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# DENK-MITTEL METAPHORS

## Metaphors as Thought Devices in Henry James' *The Wings of the Dove*

By Naomi Francisco

Henry James' late works have created an ongoing case for investigation. From his stream-of-consciousness style we see his mastery of language while experiencing the difficulty of comprehending his writing. Specifically, the role of metaphors within his late novel *The Wings of the Dove* are striking because of their independent behavior, and upon analysis of this work, I have found new discoveries in the function of metaphor, most prominently as a device that is more than a substitution for something else, which mystifies rather than clarifies, and which reflects the inner workings of the mind. In fact, metaphor is integral to the way James represents thought streams - it may even be used as an deceptive thought in the mind of a character, instead of a just a modifier, it may be used as an aid to the reader in difficult passages of character's thoughts, and lastly it may even work as a moving scene, rather than a picture. Metaphors in this novel in the end may even represent the everyday processes of the mind and a character's growth and maturity, which I find to be novel functions of the metaphor and something which is yet to be explored further in James' works.

### Introduction

In the quest to study and understand Henry James' late novels, which include *The Ambassadors*, *The Wings of the Dove*, and *The Golden Bowl*, the first natural question that comes to mind is that of his prose. The density of the passages are packed with many parentheticals and descriptions that seem to point in every direction, and a second, closer look is almost always warranted. To say that reading his novels is difficult would not be an overstatement. Scholars consider James to be a major player at the outset of the stream-of-consciousness style, which M. H. Abrams describes as "the unbroken flow of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings in the waking mind; it has since been adopted to describe the a narrative method in modern fiction."<sup>1</sup> Questioning his choice in style ultimately leads one to consider the metaphors in *The Wings of the Dove* . The dense, introspective paragraphs are packed full of metaphors, and as such, they cannot be ignored within the conversation of James' stream-of-consciousness style. The relationship between stream-of-consciousness and metaphors and how they work in this novel is an interesting one , and leads to new discoveries in the function of metaphor. A metaphor is not merely a literary device as "simple one-to-one equivalents ('this stands in for that')"<sup>2</sup> but rather something that has an independent nature of its own, that inspires mystique instead of clarification, and which, within the scope of the book, resembles the workings of the mind as the character thinks, perceives, and feels .

The ways in which James employs metaphor are critical to his portrayal of the thoughts in a the mind. It is an essential tool within stream-of-consciousness and his usage of metaphors differs from traditional conceptions

1 M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Terms*, (Cengage Learning, 1999), 298-299. [https://mthoyibi.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/a-glossary-of-literary-terms-7th-ed\\_m-h-abrams-1999.pdf](https://mthoyibi.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/a-glossary-of-literary-terms-7th-ed_m-h-abrams-1999.pdf)

2 David Punter, "The Classical Problem," *Metaphor*, (Routledge, 2007), 17.

of metaphor. What is considered “traditional” metaphor has been a debate throughout the centuries, but I will use Aristotle’s definition to give us at least a broad framework to conceptualize within. Aristotle writes, “Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else.”<sup>3</sup> As this paper will discuss, the metaphors we will deal with in James’ novel do more than simply giving something a name that “belongs to something else.” For James, the device depicts both enlightenment and deception in the scenarios and scenes in the mind of the characters, with an active element in them that makes the metaphors longer and more complex than just giving it the name of “something else.” Additionally, this paper will discuss how the metaphors reflect functions of the mind, from everyday thoughts, dreams, and the maturity of the characters in the novel. Linguists have discovered that metaphor is a conceptualization tool —“the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another” as George Lakoff described it<sup>4</sup>—and James’ work hints that he might have had an intuition of this and perhaps tried to mirror it.

This paper’s focus on metaphor has to do with the fact that the stream-of-consciousness narrative employs metaphor as more than the traditional literary device, which expands or clarifies a subject. Metaphor is essential as a stream-of-consciousness device when the characters delude themselves and others, develop their thoughts and opinions, and dwell in deep thought. For the reader, the metaphors act as something to grab onto, while at the same time reflecting the tendencies of the mind as it conceptualizes one idea in terms of another. The fact that the human mind works this way will not be explored in depth; rather this paper will focus primarily on how James uses metaphor in a more nuanced and specialized way than it has ever been traditionally considered.

## Chapter 1

In James’ works, metaphor is more than a literary embellishment, ornamentation, or flourish. Metaphor here takes on a life of its own, has its own structure, and is in a way a “world-building” device in the mind of a character. As an introduction, we will first look at David Punter’s description of the problem lying within our notion of metaphor:

A metaphor . . . is not necessarily a matter of simple one-to-one equivalents (‘this stands in for that’), but neither is it a process of ornamentation of something that could have been more clearly said in another, simpler way; rather, in this case at least, as in the very different case of the party political slogan quoted above, it *is* the very substance of the discourse. A common error about metaphor is to suppose that it can be in some sense ‘unpacked.’ When that unpacking takes place, what is left is rarely of value; it seems a paltry and colorless thing when compared with the metaphor itself.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the function of metaphor is not that we “unpack” it, which Punter says is our mistake, but that we take the metaphor as “the very substance of the discourse” itself, meaning that metaphor has weight in its own right and can stand on its own. The following examples will clarify this understanding of metaphor, as the metaphors are detailed in the ensuing typology.

To be clear, the metaphors that will be addressed are ones that the characters invent and that occur in their minds as opposed to metaphors stated by the narrator in this third-person limited omniscient narrative. What we find when we analyze the characters’ metaphors is an image of the struggle, the situation, or perception of a situation they are dealing with. Additionally, the analyses of the metaphors to be explored in the following two sections will follow us throughout the entire discussion. Metaphor will be seen first as an independent framework, then as a tool of deception, both as a willfully deceptive tool used by a character on other characters and also used by characters on themselves.

### *Section 1: Independent Frameworks*

3 Aristotle, *The Poetics*, Chapter 21, 1457b1-30, Readings from English H195A, UC Berkeley. Professor David Marno, November 1st, 2016.

4 George Lakoff, “The contemporary theory of metaphor,” *Metaphor and Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 202-251.

5 Punter, *Metaphor*, 17.

Our first example exemplifies the way in which the metaphors take on independent lives of their own, by prompting associations in the characters' minds and then detaching into its own idea. In one example, Densher in *The Wings of the Dove* applies different roles to Kate:

The ostensible, in Kate, struck him altogether, on this occasion, as prodigious; while scarcely less prodigious, for that matter, was his own reading, on the spot, of the relation between his companions... she was always, for her beneficent dragon, under arms... so that he now recognized something like the artistic idea, the plastic substance, imposed by tradition, by genius, by criticism, in respect to a given character, on a distinguished actress. As such a person was to dress the part, to walk, to look, to speak, every way to express, the part, so all this was what Kate was to do for the character she had undertaken... Aunt Maud's appreciation of that to-night was indeed managerial, and the performer's own contribution fairly that of the faultless soldier of parade... it was as if the drama – it thus came to him, for the fact of a drama there was no blinking – was between *them*, them quite preponderantly; with Merton Densher relegated to mere spectatorship, a paying place in front, and one of the most expensive.<sup>6</sup>

Densher watches Kate as she enters into the room. He watches Aunt Maud as she receives her. He then applies metaphors to Kate. First, that of a soldier, who is “for her beneficent dragon, under arms,” meaning that she is preparing for battle against the dragon, her own Aunt Maud (the “dragon” metaphor applied to Aunt Maud will not be explored in this paper). Secondly, that of an actress: “. . . a distinguished actress. As such a person was to dress the part, to walk, to look, to speak, every way to express, the part, so all this was what Kate was to do for the character she had undertaken.” Like an actress, she has committed herself to a certain character and had to in every way conform herself to it. In order to orient himself around Kate and Aunt Maud's relationship at that single moment, Densher finds that he is merely a spectator, with “a paying place in front, and one of the most expensive.” In his lengthy observance, he tries to figure out his role or position in this social context, and he fills this missing part of his knowledge through metaphor. Before, he had had no place in relation to Aunt Maud and Kate, and her entrance made him wonder about their relationship, and then about his own relationship to them, and so he theorizes through metaphor, and *the metaphor* becomes his conclusion. Densher has filled in what he is wondering about, and thus creates a new idea for himself. This can be related to Nietzsche's theory on the acquisition of knowledge through humanity's “drive for truth,”<sup>7</sup> which starts with the formation of concepts. Every word instantly becomes a concept precisely insofar as it is not supposed to serve as a reminder of the unique and entirely individual original experience to which it owes its origin; but rather, a word becomes a concept insofar as it simultaneously has to fit countless more or less similar cases - which means, purely and simply, cases which are never equal and thus altogether unequal. Every concept arises from the equation of unequal things.<sup>8</sup>

A word becomes a concept as it “fits” other cases, as Nietzsche explained above, and Densher does this through fitting a concept (spectatorship) into his own case. In many instances he finds that he is not a main player in the game, but rather a spectator, a pawn in the hands of Kate. He produces new knowledge for himself through the production of metaphors, which contrasts with Nietzsche's theory insofar that for Nietzsche it is the “word” which applies to countless cases. It is a new idea that has an independent life of its own, and that importantly also has a space of its own.

The space to which I refer to is the framework that the metaphor provides. An example of how a metaphor provides such a framework comes from Book Sixth, Chapter III.

...it brought them back to the fact of her success; and it was at that comparatively gross circumstance, now so fully placed before them, that Milly's anxious companion sat and looked – looked very much as some spectator in an old-time circus might have watched the oddity of a Christian maiden, in the arena, mildly, caressingly, martyred. It was the nosing and fumbling not of lions and tigers but of domestic animals let

6 Henry James, *The Wings of the Dove*, (Penguin Classics, 2008), 217.

7 Friedrich Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense,” *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1979), 889.

8 *Ibid.*, 891.

loose as for the joke.<sup>9</sup>

We are given the scene of the martyrdom of a Christian maiden — this is how Densher thinks about Milly, at this moment. Again, he is a “spectator,” and she is a “christian maiden, in the arena, mildly, caressingly, martyred.” What first must be pointed out is that without this foundation of metaphor, we really cannot see how Densher views Milly—although through interpretation it is possible to infer that he may see her as an innocent, helpless, but virtuous and strong woman, who looks ahead to another life. This instance still illustrates that metaphor is the very idea one starts with, and without it one would not have such rich associations from which to proceed. Even though individual conceptions of metaphor may take each reader in a different direction, they are still limited in the sense that the mind is prompted in one direction, and not another. There could be multiple directions, but the source is all from the one metaphor that prompted what was noticed. One cannot doubt that a metaphor like Densher’s would prompt certain images and not others, such as a theoretical metaphor involving cooking in the kitchen which prompts certain ideas and not others. It is a knowledge production tool as well as the dimensions and boundaries—the framework—of the matter at hand. It becomes its own concept with its own life, and it started with something else that gave it boundaries a direction and resulted in knowledge production.. Milly is contained in Densher’s mind as a helpless maiden, being torn apart by “domestic animals,” which we can take to be the other characters, and he pictures himself as just there for the show.

Densher uses metaphor not just as a placeholder or an ornament, but to be the very idea that he regards and the framework in which he thinks. Donald Davidson similarly articulates this concept, particularly when he asserts, “[w]hat has been left out is any appeal to the original meaning of the words. Whether or not metaphor depends on new or extended meanings, it certainly depends in some way on the original meanings,”<sup>10</sup> which leads him to the conclusion that “all the while we are in fact focusing on what the metaphor makes us notice. . . we would simply project the content the metaphor brought to mind onto the metaphor. But in fact there is no limit to what a metaphor calls to our attention, and much of what we are caused to notice is not propositional in character.”<sup>11</sup> Through the lens of Punter at the beginning of this chapter, metaphor for Davidson is something that relies on the original meanings of the word which in turn leads each reader to unique and individualized associations. .Essentially, however, the words and the concepts they hold are the very ideas one is working with; they are sufficient in themselves to make the reader notice relations, and though this may be different for each person, the metaphor is still the conception that is the “very substance of discourse”<sup>12</sup> that prompted associations in the first place. So really, there is no “unpacking” going on, or any “hidden meaning”; rather, a metaphor is reliant on the words it is constructed of, and those words make the reader notice or think of another idea in particular, and then make associations based on those new details. The way James represents this to the reader is through, for example, Densher’s long thought process that starts with a metaphor and then develops into more metaphors that give him something more substantial to explain what he is witnessing.

I am not, however, asserting that the metaphor is an *accurate* picture of what is being handled. As Nietzsche said, “we possess nothing but metaphors for things—metaphors which correspond in no way to the original entities.”<sup>13</sup> He discusses the way in which words are assigned arbitrarily. Words themselves are not ever the original thing begun with, evidenced in how we have many different words in different languages that can express the same thing. He says our mistake, as the human race in general, is that “[h]e forgets that the original perceptual metaphors are metaphors and takes them to be the things themselves.”<sup>14</sup> I am not saying that the metaphors the characters in James’ novel use are accurate representations at all, but rather that they are more like placeholders, or variables, with an arbitrary value assigned to them—neither accurate nor inaccurate. It is something that can fill the void of unknown knowledge. It is that part of their consciousness that tries to fill the unknown with essentially *anything*. However, that does not negate the fact that a metaphor can still be seen as an independent entity in itself, as the filler of something, even if they are not “the things themselves” or the actual reality of the situation. Even

9 James, Dove, 217.

10 Donald Davidson, “What Metaphors Mean,” *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, (Oxford University Press, 2001), 6.

11 *Ibid.*, 20.

12 Punter, *Metaphor*, 17.

13 Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lies,” 891.

14 *Ibid.*, 893.

while Densher metaphorized the situations with Kate and Milly, they are constrained in his mind only, and by his perceptions and opinions. The “reality”—since the reader has a more omniscient view—can be very different, as we will see that characters’ thoughts conflict with other characters’ perception of reality.

## *Section 2: Filling in the unknown and deception*

Knowledge production and boundary markers are just two ways to approach the ways in which the characters in *The Wings of the Dove* use metaphor. The method of filling in the unknown is another, broader category in which we can see other ways the characters in the novel conceptualizing the diegetic world through metaphor. A general example of ‘filling in the unknown’ can be seen in Book Second, Chapter I, in which Kate creates the schema where she and Densher met:

They found themselves regarding each other straight... She had observed a ladder against a garden wall—and had trusted herself so to climb it as to be able to see over into the probable garden on the other side. On reaching the top she had found herself face to face with a gentleman engaged in a like calculation at the same moment, and the two enquirers had remained confronted on their ladders. The great point was that for the rest of that evening they had been perched - they had not climbed down; and indeed during the time that followed Kate at least had had the perched feeling - it was as if she were there aloft without a retreat. A simpler expression of all this is doubtless but that they had taken each other in with interest.<sup>15</sup>

Kate formulates their interaction, creating a metaphor that represents how she pictures their first meeting. She looks over a garden wall, with someone on the other side doing the same as a result of their mutual curiosity. The wall, the ladder, the perching can all take significance in a first meeting of two people, as Kate and Densher are considered by the ways in which they are both similar and different, male and female, etc. But what is important is the world-building Kate does here: she produces new knowledge through metaphor and regards herself as a curious person at this moment, as Densher considers himself. She defines the space, giving the reader a garden wall scene to elaborate the innocence and excitement of the first meeting. But most importantly, she uses metaphor to do all of this, to fill in the previously boundless, undefined event, since it was previously an untamed picture, unexpressed schema, or framework in which she and Densher met. Lastly, this passage shows how metaphor is necessary, as an independent entity, and not just ornamentation, to reach the goals of knowledge acquisition for Kate. As shown by the last line of the narrator, “[a] simpler expression of all this” could have been used, but it was not, and the meaning and details that are noticed through the metaphor are much more rich. The reader would not have gained as much knowledge of the situation if the narrator had only said, “A simpler expression of all this is doubtless but that they had taken each other in with interest.”

There are moments, however, when a metaphor itself, although adding knowledge and filling in the mind, will delude a character from the truth. An instance of this is in Book Fourth, Chapter II, when Mrs. Stringham conceptualizes Milly as a princess:

The handsome English girl from the heavy English house had been as a figure in a picture stepping by magic out of its frame: it was a case in truth for which Mrs. Stringham presently found the perfect image. She had lost none of her grasp, but quite contrary, of that other conceit in virtue of which Milly was the wandering princess: so what could be more in harmony now than to see the princess waited upon at the city gate by the worthiest maiden, the chosen daughter of the burgesses?<sup>16</sup>

Susan Shepherd Stringham is enjoying her time with Milly as they both reap the benefits of association with Kate Croy and Aunt Maud. The way in which Mrs. Stringham thinks about their fortunate relations with these women gives Milly the metaphorical role of a “wandering princess” who is appropriately waited upon by “the worthiest maiden” in London. This metaphor gives the sense that Kate Croy is welcoming Milly not only out of

<sup>15</sup> James, Dove, 62.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 146.

duty, but out of humility. As a filling device, the metaphor is a placeholder that Susan Shepherd uses to fill in the question of why Kate has received Milly so well. Her reasoning seems to be that because Milly is an American heiress, she is worthy of such a reception, and as a “princess” she should be given all the formality and welcome that is appropriate of one in high society. The reader, however, knows that Kate’s motives are not as pure as Mrs. Stringham thinks, and in this way, Mrs. Stringham deludes herself about Kate’s motives with her own metaphor.

Besides deluding the characters, metaphors are also conceived by the characters so that they purposefully see something without really seeing it. In Book Fifth, Chapter IV, Milly leaves the Doctor Sir Luke Strett after consulting him on what to do with her life. He advises her to “live”<sup>17</sup> as if she were not dying and to enjoy her life. She leaves him elated, and a curious picture comes to her mind:

she had been treated — hadn’t she? — as if it were in her power to live; and yet one wasn’t treated so - was one? — unless it had come up, quite as much, that one might die... But the beauty of the idea of a great adventure, a big dim experiment or struggle in which she might more responsibly than ever before take a hand, had been offered her instead. It was as if she had had to pluck off her breast, to throw away, some friendly ornament, a familiar flower, a little old jewel that was part of her daily dress; and to take up and shoulder as a substitute some queer defensive weapon, a musket, a spear, a battle-axe - conducive possibly in a higher degree to a striking military appearance, but demanding all the effort of the military posture. She felt this instrument, for that matter, already on her back, so that she proceeded now in very truth after the fashion of a soldier on a march — proceeded as if, for her initiation, the first charge had been sounded.<sup>18</sup>

It is significant that Milly resolves to leave that demeanor, the expectation of her death, behind, and to take on a new “reason; she would affirm without delay her option, her volition.” She sees herself as taking off a familiar part of her dress and instead taking up a “defensive weapon,” which required a “military posture.” The use of military language is employed amidst the questions of why she was being treated like she would live, when she also knew she could die. Sir Luke Strett was trying to give her the confidence that she would live, and she is anxious over whether that meant she would survive or not. Either way, her anxiety over how Sir Luke Strett treats her is perpetuated in the picture that follows. She uses this metaphor of a soldier to see something without seeing it—she sees herself as a valiant trooper, fighting off her old habit—yet the metaphor is still soaked in the solemnity of a soldier going to battle, and let it not be forgotten that there is great risk of loss of life in doing so. She uses this metaphor, however empowered it makes her feel, to mask what she is really getting into—fighting as a soldier to the death, her own death. Though she has a new empowering image of herself, it has not rid her of the possibility of death, and the image gives the reader a notion of this, as soldiers may not return from battle.

Densher is also guilty of seeing something without actually seeing it, this time in a situation with someone else.

It was his difficulty for the moment that he was face to face with alternatives, and that it was scarce even a question of turning from one to the other. They were not in a perspective in which they might be compared and considered; they were, by a strange effect, as close as a pair of monsters of whom he might have felt on either cheek the hot breath and the huge eyes. He saw them at once and but by looking straight before him; he wouldn’t for that matter, in his cold apprehension, have turned by an inch.<sup>19</sup>

This passage details Densher’s dilemma after receiving an update about Milly’s money. The information gives him choices, and he constructs a metaphor rendering the alternatives as “a pair of monsters.” What must be noted is that the narrator never explicitly reveals what these monstrous alternatives are. Using a metaphor as a substitute for another idea can be taken as seeing something without seeing it, or acknowledging it in different terms than what it really is. So although he conceptualizes both alternatives as equally bad “monsters,” and gives boundaries for the reader to consider them in terms of what they understand “monsters” to be, he still doesn’t reveal them,

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17 Ibid., 200.

18 Ibid., 202

19 Ibid., 494.

though we can infer what they might be. This is another instance of seeing something without actually seeing it and dealing with it in a way that is indirect, for both the character and the reader. In this way, James uses metaphor to make the reader wonder, rather than elucidate his own meaning

Lastly, there is a difference between seeing without seeing, and purposefully hiding behind an idea, which manifests as a metaphor as well. The situation in the most recent passage is individual: the character does not want to face what they know in themselves. However, the situation in this next passage is interpersonal: the character uses the metaphor as a ploy to mask themselves from others. An example of this is when Kate names Milly a “dove,” the most infamous of metaphors in this book. Kate is honest with Milly, and tells her that Mrs. Stringham has been using her as a victory in the social world, along with other people who have been using her without giving anything back. When Milly asks why this is so, Kate replies, “ ‘Because you’re a dove.’... [Milly] found herself accepting as the right one, while she caught her breath with relief, the name so given to her... *That was the matter with her. She was a dove. Oh, wasn’t she?*”<sup>20</sup> Kate uses a metaphor for Milly, and Milly accepts it. She accepts that she is a dove in the hands of others, but the revelation instantly gives her the power to hide behind it. She immediately lies in the same scene to Mrs. Lowder, saying, “ ‘I don’t *think*, dear lady, he’s here.’ It gave her straightaway the measure of the success she could have as a dove.”<sup>21</sup> She lies to Mrs. Lowder about Densher’s whereabouts, despite knowing her high opinion of herself; the “measure of the success she could have as a dove” would not be doubted. Secondly, the narrator says that the revelation “with the new day, was once more her law—though she saw before her, of course, as something of a complication, her need, each time, to decide. She should have to be clear as to how a dove *would* act.”<sup>22</sup> She wants to figure out how a dove *would* act, but then lies again, this time about her own whereabouts in collaboration with Susan Shepherd when Sir Luke Strett comes to visit her. Whatever a “dove” metaphor may imply, we know that she wants to *act* like a dove—and would her lying be considered *dove*-like to her companions if they were to know about it? In this way, Milly takes advantage of the metaphor offered to her. She hides behind the guise of a sweet dove in order to further her own plans, though they may be innocent.

After considering these metaphors, one can see that they do not merely operate as independent frameworks which bring life to the narrative, but they additionally serve as knowledge producers conceived by the characters. Within this knowledge acquirement, metaphors work to fill in the knowledge the characters do not know, to enlighten them, and even work as forms of deception to themselves or others. In all, without metaphor, the rich knowledge production would not have been possible, no matter where the metaphor takes the reader. The space that the metaphor defines is a constant tool, and it expands the boundaries of thoughts in which characters think about themselves and others, or have others think about them.

The metaphors are not used in the traditional sense to enlighten or simply give something the name of something else, but they are an essential part of the stream-of-consciousness style that introduces different elements of the thought process—not just to show the truth, but to hide it. Metaphor is normally understood to “expand upon” and “to make clear” a concept. However, we see characters using metaphor in a contrary manner. Metaphor is a special case of representing the consciousness of a character beyond the traditional use of this literary device .

This conception of metaphor relates to linguistic research on the ways in which individuals produce conceptualizations. In fact, as Michael Reddy said, “everyday English is largely metaphorical, dispelling once and for all the traditional view that metaphor is primarily in the realm of the poetic or ‘figurative’ language.”<sup>23</sup> This will be expounded upon later in the section “Metaphor as an Essential Part of the Psyche” however, it will suffice to say for now that metaphor is not merely a literary device for ornamentation, nor is it solely an independent framework . Research shows that metaphor is in fact a *way* we conceptualize. I will use this point only sparingly, so as not to launch into a discussion of how this pertains to real human minds and remain within a theory of metaphor in James’ novel.

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20 Ibid., 226.

21 Ibid., 227.

22 Ibid.

23 George Lakoff, “The contemporary theory of metaphor,” *Metaphor and Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 204.



## Chapter 2

### Section 1: Henry James and William James

What this typology of metaphors in *The Wings of the Dove* reveals is the use of metaphor in new ways by the characters to think about and conceptualize their lives within a stream-of-consciousness style. I will next consider what James says about his own writing and the ways in which his brother William James' ideas are embedded within Henry James' style. There are many parallels in Henry's novels and William's works, and although no direct influence can be inferred between them, one can definitely point out the similarities between the concepts of William and the manifestation of these concepts by Henry in literature. After presenting these brothers, a more in-depth discussion of James' form will round out the analysis.

In James' "The Art of Fiction" he gives an analysis on what he considers fiction's purpose and method to be.<sup>24</sup> Famously, he says "The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life."<sup>25</sup> This is in contention with other critics who have defined fiction as "renounc[ing] the pretension of attempting really to represent life."<sup>26</sup> These authors, one among them that James points out being Anthony Trollope, defend their work by advising their readers that fiction is just "make-believe,"<sup>27</sup> which James finds a preposterous claim. The next step in taking fiction seriously, he asserts, is considering fiction as art. However, readers responded to this negatively, believing that "the search for form"—the experimental forms in literature—does not correspond with *their* expectations of literature, as being either instructive or amusing.<sup>28</sup> They expect virtuous characters in positions of influence, happy endings, to jump from page to page, and to find out what happens next. Any type of "artist in fiction is regarded as a sort of meddling doctor who forbids agreeable aftertastes."<sup>29</sup> To take fiction seriously would make it boring, which James clarifies is the position of his contemporary critics. Critics would contend that any variety in form was not the point of fiction.

However, James argues that an author should be free to depict reality as he or she sees fit, in whatever form he or she would choose. James defies all three of the expectations he lists in *The Wings of the Dove*. Kate is conniving and Densher is from a lower class; the happy ending is never achieved and James' prose is not the fast paced type that makes one jump to the next page. What is important is that the fiction "need only be interesting,"<sup>30</sup> and the roads to being interesting are "innumerable."<sup>31</sup> James says that each author's decision about the *way* he or she will convey life actually reveals "a particular mind,"<sup>32</sup> that is as unique as the individual person. It is ironic that James asserts that an author reveals his or her "particular mind" by choosing the form he or she will write in, because as James' late-style presents itself, his own chosen style in fact reveals his unique mind, *as like a mind*. Not only does James assert that the form of writing will reveal the mind, but that his own form is itself like a consciousness. It is almost as if he did not separate what he thought and the words he put onto the page, as if there were no filter between his mind and the writing. A comparison with his brother William James will further explore this connection, and I will refer to William James as William for the rest of the chapter.

Henry and William have prominent similarities when one reads William's "The Stream of Thought" chapter of *The Principles of Psychology*.<sup>33</sup> William was a distinguished American philosopher and psychologist, and one can easily imagine the influence he had on Henry. Without introducing blunt evidence of their correspondence, my following analysis and research will reveal how the juxtaposition reveals William's influence on Henry's novels. Both brothers were concerned with psychology—one was a practitioner while the other represented ways in which the mind worked in literature. Thought and conceptualization became a central point of interest for both,

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24 Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," *The Art of Fiction*, (Oxford University Press, 1948), 1-23.

25 *Ibid.*, 5.

26 *Ibid.*, 4.

27 *Ibid.*

28 *Ibid.*, 7.

29 *Ibid.*

30 *Ibid.*, 8.

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*

33 William James, "The Stream of Thought," *The Principles of Psychology*, 146-187.

and they asserted their theories of thought and conceptualization through their respective fields.

There are two points in William's chapter discussing thought which have the most to do with our purposes, which I will paraphrase, and that are present in James' work. I will use them to prepare for my later discussion of metaphor in the novel:

- 1) "*Thought is in constant change*" or, Time, experience, and mood change perceptions of a subject.<sup>34</sup>
- 2) "*Within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous*" or, Thoughts are not separate, "linked," nor even like a chain, but they flow together.<sup>35</sup>

The first point is clarified further with William's words: "Yet we never doubt that our feelings reveal the same world, with the same sensible qualities and the same sensible things occupying it. The difference of the sensibility is shown best by the difference of our emotion about the things from one age to another, or when we are in different organic moods. What was bright and exciting becomes weary, flat, and unprofitable."<sup>36</sup> This is the explanation of the first point I have listed, which is actually the second principle out of five in his chapter "Five Characters in Thought."<sup>37</sup> It states that a person takes his thoughts for granted in that they do not change regarding a subject, whereas realistically feelings and thoughts about things change "from one age to another" or even by the moment-by-moment, day-by-day "organic moods." What stays the same is *what* the thing is, but the thoughts are not the same as before. They change through time, experience, and the mood according to the moment. Williams says, "*What is got twice is the same OBJECT.*"<sup>38</sup> This presumption is heavily present in *The Wings of the Dove* as James' characters change their feelings and thoughts about a situation while the "object" stays the same, whether that be the person, interaction, or place. It is important to note that these "objects" are not necessarily images in the stream-of-consciousness, but that they are the thing that is being thought, which could simply be words not accompanied by images. The feature of the image, and ultimately the metaphor, is found in James' work. What James has added to William's psychological principles is an explanation of the ways in which the stream-of-consciousness style also takes form in images and metaphors. Millie and Densher are one of many examples, and demonstrate that James' novel is an evolution of thought in the characters. They reflect William's concepts through the use of metaphors or images.

We have already encountered an instance of this in the passage where Milly conceptualizes herself when she knows she is ill and dying. Her thoughts about herself begin in Book Fifth, Chapter II, as she beholds a portrait by Bronzino which Lord Mark brings her to:

As wonderful as he had said the face of a young woman, all splendidly drawn, down to the hands, and splendidly dressed; a face almost livid in hue, yet handsome in sadness... her eyes of other days, her full lips, her long neck, her recorded jewels, her brocaded and wasted reds, was a very great personage—only unaccompanied by a joy. And she was dead, dead, dead. Milly recognized her exactly in words that had nothing to do with her. "I shall never be better than this."<sup>39</sup>

She identifies with this literal image, not because she looks similar to the woman in the portrait, but because the woman in the portrait is "dead, dead, dead." Milly sees a beautiful, opulent woman whose picture is "unaccompanied by a joy" as like herself. Milly is an heiress with a fortune, has everything she needs, but is unhappy. Thus, she identifies with the lifeless woman in the painting. However, her thoughts about herself change with encouragement from Sir Luke Strett who, as we have seen previously, tells her to "live."<sup>40</sup> She deludes herself into thinking she has a chance by applying the role of a soldier to her life, along with hiding behind an image that others give her so that she can manifest the idea *externally* while not actually being the innocent dove they take her to be. Another progression of her thought is again captured in the metaphor of a soldier, yet working differently, at the opening of Book Seventh, Chapter 1.

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34 Ibid., 149.

35 Ibid., 154.

36 Ibid., 151.

37 Ibid., 146.

38 Ibid., 150.

39 James, Dove, 183.

40 Ibid., 200.

When Kate and Densher abandoned her to Mrs. Stringham on the day of her meeting them together and bringing them to luncheon, Milly, face to face with that companion, had had one of those moments in which the warned, the anxious fighter of the battle of life, as if once again feeling for the sword at his side, carries his hand straight to the quarter of his courage. She laid hers firmly on her heart...<sup>41</sup>

The image of the warrior or soldier evolves as she comforts herself as an “anxious fighter” whose source of courage is her own heart. Whether or not it is because she faces again the reality of her illness, her suspicions about Kate and Densher, or what Sir Luke Strett said to Susan, clearly disheartens her, and she must take on the role of a soldier to cope. Milly’s thoughts about herself evolve through interactions with others; it seems that she is dependent on what others say before she can create a mental image or metaphor for herself. William’s principle applies to her in that her thoughts, and thus images and metaphors, regarding herself have changed through time and interaction with others, the latter of which may be argued is contained in William’s point since the passage of time, experience, and mood may most likely include conversations with others which will alter the thoughts about her life and her own will to live, which is the “object” which is “got twice.”

Densher thoughts also evolve, particularly his memory of Kate coming to his rooms. Kate concedes to Densher’s request for sex, knowing it would bolster his resolve in complying with her plot. In Densher’s memory of the event, “His faded old rooms” in Venice,<sup>42</sup> where he stays while he vacations with Milly, Kate, and the rest of their friends, change after Kate comes into them..

It was after they had gone that he truly felt the difference, which was most to be felt moreover in his faded old rooms...what had come to pass within his walls lingered there as an obsession importunate to all his sense; it lived again, as a cluster of pleasant memories, at every hour and in every object... It remained, in a word, a conscious watchful presence, active on its own side, for ever to be reckoned with in face of which the effort at detachment was scarcely less futile than frivolous. Kate had come to him; it was only once...yet she had come, that once, to stay, as people called it; and what survived of her, what reminded and insisted, was something he couldn’t have banished if he had wished.

It played for him—certainly in this prime afterglow—the part of a treasure kept at home in safety and sanctity, something he was sure of finding in its place when, with each return, he worked his heavy old key in the lock. The door had but to open for him to be with it again and for it to be all there; so intensely there that, as we say, no other act was possible to him than the renewed act, almost the hallucination, of intimacy... He remained thus, in his own theater, in his single person, perpetual orchestra to the ordered drama, the confirmed ‘run’; playing low and slow, moreover, in the regular way, for the situations of most importance. No other visitor was to come to him...he gave no address and encouraged no approach; he couldn’t for his life, he felt, have opened his door to a third person. Such a person would have interrupted him, would have profaned his secret or perhaps have guessed it; would at any rate have broken the spell of what he conceived himself—in the absence of anything ‘to show’— to be inwardly doing.<sup>43</sup>

An image is created where there was none before. The “presence,” and the “spell,” emerge. Additionally, the image of a “play” in regards to Kate, as when Aunt Maud received her, is brought up again as another evolution of that same image. William’s principle is used yet again to indicate the creation of meaning and new thoughts for an “object” that is “got twice,” or thought over again. The theater in Densher’s head in regards to Kate is reinforced, repurposed, and added to an existing thought. He is no longer one of the many spectators, but in this last passage the performance is primarily *for* him, in “his own theater” which is significant in light of the fact that he has not had any will in the situation, and now that he has asserted his will the show is “his.” He gains control in the situation by imagining himself as the sole watcher and participant; it is *his* secret show to watch again whenever he comes home, and this changes his attitude towards his deceptive deeds that aim to trick Milly into falling in

41 Ibid., 313.

42 Ibid., 365-371.

43 Ibid., 411-412.

love with him.

James' novel is an evolution in thought: it is an exercise in how his characters develop their views and how their thoughts regarding a subject change, all through imagery and metaphorical devices. William summarizes up this process:

For there it is obvious and palpable that our state of mind is never precisely the same. Every thought we have of a given fact is, strictly speaking, unique, and only bears a resemblance of kind with our other thoughts of the same fact. When the identical fact recurs, we *must* think of it in a fresh manner, see it under a somewhat different angle, apprehend it in different relations from those in which it last appeared.... Often we are ourselves struck at the strange difference in our successive views of things.<sup>44</sup>

One should notice that the character's minds are not static and are "never precisely the same." This differentiation of minds resembles previous thoughts on the "same fact" only to a limited extent. It is through the first principle mentioned that the factors of time, experience, and mood change what the characters think and cause successive thoughts to be thought "of in a fresh manner" and "under a somewhat different angle." Milly and Densher's changing circumstances produce changing images to demarcate and illustrate their evolving thoughts.

However, William's second point, "*Within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous,*" will contribute to the discussion of the form James uses for his character's mental conceptualizations. William argues that although the content of thoughts may change, there is still continuity between them, because even a time-gap (such as sleeping) will not hinder the connection to the awake consciousness that came before it,<sup>45</sup> because the parts are "inwardly connected and belonging together because they are parts of a common whole.... The natural name for it is 'myself, I, or me'"<sup>46</sup> No matter how much time occurs between thoughts on the same subject, it is still a part of the "I" who has both the memories and the present thoughts that have the same "warmth and intimacy" in them, allowing past and present feelings to belong to each other. Therefore, consciousness is not "chopped up in bits," nor is it a "chain," or "train" of thought. The term is coined by William—" [i]t is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' is the metaphor by which it is most naturally described. *In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness.*"<sup>47</sup>

Therefore, changes of quality or content in thought are "never absolutely abrupt."<sup>48</sup> To elucidate that phrase, the long passages in James' narrative are constituted of many subjects and seem to be following William's logic of different thoughts being parts of the same whole. The differing thoughts do not need an entire break in the form—perhaps in the form of a new paragraph or sentence—because James' long passages reflect the way in which William describes the mind: the handling of multiple subjects in the same space, which warrants James' long paragraphs with minimal breaks and many parentheticals. We can use this same logic of continuity and apply it to passages where metaphors, which introduce different pictures on the same subject, are multiplicitous by being able to justify the packing of them in a single passage through William's principle of continuous thought.

One instance of a profuse amount of metaphors in a single passage can be found when Kate uses many metaphors to describe Aunt Maud in a scene near the beginning of the text, all in the space of two pages. They are the following: a "lioness," with her office as the "counting-house, her battlefield," and as "a wonderful lioness for a show [...] an extraordinary figure in a cage [...] with a lustre of agate eyes, a sheen of raven hair, a polish of complexion that was like that of well-kept china."<sup>49</sup> She embodies not only these metaphors but also the secret name Kate gives her, the "Britannia of the Market Place,"<sup>50</sup> which is borrowed from John Ruskin's "Traffic" lecture in 1886.<sup>51</sup> Lastly, "Mrs. Lowder *was* London, *was* life—the roar of the siege and the thick of the fray."<sup>52</sup>

44 James, "The Stream of Thought," 151.

45 Ibid., 154. William's first point under his header: "3. Within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous."

46 Ibid., 155.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., 154. William's second point under his header: "3. Within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous."

49 James, Dove, 43.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., 539. This reference to John Ruskin is included in endnotes of the novel.

52 Ibid., 44.

What are we to do with all these images? Surely they cohere in some way? The first is a lioness in a cage, which is also made of expensive cloths and ornaments, which can be inferred as a description of her clothing. Next, she is “Britannia of the Market Place,” and then she is “London” itself. How do the metaphors work together in such close proximity and in the same paragraph?

The packing of metaphors makes sense because James is reflecting the process of how the mind deals with many aspects of one thing. So although the content may change, it is all under one cohesive idea, person, or thing—the “I.” It is because “[t]he thunder itself we believe to abolish and exclude the silence; but the *feeling* of the thunder is also a feeling of the silence as just gone; and it would be difficult to find in the actual concrete consciousness of man a feeling so limited to the present as not to have an inkling of anything that went before.”<sup>53</sup> Thoughts are never independent, but rather always build upon the thoughts that came before. But it is precisely through what comes before, and which comes in a stream, that we see the different conceptions Kate has for Aunt Maud. The earlier metaphors influence the later metaphors. The lion, ever the mark of England as a nation, precedes the reference to Britannia, which is also a symbol of England, and then finally concludes with the statement that she was “London” itself. The metaphors traverse from general to specific, but all grow into the same thing: “Mrs. Lowder *was* London, *was* life.” These metaphors react together and work up to a final resolution that Aunt Maud was not only the lion and Britannia, but also London, as well as *life* itself. She was Kate’s life, and Kate must react to her. Kate’s stream of thought leads her to this conclusion, and the intensity and packing of metaphors communicates the gravity of Mrs. Lowder’s immenseness in Kate’s life. Without one metaphor preceding the other, the intensity of Mrs. Lowder’s weight in Kate’s life cannot be built up. But with it, the particular form and placement of the metaphors in the novel communicate Kate’s circumstance: Mrs. Lowder is her life and that which she must react. “Experience is remoulding us every moment, and our mental reaction on every given thing is really a resultant of our experience of the whole world up to that date,”<sup>54</sup> is how William explained the effect of our previous thoughts on successive thoughts. This lens also explains the ways in which Kate’s images have evolved upon each other by influencing and building on one another up to the present time.

A second layer of stream of consciousness is present in this passage. Even within these descriptions of her aunt are Kate’s misgivings about “trusting to easy analogies.”<sup>55</sup> She knows that she cannot simply assign an image to her aunt, for that would discredit the “complex and subtle Britannia,”<sup>56</sup> who was more than what mere comparison with images could hold. Kate claims that even Britannia was afraid of some things, but Aunt Maud is not afraid of anything.<sup>57</sup> This adds another layer of complexity as we discuss the panoply of Kate’s thoughts; she gives metaphors for her aunt while at the same time discrediting them, and this shows even thoughts of differing nature can be contained in the same space and be an example of William’s idea of the continuous yet differentiating thoughts which are “belonging together.”<sup>58</sup> Like the metaphors, they react together but exist within the same space. The intensity of metaphors which we discussed first, and which leads up to Aunt Maud’s encapsulation of Kate, is the first layer of William’s point and application to James’ work. The second is how other elements, particularly Kate’s own misgivings of the analogies and images she applies to her Aunt, can also be found in the same space. The metaphors and thoughts belong to each other and work together to form a whole, and in this way James reflects the mind and the continuity between thoughts, even those which differ in quality and content.

Therefore, in regards to William, we can take the juxtaposition of the brothers to be a helpful aid in understanding how James has his characters conceptualize. The situation or object stays the same while the image which the character holds evolves in his or her mind, as he or she has more time, experiences, and moods. Secondly, James’ long paragraph style can be examined through William’s stream of consciousness principle, where not only do metaphors work together, but other competing, contradicting thoughts are also contained in a single paragraph. It reflects the way in which James conceived thoughts of different quality and content as continuous streams of thought, which is not clearly demarcated in the mind, and thus did not have to be on the page. In this way, James reveals *his* unique individual mind as a fiction writer. He chooses a mode that happens

53 William, “The Stream of Thought,” 156.

54 Ibid., 152.

55 James, Dove, 43.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., 44.

58 William, “The Stream of Thought,” 155.

to reflect the mind itself and does “attempt to represent life” in the way that he conceives the mind to work. He shows the evolution of thought through images and metaphors while considering different subjects all at the same time, as much as he can on the page in prose.

## *Section 2: Form, Feeling, & Metaphor*

Another aspect of James’ literature derived from the metaphor-packed passages is the question of what is gained from the form he presents? What is the reader’s own understanding and experience with the text? What is pointed out about conventional literature itself, with James employing long, obscure, metaphor-packed passages, which are unconventional? The unconventional form will be discussed first.

This is James’ new form, composed of long sentences with parentheticals and concessions, as we just discussed in Kate’s passage about her aunt. Roman Jakobson, in *Language in Literature*, points out that “[t]he artist-innovator must impose a new form upon our perceptions, if we are to detect in a given thing those traits which went unnoticed the day before. He may present the object in an unusual perspective; he may violate the rules of composition canonized by his predecessors.”<sup>59</sup> This is what James attempts to reveal—he challenges the idea that words themselves are easily accessible and that they are presented in forms to which readers are familiar. He complicates this notion of form by showing us that perhaps fiction has nothing to do with thoughts being represented clearly, because thoughts are not clear, they are conflicting and obscure. He attempts to show that this is what really happens in the mind. In line with his showing rather than telling mode of presentation, James presents the mind as it is: a conglomerate of mixed facts and perceptions which, at most times, are difficult to understand.

So with lengthy, obscure language, James points out the construction of his words. Kate and Densher are not just a complicated love story, yet this is an introduction of the form of the cloudy sphere of thought—unadulterated and blatant—to call attention to itself as a unique form. It is similar to the conceits used by John Donne, where the poem calls upon the wit of the writer. However, instead of calling upon the person who who creates the witty saying, the stream-of-consciousness style points to itself as a new form. We can transport this idea to say that the long-winded, many parenthetical passages which include long metaphors —“scenes,” which will be explained more fully—make themselves conspicuous as a form. As long passages, they point to themselves because of the difficulty of separating out all the different things that are going on, all running on a single page. Metaphors, as scenes, make themselves very apparent because they are not used as “simple one-to-one equivalents”<sup>60</sup> as a short kind of comparison, but as lengthy metaphors, ones which involve much movement and time. Without them, the reader would not have as much depth, and the story would not be as colorful and complete.

This produces not just a difficult form to handle, but also makes one question the effect of such circuitous metaphors. James’ difficult prose wants to take the reader on that ride of all the things felt when one experiences something, and the difference here is that James compiles all those conflicting thoughts and feelings into words to create a feeling of the thought process. James gives the feelings a more general sense through his experimental form, which Professor Lavery from UC Berkeley’s English Department elaborated on in his lecture on realism. It is “the feeling of being a feeling person.”<sup>61</sup> It is about feelings in a general sense, and the feeling that the narrator gives the reader. As I learned in Professor Lavery’s lecture about Récit vs. Affect (where he used the term “affect” to mean the feeling that a piece of literature gives to the reader), James’ novel is like something we’d find in a poem with no plot or progression—which is very apparent in his novels at certain times when the story progresses so slowly—where one is just supposed to gather a feeling and not the whole story. His passages at times remind one of prose-poetry: something that is conscious of its own form with the plot as a secondary force. This form makes the reader feel like they are in the brain. This densely packed style with slow plot progression lends a form to uncensored thoughts in James’ novel.

Clare Pettitt has also analyzed the mind of the character and the stream-of-consciousness vein which James is famous for in her work “Henry James Tethered and Stretched: The Materiality of Metaphor.”<sup>62</sup> Pettitt

59 Roman Jakobson, “On Realism in Art,” *Language in Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 21.

60 Punter, *Metaphor*, 17.

61 Joseph Lavery, English 122 “Victorian Literature,” UC Berkeley. February 3rd, 2016.

62 Claire Pettitt, “Henry James Tethered and Stretched: The Materiality of Metaphor,” 139, 148.

makes the point that, as opposed to using “objects as metaphors in his earlier texts ... [James] makes physical practices and processes enact the experience of embodiment in his novels.”<sup>63</sup> She notices that James veers away from using just objects and instead also employs bodily movement or something in action in his metaphors and characters’ conceptualizations. The metaphors are not static, but their descriptions more often than not contain movement by an element. Pettitt expands further, noting that “[they] are metaphors of practices in which both the human and the non-human participate” and are “*acting* upon one another. Process and practice are what James is interested in metaphoricizing: complex chains of activity and action and reaction that remain open and in play.”<sup>64</sup> James uses a *scene* rather than an object to capture the minds of his characters. Milly is not just a dove, she is a martyr, circled by “domestic animals” in Densher’s mind;<sup>65</sup> to Susan Shepherd she is a “wandering princess” waited upon; and to herself, she is not just dead like Bronzino’s portrait, but she is a soldier who took up and shouldered a weapon and proceeded “after the fashion of a soldier on the march.” For Kate, it is for the way she walks into the room that Densher applies the metaphor of a performer on her, and what do performers primarily do but move about the stage? Additionally, Kate imagines herself climbing and seeing over the garden wall where she and Densher first met. Lastly, the act of *not* moving is also made conspicuous in Densher’s predicament of whether to turn to either side of the “pair of monsters” when he finds that “he wouldn’t for that matter, in his cold apprehension, have turned by an inch.” All these metaphors involve movement of the character in some way and give the reader a moving picture to ponder.

I argue metaphor is woven into the narrative in packed passages and lengthy descriptions involving movement for the purpose of recreating consciousness, or the feeling of it. Just as easily as our thoughts lead us to certain conclusions by a flowing stream of uninhibited connections, metaphor becomes a tool of connection and therefore a tool of thought itself. Although a reader may not understand a passage fully, the metaphors become a form of a “rest-stop” where readers can regain control of the narrative, and perhaps be imparted with a certain feeling. No longer is metaphor merely a device to represent the consciousness, but it is also a means by which the reader can understand difficult prose. This challenging new form, along with metaphor “rest-stops,” gives the cursory reader a “feeling” when each word or sentence is not understood, as James communicates through an experiential medium. The reader can access the experiential knowledge of these metaphors, though the rest of text’s components may be unclear.

These observations on James’ form and the ways in which his form affects the reader leads to two main points: feeling is gained when the prose is difficult, and metaphors can be a “rest-stop” on the road to understanding a passage. In all, James’ form is an effort to give the reader a sense of what it’s like in the brain through his pursuit to represent life as it is in the form he chooses. Evolution of thought for the characters in the novel employs images and metaphors, which James develops from William’s theory of the stream-of-consciousness.

### Chapter 3

#### *Section 1: Metaphor as an essential part of the psyche*

This next section will lay out my final and culminating argument: metaphor, used by James in *The Wings of the Dove*, is an essential component of representing the psyche of a character. George Lakoff is a contemporary cognitive linguist renowned for his theory that people live by the metaphors they conceptualize.<sup>66</sup> Lakoff challenges the classical notion that metaphor is reserved only for the domain of the literary, or “defined as a novel or poetic linguistic expression where one or more words for a concept are used outside of their normal conventional meaning to express a ‘similar’ concept,”<sup>67</sup> and rather maintains that metaphor is an “extension of the

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63 Ibid., 139.

64 Ibid.

65 James, *Dove*, 217. The following passages were introduced in the first chapter.

66 George Lakoff, “The contemporary theory of metaphor,” *Metaphor and Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 202-251.

67 Ibid., 202.

study of everyday metaphor.”<sup>68</sup> In fact, as Michael Reddy wrote first, “everyday English is largely metaphorical.”<sup>69</sup>

Metaphor is a method we use to think about the world and has more to do with thought than language as it is employed extensively in everyday speech and mental understanding. “[Metaphors] are general mappings across conceptual domains... everyday abstract concepts like time, states, change, causation and purpose turn out to be metaphorical.”<sup>70</sup> “Mappings” are “the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another.”<sup>71</sup> So we can see in the mnemonic “love is a journey” that “[t]he metaphor involves understanding one domain of experience, love, in terms of a very different domain of experience, journeys. More technically, the metaphor can be understood as a mapping (in the mathematical sense) from a source domain (in this case, journeys) to a target domain (in this case, love).”<sup>72</sup> The metaphors “love is a journey” and “life is a journey”<sup>73</sup> are metaphors we use in everyday language, proving that metaphor is an essential mode to our “ordinary, conventional way of conceptualizing the world.”<sup>74</sup> Metaphor is essential because as the discussion becomes more abstract and emotional, metaphor becomes the usual route to take.<sup>75</sup>

Lakoff argues that long-term, purposeful activities are understood as journeys in human minds. The mnemonic “life is a journey” evokes sayings like, “He got a head start in life. He’s without direction in his life. I’m where I want to be in life. I’m at a crossroads in my life. He’ll go places in life. He’s never let anyone get in his way.”<sup>76</sup> These all use language suggestive of traveling and journeying to characterize a person’s life. These are quintessential metaphors in everyday life that individuals bring *into* their encounters with literary works. Lakoff quotes Robert Frost’s “The Road Not Taken” to show that our understanding of this poem as a metaphor for life, or as the choice between life goals, would never have been interpreted through that lens without the conventional metaphor “life is a journey” already existing in the mind of the reader. Lakoff explains: “since it is about travel and encountering crossroads, it evokes a knowledge of journeys. This activates the system of conventional metaphor we have just discussed, in which long-term, purposeful activities are understood as journeys.”<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps James, who preceded Lakoff, had an inkling of this notion and already suspected that we conceptualize in metaphor. He would be representing life, if he were to—and he does—tell it this way: uncensored thoughts with metaphorical associations and conceptualizations. It may not be conventional, well-known metaphors that James uses, but the concept of people using metaphors to think in ordinary life is something that is not just a literary convention for James, but a way of representing the reality of consciousness. Thus, narrating with the extensive metaphors in *The Wings of the Dove* is reflective of real minds.

## Section 2: Dream

To demonstrate that metaphors are a psychological phenomenon beyond a mere literary device, I will parallel my discussion of metaphors with the concept of dreams. Metaphors are an essential form of the consciousness in James’ novel, and like dreams, they are a psychological phenomenon. To arrive at this point, I will start with Frederic Nietzsche and David Punter and the relation of metaphor and dream.

To use Nietzsche’s ideas, metaphors are knowledge containers, even though they do not in any way correspond to the original entities,<sup>78</sup> because words are just nerve stimuli, converted into a visual image, and then into a sound. Nietzsche asserts “[p]erhaps metaphor begins when we find that experiences, however important or trivial, in truth do not have a name in any simple sense... metaphor would be a continual process of trying to find names for things which in fact do not have names... and using words inevitably entails using metaphors.”<sup>79</sup>

68 Ibid., 203.

69 Ibid., 204.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid., 207.

73 Ibid., 224

74 Ibid., 204.

75 Ibid., 205.

76 Ibid., 223.

77 Ibid., 238.

78 Nietzsche, “Truth and Lies,” 891.

79 Ibid., 889.



Nietzsche understood metaphors to be an entity-word relation, in which the relation is ambiguous and is essentially, like a traditional metaphor, the putting of one sphere onto another.<sup>80</sup> In line with Nietzsche saying that every word itself is a sort of metaphor, psychologically, metaphors are important in the formation of concepts. “Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force.”<sup>81</sup> Words themselves are metaphors, according to Nietzsche, and so even at the level of words metaphor operates in the mind of a learning individual.

In *Metaphor*,<sup>82</sup> Punter draws the connection between metaphor, dreams, and the fact that metaphors are psychological realities. They are related by “the whole question of *meaning* in relation to metaphor. Does a metaphor *mean* something more than, or different from, or in some sense beneath, what it appears to say; or is the meaning of metaphor precisely what it *does* say?”<sup>83</sup> In a Freudian tradition,<sup>84</sup> we can think of dreams as carrying out the same function as metaphors: presenting images embedded with decipherable meaning, or meaning *more* than what they appear to say. Likewise, metaphor “gives off its own meaning in a way that is difficult of apprehension but integral to communication and understanding.”<sup>85</sup> We may not use dreams as credible information, but one must concede that dreams may have a meaning that is difficult to ascertain while still imparting the dreamer with a new understanding nonetheless, just as metaphors do.

Punter supports Lakoff’s assertions and my claim that James uses metaphor not just as a conventional device that has functioned solely in the literary canon, but additionally as a reality of consciousness, as metaphor “crucially has a psychological dimension.”<sup>86</sup> In metaphor, as in dream, “one thing stands for another; which is, according to Freud, the basis of all dream.”<sup>87</sup> Punter refers to Lacan who also installed metaphor as not just a literary device, but as “a reflection of the wider ways in which humans consciously or unconsciously deal with the world.”<sup>88</sup> In fact, it is the very associations in dreams that “‘remind’ the subject that without metaphor the world makes no sense... [it] reminds us that we make sense of the world only by perceiving likenesses and differences between things and other things.”<sup>89</sup> Dream itself is a sort of exercise in metaphor, as a way of “perceiving likenesses and differences between things and other things,” whatever the subjects of the dreams are. So there is an even closer, inherent relation between metaphor and dream: they are nearly each other, but the former exists in literature and the latter within the working mind. So not only is metaphor a literary device, but it is something which is psychological as well in that it is the way one “encounter[s] [...] the other.” In terms of *The Wings of the Dove*, in order to deal with “the other,” the characters also use metaphors—associations from one mental sphere onto another—to perceive and understand each other and the world around them. If one did not draw relations between abstracts, one would have no ‘sense’ about the world. The same goes for James’ characters as they orient themselves, deal with each other, and decide what they will do next.

### *Section 3: The subconscious and individualization*

According to Carl Jung in *Man and His Symbols*,<sup>90</sup> “dreams are the most frequent and universally accessible source for the investigation of man’s symbolizing faculty.”<sup>91</sup> He believed that if a person were to go on talking about his dreams, eventually the images and thoughts that they prompt would indicate the unconscious “ailments”<sup>92</sup> of his

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80 Ibid., 890.

81 Ibid., 891.

82 David Punter, “The Classical Problem,” *Metaphor*, (New York: Routledge, 2007).

83 Ibid., 17.

84 Ibid., “Metaphor and Psychoanalysis,” 73. Punter explains that “one thing stands for another; which is, according to Freud, the basis of all dream.” I will use this quote again in the next paragraph.

85 Ibid., “The Classical Problem,” 17.

86 Ibid., “Metaphor and Psychoanalysis,” 73.

87 Ibid., 75.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid., 81.

90 Carl Jung, “Approaching the unconscious,” *Man and His Symbols*, (London: Aldus Books Limited, 1964).

91 Ibid., 25.

92 Ibid., 27.

mind, through both what he says and omits, and which point to the the conflict and “predicament”<sup>93</sup> he attempts to avoid. As we have seen, metaphor and dream have deep connections in their functions, methods of associations, and potential to mean something more. In *The Wings of the Dove*, as discussed, metaphors help the characters hide in a variety of ways, and they omit things that they would rather not see, that they are tricked by, or that they trick others with. It shows what they are trying to avoid.

However, metaphors can also be thought of in terms of Jung’s “Symbols of transcendence,” which lead to the “full realization of the potential of his individual Self.”<sup>94</sup> As metaphors are images, and images can become symbolic, metaphors also help characters grow and mature. Not only are metaphors psychological realities, but the images one creates for oneself are the ones which he or she uses to help oneself along and develop his or her ideas and opinions. The symbols themselves need not always be popular religious or social imagery, and may in fact be unique to the individual. These images are notable because they are “connected with the periods of transition in a person’s life,” which help the person mature, and move on from a “any state of being that is too immature, too fixed or final. In other words, they concern man’s release from— or transcendence of— any confining pattern of existence, as he moves toward a superior or more mature stage in his development.”<sup>95</sup> This is done through the “union of the consciousness with the unconscious contents of the mind,”<sup>96</sup> all through the help of the symbol, and is ultimately the means by which man can attain his goal of achieving the full realization of his Self.<sup>97</sup>

We can apply Jung’s concept, as one sees it here, to the novel. Characters use metaphors to expand their understandings and ultimately discover a better state than the previous one. It can be argued that they are seeking “maturity” and the fulfillment of themselves and their situations to obtain a sort of peace, or equilibrium. To help characters achieve this are the symbols they create, which are not only tools of deception and manifestations of what they try to avoid, but are ultimately images that will also help them mature into their next phase of individual development. Milly imagined herself as a soldier, which hid the fact that she was weak, but this metaphor served as a tool to help her grow into the type of person she wanted to be: she wanted to achieve her full self, forgetting the hindrance of her illness while at the same time reaching for her full potential, and thus she uses soldier imagery. Her unconscious desire to be rid of her illness enters her conscious mind in the form of an image. Densher guised his alternatives in the midst of a hard decision as monsters and in that way showed that both options were regrettable and full of fears. He carried this imagery with him and learned that he could be stuck in between them for the moment, but he would eventually have to pick one. The “symbols” helped him in his development toward an equilibrium. His unconscious need to do what would clear his conscious caught up with his consciousness, and this took the form of clear, understandable imagery. The metaphors are used not just to represent deception in its various forms, but to additionally represent what the character considers as growth in individual maturity. Symbols help the individual grow as they perceive those “likenesses and differences” between people and circumstances.

## Conclusion

The metaphors in Henry James’ *The Wings of the Dove* work heavily in the stream-of-consciousness vein in which he writes and show primarily how metaphor can operate on more levels than what has been traditionally conceived. Metaphor in this novel is not just an ornament that enhances writing, but rather is integral to the way James represents thought streams. Metaphor works more complexly than just as a clarifier—it is in fact a tool of deception in the minds of the characters. In regards to James’ formal pursuits, his “attempt to represent life” brings him to write *as if almost* in the mind itself. He reflects his brother’s ideas in the evolution of thought with images and the handling of many types of thoughts in one space. But beyond that, metaphor gives the reader an anchor while the prose is difficult, and lends to the feeling the literature gives, even if all the words are not easily understood. Another key feature of James’ metaphors is the involvement of movement and the fact that the metaphors are more like *scenes*, which contrast with the conception of metaphors as comparisons of static

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid., “Ancient myths and modern man,” 149.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid., 151.

objects. The use of metaphors in the stream-of-consciousness narrative has an even deeper connection with the mind, as metaphors themselves are a reflection of the everyday workings in the mind— metaphor is an operator in conceptualizing day-to-day affairs, present even in the nightly occurrences of dreams, and this is what is modeled in the novel. Thus, metaphor is not just a fancy way to say something or to make it more beautiful— it is a complex tool of deception, of conceptualization, and it is used in the representation of maturity and growth for the character.

I will conclude my paper with a discussion of the German word “denk-mittel” and its relation to my arguments. It means “thinking [denk] medium [mittel],”<sup>98</sup> i.e., the thing through which one thinks. The metaphors analyzed here can be thought of as denk-mittel. Like Freud’s dream analysis, metaphors are laden with meaning, but unlike the dream analysis, the images are not *unconscious* but purposefully *give* an image from and for the character, which they use for a variety of thinking activities. We can use William James’ words again, as he states, “[a]ll our conceptions are what the Germans call denkmittel, means by which we handle facts by thinking them. Experience merely as such doesn’t come ticketed and labeled, we have first to discover what it is.”<sup>99</sup> *The Wings of the Dove* presents a unique way for characters to think about their lives while at the same time reflecting the real processes of the human mind.

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98 “Denkmittel,” Google Translator, [https://www.google.com/search?q=denkmittel+meaning&rlz=1C5CHFA\\_enUS741US741&oq=denkmittel+mean&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j0.4057j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#q=german+dictionary](https://www.google.com/search?q=denkmittel+meaning&rlz=1C5CHFA_enUS741US741&oq=denkmittel+mean&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j0.4057j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#q=german+dictionary)

99 William James, “Lecture V: Pragmatism and Common Sense,” *Pragmatism*, (The University of Adelaide, 2016), <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/j/james/william/pragmatism/lecture5.html>.

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