Selective Bibliography for Henry James, *The Wings of the Dove*  
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NB:
* indicates a particularly useful text for preparation for the concours  
** indicates texts to be read in priority  

To the extent possible, hypertext links have been provided. Most documents indexed are followed by a brief description of content.

1) Primary Sources

1.1 Novel


E-text of New York Edition: [https://www2.newpaltz.edu/~hathawar/wings1.html](https://www2.newpaltz.edu/~hathawar/wings1.html)

1.2 Critical Writings

the New York Edition, New York, The Library of America, 1984, p. 1039-1341 (see in this volume, regarding Jamesian technique, the prefaces to **Roderick Hudson** [“relations stop nowhere” 1041; “centre” of consciousness, 1049-1050], *The American* [difference b/w realist and romantic modes of imagination, 1061-1064], *The Portrait of a Lady* [the “medium” of consciousness 1074; “the house of fiction” 1075], *The Princess Casamassima* [“dramatic value,” comparison with George Eliot, 1095; “polished mirrors” of consciousness, 1095-1096], **The Tragic Muse** [scenic versus pictorial, “specious and spurious centres” 1109], *The American* [the difference btw. realist and romantic modes of imagination, 1061-1064], *The Portrait of a Lady* [the “medium” of consciousness 1074; “the house of fiction” 1075], *The Golden Bowl* [the “high spontaneity of these deviances and differences” 1330; “the religion of doing” 1340].

**“The Lesson of Balzac”** (1905). *Literary Criticism, Volume 2: French Writers, Other European Writers, The Prefaces to the New York Edition*, New York, The Library of America, 1984, p. 115-138. (Like the New York Edition prefaces, this late essay discusses novelistic technique and aesthetic principles: “Literature is an objective, projected result; it is life that is the unconscious, the agitated, the struggling, floundering cause.” 119. Discusses the greatness of Balzac, and his limitations, in comparison to other 19th century novelists such as Dickens, Eliot and Flaubert)


1.3 Shorter fiction


### 1.4 Autobiography, Notebooks, Travel Writings, Essays, Letters


### 1.4 French Translations


2) Secondary sources

2.1 Biography


**Matthiessen, F.O. *The James Family*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1948. (essential reading on novelist’s family and social background, often pertinent with respect to Milly’s; influence of Henry James Sr. in author’s pursuit of aesthetic education, p. 1-100)

2.2 Articles and book chapters devoted exclusively to *The Wings of the Dove*


p. 289-323. (focuses on opposition between Kate’s pragmatic materialism and Milly’s transcendental indefinability and on other characters’ attempts to interpret the latter)


*Bersani, Leo. “The Narrator as Center in The Wings of the Dove.” Modern Fiction Studies VI, Summer 1960, p. 131-144. (classic study of free indirect discourse and centre of consciousness technique; focus on ambiguity of Densher’s moral consciousness and theme of renunciation)


Bradbury, Nicola. ““Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is’: The Celebration of Absence in The Wings of the Dove.” Henry James: Fiction as History, ed. Ian F.A. Bell, New York, Barnes and Noble, 1985, p. 82-97.


central characters as embodying different aspects of the aesthetic imagination; examines theme of sacrifice in context of economic, religious and artistic discourses)


Graham, Wendy. *Henry James’s Thwarted Love*. Palo Alto, Stanford UP, 1999. (aligns text with biography while grounding its probing of gender constructions and queer sexualities in late Victorian culture; demystifies Milly’s martyrdom; see last chapter on Wings)


---. “Du revenant à la figure. Le corporel et le spectral dans The Wings of the Dove de Henry James.” Sillages critique, 2006. URL: http://journals.openedition.org/sillagescritiques/425 (studies diffuse effects of ghostliness as traces of “other scene” of writing; discerns in lurking presence of Lionel Croy the effects of obsessive fear of incest in Kate’s relation to her father)


Moon, Michael. “Sexuality and Visual Terrorism in The Wings of the Dove,” Criticism, XXVIII, 1986, 427-443. Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/23110471 (examines the sexual politics of the gaze and argues that the narrative unfolds as return of phallic empowerment to Densher; sees upper-class homoeroticism in the latter’s fear of and fascination with Eugenio’s stares)


Sears, Sallie. The Negative Imagination. Form and Perspective in the Novels of Henry James. Ithaca, Cornell UP, 1968. (thematic study that views truth and beauty as irreconcilable in James, and the basis for the author’s ironic or “negative” imagination, calling for renunciation and sacrifice; interprets Densher’s conversion as a failed spiritual transformation; on Wings see p. 63-98; extracts in 1978 Norton edition, p. 551-563)


*Wegelin, Christof. “The Lesson of Spiritual Beauty.” *The Image of Europe in Henry James*. Dallas, Southern Methodist UP, 1958, p. 106-121. (analysis of international theme opposing American idealism to English empiricism, argues that the differences between Kate and Milly are the differences between the civilisations which have moulded them; extract in Norton edition of Wings, p. 505-513)

subjectivity presented in novel is erected and opens itself to critique, following Jameson’s understanding of point of view as inherent to bourgeois ideology)

Žižek, Slavoj. “Kate’s Choice, or, the Materialism of Henry James.” Lacan: The Silent Partners. Ed. Slavoj Žižek. London, Verso, 2006, p. 288-312. (draws parallels between Wings and other James fictions while making case for author as writer of history who knew how to avoid historicism and ethical relativity; argues that the cruellest character, Kate Croy, is in fact the most ethical)

2.3 Articles and books devoted partly to Wings

Anderson, Quentin. The American Henry James. New Brunswick, Rutgers UP, 1957. (on Wings, see p. 233-280; influential early study interpreting Wings as less a novel of social manners than an allegory of morals)


Eagleton, Terry. Radical Sacrifice. New Haven, Yale UP, 2018. (analysis of sacrifice as basis of social order and inherent to politics and revolution, from biblical texts to Shakespeare, Hegel, Nietzsche and James; on Wings, see p. 135-141)


Thrailkill, Jane F. *Affecting Fictions: Mind, Body and Emotions in American Literary Realism*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2007. (studies mechanics of empathy, observing how brute facts of human decay are disseminated in novel through Densher’s awareness of them; on *Wings*, see ch. 6)


**2.4 General reference**


