



THE WORLD OF MYSTERY AND SUSPENSE ANDIN WILLIAM COLLINS' *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

WASFIA HASAN

Ph. D. Research Scholar
Dept of English
The Glocal University
Mirzapur Pole, Saharanpur,
(UP) INDIA

ABSTRACT

Wilkie Collins' The Woman in White appears as a masterpiece of detective fiction .It appears as a series of documents . The documents are put for specific purpose that comments on its specific narrative .With a short "Preamble" , the novel begins and its protagonist Walter Hartright sets the trend which popularized the popular detectives of the present times.In The Woman in White Collins entangles the plot by his sui generis narrative techniques . The present paper offers a close reading on the contexts, texts and connotations of The Woman in White.

Key Words :Wilkie Collins , The Woman in White, detective fiction , mystery fiction, narrative technique, postmodernism.

INTRODUCTION:

Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* appears as a masterpiece of detective fiction .It appears as a series of documents . The documents are put for specific purpose that comments on its specific narrative .With a short "Pre amble" , the novel begins and its protagonist Walter Hartright sets the trend which popularized the popular detectives of the present times.In *The Woman in White* Collins entangles the plot by taking a lady of comparative appearance and substituting her for the beneficiary, Laura Fairlie, passes on and is covered for society by the name as Laura Fairrie's. At the point when Laura escapes with the assistance of Marian , she finds umpteen impediments in establishing her lawful character.

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She finally prevails with regards to doing along these lines, because of the ingenuity of Walter Hartright, the youthful drawing ace, and Marian Halcombe, a lady of incredible mind and cultured breeding and especially worried about Laura.

Discussion : Lila Sylvana May writes in her article “Sensational Sisters: Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*”, that , it is :

*"the strange family story which is the purpose of these pages to unfold." Is it a "strange family story, or the story of a strange family? Or, perhaps it is a story of the strangeness of the family? The Victorians' obsession with familial drama belie their ideological enthusiasm for the nuclear family and their assumption that the family as the foundation of society was a unit organized around natural virtue and cemented by individual love, service, an self-sacrifice. For this Victorian enthusiasm masked a fear about the nature of a key component of the familial recipe: namely, female agency as it manifested itself in its purest, most untainted, and "natural" form-sisterly love. Viewed from the perspective of this concern, we see that *The Woman in White*, like so many texts contemporary with it, is in many respects a treatise on sisterhood.² In suggesting that this "strange family story" is structurally yet another story about sororal desire, I am making an empirical claim, not simply alluding to a tautological truth.()*

Collins utilizes the reliable components of the detective novel, in particular, crime, mystery and suspense in this novel. His legitimate training partialised him towards an interest in crime, criminals and location. It likewise inspired the 'witness - in the crate', account of his two significant books *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*.

With reference to Hyder, Clyde K's statement in his paper “Wilkie Collins and the *Woman in White*.”we can say that :

*In his introductory remarks to Basil Collins called the novel and the play "twin-sisters in the family of Fiction," the one "a drama narrated" and the other "a drama acted." In a dramatic novel like *The Woman in White* every incident is necessarily planned with care. One inconsistency of time in the first edition, subsequently corrected, did escape th author.²² In a dramatic novel, too, fatalism is often prominent. Dreams a favorite subject with an author himself susceptible to weird dreams, foreshadow important events: The letter warning Laura against marriage with Sir Percival (Chapter xi of the first part) contains an account of an ominous dream. Before departing on the journey that ended at the asylum, Laura has bad dreams.(p301)*

In *The Woman in White* Collins compares the universe of the upper working class by relating the two in the quest for a framework that would both undercut and uncover the secrets of the



human mind using a clearly mainstream structure much as utilized in his mystery books. Consequently, structure and meaning both uncover his fascination for famous stories however frequently amusingly undercuts its own structure to uncover Collins' more obscure fixations and quest for criminality in human instinct. Collins " ...the creator, straightforwardly recognizes an anarchic and asocial counter world as an effectively appealing option in contrast to the arranged, socialized universe of customary convictions. . . . " 2 In Collins' epic, abusive behaviour at home and home-grown crime predominates: poisoning by a kind and natural hand, crimes carried out in an attack of energy, and intra-familial contentions which lead to intrigues regarding execution of wills and the inheritance of property. The universe of ordinary citizens, wild with the savagery of incendiary criminal exercises was acclimated and sentenced to vitiate the amiable environment of the Victorian family.

In *The Woman in White*, we find 'the hot-tempered and merciless domineering jerk of a sham and falsifier' Sir Percival Clyde and "the genuinely psychopathic criminal" Count Fosco, both occupied with a connivance to burglarize *Lama Fairrie* of her personality.

Anne Caiherick the copy of *Lama Fairrie* is the unsuspecting casualty of these two savage criminals. Sir Percival Clyde is in addition, blameworthy of bite the dust crime of being a sham. By wrongfully putting his dad's and mom's names in the marriage register of the Church in Welmingham, Percival inherits the Black water Park property and stances as the legitimate beneficiary to this property. It is critical, that the Count consistently goes with Sir Percival Clyde. Collins had himself commented that Fosco originated in Collins' longing for verisimilitude as he understood that the crime to be carried out would require the ingenuity of an outsider. Simultaneously, Collins makes out Sir Percival to be 'a frail pitiful villain'. These two characters fill in as a foil to one another. It is through both Fosco and Sir Percival, that the double nature, the social and psychological legitimacy of the criminal is addressed, revealing Collins' longing to investigate the criminal components in human instinct. In this way, Collins here utilizes character to uncover the more obscure openings of the criminal mind.

Sir Percival, the fiendish ill-conceived baronet looks for *Lama Fairrie's* ownership and subsequently her fortune; and through the improvement of this regular criminal, Collins focuses on the ethical shortcoming, blame and dubious idiosyncrasies of the criminal alongwith his wild temper and inconsiderate authenticity. Through Fosco, the creator shows us the opposite side of the coin, specifically the huge vanity, egotism and self duplicity of the criminal, his affection for drama and sheer involvement and fervour in the connivance, his intoxication with his sharp ploys, and his pleasure at their fulfilment, his lethal appreciation for intelligent and clever ladies, his simple appeal, his trickiness and inconceivably cunning ways. Collins brings us the limit duality in the idea of criminal when he depicts the scene where *Marian* catches the 12 PM heart to heart of Fosco and Percival. Tally Fosco, the genuinely



psychopathic criminal, coolly figures the best time and circumstance to obliterate Laura's character with a living demise, while the fraud Percival shrinks even from the possibility of the deed. This total inversion in their criminal nature stuns us - the human inhibition of Percival and the fierce heartlessness of the Count In creating Fosco, Collins said that the Count owed his introduction to the world to the ingenuity of the crime, which required an outsider and that it was an overall conviction that felt men will in general be more merciless. "I had started to compose my story, when it struck me that my villain would be typical and I made hint fat in resistance to the perceived kind of villain" (WW vii), so composes Collins of his villain. Fosco's conviction and speculations regarding the obscene balderdash, that crimes carried out by the shrewd are rarely discovered, were Collins' own.

The essence of Collins' detective hypothesis is that the savvy criminal is never discovered the crimes that are discovered and detailed by the police are those perpetrated by stupid criminals. Fosco comments, that the hiding of a crime, or the recognition of a crime, is nothing yet a preliminary of ability between the police on one side, and the individual on the other. "At the point when the criminal is a ruthless, uninformed imbecile, the police, in nine cases out of ten, win. At the point when the criminal is a fearless, taught, profoundly intelligent man, the police, in nine cases out of peak, lose...."(WW 210-12).

Since the law is by inclination the willing accessory of the 'long satchel', Fosco sits idle, which works outside the law. A similar law he controls to seal Laura's inheritance and assist Glyde with achieving his unlawful finishes, while Hartright the violated one, needs to work outside the law, is captured and turns into an unwilling associate at the execution of Fosco, because of Pesca. Htus, Hartright, in the event that he is to, outsmart Fosco, needs to learn and dominate Fosco's specialty of cunning and see with Fosco's criminal intellect. Both work with similar methods toward comparative closures. Accordingly, Fosco's insidious plot comprises simply in the augmentation of what Hartright himself has introduced to the peruser, the comparable appearance of the two ladies. Manipulating the sin of wrongness, Fosco makes whiteness represent all there is of both; from this he moves to the deadly representation by which Anne is made to have Laura's spot in her grave. The most sinister crime in *The Woman in White* is the acknowledgment and effective execution of this bogus analogy. In spite of the fact that, Fosco is a lot of liable of criminal figuration, yet Hartright's stunts should similarly to be censured by the novel, which shows them.

CONCLUSION :

The novel is full of sensational elements .There is one incredible distinction in request to give sensations in bounty, Hartright should do what his most outstanding foe does; yet Hartright's casualty is just the peruser, and the crime is just the peruser's craving to be hoodwinked. In



this context Walter M. Kendrick writes in “The Sensationalism of The Woman in White”, which can appear as a concluding remark:

Collins's first great success, *The Woman in White*, can be seen as more than a historical artifact or a primitive precursor of Agatha Christie. The novel is very much concerned with the problems of plot and character, form and imitation, artifice and authenticity, which occupied the debate over literary sensationalism. It is a significant departure from the realism of Trollope and George Eliot, and it exploits its sensational techniques with remarkable ingenuity. At the same time, it is founded in the realistic faith which it violates. The novel exhibits a double urge towards conventionality and innovation, taking full advantage of its sensationalism but at the same time demanding that it be read as if it were realistic. (P22)

The novel , thus offers significant foregrounding for the genre of sensational fiction and enriches the stream of popular literature. In the postmodern world such works are giving a sense of alternate thinking to look at the world order.

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