

deux billets, les quinze cents autres francs s'écoulèrent. Elle s'engagea de nouveau et toujours ainsi!"

Ce jeu enchevêtré de billets, de dettes et de paiements crée une tonalité d'angoisse qui annonce le "rire" fantasmagorique d'Emma avant sa mort:

"Parfois il est vrai, elle tâchait de faire des calculs, mais elle découvrait des choses si exorbitantes, qu'elle ne pouvait croire. Alors elle recommençait s'embrouillait vite, plantait tout là et n'y pensait plus."

Obsédée par l'argent qu'elle veut dépenser largement et ne pouvant accepter la réalité des choses, elle se réfugie dans la lecture des livres "extravagants" avec les situations "sanglantes".

Quand Emma est à Rouen avec Léon:

"C'étaient ses jours de gala. Elle les voulait splendides! et lorsqu'il ne pouvait payer seul la dépense, elle complétait le surplus libéralement ce qui arrivait à peu près toutes les fois."

Dans cette passion d'Emma, il existe un désir de possession d'objet qui unit profondément l'argent à la sensualité.

Un jour elle pria Léon de porter six cuillers en vermeil au mont de piété; (c'était le cadeau de noces du père Rouault). Le cadeau du père, le souvenir du mariage, l'affection filiale, rien ne comptait pour elle, elle était dévorée par l'obsession de l'argent pour satisfaire ses désirs les plus frivoles, et ses besoins les plus futiles.

Flaubert nous présente Emma presque atteinte de dépression nerveuse:

"Elle éprouvait maintenant une courbature incessante et universelle. Souvent même Emma recevait des assignations, du papier timbré qu'elle regardait à peine. Elle aurait voulu ne plus vivre, ou continuellement dormir."

Cette dépression nerveuse amorce et explique déjà le suicide d'Emma. Elle se détache de la réalité qu'elle n'a jamais pu accepter à cause de son "bovarysme", et se laisse entraîner vers le tragique du destin.

Rentrée de Rouen, après avoir été au bal masqué de la mi-carême,

Félicité montre un papier gris à Emma. Emma tout en lisant après avoir sauté quelques lignes lut:

"Dans vingt quatre heures pour tout delai," Quoi donc? "Payer la somme totale de huit mille francs". Et même il y avait plus bas:

"Elle y sera contrainte par toute voie de droit, et notamment par la saisie exécutoire de ses meubles et effets."

"Cependant à force d'acheter, de ne pas payer, d'emprunter, de soucrire des billets, puis de renouveler ces billets qui s'enflaient à chaque échéance nouvelle, elle avait fini par préparer au sieur Lheureux un capital, qu'il attendait impatiemment pour ses spéculations."

Lheureux trop rusé avait passé toute la somme à M. Vinçart tirant ainsi très adroitement son épingle du jeu.

Tandis que le thème de l'argent atteint son pressto fortissimo, le rideau se lève impitoyablement sur l'acte de dénouement.

Dans une scène des plus émouvantes, Flaubert peint la férocité redoutable de Lheureux, et la détresse navrante d'Emma et il finit le passage:

"Il la poussait doucement vers l'escalier:

- Je vous en conjure, monsieur Lheureux, quelques jours encore:

Elle sanglotait.

- Allons bon! des larmes!

- Vous me désespérez!"

Dans la scène chez le notaire Emma lui dit:

"-Vous profitez impudemment de ma détresse, monsieur. Je suis à plaindre mais pas à vendre."

Il semble que pour une fois Madame Bovary préfère la dignité à l'argent.

Toutes les démarches d'Emma pour payer la somme exigée restent vaines et Flaubert accélère davantage le rythme du récit et précipite les faits, tel Bethoveen dans le troisième mouvement de la sonate *"Au clair de lune"*.

Pour concrétiser le découragement infini, le dégoût profond, et l'indifférence totale d'Emma, Flaubert présente son dernier geste de prodigalité:

"Emma prise de dégoût, lui (à l'aveugle) envoya, par dessus l'épaule, une pièce de cinq francs. C'était toute sa fortune. Il lui semblait beau de la jeter ainsi."

Ce geste symbolique dramatisant l'état d'esprit d'Emma, semble qu'elle se débarrasse enfin de l'argent dont elle a été hantée et obsédée pendant toute sa vie tel un poison qui s'infiltrait progressivement en elle, toujours victime de son "bovarysme."

Après le suicide d'Emma, les ennuis d'argent continuent:

"Les affaires d'argent bientôt recommencèrent. M. Lheureux excitait son ami Viçart, et Charles s'engagea pour des sommes exorbitantes... Il s'indigne plus fort qu'elle (sa mère). Il avait changé tout-à-fait. Elle (la mère) abandonna la maison."

A chaque dette qu'il payait, Charles croyait en avoir fini. Il en survenait d'autres, continuellement."

Le thème de l'argent, comme nous l'avons noté, se fait entendre dès le début du roman bien avant d'entrée en scène d'Emma Rouault, et continue de se faire entendre après sa mort.

Le thème de l'argent rapproche enfin les deux époux, après la mort d'Emma, le thème qui fut la cause de leur malheur.

"Pour lui plaire, comme si elle vivait encore, il adopta ses prédictions, ses idées il s'acheta des bottes vernies, il prit l'usage des cravates blanches. Il mettait du cosmétique à ses moustaches; et soucrivit comme elle des billets à ordre."

Elle le corrompait par de là le tombeau."

Flaubert donne une vision saisissante de l'argent, qui crée ainsi une intimité sensuelle, quoique chimérique, entre les époux dont ils n'ont jamais pu jouir durant leur vie conjugale.

"Il (Charles) fut obligé de vendre l'argenterie pièce à pièce, ensuite il vendit les meubles du salon."

La misère étale ainsi largement ses ailes funèbres sur cette pitoyable existence ratée. Mais pour montrer l'amour d'Emma que Charles porte malgré tout dans son cœur:

"... la chambre, sa chambre à elle, était restée comme autrefois."

"Un jour qu'il était allé au marché d'Argueil pour y vendre son cheval-dernière ressource-il rencontra Rodolphe."

La ruine est complète l'édifice s'est écroulé il n'en reste presque plus rien.

Après la mort de Charles Bovary, Flaubert ajoute:

"Quand tout fut vendu, il resta douze francs soixante et quinze centimes qui servirent à payer le voyage de mademoiselle Bovary chez sa grand'mère.

Cette précision quasi douloureuse, où chaque mot fait entendre la note d'une finale infiniment triste, éteint enfin, le thème obsessionnel de l'argent, à la dernière page, de cette pathétique symphonie romanesque de Gustave Flaubert.

Malek Mehdi Mirfendereski
October 1993

پښتونخواه علوم انساني و مطالعات فرانسې
پرتال جامع علوم انساني

PATRIOTISM IN *THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY*

Ma'sumeh Tabatabai

یک داستان چگونه خلق می‌شود؟ یک قهرمان بر چه مبنائی ساخته می‌شود؟ آیا اینها تنها زائیده تخیل نویسنده و بر مبنای آرمانهای خلل‌ناپذیر وی شکل می‌گیرند؟ یا نه، تخیل و آرمان نویسنده فقط پاره‌ای از عواملی هستند که در خلق یک اثر تأثیر می‌گذارند؟

عوامل بیرونی نظیر تحولات تاریخی، مسائل اجتماعی و عکس‌العمل خوانندگان نیز در سیر تحول فکری نویسنده و نهایتاً در ایجاد آثار وی جای خاص خود را دارند. در مقاله "وطن پرستی در تصویری از یک خانم" اثر هنری جیمز، نویسنده آمریکائی ساکن انگلیس، نویسنده مقاله بر آنست که عوامل مختلفی که در خلق داستان و شکل‌گیری قهرمان آن مؤثر بوده است را بیان کند.

In 1880, when Henry James, the American novelist residing in London, published his first major novel, *The Portrait of a Lady*, some reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic were offended. American reviewers generally objected to what they thought were James' anti-American sentiments (Richmond, 159). British reviewers were also made indignant by the way James illustrated "the pre-dominance of the great American race and the manner in which it has overrun and conquered the Old World" (Oliphant 655). Of course, this was not the first time that reviewers on one or the other side of the Atlantic had accused James of injuring their national pride. In 1878, when *Daisy Miller* was published, "London laughed too heartily" at the flirtatious and uncultivated American girl, but many Americans were outraged (*Henry James* 20). Then, he wrote *An International Episode*, in which Americans could laugh back at the smugness of stuffy Britons, but London was appalled. When *The Portrait of a Lady* was published, it seems both sides were ready to be offended, and so they were. However, it is my

personal belief that a more disinterested or less prejudiced reader of *The Portrait* can discern that in this novel James is paying homage to his fellow Americans.

In reading James' novels one almost always feels the ambivalence that is woven into the very fiber of his novels. This ambivalence no doubt emanates from the feelings and beliefs of the author himself. On one hand there is his taste for form, style, aesthetics, culture, sophistication, wit, urbanity, manners, grandeur, power, glamour, aristocratic standards and values; his feelings for the arts, for aesthetic and sensuous perceptivity. Then, there is his repulsion for cunning, duplicity, insincerity, and materialistic values that usually go hand in hand with those virtues. For James, Europe presented this kind of ambivalence. Then, again, there is his concern for morality, spirituality, commitment, simplicity, honesty, frankness, and industry; however, these virtues are usually paired with limitations such as gullibility, ignorance, narrow-mindedness, provinciality, and vulgarity, which he abhorred. America appears to stand for this second set of ambivalence. In *Portrait of Places* he complains of this feeling when he describes "the baleful spirit of the cosmopolite":

"You have formed the habit of comparing, of looking for points of differences and resemblance, for present and absent advantages, for virtues that go with certain defects, and defects that go with certain virtues"(76).

He seems so undecided between these sets of virtues and their respective defects that it often confuses his readers and critics. He would laugh at American simpletons, bowing down to their moral integrity at the same time; he would scorn European's worldliness, relishing their cultural heritage and their civilization in almost the same breath. This ambivalence frequently causes misunderstanding and misinterpretation of his intentions.

In *Daisy Miller*, Daisy is "an extraordinary mixture of innocence and crudity"(475). The reader feels James' contempt for her ignorance and lack of interest in history and culture when Daisy talks of "those dreadful old men that explain about the pictures and things"(482), or when the history of Bonnivord goes in one ear (of Daisy) and out of the other(475). At the same time, one clearly feels the sympathy of the author for the girl who was misunderstood by everyone because of the differences between the two cultures. As William Dean Howells points out, James sees in America "a civilization so spiritual that its innocent daughters could be not only without the knowledge, but without the fear of evil ('James' Later Work'7). Similarly, in

The Europeans, the gentle, generous, serious, and duty-bound Wentworth family are admired for those virtues. At the same time, they are ridiculed for their lack of the ability to enjoy life; Felix, the young European says of his American uncle "He looks as if he were undergoing martyrdom, not by fire, but by freezing"(26), for being preoccupied with the "great questions of life"(92) even in the midst of a marriage proposal, and for their inability to appreciate or understand art. When Felix, an amateur artist, tells his uncle, "I should like to do your head, sir, "adding, "I think I should make a very fine thing of it". Mr. Wentworth gravely answers, "The Lord made it, I don't think it is for man to make it again". Meanwhile, Mr. Broderip thinks that, "amateuris probably a European expression for a broker or a grain-exporter"(54). On the European side, however, the sentient happy nature of Felix and the lively perception, refined imagination and superior manner of his sister, Madam Munster [Eugenia] are what James obviously admires. When Madam Munster goes to see the invalid mother of Robert Acton, the bachelor in whom she is interested, she puts on her best social manners:

"I have heard a great deal about you," she [Mrs. Acton] said softly, to the Baroness [Eugenia].

"From your son, eh?" Eugenia asked. "He has talked to me immensely of you. Oh, he talks of you as you would like," the Baroness declared, "as such a son must talk of such a mother!" Mrs. Acton sat gazing; this was part of Madam Munster's "manner". But Robert Acton was gazing too, in vivid consciousness that he had barely mentioned his mother to their brilliant guest(75)

At the same time, the very 'manners' which James admires, are also used here, as in many similar instances, to suggest European insincerity. There are also many passages indicating their materialistic mentality, such as when Eugenia informs her brother, Felix, that Robert Acton is in love with her. Felix replies:

"And he has a large fortune. Permit me in turn to remind you of that."

"Oh, I am perfectly aware of it," said Eugenia. That's a great item in his favor"(120).

At times, however, one can feel an overall preference for America and its values. James comes very near to admitting that preference. "I have, for

instance, every disposition to think better of the English race than any other except my own. There are things which make it natural I should. There are inducements, provocations, temptations, almost bribes" (*Portrait of Places*(77)). We notice that he carefully excludes his own race from those secondary to the English. This one question, however, remains: Were there, at any time, any inducements, temptations, provocations, and bribes for him to think better of the American race?

Among James' novels, two are decidedly seasoned with patriotic flavor, while brilliantly preserving the realistic qualities of James' style at the same time. The first of these is *The American*. According to Oscar Cargill, in 1876, at the time of James' sojourn in Paris, a French play was put on the stage by Alexandre Duma, Fils, by the name of *L Étrangere*, in which an American character was portrayed as a ruthless villain and James, who at times was himself very critical of his countrymen, could not tolerate an assault from an outsider and "was up in arms"(45). He not only wrote a very negative review to *The Tribune*, ridiculing the play and protesting the depiction of an American as an "implacable demon", but retaliated by writing *The American*. This novel is the story of what James calls "a cruelly wronged compatriot". He continues, "the point being in especial that he should suffer at the hands of persons [French nobility] pretending to represent the highest possible civilization"(41). Cargill adds that *The American* is strongly influenced by *L Étrangere*; indeed in many instances *The American* is an inverted version of *L Étrangere*. Of course, James is too skillful a novelist to draw an unrealistic or exaggerated character, "but", as a reviewer has noted, "this one character was so thoroughly of the best typical American sort" (Gard, 47). We are to see Newman through his eyes, which are "full of contradictory suggestions". "Frigid and yet friendly, frank yet cautious, shrewd yet credulous, positive yet sceptical, confident yet shy, extremely intelligent and extremely good-humoured, there was something vaguely defiant in its concessions and something profoundly reassuring in its reserve...", then, "Decision, salubrity, jocosity, prosperity, seem to hover within his call(2-4). Soon we realize the "contradictory suggestions" are not all that contradictory. Most of them are very positive traits. Isn't James trying to depict the picture of a nearly perfect man? One who possesses most of the virtues and few of the defects? At the end of the novel, to quote James, "he arrives at his just vindication and fails of... vulgarly enjoying it... All he has at the end is therefore just the moral convenience, indeed the moral necessity, of his practical, but quite unappreciated, magnanimity" (Cargill 41).

The Portrait of a Lady is the second novel that bears the mark of James' patriotism. James called *The Portrait of a Lady* his "big" novel. He

wrote to T.S. Perry, who offered to write an article on James' work, to wait for this novel because "on that I shall take my stand". He also wrote to Howells that "I am greatly in need of a larger success" (*The Conquest* 402). Why did he need a larger success at this point? What was the situation in which he wrote the book? How did he stand with the American public at this point of his life? What other changes might have occurred in James' attitude and how did they affect the novel? These are the points which we will endeavor to shed light on.

Two years after writing *The American*, James wrote *Daisy Miller*. James had mainly meant to show Daisy as a misunderstood American in Europe and had said, "The whole idea of the story is the tragedy of a light, thin, natural, unsuspecting creature being sacrificed, as it were, to a social rumpus that went on quite over her head and to which she stood in no measurable relation" (*Henry James* 18). Her flirtatious and uncultivated personality infuriated many Americans, especially James' female readers; they considered it an offense to the "divinity of American womanhood" ("James' Later Work" 8).

In 1879, one year after the publication of *Daisy*, James was asked to write a book about Hawthorne for the *English Men of Letters* series. The book proved very successful with the British public. In the book, however, James had enumerated all the things that were lacking in the American social life at the time that Hawthorne was writing, in order to show the difficulties facing the novelist, and as a result, he greatly offended the American reviewers. He was accused of taking on a foreign attitude and treating Hawthorne with condescension. They objected to the repetition of the word "provincial" in describing American society. Even William Dean Howells, James' intimate friend, was critical (*Conquest of London* 248). According to Leon Edel, from this time on "there was formed the legend that James was an expatriate who mocked his countrymen and exalted Europe at the expense of America" (*Henry James* (22)). It was at this point in his career that James started to write *The Portrait of a Lady*, knowing only too well that he was badly in need of a success.

But this is not all. There was another change taking place in England, and in James' political attitude as well, that might have had a direct bearing on writing *The Portrait*. Cheryl B. Torsney, in her interesting article, "The Political Context of *The Portrait of a Lady*", shows how James, caught up in the moral controversy between the Imperialists and Anti-Imperialists of his time, first supported Benjamin Disraeli's expansionist policy. In this period, according to Torsney, "James' language took on an imperialist tone suggestive of 'the white-man's burden' rhetoric popular at the time." In those

years (1870-77), James called the native population of the colonies "naked and blood-thirsty savages"(88). He called the Afghan people who were defending their country against the British invasion "brutal savages", expressing sorrow that the lives of English youths should be expended to "castigate" them(90). He called the British Empire "a heroic creation" which should be maintained. However, later, in 1880, the year in which he wrote *The Portrait*, when the imperialistic policies of Britain was no longer paying, and to use James' words, "the country [was] in a very dismal state--everyone [was] poor--the embarrassment of the government [was] increasing", and the country was "staggering under responsibilities which she [and also he] formerly thought glorious" (91), James' attitude began to change; he took on a more moralistic tone. In this year, Disraeli's Tory government was voted out and Gladstone, whose "political style was one of moral fervor and commitment to justice" (86), became the head of the government. This is when James renounced "the heartless Tories" (97). After this period, he increasingly viewed the imperial policies as "dangerous, stupid, and immoral" (98).¹ So, he started to write the novel in a mental and psychological state in which moral considerations and the desire to please his countryfolks were high on the agenda.

A summary of the novel might be useful here. Isabel is an idealistic and intelligent young American girl who accompanies her aunt on a journey to Europe, where she becomes the subject of everyone's admiration and affection. This admiration leads to two proposals from her suitors: a handsome English lord, and an insistent American businessman. She rejects both. In Italy, she meets Gilbert Osmand, an expatriate dilettante. She marries him despite the warning of all her friends, including her loving cousin, Ralph Touchet and her friend, Henrietta. She later finds out that Osmond married her to collect the money her uncle left her at the request of the consumptive Ralph. She also realizes that her marriage, which she thought she had chosen freely, had been arranged by Madame Merle, Osmond's former mistress and the mother of their daughter, Pansy, to secure Pansy's future. The novel culminates in Isabel's return to Rome and to her husband after the death of Ralph, and after rejecting the pleas of her American suitor to set herself free. Evidently, Isabel's reason for doing so is to be of help to Pansy, who is the subject of her father's cruelty.

According to Edel, in a letter to W.H.Howells, James expressed his intentions regarding the novel thus: "My novel is to be an Americana-- the adventures in Europe of a female Newman, who, of course, equally triumphs over the insolent foreigner" ("The myth of America" 8). This sentence is quite significant because, first of all, it indicates that both Isabel Archer and

Christopher Newman are representative characters endowed with typical American traits. Secondly, it establishes the fact that James intended for both to "triumph over the insolent foreigners". A third point is that since the protagonists of the novels are representing America, unless the antagonists are also representative types, they will not fulfill their function as the means for comparison and contrast of the two cultures, and if they do not, there is no need for the use of American types, either. Therefore, the protagonists are also types representing Europe. So, contrary to what some critics² supposed, although Osmond and Madame Merle were both born in America, James considered them as Europeans and foreigners.³ Finally, the antagonists in the two novels are described by the negative adjective "insolent". Henry James again writes to Howells that his heroine is to be "a great swell, psychologically: a grande nature" ("The Myth" 8). The insolent foreigners are, therefore, to face a grande nature. The question to follow is how James achieved this purpose in the course of the novel.

First of all, James gives his readers pages of descriptions of his heroine's noble impulses:

She had certain nobleness of imagination... she spent half her time in thinking of beauty and bravery and magnanimity... she had an infinite hope that she should never do anything wrong. She had resented so strongly, after discerning them, her mere errors of feeling (the discovery always made her tremble as if she had escaped from a trap which might have caught her and smothered her) that the chance of inflicting a sensible injury upon another person, presented only as a contingency, caused her at moments to hold her breath. That always struck her as the worst thing that could happen to her... it was wrong to be mean, to be jealous, to be false, to be cruel; she had seen women who tried to hurt each other. Seeing such things had quickened her high spirit; it seemed indecent not to scorn them (45).

As to her defects, or as James puts it, "errors and delusions", either James "shrinks to specify [them] in order to preserve her dignity", or they are of the kind that are natural for a fine, wholesome young girl anywhere in the world: "her meager knowledge, her inflated ideals, her confidence at once innocent and dogmatic... her desire to look very well and to be, if possible, even better"(46). Yes, unlike Christopher Newman, whose defects, few as they are, can be blamed on provinciality and lack of high culture, Isabel's shortcomings are those natural in a child who has not yet had time to see,