

## THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF HENRY JAMES'S NOVELLAS

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**ABSTRACT.** This thesis examines the distinctive artistic features of Henry James's short prose, including psychological centralization, indirect meaning, ambiguity, ironic distance, delayed realization, and a compositional structure that allows for open interpretation. Drawing on "The Beast in the Jungle," "The Birthplace," and other works of short fiction, the study explores the individual poetics of James's novella writing.

**KEYWORDS.** Henry James, novella, short fiction, psychologism, ironic narration, ambiguity, composition, artistic individuality.

**INTRODUCTION.** Henry James is a writer who created a distinctive artistic school not only through his major novels but also through his short stories and novellas. In examining the history of the American short story, Martin Scofield places James's short fiction among his most significant artistic achievements. The distinctiveness of James's novellas lies not in their brevity as such, but in his ability to condense complex psychological and ethical meanings within a relatively compact form. Henry James elevated the novella, as an intermediate form between the novel and the short story, to a high level of artistic achievement. Although his novellas are characterized by concise compositional structures, they incorporate the profound psychological and socio-moral analysis commonly associated with major novels.

**MAIN PART.** The study examines James's novellas "Daisy Miller" (1878), "The Aspern Papers" (1888), and "The Pupil" (1891) through analytical and hermeneutic approaches. The primary objects of analysis are plot structure, conflict typology, and the forms through which the psychological states of the characters are represented.

An important characteristic of James's novellas is the dependence of plot development on inner perception rather than external action. Although the protagonist is often situated at the center of events, he or she does not immediately understand the meaning of what is taking place. Consequently, the composition tends to follow a pattern of "observation — supposition — misinterpretation — renewed realization" rather than a simple "event — explanation" model. This technique requires the reader to participate in the search for meaning alongside the character.

The second characteristic is the semantic power of the unspoken. In James's dialogues, the intention underlying a statement, as well as silence, tone, and indirect suggestion, often carries greater semantic weight than the words themselves. In "The

Beast in the Jungle,” in particular, the tragic nature of the relationship between John Marcher and May Bartram is constructed through feelings that remain largely unspoken. The power of the work lies in the contrast between Marcher’s fixation on an unknown future “event” and his inability to recognize the reality of the relationship available to him in the present.

The third characteristic is ironic doubleness. In “The Birthplace,” Morris Gedge finds himself caught between historical truth, reverence for literary genius, and the demands of a tourist spectacle. Shakespeare is not explicitly named in the story, yet the entire ritual system surrounding the “Great Man” is readily recognizable. Through this device, James exposes the tension between a sacralized literary memory and its commercialization as a public spectacle. A study published in PMLA likewise regards “The Birthplace” as an important text for understanding James’s engagement with literary genius and the Shakespeare phenomenon.

The fourth characteristic is the capacity of the ending to compel reinterpretation. James frequently creates a moment of realization at the end of a work that requires the reader to view earlier events from a new perspective. The ending therefore does not merely conclude the plot; it transforms the semantic horizon of the entire text. The delayed realization in “The Beast in the Jungle” illustrates this technique: Marcher eventually understands that the “beast” he has been awaiting is not an extraordinary external event, but the tragedy of having failed to live his life.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS.** • Synthetic and compact plot structure: James’s novellas generally avoid excessive secondary developments; attention is concentrated on the central psychological conflict and the protagonist’s process of self-understanding.

- Moral and cross-cultural drama: The conflict between American and European values is particularly evident in “Daisy Miller.” The tragic incompatibility between Daisy’s personal freedom and the rigid conventions of European society is rendered with considerable psychological depth.

- Ambiguous and open endings: The writer frequently avoids providing a definitive and final resolution. This encourages the reader to reflect on the subsequent fate of the characters and on the moral implications of their choices.

**CONCLUSION.** The individuality of Henry James’s novellas is manifested in the synthesis of psychological depth, indirect narration, ironic distance, semantic ambiguity, and the poetics of delayed realization. He transformed the short prose form from a vehicle primarily for narrating events into an instrument for exploring how individuals understand—or fail to understand—their own lives. For this reason, James’s novellas occupy a significant position at the intersection of realism, psychological prose, and the poetics of modernist short fiction.

Henry James's novellas expanded the possibilities of short and middle-length genres in American and world prose. His novella poetics, psychological detailing, and method of representing character psychology dynamically constitute an important theoretical resource for contemporary Uzbek literary scholarship and comparative poetics.

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