

A Melting Pot of Affections in *The Other House*

斎藤彩世

A Melting Pot of Affections in *The Other House*

Sayo SAITO

Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. A Glimpse of “Startling” Scenes—Rose and Homoeroticism
- III. A Melting Pot of Various Kinds of Affection
- IV. Stopping Time and Preserving Affection
- V. Conclusion

[Abstract]

The Other House (1896) by Henry James has been regarded by critics as second-rate. It has many characteristics atypical of James; however, seen from the viewpoint of sexuality, this story plays an important role. The heroine, Rose Armiger, is the first conscious lesbian in James's works. Furthermore, although James had previously depicted the agony of homosexuals in the heterosexual culture of the Victorian era, in this story, he depicts a compatibility between homosexuality and heterosexuality. Thus, the theme of homosexuality is significantly changed in this novel. James is concerned with the preservation of time and ambiguous human feelings, and he sublimates these uncategorized affections into a work of art.

I. Introduction

The Other House (1896) by Henry James is a story of a woman's passionate desire. Since this story has been neglected by critics for a long time, let us introduce it with a summary. Rose Armiger finds out that her friend Julia Bream is dying after childbirth. Although Julia does not look ill, she is increasingly convinced that she will die soon. Her husband Anthony (Tony), does not believe that Julia will die, but Rose is worried that something might happen to Julia.

Rose and Julia had been friends and relatives since Mrs. Grantham became their stepmother. She was so cruel that Rose, the stronger and older of the two, had protected weak and passive Julia against their stepmother. Just before Julia falls ill, she is visited by Mrs. Grantham. Rose is certain that the visit caused Julia's sickness. She fears that if Tony remarries after Julia's death, his new wife may be as cruel to her daughter as Mrs. Grantham was to her and Julia. Hence, Julia asks her husband to pledge not to remarry while her daughter is alive. Tony repeats the vow in front of Rose, Mrs. Beever, who lives across from the Breams's house, Jean Martle, who is Mrs. Beever's protégé; Dr. Ramage who is Mrs.

Key words : Henry James, Sexuality, *The Other House*

Beever's doctor; and Dennis Vidal.

Dennis had been engaged to Rose for a long time. They had not been able to marry because of their poverty. He has, finally, achieved success in China and has returned to marry Rose. Unfortunately, Dennis discovers that the house is dominated by the oppressive atmosphere caused by Julia's illness, and Rose is too upset to consider marriage. Dennis is disappointed by Rose's indecision and thinks that she wants to reject his proposal. Soon after this quarrel, he goes to Mrs. Beever on an errand for Tony. Having heard about his broken engagement, Mrs. Beever feels sorry for Dennis and invites him to stay at her house until he leaves the town in the next day or two. Before long, Julia died, and Rose also leaves the Breems's house.

Four years later, Mrs. Beever asks Rose to come back to her house. After arriving at Mrs. Beever's house, Rose learns that Dennis suddenly appeared at the house to thank Mrs. Beever for her kindness in the past. Again, all characters gather at the two houses (the Breems's and the Beevers's). Mrs. Beever wants her son Paul to marry Jean, whom she had educated and treated kindly for a long time. Yet, recently, Mrs. Beever has noticed that Tony secretly loves Jean. Hence, Mrs. Beever calculates that it would be convenient for her if Tony were attracted to Rose, so she invites Rose to a birthday party for Julia's daughter, Effie, who is turning four. Effie does not appear. She has not been very well since morning. Jean, who has looked after Effie for these four years, is worried about her and goes to the Bounds (the Breems's house) to check on Effie.

Everyone thinks that Jean is the only person who has the right to take care of the child. During Jean's absence, Rose, as Mrs. Beever's emissary, helps Paul to propose to Jean. The occasion planned for the formal proposal is Jean's birthday as well as Effie's. Rose had chosen a piece of jewelry for Jean on Paul's behalf and helps him rehearse the proper way to court her. Rose also encourages Tony to persuade Jean to marry Paul. In spite of all these efforts and Mrs. Beever's kindness for a long time, however, Jean rejects Paul. It gradually turns out that Jean loves Tony and that is the reason for her rejection of Paul.

Just before this surprising news, Rose becomes convinced that Tony sincerely loves Jean since he persuaded her to marry Paul. Paul is wealthy and honest, in short, the best possible husband, whom poor Jean cannot have without Mrs. Beever's patronage. Tony understands well that he cannot marry Jean because he respects Julia's wishes above all; hence, he believes that the next best option for Jean is to marry Paul. On seeing Jean give up everything for Tony by rejecting Paul's proposal of marriage, Rose realizes how much Jean loves Tony as well. This alarms Rose; she conveys her doubt about Jean's right to look after Effie because Rose suspects that Jean might become Effie's stepmother and hurt Effie while causing Tony to violate his pledge.

Rose takes Effie away from Jean triumphantly. After half an hour, everyone realizes that Effie has disappeared. Rose convinces them that Jean has taken Effie somewhere. Finally they find Effie, drowned and hidden under the bridge. Tony thinks that the murderer is Jean, since Rose has repeatedly suggested the possibility that Jean might kill the child to marry him.

Thus, he stands up for Jean by claiming that he killed Effie. At the moment, Rose is convinced of her failure to separate the two lovers. Gradually everyone comes to realize that Rose is the murderer. However they decide to make her leave and treat Effie's death as an accident. Only Dennis sees Rose going over the bridge with Effie just before Effie dies, but he keeps this knowledge a secret; furthermore, he pretends to be Rose's husband to help her escape. Despite having been deceived by Rose, Dennis still loves her. Jean was infuriated at first about Rose's plot to separate her and Tony, but he still manages to persuade her to leave Rose unpunished. Tony insists that he is responsible for Rose's behavior: Rose loves him passionately and he has encouraged her to do so. The story ends with Tony's despair at the fact that women love him too much.

This is the only story among James's novels that describes a murder. As Gerard M. Sweeney states, many critics have noted that this novel is "atypical of James" because it is classified as "a thriller, a murder mystery, a 'whodunit'" (216). It also has many other characteristics atypical to James's style, but the most controversial point in the previous studies is the story's ending: Rose is left unpunished for her murder of Effie. Leon Edel states that this novel deals with "a crime which defies the tradition of murder stories by going unpunished" (*Treacherous Years* 167). Edel's tone is sympathetic with James, but for the same reason as Edel cites, other critics have dismissed it as second-rate. As S. Gorley Putt notes, this novel has been neglected because nothing in the story is plausible, and if readers could recognize its verisimilitude, the novel would be very unpleasant (311).

Critics have had divided on this subject from the beginning. An anonymous reviewer in *Saturday* observed that James aimed at popular acclaim for the first time in his career, and that it is deplorable that he abandoned the subtle, inimitable style that he had cultivated over many years (Gard 261). In contrast, an anonymous reviewer at *Critic* highly praised the novel: James's works had always become first-rate events in the world of letters, and *The Other House*, James's new attempt, undoubtedly marked another historical event (Gard 263).

The effect of its strange, controversial ending is heightened by an absence of authority. Sweeney notes that Mrs. Beever appears in the opening as an authority; she would have accused Rose of her crime and restored social order in the ending. However, Mrs. Beever literally disappears from the novel (220). Sweeney concludes that Effie's murder represents the complicity of Victorian society. Oscar Cargill also argues that the characters' collective complicity in the crime violates Victorian morality, and through this violation, James exposes the deceptive nature of Victorian morality (212). Thus, the ending has been subject to various interpretations, but this ambiguity was not originally calculated by the author. As we will consider in the following discussion, Rose's role in the story is ambiguously written. However, in the original idea sketched in James's *Notebooks* in 1893, James clearly writes that Rose desires Tony, which is her motivation for killing Effie (Matthiessen and Murdock 139). Furthermore, James refers to Rose as a "Bad Heroine" and Jean as a "Good Heroine" (*Notebooks* Matthiessen and Murdock 140). In James's novels, there is usually a degree of ambiguity about good and evil, which is a very Jamesian characteristic.

Then why did James suddenly reduce his story to a “melodrama” (Murphy 90; McElderry 328; Isle 41) ? We can find the answer to this question in his attempt to gain popularity and sales: in a letter to the editor of the *Illustrated London News*, Clement Shorter, James writes that he “should like to capture the public” of the magazine (*Letters* IV: 30). James also writes with great enthusiasm that “[he] shall endeavor to be thrilling, and my material is such that [he] think [s] [he] shall succeed” (*Letters* IV: 31). After a popular disaster with the premiere of *Guy Domville*, James decides to captivate readers’ attention. According to Amy Tucker’s article, the illustration accompanying the story serialized in the magazine reflects this decision: it shows a woman holding out her hands with a cup (which is probably poisoned), with a demon behind her whispering something into her ear (23). It is clear that while he was writing, he gradually changed his plan. In a letter to Edmund Gosse, James confided in Gosse that the problem is that *The Other House* was more difficult to deal with than he had expected, and that he had made little progress (*Letters* IV:33).

As a result, Murphy argues, Rose’s inner state and the dark shadow cast on Jean and Tony by Effie’s death causes “moral ambiguity,” and thereby the novel became a drama of “complex human psychology” (90-91). Barzun states that the plot of the novel is simple, but the characters are complicated; James gives both the good and the evil characters “charm and ferocity” and “brains and blindness” (516). For this background, this paper will consider why the simple drama became a complex psychological novel and what effects its ambiguities including the ending, achieved, and conclude that Rose’s escape from punishment functions to create a melting pot of various kinds of affection.

II. A Glimpse of “Startling” Scenes—Rose and Homoeroticism

Spying on others is a recurring theme in this novel. The first glimpse is taken by Jean when she comes to the Bounds on an errand for Mrs. Beever: Jean thinks that an unfamiliar woman is scrutinizing her, but soon realizes that rather than the woman looking at Jean, Jean has been examining her. The glance causes a moment of sensual embarrassment in Jean. What she sees at that moment is Rose’s relaxed posture: “a young woman bent low over a table at which she seemed to have been writing. Her chair was pushed back, her face buried in her extended and supported arms, her whole person relaxed and abandoned” (13) . Given the Victorian genteel tradition and publicity in the upper class houses, we can easily imagine that Jean would feel as if she were peeping into a woman’s boudoir. Besides, “[the woman’s] attitude denoted a state of mind that made the messenger from Eastmead [Jean] hesitate between quickly retreating on tiptoe or still more quickly letting her know that she was observed” (13). Jean has caught a glimpse of not only Rose’s outstretched body but also her hidden feelings. Later, Jean also spies on Tony while he sleeps a fitful doze, and she feels a sense of guilt again. As soon as Tony opened his eyes, Jean “uttered a blushing ‘Oh!’ which deplored this effect of her propinquity and which brought Tony straight to his feet” (92). Later, Jean is also spied on by Paul. Thus, spying on others is repeatedly described, and all of these scenes lead to a fatal

glimpse in the ending: Dennis catching Rose going over the bridge with Effie, a glimpse that becomes a proof of Rose's guilt.

This recurring act of spying on others emphasizes the idea that people can see only a part of what happens around them. Among the Jamesian novels, *The Other House* most directly makes use of the limitation of viewpoints. For example, readers witness the two surprising happenings: Rose holding Effie in her arms for the first time in four years, and Dennis returning to propose to Rose. Thus, both of these events are known to readers. Yet, in chapter 26, we observe the same information being repeated between Jean and Paul; as soon as Jean leaves, Paul repeats these facts again to Mrs. Beever, not in the form of a summary, but in detail. We read about these happenings a total of three times. Viewed in this light, the repetition effectively draws attention to the characters' differences in knowledge. As a result, the characters, who can only see part of the surrounding events, cannot know the full truth. As for Dennis's proposal of marriage to Rose, Mrs. Beever says, "I only know what Paul tells me"; Paul says, "I only know what I had just now from Jean"; Tony says, "I was there when they met . . . and I saw for myself pretty well how it *would* go"; and Mrs. Beever adds to the ambiguity by replying, "I confess I didn't. . . . It must have gone with a jump!" (emphasis mine 245) . The same limitation of viewpoints delays their discovery of Effie's death as well.

This limitation of viewpoints is used more subtly in another scene. Critics have assumed that Rose's love for Tony is the reason for her murdering Effie. However, Rose's love for Tony is a fact seen from Dennis's and Mrs. Beever's viewpoints. The narrator explains an incident between Rose and Tony as follows: "the instant effect on [*Dennis's*] *imagination* of his finding [Rose] intimately engaged with [Tony,] who had been, however without fault, the occasion of her perversity [the reason for Rose's indecisive behavior toward Dennis's proposal of marriage]" (emphases mine 204). By using the words italicized above, the narrator emphasizes that the intimacy between Rose and Tony and "the occasion of her perversity" in the past are not universal truths but only what Dennis imagines. Cargill cites as one of the defects of the novel its lack of any convincing explanation as to why the women in the story are so drawn to Tony: he is not very attractive, and women have no reason to fall helplessly in love with him (214). Cargill's comment is very suggestive since we are originally not told that Rose and Julia love Tony so much.

Thus, characters are enclosed in an ambiguous setting and act according to their own fancies. The recurring act of spying symbolizes the characters' tentative and uncertain vision. However, seen not from characters' but readers' viewpoints, spying on someone becomes a revelation. Through the characters' acts of spying, readers are forced to feel that they have caught a glimpse of a secret. The most thrilling secret is Rose's. When she is forced to make a decision about marriage, she discloses her agony only to readers: "she had the appearance of holding in with extraordinary force some passionate sob or cry, some smothered impulse of anguish" (66). Dennis turns his back to Rose at this moment, and when he turns around to her, this expression has already disappeared. Rose wears her social mask again as soon as her fiancée looks at her. Readers are expected to be shocked at this scene, since engaged lovers

are supposed to be on the most intimate of terms and Rose is a person who cannot be easily agitated. Tony is acutely aware of Rose's duality: he detects that there is something in her eyes "so deep, so exquisite" and "[it] represented something that no lapse could long quench" (154). Rose "could sometimes turn it away, but it was always somewhere; and now it covered him with a great cold luster," and "[Tony] got up nervously, there would be nothing pleasant in any way of dealing with this one" (154). Rose's secret is described as a problem that sociable Tony, who handles everything with his smile and pleasant words, cannot understand.

As Tony comes to realize that Rose's secret cannot be reconciled with normal social expectations, readers are secretly shown an expression of her homoerotic feelings. As Priscilla L. Walton has already cited, Rose insists that she and Julia each consider the other the only thing she owns, with husbands and lovers counting for nothing (17). As stated above, critics assume that Rose uncontrollably desires Tony; however, when Tony suggests to Rose that they will begin a new relationship not as Julia's friends but as mutual friends, Rose rejects this by saying that nothing has changed in her feelings, "save perhaps in the sense of its having become a little intensified. If I was here before as Julia's friend, I'm here still more as Julia's friend now" (155). In this scene, Tony and Rose uses the same words "Dear little Julia"; yet the narrator reveals that feelings with which they utter her name are greatly different: Rose calls Julia's name "with an expression which, unlike Tony's, would have left on the mind of an ignorant auditor no doubt of its conveying a reference to the unforgotten dead" (155). Rose is the only person who remembers Julia after her death.

Rose's motivation for murdering Effie is to honor Julia's wishes: Jean is "the nicest girl [Mrs. Beever] knew" (7), but she unintentionally ignores Julia. For example, after Effie is found drowned, Jean cries that the child must have called her name: Jean thinks of herself as the girl's stepmother, the horror that Rose had feared. Tony also recognizes Jean as the only person with the right to take care of the child, regretfully stating, "It was the only little minute in all the years that you had been forced to fail her. She was always more yours than mine" (307). As this comment reveals, Effie is seen to be Tony's or Jean's. If Rose lets them be, Julia would lose her position as Effie's mother. Rose's loyalty to Julia triggers a disaster, but it is certain that Rose is not the selfish murderer she appears to be. In explaining her motivation for her act, Rose says "my grounds are so deep—deep down" (145). She attempts to elaborate her feelings, but in the middle of this, her face grows pale and more serious. She declares, "I've an idea that has become a passion with me. . . . There's a royalty I must cherish—there's a memory I must protect," finally behaving "like the priestess of a threatened altar" (145). Thus, while Rose commits an unforgivable crime, the above passage shows that it comes from her almost religious adoration of Julia. Whether this story is judged as a brilliant and subtle novel or as a popular sensational fiction for the mass market seems to depend on whether the reader takes Rose's words at face value.

III. A Melting Pot of Various Kinds of Affection

It is noticeable that Rose is given a special perspective by the author. Cargill observes that for James, Rose is certainly his heroine and only Rose and James see the whole situation clearly (212). Rose's thoughts in particular are very ambiguously written and shared only by the author. They can be discerned only by readers able to perceive homoerotic feelings. Rose confesses that insight or imagination is only for the people who are scared and cornered; she continues by insisting that "[she] was awfully afraid to be one that [she's] been keeping [herself] in" and that "[she] knew a hitch was coming" (86). This line of Rose's highlights her potential marriage to Dennis. For Rose, this marriage looms as a danger that would trap her as a heterosexual. Walter Isle claims that Rose's poverty and rootlessness sets her apart from people such as the Breams and the Beevers; hence, the other characters cannot see through her (55). Yet, Rose's privileged insight is also deepened by her identity as a homosexual.

As previously stated, Rose feels an unnamable danger headed towards her. In this circumstance, she decides to rely on the tools of heterosexuality. For example, Rose uses heterosexual affection to position herself. When Julia's imminent death is not revealed to the guests of the Bounds, Rose learns of Julia's situation through Tony, who pretends to be calm and whose intentions cannot be perceived by others. Rose succeeds in learning the truth by catching an invisible thread of consciousness: she senses that "it was as if a new delicacy had operated" (79). Tony's delicacy in not revealing Julia's real situation comes from his affection for Julia: he continues to insist that the news is too horrible for him to believe. By not mentioning it, he tries to distract himself from the possibility of Julia's death.

Walton is the only scholar who discusses the homoerotic relationship between Rose and Julia, and between Dennis and Tony. She concludes her interpretation as follows:

The Other House, which works to sensationalize the threatening nature of a sexually assertive and lesbianized woman, is superficially in accord with the containment paradigm and with the homophobic climate of the mid-1890s. However, the novel also unsettles that paradigm—which may explain its failure to excite fin de siècle audiences—for it restrains its femme fatale in a male circle that is fraught with homoerotic promise. (14)

As suggested by the phrase "unsettles that paradigm," Walton views this novel as a conflict between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Given "the homophobic climate of the mid-1890s," it is valid to detect this conflict in this novel. However, heterosexuality helps Rose in various ways, and we can detect some compatibility between heterosexuality and homosexuality. For instance, heterosexuality sometimes gives her a way to express her feelings. As stated above, Dennis wants to clarify his relationship with Rose; but whenever he brings forth the topic of their marriage, Rose absent-mindedly ignores it. She also continues to avoid being kissed

or embraced. Rose continues to justify this by insisting that she is too worried about Julia to consider anything else. She wants to postpone the discussion of marriage until Julia's illness is over. After Rose and Dennis quarrel, Tony asks her what happened to them; however, she cannot explain their situation clearly. Rose's complaint about Dennis is expressed vaguely and inarticulately as "a small, confused cry" (81) and "another vague sound" (82), finally ending her explanation with "Oh, God! oh, God! oh, God!" (84). However, Rose can express her love for Julia by appropriating the language of heterosexual affection. When Tony says, "To you I can say it, Rose— [Julia's] inexpressibly dear to me," Rose "showed him a face intensely receptive" and says, "It's for your affection for her that I've really given you mine" (39). Rose sums up the conversation with the words "We shan't loved [Julia] so much only to lose her" (emphasis mine 40). Similarly, Rose sometimes encouraged Tony to confess his love for Julia as well. As the pronoun "we" shows, Tony and Rose feel "a comfortable intimacy" (40) that can be maintained through Julia and by their indifference to each other.

The most symbolical intersection of heterosexuality and homosexuality is Effie. Isle points out that Effie is a symbol of Julia's will (69) while Muriel G. Shine regards the child as a "focal point for a fierce struggle" and a "poetic device" (78). As these previous studies reveal, Effie is described as not a real child but a symbol. Effie presents a mixture of various sexualities. For instance, both Rose and Jean wish to possess Effie because she is a symbol of their lovers.

"It's because of that that I want [Effie] !" [Jean said.]

"Because you adored [Tony] —and she's his?" [Rose asked.]

Jean faltered, but she was launched. "Because I adore him—and she's his."

"I want her for another reason," Rose declared. "I adored her poor mother—and she's hers. That's my ground, that's my love, that's my faith." She caught Effie up again; she held her in two strong arms and dealt her a kiss that was a long consecration. (235)

For Rose, Effie is a reminder of Julia, and for Jean, Effie is a reminder of Tony. In this scene, two kinds of affection dominate Effie. Gradually, the bonds of affection between the others begin to converge on the child. After Rose kisses Effie's arm and presses her cheek against Effie, Dennis imitates Rose's gestures exactly; kissing Effie where Rose kissed her and pressing his cheek where Rose pressed her cheek, as if seeking the residue of Rose's affection. Effie is the common focus of affection between Julia and Tony, Tony and Jean, Rose and Julia, and Rose and Dennis.

Not only heterosexual language and gestures but also maternal affection helps Rose navigate her crisis. As previously stated, Dennis's proposal forces her to forget Julia's problem, focus on their relationship, and decide whether to marry him. Dennis realizes that something is wrong with their relationship, but is not convinced by Rose's reasons; hence, he desperately continues to ask for the real reason. Rose also repeats her answer, "Why, my dear child. . . Poor Julia's between us—much between us" (63). Rose helplessly insists that Julia is the

reason for their estrangement. The more important point in this scene is Rose's calling Dennis "my dear child"; she uses maternal affection to maintain a distance from him. Whenever Rose evokes or plays a heterosexual role, she uses this maternal image, and the narrator cooperates with Rose's strategy. Moreover, Rose is spiritually and physically more mature than Dennis. The narrator emphasizes Rose's maternal role by depicting her encompassing his body and his feelings. For example, when Dennis tries to propose to Rose with his news of his success in China, Rose "protected and even a little patronized him" (45). She congratulates him as follows:

"You're not splendid, my dear old Dennis—you're not dazzling, nor dangerous, nor even exactly distinguished. But you've a quiet little something that the tiresome time has made perfect, and that just here where you've come to me at last—makes me immensely proud of you." (45)

Although Dennis repeats his wish to hear more passionate words, Rose persuades him that she has given enough approval to reassure him. As her words reveal, Rose's affection is not heterosexual but familial. In order to avoid making a decision on marriage, Rose plays the role of a mother. Thus, Rose's homoerotic love toward Julia mingles with a maternal affection for Dennis. As Rose murmurs that "Everything's strange—and the truest things are the strangest," the truest affections that characters feel are strangely melted into one another.

IV. Stopping Time and Preserving Affection

Rose utilizes varied kinds of affection described above in order to protect Julia and her own love for her; she sometimes plays a maternal role for Dennis, Paul, and Tony. She also voices her love for Julia by appropriating the language of heterosexuality. We have already seen that Rose constantly fears being trapped by heterosexuality; nonetheless, she does not definitively refuse Dennis's proposal of marriage. Rose wishes only to remain between heterosexuality and homosexuality. She repeats the word "wait" and "patient" to her fiancée; she also tries to turn her eyes from a letter which Dennis earnestly recommended she read, and that would lead to the topic of their marriage. In this scene, she seems to hope to stay where she is: she can safely yearn for Julia as much as she likes since Julia is dying. On the other hand she can keep the prospect of marriage in view, a prospect that will lead her to the "normal" life that she has not yet realized. Dennis scolds Rose for her indecisiveness, saying, "you're not straight" (73). This comment carries a double meaning for modern readers, and even for Victorian readers, at least one meaning is clear: Rose wants to deviate from the path of marriage. It is noticeable that Dennis also points out that she is just buying time.

Not only Rose but also other characters have a twisted affection for their beloveds. Paul proposes to Jean because he loves Rose. Jean loves Effie and tries to live near Tony while serving as Effie's permanent nanny because Jean loves him. Tony encourages Jean

to marry Paul because Tony loves Jean. Among these characters, Tony's ideas of love are closest to Rose's. He wishes to stop Jean's growth in order to love her without any dangerous consequences. After four years have passed, Tony still remembers the moment when he first met her: "the act of slow, charmed apprehension had yet to melt into accepted knowledge" (168). In this passage, Tony feels as if he was currently awaking to find out that Jean has spied on him. By remaining in this period of time, he maintains both the agreeable vision that she brings something wonderful, as well as the necessary distance from Jean to keep him from any serious relationship.

Tony views Jean as between adulthood and childhood. When he watches her duality, it is described as if time had stopped:

[Tony] was interested in not interrupting by a rash motion the process taking place in the figure [Jean] before him, the capricious rotation by which the woman peeped out of the child and the child peeped out of the woman. . . . There was no point at which it had begun and none at which it would end, and it was a thing to gaze at with an attraction refreshingly baffled. (168)

We do not know when Jean's change begins and when it ends; hence, although she changes her figure endlessly, she always remains in the same period of time in Tony's mind. Tony thinks that while watching her change miraculously, he can be "free to remain as he was" (168) and not have to choose between Julia or Jean. Tony confesses that it becomes possible that he likes Jean "comfortably" because "[his liking] would lead to exactly nothing" (168). As Walton acutely points out, Julia's wish is not only to block Tony's remarriage but to protect Tony from it (20). Originally, Julia, Rose, and Tony maintained a comfortable triangular relationship in which Rose and Tony use each other to express their love for Julia. Furthermore, given heterosexism in Victorian culture, Rose could not have lived under the same roof as Julia without Tony. Now Julia's wish serve to control and facilitate love matches, which are opposed by additional sexual control by Mrs. Beever, a typical Victorian match-maker.

This ambiguous time and space in which various kinds of affection mingle with one another is maintained not only by the characters but also the author: James makes Mrs. Beever leave the scene. Mrs. Beever struggles to "straighten it out" (89) on every occasion, and this phrase reveals her ideological nature by including her recommendation of "straight" (heterosexual) relationships for the younger characters. However, she does not appear at the ending, when she is supposed to execute her power most. Furthermore, the author conceals Rose's crime by conflating heterosexuality and friendship. Paul cooperates with Tony and Dr. Ramage to conceal Rose's crime because Paul loves her. Tony agrees to conceal the crime because of his love for both Jean and Rose. Dennis keeps her crime secret because of his love for Rose, and Dr. Ramage does so because of his friendship with Mrs. Beever. Even Jean reluctantly agrees to do so because of her love for Tony. Thus, Rose's homoerotic feelings for

Julia cause Effie's murder, which is then concealed by the others because of their heterosexual attractions and loyalties. The moral ambiguity in the ending is thus brought into the novel to describe a melting pot of various affections. Furthermore, by leaving Rose unpunished, the author seems to cooperate with Rose and Tony for the preservation of ambiguous affections.

In addition to creating ambiguity about characters' affections and relationships, the author makes his characters repeat minute actions in order to heighten the effect of stopped time. For example, after being rejected by Rose, Dennis crosses over a bridge. This is a highly symbolical scene, since the bridge links the two houses for which the book is named and becomes the scene of the murder. Four years later, he crosses the bridge again as if there were no lapse of time, and the author minutely describes his return. The two houses represent a new and old culture respectively, and his coming and going between the new and old houses makes time seem ambiguous. Moreover, when he realizes that Rose is rejecting him, Dennis becomes upset and awkwardly looks for his hat upon leaving her. This gesture is repeated four years later and is again minutely described. Thus, the characters' appearance as well as their actions are exactly the same as they were four years earlier, giving readers the sense that time in the novel has not passed.

Many critics have referred to the theatric style of the novel; Edel notes that James brings a theatrical method to this novel (165). Isle notes that the theatrical method is most apparently used when dealing with time in the novel: James does not write about characters' pasts, but focuses on the present (41-42). It is not certain that the time can be referred to as a "present" or a "past," but it can be said that time in the novel is portrayed as constant; and in the stopped time, the characters' secret ambiguous affections can be preserved forever.

V. Conclusion

Rose is the first consciously homosexual character in Jamesian novels. She has a clear purpose to act as Julia's advocate and to exploit the conventions of heterosexual love. She attracts Paul, Dennis, and Tony and has them work for her. The most apparent example of this is how she falsely announces her formal engagement with Dennis in order to take Effie from Jean, successfully defending Julia's rightful position as Effie's mother. Rose lets Tony believe that she loves him and thereby gains his cooperation. Rose is conscious of this heterosexuality because she observes it from the outside. In spite of his original plan sketched in his notebooks, James begins to emphasize Rose's homoerotic desire while writing, and this transforms the novel from a simple melodrama (a battle between good and evil) into a more complex novel. This change in particular generates a suspension of time in the novel. Rose cannot decide whether to marry before and after Julia dies. The engagement between Rose and Dennis has been delayed for so long that it has deprived them (or at least Rose) of any passion. While Rose is aware of the danger of being constrained by Victorian norms, she cannot immediately forsake her "normal" life. Like Rose, Tony also cannot forget Julia. At the same time, however, he secretly loves Jean. He also wants to be free from any serious

relationship. As a result, Rose and Tony create suspense through their relationships with other characters. As long as time is stopped, each bond of affection can be maintained: not only the characters but also the author seem to wish to keep all the bonds of affection intact. Here James has arrived at a new phase. He stops agonizing over his homosexual characters by introducing consciously homosexual character into his work. James does not make her challenge the heterosexual norm; instead, he describes the interaction of homosexuality and heterosexual norms. James shows only the beauty of all kinds of affection, and while maintaining a distance from all of them, he sublimates the melting pot of affections into a work of art. Like the scenes cut by Rose's and Tony's viewpoints, art is the only way to preserve a given time and tentative affections forever.

[References]

Works Cited

- Barzun, Jacques. "James the Melodramatist." *The Kenyon Review* 5.4 (1943) : 508-21. Print.
- Cargill, Oscar. *The Novels of Henry James*. New York: Macmillan, 1961. Print.
- Edel, Leon. *Henry James: The Treacherous Years: 1895-1901*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1969. Print.
- Gard, Roger. *Henry James: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1976. Print.
- Isle, Walter. *Experiments in Form: Henry James's Novels, 1896-1901*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1968. Print.
- James, Henry. *The Other House*. New York: New York Review of Books, 1999. Print.
- . *Henry James Letters*. 4 vols. Leon Edel ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap, 1984. Print.
- . *The Notebooks of Henry James*. F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock ed. New York: George Braziller, 1955. Print.
- McElderry, Jr, B. R. "Henry James's Neglected Thriller: *The Other House*." *The Arizona Quarterly* 8 (1952): 328-32. Print.
- Murphy, Brenda. "James's Later Plays: A Reconsideration." *Modern Language Studies* 13.4 (1983) : 86-95. Print.
- Putt, S. Gorley. *Henry James: A Reader's Guide*. New York: Cornell UP, 1966. Print.
- Shine, Muriel G. *The Fictional Children of Henry James*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1969. Print.
- Sweeney, Gerard M. "The Curious Disappearance of Mrs. Beever: The Ending of *The Other House*." *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 11.3 (1981) : 216-28. Print.
- Tucker, Amy. *The Illustration of the Master: Henry James and the Magazine Revolution*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2010. Print.
- Walton, Pricilla L. "'The Tie of a Common Aversion': Sexual Tensions in Henry James's *The Other House*." *Henry James Review* 17.1 (1996) : 11-21. Print.