



THE ARTISTIC STYLE OF W. COLLINS' WORKS

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ABSTRACT

Analyzing the work of Wilkie Collins, one cannot avoid the problem of his typological place in European literature of the 19th century. For the first period of his work, this problem is relatively clear (without some very significant reservations). His numerous novels and stories (many of them mentioned above) are mostly centered around chilling secrets, which the writer unfolds, generously using the principles of gothic novels and melodramas. Collins was fond of theater since childhood and lived in the world of the melodramatic principle of life decision. In the first third of the XIX century. melodrama was extremely widespread in all the theaters of Europe. It can be said without exaggeration that it was (for the general reader) the era of melodrama and vaudeville. In England, with its specific English conservatism, melodrama remained widespread until the last third of the 19th century.

It is easy to see that with all the diversity of the young writer's creative searches, one of his constants is the romantic (and partly pre-romantic) subtext. Collins refers to the same genres and themes as the European romantics of the first third of the 19th century. Like many of them, he does not shy away from melodramatic effects, likes to recall gothic motifs, and highly appreciates the expressiveness of the story.

Being well prepared for artistic creation by family traditions, being at the same time a painter, actor, prose writer and playwright, Collins early showed the ability to reincarnate, which brought him fame. By nature, he was endowed with a subtle sense of style, which formed the basis of his skill as a storyteller; as a painter, he relatively quickly learned the difficult skill of a picturesque story, easily mastering the landscape, literary portrait, and everyday surroundings of the story.

When writing the novel, Collins was inspired by materials from the French trials. Court cases more than once helped him find material - almost every work is based on a real criminal case or investigation.

In *The Woman in White*, the writer judges those in power who put an ingenuous young woman in a hopeless situation. In the preface, Collins directly points out that the real cause of



all the tragedies is the imperfection of the British court, "lubricated with money." The novel focuses on the defenselessness of women in the face of legal and moral laws. According to Coates, in the novel it is the law and conventions of Victorian society that inspire real horror, only the mysterious coming from Gothic novels (dreams, madness, supernatural) can save them from them. The real embodiment of this horror was the usual power of a man over a woman and women's "inexperience and vulnerability"

At the same time, "The Woman in White" is, above all, an exciting read. As the author says in the preface, this is a novel about what "a woman can endure and what a man can achieve." This is a beautiful fairy tale, or rather, the restoration of a myth by modern means and for modern people. The fairy tale model is carried over into the novel, although the myth of the overseas sorcerer and the invincible monster has been replaced by a more modern carbonari. It is the connection with the fairy tale, with a certain universal archetype of the struggle between good and evil that can explain the popularity of the novel among readers.

"The Moonstone" is structurally remarkably similar to "The Woman in White". In the preface to it, the author wrote: "In some of my previous novels, my intention was to trace the influence of circumstances on character. In the present narrative, I reversed the process. Here an attempt is made to trace the influence of character on circumstances. The behavior of a young girl, prompted by an unexpected and startling event, is the foundation upon which I have built this book."

But from the novel it is impossible not to draw a conclusion about how thin the soil of Victorian moral well-being is, how easily an idyll turns into a tragedy. The starting points for such reflection are the stories of Rosanna Spearman, Ezra Jennings, and to some extent, the fate of a poor relative - Miss Clack. Social themes are toned down in the novel, but can still be seen. These are the problems of workhouses and crime (on the example of Rosanna Spearman), the influence of money on a person's destiny (the life of a poor relative of Miss Clack, Rosanna Spearman, Erza Jennings), self-realization and self-respect of a person, the topic of opium (Ezra Jennings, Franklin Black), women's committees etc.

"Moonstone" is a fascinating read. Its fascination largely depends on the detective aspect of the novel, which keeps the reader in constant suspense. As in *The Woman in White*, and later in other works by Collins, the reader receives, as it were, a record of the interrogation of various witnesses and has the opportunity to independently build versions and correct them as the circumstances of the disappearance of the diamond become clear.

But, as already mentioned, Collins' detective intrigues are always false detectives. The climax of the novel (Godfried's proposal and the annulment of the engagement) has nothing to do with the Moonstone. The disappearance of the diamond no longer has any effect on the fate of the heroes and on the central conflict. The quarrel between Rachel and Franklin is not due to the theft of the Moonstone, but due to the dishonorable behavior of the young man (as Rachel imagines him to be). The diamond disappears for the second time, but the young people still get married. Thus, the composition of the novel does not correspond to the history of the Moonstone; it does not contain the spring of action.

The very same story of the Moonstone is just a way to show the relationship of all the characters. The moonstone does not play the role of a real treasure, it did not enrich anyone, did not make anyone happy. Only for Godfried was he a treasure that could solve his financial



difficulties. For everyone else, this is just a trinket that brought a lot of grief. Thus, the essence of the novel itself is not in the detective story.

The detective intrigue constantly fades into the background, and the essence of Franklin's search is in his own rehabilitation in the eyes of Rachel (he is quite able to redeem the value of the diamond). Moreover, with another aspect of reading, it turns out that the most important thing is that the key to revealing the secret is given from the very beginning, when the detective Cuff points out that the diamond will be in the hands of a well-known unscrupulous banker. In addition, if you re-read the birthday scene at the Verinder estate, then everything will coincide with the final version - it was Dr. Candy and Godfrey who tried to get Franklin drunk by planting opium, which they eventually succeeded in.

Both *The Woman in White* and *The Woman in the Moonstone* emphasize the need to create an objective, fact-based, credible story through the testimony of witnesses, who were the first to fight the falsity of this vague narrative. However, this move only increases the unreliability of the story and forces the editors to constantly defend their project. Walter Hartwright opens the story in *The Woman in White*: The incident quoted here is told by several pens, as the crime was told by several witnesses in court. the same goal, in both cases, to always present the truth in the most direct and understandable way ... the people who are closest to you ... connect the words through Similarly, "*Moonstone*" opens with the same promise: "We should all take turns writing the story of *Moonstone* - the more personal experience we have, the farther we will go". Document collector Franklin Blake reaffirms: "*Nothing is added, changed or removed ... I keep them as authentic documents certified by witnesses who can tell the facts*". However, no novel fulfills these promises, which raises questions about the gender differences between the story agency and its control. It is clear that the testimony of the first person promised in "*The Woman in White*" was not taken into account. In the middle of the novel, Walter emphasizes that the story is under his control, "Marian's story and Laura's story should be next. One is particularly noteworthy given that Marian contributed to the story earlier. The missing parts in the documents compiled in "*Moonstone*" are less clear; the plaque collection would not be complete without his testimony, during the initial investigation, his silence was restored two years later in Franklin's collection of stories, the female protagonists involved do not participate in the story movement, in the silent silence.

Once adopted, these stories apply to female protagonists, indicating the need for such a cautious approach. When female protagonists are able to choose silence, they use this silence to circumvent the legal system and ensure justice that the legal system does not want or does not want. When Hartwright abruptly abandoned his first-person testimony plans and described himself as an objective narrator for the rest of the novel, there was a great deal of critical attention to the dramatic transformation of *The Woman in White*. As a clear example of the male protagonist's control of the words and stories of the female protagonists, the critical discussion of this event focuses on the gender dynamics in the novel. D. A. Miller argues that the male protagonists of "*The Woman in White*" are threatened by female freedom, and therefore the entire period of the novel is not interconnected and therefore seeks to limit uncontrolled female protagonists. Thus, Hartwright's skill in narration is to try to establish control over Marian and Laura, which helps them to capture the interior under



Hartright's guidance. Miller, on the other hand, points to the futility of these "anxious male imperatives" and "cannot achieve the sluggishness or closure of the story by arresting or detaining the woman".

The novel "The Woman in White" is built as a false detective, hiding social problems underneath. In the course of the development of the plot, Hartright manages to reveal many secrets: he discovered the secret of the woman in white and her mother, the secret of Sir Percival, found the real Laura Fairlie, exposed Count Fosco.

He also notes that the characters who are the least reliant on legal standards of evidence most successfully discover the truth. Just a few years later, Pamela Perkins and Mary Donaghy extended Miller's analysis, arguing that, although Hartright is attempting to dominate the women of the novel because he is threatened by them, Collins does this intentionally to highlight Victorian gender inequities, not to reinforce them. By showing how even Hartright, the male protagonist, is warped by this unjust system, Collins critiques contemporary social conventions. Later criticism focused increased attention on issues of identity, although gender continues to play a main role in these critical analyses. Gwendolyn MacDonagh and Jonathan Smith focus on the ways in which the male characters use writing to establish their identity. They note that all of the male characters, Glyde, Fosco, and Hartright, use writing to fill blank spaces and establish their identity. Reading Hartright more critically than previous scholars, they argue that, if villainy in the novel is based on the creation of false narratives, Hartright has much in common with the antagonists.

Looking at gender differences in the practice of writing, they contend that, for female characters, power lies in erasure and the blank spaces that the men are so desperate to fill, not in the creation of texts, establishing distinct differences in the power of men and women. Similarly, M. Kellen Williams argues that, contrary to Perkins and Donaghy's sympathetic reading of the text as social critique, Collins was in fact reifying gender norms and sexual difference in the face of the contemporary breakdown of strict gender differences. He also argues that characters that rely the least on the legal norms of evidence are the most successful at discovering the truth. A few years later, it expands on the analysis of Pamela Perkins and Mary Donaghy Miller. Collins criticizes modern social conventions and shows how even the male protagonist Hartwright was violated by this unjust system. Criticism has since focused on identification problems, although gender continues to play a key role in these critical analyzes. Gwendolyn McDona and Jonathan Smith focus on ways to use writing to identify male protagonists. They point out that Glyde, Fosco, and Hartwright use male writing to fill in the gaps and identify themselves. Reading Hartwright more critically than previous scholars, they argue that while evil in the novel is based on the creation of false stories, Hartright has much in common with antagonists. Looking at gender differences in writing practice, they emphasize that the power for female protagonists lies not in creating texts by establishing clear differences in male power, but in eliminating gaps and gaps that men hope to fill and women. Similarly, as M. Kellen Williams points out, in contrast to Perkins and Donagin's sympathetic reading of the text as a social critique, Collins actually identified gender norms and gender differences in the context of the modern fragmentation of rigid gender differences.



Williams points out that Hartright's control of the legend and their appointment as head of the household only happens after acknowledging the difference between Anna Katerick and Laura Fairley, the woman in the white dress is not only different, but empirical, represents a form that can be verified and shows that male identity and safety depend on the ability to recognize this difference. Recent criticism has continued to focus on gender, agency, and individuality, with Anne Gailin analyzing the possibilities of male and female protagonists to tell separate stories. Combining many aspects of previous critiques, he emphasizes the importance of writing in Hartright's story management and manipulation, as well as in identifying identities, and emphasizes that the novel is concerned with women's mobility and the risk of women going beyond society-approved boundaries, roles and gaps. Ultimately, this mobility and narrative control should be limited to traditional, patriarchal structures. However, reading the same social critique made by Perkins and Donaghi, while he reassures ordinary readers by preserving the surface, "the excessive killing of the desired story casts doubt on its permanence". However, questions about gender differences in the story agency and "Moonstone" are more subtle than "The Woman in White," so there's a lot of critical attention elsewhere. Many scientific articles on the Moonstone are read as a critique of British imperialism, given that this gem was restored in its homeland. Others focus on science and rationality, explore the interaction of different ways of knowing, and draw conclusions about the different levels of success and confidence that this provides in different ways. As the first detective novel, "Moonstone" is also explored for transforming the short story form into a novel length and its impact on the genre. However, the novel focuses on story strategies. Lewis Roberts examines the tension between detective fiction experiences and knowledge and disclosure. Roberts argues that The Moonstone reflects the gender bias of traditional Victorian narratives, in which female protagonists typically gain power by concealing information, while male protagonists gain power through knowledge.

Thus, Rachel is most interested in keeping her secret, and when her secret is revealed, she goes into the background. Finally, Roberts argues that women are associated with absence and silence, while men are associated with existence and stories. This reflects a similar dynamic in The Woman in White, and proves a larger pattern in Collins' work. For him, for you, and for me, the fact that Rachel Verinder is not narrated in The Moonstone is a noticeable absence in the text, and this gap casts doubt on the full set of visible testimonies, and the reader is asked to read between the testimonies encourages. The premise of the collection is that "the whole story" is told, and "each of us must write the story of the Moonstone ... based on our personal experience". It is not uncommon for Franklin to use the word "all". His efforts to create a comprehensive account include searching for old family documents, re-establishing contact with an elderly family member who had an antagonistic relationship with him, and asking for testimony from anyone remotely associated with these events, includes, even if they have a personal relationship. This is so limited that their contribution is only a few pages, for example, Murthwaite. In addition to this comprehensive encounter, Franklin assures the reader of the integrity of the stories throughout the novel and emphasizes that "no line breaks from the first to the last," as contributors are encouraged to "own" themselves ordered a restriction the personal experience of individuals and events ... as a true witness".



In the 1840s, cheap serial editions of novels were very popular, in which the heroine - a girl from the lower class - left her father's house through the fault of a seducer (usually an aristocrat), often associated with the underworld, and after many misadventures acquired a valiant defender, with whom in the finale entered into a happy union. Bandits, gypsies, bloody atrocities, incredible illnesses, loss of reason constituted the set of means of these works, invariably ending in the triumph of virtue and the shame of vice.

Their style was pompous, replete with clichés, rhetorical figures, and at times was simply clumsy. Later, the authors preferred the heroine from an aristocratic environment, the scene of action was an exotic country. In the middle of the century, social problems began to penetrate popular novels: the position of governesses, emigration, drunkenness, which, however, did not contribute to raising their artistic level.

The accusations of proximity to cheap reading that constantly accompanied judgments about Collins are explained by the fact that in the plots of his novels it is easy to see the similarity of collisions with mass reading. The writer found in them soul-stirring situations.

Another notable shocking feature of the genre was the way women and femininity were portrayed. Heroines became the center of all sensational novels. The woman was shown, made a spectacle out of femininity be it a passive heroine of the angelic type or a femme fatale. Whether she is a goodie or a villain (and sometimes the lines between these poles become blurred), but at least one of the women in the sensational novel is positive, emotional and passionate, the other is bad, crazy and generally dangerous to meet. It is worth noting that the critics of the XIX century and modern readers find sensational heroines sincere, some even unforgettable because of the strength of their feelings, which sometimes cannot even be clearly articulated.

The sensational novels of Collins in a later period include the novels "Blind Love", "Jezebel's Daughter", "Two Fates". "Blind Love" - the last novel by Collins (1889), already completed; after the death of the author by the writer and publicist Walter Besant. Collins thought over and made rough notes for the entire novel, but completed only 48 chapters in its entirety (there were 60 chapters and an epilogue in the novel). Besant finished the remaining chapters and explained it all in the preface to the novel.

The novel shows the moral degradation of the central character, Lord Henry Norland. His shifting beliefs range from fiery idealism that draws him into a political assassination, to suicidal desperation, an insurance company's dastardly deception, and murder.

Collins' "second manner" of narration is distinguished by the fact that, having retained the skill of a fascinating, "exciting", "sensational" story, the author approaches a peculiar genre, which the British call "novel of purpose" (everyday novel on a given topic), and the French - "le roman à thèse".

Most of the Collins novels appearing at this time now consistently pursue a small group of problems, as a rule, clearly put forward by the author at the beginning of the book and developed to the finale. The climax of the action usually coincides with the conclusion about the hopelessness, the insolubility of the problem. In "Husband and Wife" (1870), which opens Collins's "second manner", the question of the inconsistency of legal standards is raised in turn with respect to Irish-Catholic marriage, then - to the so-called "irregular", Scottish, and, finally, to official English marriage code. In all three cases, the woman is economically and



morally infringed, the laws do not guarantee either her physical integrity or the safety of her property from abuse. All three marriage law chips dominating the UK provide opportunities for egregious atrocities.

If Collins could not equal his older brethren in the strength and breadth of the Victorian way of life, then his "novels of purpose" thrilled readers, touching on matters that concerned everyone. Moreover, the writer found the way to the hearts of readers easier, because he up to the end maintained a humane and kind attitude towards people and life in general. By this he resolutely opposed naturalism with its cruel attitude towards life and man.

Collins divides the novels into small chapters, gives them enticing titles, and rapidly moves the story from one extreme dramatic episode to the next. Tragic scenes are usually interspersed with romantic or comic scenes, creating the overall positive mood of the novel.

All his works (including the novels of the last period) can be attributed to mystery novels, when the author makes the reader "cry, laugh and ... wait." Detective moments are present in almost all of his novels, but ... the reader most often deals with a false detective story.

The essence of the novel lies in something else: in the problems of relationships between the characters, in the removal of obstacles to mutual love, in reflection on serious social problems. The detective elements of the novel add fascination and allow the author to keep the reader in suspense until the very end of the book.

Psychologism remains in the novel thanks to precise details in the description, small but significant remarks, through descriptions of the actions of the characters themselves. The reader feels the passions and emotions of the characters and sympathizes with them. Seas of tears were shed over Collins' novels.

His heroes are endowed with peculiar marks, features, eccentricities, they are easy to recognize; it is easy for the reader to figure out whether the characters are positive or negative in front of him. Villains and good people in Collins' novels show themselves very early, the reader knows whom to pity and whom to hate.

In a word, Collins' novels can be regarded both as problematic works and as entertaining reading - "fiction". This feature of the creative manner and brought the writer the epithet "sensational novelist."

The absurdity of the British trinitarian marriage law was both the subject of serious reflection, and, because of its illogicality, a fact of "sensationalism." At the same time, in order to firmly "solder" the two narrative streams, the author needed many and varied artistic facilities. The most important of these is the skillful use of vertical context. Developing your doubt in the most important legal and moral standards public and private life, Collins put the rod to marriage problem on a dense vertical subtext, in general creating a wide an ironic survey of the moral climate of the Victorian middle class.

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