian period. The characters, in the beginning, remain unknown about the social and cultural values, but the lust for money lead them towards tragedy in their life. So, they are in between liberality and fading morality of Victorian period.

IV. Exposition of Conflict of Moral Values

Every piece of literature demands various interpretations. James's *The Wings of the Dove* has greatly been discussed by many critics who have come up with a number of interpretations: the lesson of spiritual beauty, social disintegration, ordeal of consciousness, lust for money and the semantics of social hierarchy. Moreover, his attachment to the socio-cultural element is significant. The major characters are sometimes attracted by morality and sometimes by liberality of the twentieth century. They seem to be torn between fading morality of 19th century and liberality heralded by the 20th century. Kate's and Merton's lust for money makes their love affair tragic.

In spite of various interpretations on James' *The Wings of Dove*, the major characters' role in the novel clarifies the dilemma of characters on morality and liberality. The main characters are neither able to accept morality completely nor can they go against it. In the novel the major characters, Kate Croy and Merton Densher who are passionately in love, are suspended between moral and liberal modern ways of life. The love affair turns into tragedy because of their cultural difference – one rich, the other poor, one liberal another moral. Kate is in dilemma throughout the novel as to whether to preserve her family background by abandoning Merton or to become poor by abandoning her family rules. She is so much more devoted to money that drives her to the quest for liberal ways. She does not want to see her family's fortune and honor turn to dust. So, she does not want to sacrifice her personal dignity into that misfortune. She is

proud of her family reputation. She is wealthy, dignified, proud of her name, charitable of her magnificence. On the other hand Densher, a poor, believes in true love, and gives no importance to money. He is loved by all because of his moral belief.

On the other hand, she is controlled by Aunt Maud who puts her under the periphery of her strict moral and social boundaries. She has a narrow little family feeling. To Densher, Kate is a deep, unknown, the uncut because the moral intelligence has surrendered itself to money. Kate does not hold firm to her personal values and her moral integrity. She reconciles her standards to Maud, thus she is converted in society. Merton is driven to self understanding by her weakness of will and the horror of running after money which is in same sense most ugly for him.

Money has become the controlling force in this novel. Milly sees the English friends to have been attracted by her economics. The economic values have subverted human values not just in Kate's identification of Milly with her health but it has reduced morality into liberal way modern life. Kate's father and sister reject Kate's offer of family in favor of her potential cash value as Aunt Maud's word. Aunt Maud sees Kate as a financial investment. Milly and Maud also focus on economic value, for they try to bribe to Merton because they want to have hold over him.

Likewise, the relationship between Merton and Kate gradually fades with the lust for finances. Money matters a lot instead of true love between them resulting in moral conflict. Though Merton is a witty, handsome and idealistic young man he can't get Kate because of Kate and Kate's Aunt's

aristocratic thinking and their idealized reputation of money. Kate's aunt does not show her consensus to marry Kate to Merton because of his poor economic background. So, Kate is not willing to abandon money status to be with Merton. But she is willing to do morally questionable things when she makes a scheme to get a fortune from a terminally ill American heiress.

Thus, the novel depicts the moral conflict of the 19th century which was aggravated by the advancement of science and technology, which marked the gap between rich and middle class people. The aristocratic concept of rich people like, Aunt Maud is oriented towards the emerging modern liberal attitudes of the 20th century in European society. Major characters, Kate Croy and Merton Densher are torn between morality and liberal ways of modern life which creates the conflict in the fading morals and the tradition of the 19th century due to emerging modern liberal attitudes.

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