



**The Value of the “Study of a Romantic Mind”: Henry James’s “The Story
in It”**

Jin Li

Abstract

Henry James’s four references to his short story “The Story in It” (1902) in his notebook entries reveal his keen interest in the story of an honest woman. In Maud Blessingbourne’s intense disputes with Mrs. Dyott and Colonel Voyt on the nature of “story,” the definition of “relation,” and the absence of decent women characters in European fiction, Blessingbourne’s righteousness, sincerity, and tolerance are highlighted. The paper contends that James advocates the importance of abiding by the aesthetic principle of freedom based on sincerity in fiction writing in response to Walter Besant’s emphasis on the consumptive nature of “story.”

Keywords: value, the “study of a romantic mind”, Henry James, “The Story in It”.