

## TECHNIQUES OF UNREADABILITY IN *THE WINGS OF THE DOVE*

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### Abstract

The later Henry James was aware that English fiction was at the risk of an excessive “vulgarity” from which he was anxious to help save it. To achieve this purpose, he used the techniques of a strategy of “unreadability” in his fiction. The present study is an attempt to critically analyze the techniques of “unreadability” in *The Wings of the Dove*. These techniques are strategic contradiction, waiting as representational dilemma, the unknowable character, metaphorical perception, and the function of the labyrinth. However, another argument of the present paper is that the function of these techniques in James’s novel is paradoxical, because on the one hand they render it unreadable while on the other hand they make it into a narrative space where the interaction of text and reader guarantees the production of new experiences.

**Keywords:** *The Wings of the Dove*, unreadability, representational waiting, unknowable character, labyrinth

### 1. Introduction

The fiction of Henry James is in the middle way from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century traditional story to the 20<sup>th</sup>-century modernist fiction. Published in 1902, *The Wings of the Dove* is a work of the later Henry James when he was aware that the English fiction was at the risk of an excessive “vulgarity”. Firstly, I will attempt to explicate the vulgar for James. To elaborate what he thought as vulgar, Shoshana Felman says,

The literal is “vulgar” because it stops the *movement* constitutive of meaning, because it blocks and interrupts the endless process of metaphorical substitution. The vulgar, therefore, is anything which misses, or falls short of, the dimension of the symbolic, anything which rules out, or excludes, meaning as a loss and as a flight, – anything which strives, in other words, to eliminate from language its inherent silence, anything which misses the specific way in which the text *actively* “won’t tell” (1977, p. 107).

James decided that shallow characterization was a ground of “vulgarity” in fiction; that is, the presence in it of a kind of character which was the product not of imagination but of scientific observation. In the eye of James, vulgar fiction was literal and meaningless, because of which it was likely to lose its intellectually sophisticated readers. Therefore, both as a creative writer and a critical scholar of fiction, he worked to save it from the vortex.

To do this service, James often took his characters from the upper middle classes who were supposed to be more subtle, artistically more appreciative, and with more intellectual sophistication. For example, Hugh Vereker, the novelist in “The Figure in the

Carpet” who has “become in a manner the fashion” (James, 2001, p. 6), and George Corvick, the well-known critic in the same story, are the members of the upper middle class who earn their lives through the publication of creative and critical works. These people are often concerned, not with “to be,” but with how “to be,” with the qualifications of life. In their imagination they are far different from the common people as well as in the issues of their lives, for their imagination is free and dynamic, and so among the issues of their lives are the production and evaluation of new experiences. Millicent Bell (2008) claims that James has employed such people to go through the “ordeal of creative interpretation in their efforts to understand one another” (p. 90).

Another dimension of the vulgar in the Victorian English novel for James was the use of a non-technical point of view in which the omnipresent authorial voice was often the focal voice. The authorial voice as focal in the Victorian fiction boldly cancelled what was the economy of dialogism in the modern fiction. However, as another method for saving the Victorian fiction from vulgarity, James used a series of discursive techniques which want to create in-between spaces of mutual understanding among his characters. In later decades, Michail Bakhtin called this in-between space of negotiation “heteroglossia.” Thus, as an antidote to the vulgarity of the Victorian English novel, the later James attempted to compose a kind of fiction which was “an allegory of the unreadable.” *The Wings of the Dove*, which many scholars say is the most complicated story by James, is perhaps a best illustration of the unreadable.

Having explicated the vulgar in the Victorian English novel from which James attempted to refine it, the present writer now takes to clarify a measure or mode of a paradoxical “unreadability” in *The Wings of the Dove*. The novel is unreadable in several forms. A form of it is a sense of waiting as a representational dilemma, a sense of waiting which is at the same time a cause of embarrassment and an excitement of reading. Another form of unreadability in *The Wings* is what the writer of *The Method of Henry James* means when he claims that “in the Venetian part of the story, Milly is not sufficiently present in person, she has too passive a role” (Beach, 1954, p. 263). By claiming this, Joseph Warren Beach wants to indicate that the presence of this American girl as a focal character in the novel is not fleshy and concrete enough but is like an absence-in-presence which leaves the readers “at a loss” when they attempt to discover its narrative pattern. A function of Milly’s ethereal being in the novel is the obliqueness of the narrator’s speech, which causes a discursive space the forces of which counter each other.

Another effect of Milly’s unreal presence in James’s novel is that her consciousness remains impossible for the readers to uncover and formulate till the end of the story, because as Anna Despotopoulou rightly claims, James illustrates the consciousness of such characters “in terms at once obscure and elusive” (2014, p. 152). To support her idea, she discusses the unclarity “of both what Milly immerses herself in and what she wants to avoid” (p. 152). In this way, Milly’s being is the realm of the symbol, the space where the real and the unreal do not cancel but complement each other. The insertion of reality in unreality in *The Wings* is for the creation of a precarious state of knowledge in his characters and readers where doubt and certainty determine the state of their consciousness. Another example for the insertion of doubt in certainty in Jamesian characters is in chapter 16 of *The Golden Bowl*. However the Princess Maggie has enough token to enable her to guess her husband and her mother-in-law are in a love affair, she

prefers to be far from certain about the affair. Her certainty inserted in doubt dramatizes what James calls “the sense of seeing” (James, 2000, p. 159), a sense which however is “strong” in Maggie; it excites her to grip “at the comfort of not being sure of what she saw” (James, 2000, p. 159). This is not the state of positive assurance, but the realm of risky conceptualizations through analysis and inference.

Still another form of unreadability in *The Wings* is the application of a certain mode of language. In the later James in general, and in this novel in particular, language is used not as a device of communication but as a field of non-communication. The use of grammatical structures which often concern the readers with the formal problems, or with the language of the text, is a facade of non-communication. Another form of language for non-communication in this novel is the use of a kind of opaque and enigmatic language which makes reading not into a linear movement of positive enlightenment but into a circular one which leads the readers to a “labyrinth” of doubt and uncertainty. If the linear movement of a narrative brings them, psychologically speaking, from somewhere to somewhere else, its circular movement makes reading stop where it began to move.

The “unknowable character,” “metaphorical perception,” “stylistic use of absence,” and the function of the labyrinth are among the other techniques of unreadability in this novel which the present study will attempt to analyze in due course. In the text of *The Wings*, a factor neutralizes another factor, and what remains is a handful of unreadable discourses.

It seems that these and other techniques of unreadability in *The Wings* are the secret of the operation of a “machine” which is always in the business of impeding the progress of the narrative or turning its movement to a new direction before it brings reading to a logical conclusion. And since its narrative direction repeatedly changes, for its proper functioning it needs the application of more complicated forms of language and the activity of more subtle mentalities. In such a context, the Jamesian narrative becomes oblique and “undecidable” also, because on the one hand numerous halts emerge in its signification while on the other hand it becomes “recursive” too. Thus, the present reader would like to propose that a further meaning of “unreadability” in this novel is that it is “independent” from all contemporary reading conventions. A summing up of all these techniques in this novel is the formation of a circular enigmatic discourse which makes it into an allegory of the unreadable. They cause reading to be changed from an act of consumption to an act of production.

## **2. Discussion**

### *2.1. Strategic Contradiction*

In the opening paragraphs of *The Wings* James lays the building blocks of his “house of fiction.” There he decides about both the genre and the prose style of his work. He also discusses his reasons behind the story’s composition, and provides his readers with knowledge about it. In addition, he gives a certain direction to his story. Thus, the opening paragraphs of this book are significant for the readers also, because reading them, they decide if they will read the whole book. However, as its narrative moves forward, it brings two spheres together. One is the concrete world of reality to which James and his readers belong. But this world of reality is juxtaposed to a world of unreality which is the effect of a subtle interaction between the text and the readers’ subjective minds. This world of

unreality is, as well, often the habitat of appearances, which are, it seems, the manifestations of a self which is in turn developed in the act of reading. Christina Patsiokas (2013) describes the formation of a self in reading James which “exists both in physical space and outside of it, it is essentially hyperspatial—that which can move through space but also transcends the limitations imposed by space through mediation and virtuality” (p. ii).

On the one side of this contradictory sphere there is a silence—a mark of which is the white of the paper in the hands of the author, while on its other side there is a “heteroglossia,” a plenitude of speech and life in the imaginary. Thus, this story is a space for James and his readers where they can intellectually deal with both the real and the imaginary. This means that by using a number of compositional techniques James helps his readers to compromise on a mutual understanding of both the real and the imaginary. If James in this novel creates a wholly alien world, his alien world is a transcendental adaptation of a world of reality with which he is fully familiar and which he wants to critically evaluate. In addition, his contradictory sphere in this novel is such that in the course of reading one leaves its world of reality behind to focus on a world of imagination.

However, to add to the effect of his novel’s thematic contradiction and its consequential unreadability, James makes it the butt of a structural failure also. J. Hillis Miller finds the failure in the “misplaced middles” of *The Wings*. He argues that not only the first half of it is proportionately too large, and therefore the resolution of its main secret begins too late, its second half is also necessarily deformed. To clarify this concept of “misplaced middles” in it, Miller affirms it is “too long and too short. It is too long because the whole first half exceeds its predetermined bounds and leaves James not enough space for the second half. ... The second half is just too short to be able to represent adequately what it has to say” (2005, p. 160).

Although James’s work is far from unmethodical, one can claim that there is a further form of strategic contradiction at work in it because it is the story of naivety in the trap of clever diplomacy. This compositional feature makes it into still another problematic reading. He uses the advantages of a literary aesthetic in the service of something which adds to the difficulties of reading: he exhibits the possibilities of naivety, he highlights the portentous in the exploitation of innocence, and he organizes the liabilities of it. However, an outcome of such a contradictory situation is a radical increase in the reader’s aesthetic enjoyment.

## 2. 2. *Waiting as Representational Dilemma*

Another method of unreadability in *The Wings* is the “chiasmatic structure” like that with which the novel begins (“She waited, Kate Croy, for her father to come in ...”) (2004, p. 29). Mary Cross claims that chiasmatic language in James is the ground of a

sentence pattern that would eventually be amplified at every point, opened to a play of language that pluralised not only reference but syntax, ... Doubling both the rhetorical and grammatical context of his sentences, he manages not only to open up their field of reference but to defer meaning while it is played at least twice over in reversal and inversion (1993, p. 10).

The daughter's angry waiting for her father who is a late-comer is the allegory of James's readers' seemingly futile waiting for signification which is often deferred via a self-referencing and self-pluralizing language in the web of which they get trapped. As a result, waiting often gets doubled, because James's readers have to search both for the meaning and for escaping from the "prison-house of language."

In addition, George Butte maintains that with James's narrators, chiasmus is a kind of shifting strategy which they use for "representing the phenomenological fabric ... of deep intersubjectivity woven among a novel's characters" (2009, p. 139). But Kate's radical impatience adds to the significance of the structure, because it suggests a conflict about her priority, and gives the readers an idea as to how difficult the situation is both for James and his characters. Depicting Kate as waiting, James shows himself in dramatic doubts and fears of composition also. Ergo, waiting in this novel is like a coin one side of which is the excitement of reading while its other side is a barrier in reading, and in the whole story it makes James and his readers entangled between to say and not to say, between life and death.

A further facet of Kate's waiting as a representational dilemma in this opening situation is her problem with femininity and her dependency in her life and social situation. From the eye of Millicent Bell, she is "a case of class displacement" (2008, p. 94), a woman who "thinks she can manage to seize opportunity by being opportunistic" (p. 95). Thus it is acceptable that she is much different from the women around her, and so we can study her on the basis of her reaction to her father's selfish deportment as well as in the context of her radical poverty. To alleviate her radical poverty she employs a series of subtle techniques to extract the American heiress's money.

To more fully dramatize Kate's anger as a dilemma in her waiting, James takes advantage of the representative power of language also. He represents her anger via the syntactic dimensions of the text for which we consequently have to look mainly at the form of the novel. For example, along with our involvement in a process of formation, the author involves us with a process of dissolution. So, in addition to igniting our interest to read a long and complicated story, James appeals to a method of unreadability which also takes to cancel the novel's discourse.

Kate in her place waiting for her father, when she shows herself on the small balcony and often goes to her room to see herself in the glass is a further narrative gesture which acts out her conflict. Many times she pauses on the balcony, for she is uncertain if she will wait for her father or will go away. But the situation in the street is perhaps even more conflicting than in her room, while desire for escape from her situation is a translation of her feelings.

When Kate ignores her father and goes to live with her aunt, for the first time she sees that the "material things spoke to her" (James, 2004, p. 54). Now she starts to change in the way she looks upon the things, she develops new frames of thought, and sees into new aspects of life and new horizons of existence. This is the beginning in her of a process of observation and reconsideration; and narrative discourse gets more epistemological. Here the subject of the novel is the situation of knowledge in her: how she changes her mind, and how she feels suspended and stressed.

With her fresh 'vulgarity' and her capacity for connivance, Kate's aunt, who "*was London, was life*" (James, 2004, p. 58), exerts no less authority over her than her father. Accordingly, she feels caged in this new situation also, because she finds herself dominated

by her aunt. Here she presents the situation of a feminine discourse at the edge of extinction. The story shows her a sympathetic person, because on one hand she knows she is poor, and on the other, she struggles in a romantic way for a better life. In her romanticism, she feels responsible for her father, for her widowed sister, and for “her portionless little nephews and nieces” (James, 2004, p. 59). However, she is clever enough to make a dupe of her bosom friend for her own ends. Under the pressures of love and poverty, and in the context of her subtlety, she feels that she is “formed at once for being and for seeing” (James, 2004, p. 60). Here the story wants us to read not for what people do, but mainly for how they reflect on what they do, for how they see and think and feel. It follows that we read *The Wings* to learn thinking about the “truth” of the people’s being. When a character stands at the center, it is often his or her mind in a curious representational dilemma that is at the center of our attention.

### 2. 3. *Unknowable Character*

Another factor of the unreadable in *The Wings* is the representation of Kate’s father Lionel Croy. He is as radically escapist as he is metaphorical, and for this reason, the readers cannot expect to recognize him. In Bell we read that he “becomes an ironic illustration of the sceptical view that there is no reality *except* appearance. Even those close to him cannot see him otherwise” (2008, p. 93). He is a father who is pleased that his daughter is “handsome, that she was, in any way, a sensible value” (James, 2004, p. 35). This foreshadowing signifies that he is a lying and deceiving father whose family is only business for him, and love is, in his eye, only a question of power. Therefore, he is the mark of what one would always like to vanquish but what overwhelms one, or, put differently, he is a metaphor of the unknowable, the symbol of what one always searches for but one never finds.

But Milly Theale is perhaps not less unknowable than Kate’s father, and it seems that the readers cannot demystify her too. To render her unknowable, James arranges for her absence from many scenes of the story. But her absence is a space of negotiation and observation also. Kristin King argues that her unknowability is due to her absence from the scene of the novel and that her absence makes it possible for James to take advantage of this for the benefit of communication and collaboration. King maintains that by absenting Milly from the scene the author changes her to a “mystery that brings the other characters into relationship with one another” (2000, p. 1), and creates a tendency in the readers to see how those characters negotiate about her absence. However, Kevin Kohan argues that Milly’s unknowability is due to her brightness, to her “plenitude.” For him, she is unknowable because she is too known to assent the obligations of knowledge, because she is too bright to be seen. Kevin Kohan claims that

What is known about her, though, is that she evades being known. Milly, as a figure of the center, the source of plenitude, attracts metaphysical desire because she is an emblem of the impossible fulfillment of the totality dream. Since she is taken to be a sun-figure and since she cannot be the one true meaning, she must be both: a center under erasure, a metaphor of metaphor (1999, p. 141).

As a “source of plenitude,” she wants to absorb the readers’ full attention. However, James cancels her (material) existence in the opposing powers of his metaphorical narrative. In the course of reading, we are anxious to see her, but her problem is that seeing does not work on her; that is, seeing her does not mean knowing her, as a result of which she remains unknown to the end. In her, dream and matter mingle, and although for Kate she is “at the limit of the visible” (Kohan, 1999, p. 141), she is an emblem of the dream the fulfilment of which is decisively impossible.

Milly’s unknowability (‘absence’) plays a double function. One is transformational, because it changes reading from amusement to enlightenment, from consumption to production, for it turns reading into a goal-oriented perpetual “search” for meaning in which text and readers should cooperate. Another one is narratively constitutive. Changing the role of the narrative cause and effect in the fiction of the later James, Tzvetan Todorov and Arnold Weinstein argue that the “cause” of his tale is a “search” for something which is perpetually “unknown” and “absent”. They write

James’s tales are based on an absolute and absent cause. ... There exists a cause—to be understood in the very broad sense. ... Its effect is the tale, the story which is told. The cause is absolute: everything in the story owes its presence, in the analysis, to it. But it is absent and we set off in quest of it. And it is not only absent but for most of the time unknown as well; only its existence, not its nature, is suspected. There is a quest: that is, the story consists in the search for, the pursuit of this initial cause, this primary essence. The story stops if it is found. ... The essential element is absent; absence is essential element (1973, pp. 74-75).

A Jamesian story is more than a totality of words on paper. It is something for reading and analysis, and unless it is critically read it does not take shape. So, it is not on paper but in the readers’ minds that the story comes into existence while the secret of its functioning is their perpetual searching via reading; and if they stop reading, it gets evaporated. The story as the effect of reading justifies the perpetual “absence” (or unknowability) of its cause, since upon the presence of its cause reading should stop and the story gets abolished. Thus, one can understand why Milly should be absent from many of the scenes and situations of the novel, why she should remain unknown to the end of it. Her absence is the cause of James’s metaphorical narrative.

#### 2. 4. *Metaphorical Perception*

A form of metaphorical perception in *The Wings* is the use of numerous circular structures which leads the readers again to the language itself. It is often said that in the domain of language, James the story-teller is like a magician, because he suddenly brings his hand into his pocket of the language repertoire and brings his character into being via dexterity. If this is right, it is also in the power of language that his characters and readers get perception, because although his characters’ being means their interaction in the plot adventures, his plot is the outcome of language itself. However, in addition to James’s characters’ participation in the story, if they are to see, they should also reflect upon the how of their being. Now, considering that all these narrative technologies take root from language, it can be suggested that in James’s fiction a big part of perception is metaphorical, for language is the sole state of his characters’ meaningful being through reading and reflection.

Circular language in the later James often makes metaphorical perception foggy, postponed, and self-demolishing. In the circular narrative structures of *The Wings*, there are factors, the numerous what-clauses for example, which make language self-referencing, reading enigmatic, and signification steadily the object of postponement. Thus, although reading is for signification, it also guarantees the repeal of signification. For example, none of the following sentences in the novel generate a clear and immediate experience, because instead of referring the readers to the beyond of language, they refer them to the language itself; that is, they do not move their mentalities forward, but only make them move on the circular axis of the sentence.

“She knew on the spot what she was in the presence of” (p. 77).

“For what they best knew him by at Lancaster Gate was a thing difficult to explain” (p. 200).

“Her visitor met it with candour. ‘Yes, love, I think he *is*. I mean that he sees what he can do with me’” (p. 428),

“It was what he had been all the while coming to” (p. 633).

The circular movement means that the second part in each sentence only refers the readers to its first part. This kind of self-referential language makes each sentence into something like a dead-end where the readers work to unravel the secrets of language, to demystify how James’s story makes structures in language. Reading here is not for the generation of data about Milly’s life and death but for the activity of our consciousness in the domain of language.

Another form of metaphorical perception in *The Wings* is the parts where a correspondence between the literal level of structuring and the metaphorical is the condition of a useful reading. For example, note how in James’s boating parlance a correspondence is shaped between each imagery and the meaning suggested for it: “great new steamers” for great new trends of thought or great new literary debates; “your little boat” for the movement of your imagination while approaching a (Jamesian) text; “hovering” for continual meditation in the realm of the transcendent; “leviathan” for the American heiress who will ultimately subdue all the plots against her; “violent rocking of leviathan’s companions” for the people around the American girl who will be violated by her sincere magnificence or ethereal presence. In each case, one can observe two worlds or two realms of meaning. One is a physical realm with which the readers are already familiar while the other one is a metaphysical and transcendental sphere about which they are innocent. However, in each example of this bipolar perception James provides a bridge in language which transfers the readers from the first realm of meaning to the next.

Meanwhile, it is paradoxical that in the domain of James’s metaphorical and self-referential language, reading is an attempt for understanding through what Ruth Bernard Yeazell calls “cognitive perception.” Yeazell rightly argues that perception in later James is primarily “cognitive,” because although the perception of the vehicle in many of James’s metaphors is based on our senses, the perception of the relation between the vehicle and the tenor often goes beyond the sensuous and enters the realm of the cognitive. Yeazell



describes this mode of perception in a number of scenes in *The Wings*. For example, take “Milly Theale’s clinging to the Rockies for dear life,” where her “strangeness ... resembles the strangeness of a dream, at once distant and bizarre, seemingly far removed from the ordinary life and startlingly immediate in their implications” (1994, p. 177). As a visual image, Milly on the mountain top is a site of metaphorical perception. Yet, for understanding how the strangeness of this image “resembles the strangeness of a dream,” the readers should perform some rational deductions also. To appreciate why and how Milly’s clinging to the rock is “removed from the ordinary life,” they should rationally participate in the discourse of James’s narrative. These rational deductions render the image a realm of cognitive perception also because they bring the readers to the beyond of the power of their sense perception.

For another example of cognitive perception, take when Kate and Densher meet in Kensington Gardens for the second time to negotiate the common grounds of their thoughts and feelings. Their meeting is an occasion for the readers to find out about (their) love through a “cognitive perception,” because as they read the story here they have to precisely analyse the minutest details of their talks and communications. However, this mode of perception in James is often the product of working with certain kinds of grammatical structures and attempting to understand the condition of metaphor and the function of opposition. If Milly clings to the Rockies for the possibility of a different kind of life and understanding, what kind of life and understanding will it be? Kohan (1999) argues that James works to let his characters live metaphorically and to pave the way for his readers to metaphorical understanding, a mode of understanding which is guaranteed by the powers of language. For example, it is only in metaphorical language that Milly’s existence is concrete and believable enough. Therefore, it seems that for transcending his readers’ perception, and thereby to help the Victorian fiction free itself from “vulgarity,” James has provided them with language situations where perception is based mainly on rational deduction which is itself based on the powers of metaphorical language.

## 2. 5. *The Function of the Labyrinth*

The function of the labyrinth in *The Wings* is still another strategy which James applies to add to its unreadability. The labyrinth is the form or function which makes a novelistic discourse like a maze, a network, in which a passage leads you to another passage which in turn brings you to still another one, and the last passage is likely to bring you where you were at the beginning of your quest. Wonder, suspicion, and mystery excite interest in reading, and James’s readers become curious to get more insight. Therefore, the profound atmosphere of such a context necessitates a hectic struggle for knowledge. For instance, although Kate and Merton feel themselves in “the temple of marriage,” they find no avenue to bring them to the temple, no logical way for the enactment of their wish. As they speak, they have to ponder over what they can utter in certain situations, because their talk is at the same time for testing the function of language, for the activity of consciousness, and for gaining new experiences.

When these guys meet again, their presentation is even more labyrinthine than in their first meeting, because they feel differently and are with different programs: her concern is romantic and womanly, while his is masculine, critical, and intellectual. When he examines the “scales” of his new life, he sees that “sometimes the right was down and

sometimes left; never a happy equipoise—one or the other always kicking the beam” (James, 2004, p. 89). He asks himself what he should lose to have Kate, and even gets doubtful if he should marry her at all. In this way, *The Wings* is the story of a man who searches in the maze of his mind to come to terms with a hostile environment for achieving salvation. From a realm of thought about marriage, we are led to a realm of thought about the nature of perception in the male and female. However, the story renders an ultimate perception as impossible, because its language hinders reading:

“It satisfies me beautifully,” Densher declared, “but it doesn’t, my dear child, very greatly enlighten me. You don’t, you know, really tell me anything. It’s so vague that what am I to think but that you may very well be mistaken? What has he done, if no one can name it?”

“He has done everything.”

“Oh—everything! Everything’s nothing.”

“Well then,” said Kate, “he has done some particular thing. It’s known—only, thank God, not to us” (James, 2004, pp. 94-95).

What is the logic of such a discourse where “everything’s nothing” and dialogue becomes the mechanism of its own cancelation? If “everything,” entirety, leaves no chance for otherness, no relations will take place, and “nothing” will come into existence. Therefore, it can be proposed that the “thing” of the later James’s fiction is a kind of experience which is multi-lateral, which is no longer the product of a one-dimensional design but is the method of a labyrinthine structure. In such a labyrinthine discourse, what the absolute guarantees is only a dead-end, because “everything” will lead to “nothing,” to nowhere.

However, “nothing” is as much totalitarian and absurdist as “everything.” The “everything” that demolishes all powers of otherness will logically lead to “nothing,” for it is the powers of limitation, the powers of “otherness” that is the logic of otherness also. In this way, although metaphorical labyrinth is a method of unreadability, it is also for the production of experience, for it makes something simultaneously capable to remain in somewhere and to escape from that somewhere also. Metaphor (in James) is a possibility for the sign to stand at the same time for a thing and also for something that is other than that thing. In this way, *The Wings* provides us with a labyrinth where narrative experience is simultaneously generated and destroyed.

When Densher negotiates with Kate’s aunt, Kate becomes engaged to him, and he departs for America, it seems that the labyrinthine starts functioning in him, because he makes one-to-one correspondences with things and understands the inmost secrets of the being. In chapter II of the Second Book, the novel reads

It was the language of the house itself that spoke to him, writing out for him, with surpassing breadth and freedom, the associations and conceptions, the ideals and possibilities of the mistress. Never, he flattered himself, had he seen anything so gregariously ugly ... that his impressions put straight into his mind. He would write about the heavy horrors that could still flourish (2004, p. 104).

He freely starts to get experience in more than one way; and every association or conception becomes the source of a new thought in the maze of his mind. When Mrs. Lowder is projected onto his consciousness, its representation is like an intricate

combination of parts which is far from simple and which is based on the difference between his own life and hers. Here, as the narrator tells us what Densher has perceived of Lowder, he dramatizes the play of his mind; that is, he shows us how he ponders over the things and makes perception. In James's fiction, there are occasions when characters negotiate with readers on how to unravel the mentality of other characters. Thus, the simultaneous representation of a number of mentalities in James's later phase makes it like a labyrinth. Behzad Ghaderi maintains that James tries "to break every single atom of his characters' thoughts, creating a burst of energy which manifests itself in complicated sentences" (2004, p. 45).

### 3. Conclusion

In the preface to *The Wings of the Dove*, Henry James discusses a "regular failure" which is "perhaps the most striking example" (2004, p. 19) in his oeuvre. However, affirming that the structure of this novel is dependent on the technique of "balanced halves," A. J. Ward maintains that each "Book" of this novel has its subordinate or constitutive pattern. If James's "failure" is of deformity or bad dimensions of his novel, it should go counter to Ward's argument about its "balanced halves," and can ground a system of "unreadability," because in this case the novel's "middles" are "misplaced" in consequence of which it will lose its balance. In the context of James's argument about his novel's "failure," the present paper has attempted to analyze the techniques of a consequential unreadability in it. However, it has argued that the application of the techniques of unreadability makes it paradoxically productive also, because through a perpetual search for meaning in the form of a goal-oriented negotiation between text and readers, they change reading from consumption to production.

For the functioning of this strategy of unreadability, James formulates a number of techniques a summing up of which is the formation of a metaphorical and enigmatic discourse which always wants to cancel itself but the cancellation of which is, on the other hand, the secret of a productive search for new experiences through reading. One of these techniques is the creation of contradictory narrative spaces where reality and virtuality are integrated into one another. The integration of the real and the virtual in James's narrative is also for the creation of in-between spaces where the latter is generated from the former as a consequence of which reading will no longer be a "vulgar" activity because it amazingly enlarges the consciousness of his characters and readers. It also causes an interaction between text and readers which makes reading into an act of critical interpretation. Another technique of unreadability is the production of a representational sense of waiting. In James's novel, waiting is paradoxically both a compositional quandary and an excitement of reading. If it is a quandary in reading, it is also interpretively generative, because in the context of Kate's waiting for example, when the readers sympathetically do their best to help her solve her problems, James uses both the readers' curiosity and the powers of language for casting a compositional doubt which causes productivity.

The creation of the unknowable character is a further method which James uses in *The Wings* for its unreadability. In order for reading not to control the whole discourse of his novel, he renders Lionel Croy an unknowable man even for his daughter, for there are many occasions in the novel when he goes beyond the realms of reading. Milly the

American heiress is also unknowable, because James's narrative perpetually annihilates the innermost secrets of her life and being. Her existence in the novel is the meaning of a "narrative cause" for which the reader searches but which is always "absent." Metaphorical perception is still the next resource which James uses to make *The Wings* unreadable. Through the use of enigmatic and self-referencing language in his novel, James creates reading spaces where perception is far from simple, since it goes beyond the sensuous to enter the realm of the cognitive. Metaphorical perception in James is not the result of scientific observation, but is the outcome both of the sensuous and the cognitive via insightful imagination.

However, the last technique in the hands of James to add to his novel's unreadability is the production of a narrative which is like a labyrinth. The labyrinthine makes *The Wings* like a maze in which a passage leads the readers to another passage which in turn brings them to still another one, and the last passage is likely to bring them where they were at the beginning of their quest. In this circular act of reading, what is more important is not finding an ultimate experience; it is reading experience itself.

"Unreliable narrator," "confidant character," "the scenic method," and the "community of vision" are among the other techniques which the later James has used in his fiction to add to its reading values through a paradoxical unreadability. These innovations have made it possible for James to add a lot to the cultural powers of fiction through the possibilities of a productive dialogism. However, they are beyond the space of this paper, while the present researcher will do his best to analyze them in another article.

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