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2 INTRODUCTION

It is the aim of this thesis to shed light on selected aspects of Henry James's novels, the complexity of family relationships, especially between daughters and their parents.

Between the years 1879 and 1884 Henry James became very well known as the novelist of the "international theme", i.e. he wrote stories that depict the difference and singularities between American and European manners, ideas and convictions. However, to reduce his oeuvre to the depiction of American and European differences and difficulties in or to the clashes between the two cultures, would mean to underrate this refined author. James's depiction of families, the complex and delicate relations between children and their parents is at times gripping, alarming and fascinating.

Henry James furbished his novels, novellas and short stories with unreliable, unfit, or even vicious as well as with protective, caring and respectable parents just as he portrayed spoilt and wicked but also neglected and perceptive children. Nevertheless, more often than not has the author depicted strained family relations, where parents often appear to be the first and only threat to the lives of their children and where the offspring is simply a object to control and manipulate, or even to use a tool to insult and hurt someone else.

I have selected three novels to serve as an example of James's ideas about parents and children and their particular relationships, namely *Washington Square*, published in 1880, *What Maisie Knew*, published in 1897, and *The Wings of the Dove*, published in 1902. My main points of interest are the daughters in these novels, Catherine, Maisie and Kate, and their relationships to their parents. I would like to suggest that through these families Henry James formulates his opinion on Victorian family ideology and its frequent inadequacy in real life. It is not only that the families depicted are malfunctioning and that the parents emotionally neglect their offspring. These parents reduce their children to nothing more than objects they can utilize after their own fancy.

I engage the novels on two levels: a historical-sociological and a stylistic one. The sociological and historical approach includes a look at the definition of Victorian family ideology next to a look at the author's view of his own family, while the stylistic approach will focus on James's narrative technique and art of character creation.

Victorian Society, whether in Great Britain or the United States of America, advocated an idealized picture of a home and family with a fixed place for the father, the mother and the child. This is closely connected to the position of men and women within society. I will try to give a brief overview of the idea of the Victorian family as well as the legal changes concerning the status of women and children in the period between 1840 and 1900.

Jamesian characters are renowned for their sensitivity, their ability to perceive, conceal and interpret their own actions and those of others. James preferred to make his protagonists reflector characters, telling the story from their point of view, using third person narration to tell his readers what was going on in their minds. The most potent and most effective attributes he gave his literary creations were silence and an inclination towards concealment. I regard them as the most important feature they possess.

Within the novels *Washington Square* and *What Maisie Knew* the conflicted story of a daughter is told. Catherine and Maisie both struggle within a world defined by their parents and the possibilities they provide for them.

The Wings of the Dove depicts not just the workings of the Croy family but the triangular story of love and deceit between Merton Densher, Milly Theale and Kate Croy.

Miss Croy most of the time is simply read as the antagonist to the protagonist Milly Theale. My focus, however, will be to explore the difficult relationship Kate has to her father, sister and aunt and how these relationships influence her actions in the novel.

Whether it is Catherine, Kate or Maisie – what connects these three daughters is the fact that they suffer severe emotional neglect and psychological cruelty at the hands of their parents, who try to manipulate them.

Through my reading I would like to point out the mechanics of these very strained family relationships. Henry James offers a critical approach to the dominant family ideology of Victorian society. The parents perceive their children either as an object they can control and manipulate or one parent sees the child as a tool to hurt and infuriate the other parent. There are also deliberate and undeliberate acts of silence and concealment executed both by the daughters and parents, which are the most effective capacity the author gives to his characters.

Henry James has fascinated and intrigued scholars throughout the 20th century. Many books have been written about his style, his choice of language and his thematic choices, but not so many studies have focused on his fictional families and his fictional children. The uniqueness of his protagonists has never been doubted. As I approached my topic I relied on older works such as Muriel G. Shine's *The Fictional Children of Henry James*, published in 1969, or Jeanette King's *Tragedy in the Victorian Novel*, published in 1978. Dorothea Krook's *Ordeal of Consciousness*, published in 1962, John Auchard's *Silence in Henry James*, published in 1986, and Granville Jones's *Henry James and the Psychology of Experience*, published in 1975, have been very helpful as well. More recent works such as John Carlos Rowe's *The Other Henry James*, published in 1998, and Victoria Couslon's *Henry James, Women and Realism*, published in 2007, have also been great points of entry to me while working on this subject.

3 Victorian Society and its Idea of the Victorian Family

The novels chosen for this thesis depict American and English families. Therefore I shall first try to give an overview of the American Victorian and the British Victorian idea of the ideal family as advocated by society, but also on the real legal situation concerning women and children. Mostly, 19th century American and British society paralleled each other in their ideological views on males, females and children as well as in terms of legislation.

A woman's place, a daughter's place and a child's place in society were closely connected to the ruling family ideology of the nineteenth century.

All the families depicted in the three James's novels try to exist in the places defined by ideology and the law.

3.1 Nineteenth Century Family Ideology

As with every form of ideology it has to be remembered that, "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser qtd. in Dever "Everywhere and Nowhere: Sexuality in the Victorian Novel." 162). The domestic ideal as it was prescribed by society worked best for white, middle class and upper middle class women but utterly ignored the rest of the females in the community. Likewise middle class and upper middle class males were more likely to easily succeed in a society that prescribed material profit.

British and American Victorian societies took to the idea of order and regulations so as to guard themselves against any form of excess. The family was one segment it sought to regulate on a moral and philosophical basis. Victorian society established role models for its female and male members.

3.1.1 The Victorian Female

A woman's place in the nineteenth century was the private domain, the domestic space. The difference between the private and the public spheres was very important in Victorian times. Most of the time a young woman was educated at home, i.e. she was taught how to read and write, how to do needle work and cooking, but seldom more (See McCurty 189-192).

Nevertheless it was accepted that women showed an active interest in philanthropy and charity work. In this fashion women did take part in the public and political life of the time, but were always perceived rather as supporters of male ideas and causes than their own.

A certain percentage of women, lower middle class and working class women, had always transgressed the rigid ideals put up by the moral guardians of society. They had no other options but to leave the domestic realm and find work in the city. For working class women this often meant leaving the house at a very young age such as twelve or fourteen (See Digby 197-199).

The maternal function dominated the idea of womanhood and the upper middle class or bourgeois woman faced two challenges: being the perfect wife and being the perfect mother. Although removed enough from monetary and material anxieties and therefore free to stay at home, she was not allowed to be idle or to overtly enjoy social and societal events, considered distractions from her true vocation: motherhood (See Shuttleworth 35).

A young Victorian woman had to be passive, passionless, obedient and above all else morally untouchable. Based on the Victorian ideology it was perfectly clear that after a young woman had found a well situated young man who would marry her, it was understood that she would become a mother and raise her children the best she could alongside providing shelter, sympathy and comfort for her husband, as an ever-present "angel of the house" (See Digby 199, 200-205 and Demos 14).

Being a loving mother who had nothing else to worry about but her child was of course an ideal that working class mothers could never accomplish at all.

Although ideologically regarded as the center of the family, the female remained legally dependant on her husband and her role as a wife and mother did not entitle her to power but simply to respect and reverence. There was no law that recognized her worth or protected her against physical or psychological harm.

In reality what was referred to as a love courtship that resulted in marriage reduced women to objects of commodity within the bourgeois marriage market and was also true for working class women who could never marry for love alone as well (See Herman 300 and Cunningham 115).

3.1.2 The Victorian Male

The more active role in society was assigned to man. Young boys might be taught at home while they were still young but there were public schools and universities they attended later on. In the lower middle class and the working class young unmarried men had no time for education but had to work and support their family until they married, often from a very young age (See McCurdy 211-214).

On both sides of the Atlantic the bourgeois classes looked to their superiors as role models. In Great Britain Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert stood in high regard among “earnest Victorians”¹ (See Girouard 50) as they combined successful family politics with their primary duty of serving the empire (See Girouard 49-51).

The predominant, protestant culture prescribed an often very harsh work ethic that left hardly any time for idleness or pleasure. For the middle and the upper classes this often implied not just long hours of working in their respective enterprises but also a relentless pursuit of material wealth (See Cunningham 124-125).

¹ Girouard talks about “earnest Victorians” or the “Victorian gentleman”, who had to display a serious attitude towards religion and his marriage vows and it was a part of his life task to cultivate his talents so that he could benefit others.

As a father and husband he would protect and provide for his wife and their children. He was to monitor them like a “pater familias”² and as such he held almost unlimited right to guardianship over his offspring. The custody law regarded children as subordinate beings, as an asset of the paternal estate that the husband/ father had a vested right in.

Although believed to have a capacity of mind superior to women, the male Victorian was regarded as baser and more aggressive than the female. He was ruled by his passions and his predatory sexual nature. His sexual licentiousness was often posed against female passionlessness. Within a marriage it was understood that both male and female would take their prescribed roles seriously (See Griswold 265-267).

3.1.3 The Victorian Child

While the eighteenth century had regarded children as nothing more or less than little adults, the Victorian age started to treat the subject with more attention.

The time of childhood was regarded with more interest and the females were understood as the ones perfectly capable of child rearing. The importance of the child’s environment was regarded as essential for his or her development and in addition, and so was the mother-child relationship. It needed surroundings that would provide the child with order, stability and discipline (See Demos 20-22).

² The basic unit of society in ancient Rome was the “house,” the extended family ruled by its head, the paterfamilias, to whom his wife, his slaves, and possibly several generations of his descendants were subject and in whom title to all property was vested, so that a son or any other member of the house, even as an adult, did not own anything.

Cf. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/446326/paterfamilias>>. 5 July 2009.

In terms of education some philosophers and theologians, very often with a Puritan and Christian background, tended to see the child as a depraved entity, base and prone to sinful deeds and thoughts (Cf. < <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/sewell/4c.html#classxn> >).

Other thinkers, among them Jean Jacques Rousseau, had started to see children as a neutral quantity, open to receive teachings and willing to discover the world around them (Cf. < <http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/r/rousseau.htm> >).

The teachers' idea was very often to break the child first in order to make a decent and obedient human being out of him or her. Corporal punishment was often understood as a logical element in a thorough Christian upbringing (See Demos 22).

The reality for lower middle class and working class children was by far worse. From the age of five or six they would work in order to support their families. The child mortality rate was rather high in the nineteenth century, and it was not uncommon for poorer families to have six or more children, since in many cases only half of them survived to reach adolescence.

While lower and working class children had to work and often starved, upper middle class and upper class children often suffered from emotional neglect and loneliness. For their parents they often equaled a status symbol to be shown off at dinner parties, dressed up like a little doll, but most of the time they were restricted to their nursery and their governesses. It appears that parents often compensated for this less than affectionate treatment through presents such as toys or clothing (See Köttsdorfer 163).

3.1.4 The Classical Christian View on Education

Frances Mary Buss, Elizabeth Missing Sewell and Hannah More³ emphasized mental and moral discipline in their view on education. These three women worked both as novelists and educators in British public schools and engraved their ideas on the school systems. They regarded the child not as an entirely negative creature but as a little entity that possessed the capability for enormous evil as it entered the world. Sewell regarded childhood as a preparation for adult life and any form of education had to provide the child with useful input for the time of his or her adult life.

Therefore, a child must be taught and formed accordingly in order to prevent sin from gaining the upper hand. Sewell and More regarded a Christian baptism as the first and vital step in this direction, but they emphasized the fact that they could not alter a child's mind, only its behaviour (<<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/sewell/4c.html#classxn>>).

³ Frances Mary Buss (1827–1894) was a British teacher and a pioneer of women's education. Buss was at the forefront of campaigns for the endowment of girls' schools, and for girls to be allowed to sit public examinations and to enter universities in England. She became the founding president of the Association of Head Mistresses in 1874, a position she held until 1894. Buss helped to establish the Teachers' Guild in 1883 and the Cambridge Training College for educating teachers in 1885. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances_Buss>)

Elizabeth Missing Sewell (1815-1906) worked as a British religious writer and teacher. She left a journal and an autobiography in which she commented on the importance and attention that should be given to children from an early age on. (<<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/sewell/4c.html#classxn>>)

Hannah More (1745–1833) was an English religious writer and philanthropist. She was known in her lifetime as a clever verse-writer and witty talker as well as a writer on moral and religious subjects on the Puritan side. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannah_More>)

3.1.5 The Natural-Scientific View on Education

The philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau extended his theory concerning the human condition to include children and their state of mind. Rousseau regarded society as corrupted and the child as a tabula rasa that had to be educated properly in order to enable it to survive in it. The main aim was to make the child see and understand reason.

(< <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/sewell/4c.html#rousseau>>)

Rousseau divided childhood into three stages. At first, between the ages of 1 and 12, the child acts on its emotions and impulses because it cannot understand the concepts of reason; later, between the ages of 12 and 16 the child slowly begins to understand the concept of it. At the age of 16, according to Rousseau, the child starts to develop into an adult; the set-up of his moral character has to be finished by then. He was certain that children learnt about wrong and right by experiencing the consequences of their actions but not via physical punishment, which was considered a genuine form of child rearing in his lifetime (<<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/sewell/4c.html#rousseau>>).

However, Rousseau did not treat male and female children the same way, as his theory mainly considered male children. He believed in a family organized after the patriarchal principle where young boys were educated to be self-governing whereas young girls were educated to be governed by their future husbands. While he emphasized the importance of proximity between mother and child, Rousseau also condemned women into roles of mothers and caretakers of the household, away from the public sphere (<<http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/r/rousseau.htm#SH3b>>).

4 A Brief Outline of Women's Legal Status in Regards to Property Rights and Marriage Rights between 1840 and 1900

A woman's marital status was closely connected to her property rights. Once a woman married her husband could legally annex all her property. The wife could not entail a will or dispose of any property without her husband's consent. In the case of a divorce, regardless whether the husband or the wife asked for it, the woman was left with no right to her property and usually left her economically destitute.

(Cf. <http://www.umd.umich.edu/casl/hum/eng/classes/434/geweb/PROPERTY.htm>)

More often than not society, courts and judges alike ruled that women, due to their physical appearance, were in constant need of protection and a chaperone⁴. This apparent exclusion from the public realm was justified because of their "delicate condition, her [their] inferior grasp of mind" (See Griswold 263).

In Britain **The Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act** of 1857 established the possibility for judges to grant a divorce.

Courts started, as the possibility to get a divorce was established in 1840 in the United States and in 1857 in England, to rule in favor of the wife when she was erroneously accused of adultery since her moral integrity was deemed her most precious value. (See Griswold 261-263).

⁴ Griswold discusses how judges ruled against women and defended this apparent exclusion from the public realm because of women's delicate physical condition and their inferior grasp of mind. Granting women access to the public life would make them lose their femininity judges argued.

The legal status of women who did not marry was an entirely different matter. The law defined them as “feme [sic!] sole” and they had complete legal control of their property. They had the right to dispose of their property as they saw fit and only had to seek a legal guardian if they chose to. The distribution of property in the wills of unmarried women often differed greatly from their male counterparts as they often left great portions of their property to their female relatives.

(See<<http://www.umd.umich.edu/casl/hum/eng/classes/434/geweb/PROPERTY.htm>>).

A married woman became a “feme [sic!] coverte”, the legal term used for wife in the common law, as everything she possessed was made over to the will of her husband. Widowed women had the right acquire to a dower, which usually was a third of the husband’s estate. This did not represent a return of the property brought into the marriage by the woman.

As society came to regard motherhood as a part of the domestic sphere, society started to treat it as a woman’s domain and courts began to grant women the guardianship over their children in some cases of divorce. Court decisions often led to discussions regarding the mutual duties of the spouses within a marriage. Nevertheless judges more often ruled in favour of the husband than in favour of the wife.

In 1870 the British Empire passed the first **Married Women’s Property Act**. It allowed women to keep 200 pounds of their annual earnings. It granted property rights to women living separated from their husbands. Still, the majority of the property remained with the husband (See Sturrock 77).

The year 1882 saw the passing of a another **Married Women’s Property Act**, referred to as the second **Married Women’s Property Act**, enabling women to buy, own and sell their separate property even after their marriage was over. Finally men and women were regarded as single legal entities by the law.

(See<<http://www.umd.umich.edu/casl/hum/eng/classes/434/geweb/PROPERTY.htm>>)

All these legal factors influence the plot development in the selected novels.

In *Washington Square*, Catherine can look forward to an inheritance from her deceased mother and an even bigger inheritance from her father. When she falls in love with Morris Townsend her father threatens to disinherit her in his will and later even makes good on this promise as his daughter refuses to promise not to marry Mr. Townsend. In the end Catherine Sloper's status as "feme [sic!] sole" enables her to lead a financially independent life.

In *The Wings of the Dove*, Kate Croy is also counting on the effects these legislations would have for her. She herself is without financial means but if Merton Densher marries Milly Theale he would automatically be entitled to all her possessions and could later on bring this money into his second marriage, preferably a marriage with Kate.

5 A Brief Outline for Children's Legal Status in Regards to Education, Custody and Guardianship between 1830 and 1900

Legally the child was a property owned by the father until it came of age. Until then it was a paternal asset in which the father had as rightful interest, based on “habeas corpus” and “parens patriae” legislation. Although society and judges alike commenced to see the mother as better fitted to bring up the child, custody and guardianship most of the time remained with the father and ruled women as unfit to take care of the child because of her poorer economic and financial status (See Grossberg 287-289).

Sometimes judges were more partial to granting the woman the custody over their children as it was argued by society that the mother was more apt to guide the child through the time of the tender age of childhood. Only in the 1830's did some courts start to view both parents as equally qualified for guardianship over their children (See Grossberg 292).

Although legal reforms started back in the 1830's it was not until 1882 that the **Mundella's Education Act** made it compulsory for all children between the ages of five and ten to attend elementary school. The parents had to pay for it, the fee was called ‘school pence’.

(See < <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/legisl.html> >).

Middle and upper middle class parents sent their sons to Public schools, which were not for free but demanded high entrance fees. Daughters were mostly educated at home. However in 1873 Mill Mont College was founded in Birmingham, at that time one of the few schools that provided education to the daughters of the lower and the upper middle classes. Its goal was to equip her pupils with enough knowledge to survive in the real world. The founding of the college spawned numerous debates over the womanliness of her students as some physicians and theologians feared that “the torch of intellect would only increase nervous instability within the female.” (See Digby 206).

6 The James Family

In order to better understand Henry James's view on the family and childhood, I take a brief look at his childhood and adolescent years. He grew up under unique circumstances as his family traveled a lot and hardly stayed in the same place longer than a year until he was eight years old. The James family traveled along the Eastern coast of the United States but also went to Europe and spent time in England, France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland.

6.1 Henry James's View on his Childhood

His father, Henry James Sr., came from a wealthy family of entrepreneurs with an Irish background. His mother, Mary Robertson Walsh, came from a well-situated, very strict, Calvinist family with roots in Great Britain (See Edel, *The Untried Years*, 39-40).

Henry James Junior was born in 1843, on April 15th only a year after his brother William, the first-born. For the first year of his life the family stayed in New York City in a house on Washington Square Nr. 21. In the novel *Washington Square* James gives a vivid and intense recollection of this address (See Edel, *The Untried Years*, 41).

The idea of quiet and of genteel retirement, [...], was found in Washington Square, where the doctor built himself a handsome, modern, wide-fronted house, [...]. In front of them was the square, containing a considerable quantity of inexpensive vegetation, enclosed by a wooden paling, [...] ; and around the corner was the more august precinct of the Fifth Avenue, taking its origin at this point [...]. I know not whether it is owing to the tenderness of early associations, but this portion of New York appears to many persons the most delectable. (*Washington Square* 15-16)

His mother Mary Henry James perceived as a being of soundless, selfless devotion, always organizing their daily routine and keeping a firm reign over every little detail.

In 1844, the family took their first trip to Europe, starting in Great Britain and then moving to France. In his autobiography, James referred to himself and his

brother as 'hotel children' and remembered it as a time of inconsistencies because they only stayed a few weeks in every country they visited, "We breathed inconsistency and ate and drank contradiction" (*Autobiography* 216).

The brothers William and Henry were very different in character. Henry was shy and silent and rather observed the other boys playing in the schoolyard whereas William was almost always in the centre of the action (See Edel, *The Untried Years*, 77).

Henry was confused about his father's profession, him being a sort of philosopher and bon vivant, which was so unlike the professions the other children's fathers had (See James, *Autobiography*, 230-234).

In retrospect Henry James wished his parents had given him more advice and guidance at home, "[...] our fending [...] for ourselves didn't so much prepare us for invidious remark [...] as to hush in my breast the appeal to our parents, not for religious instruction [...] but simply for instruction (a very different thing) [...]" (*Autobiography* 34).

His father was a soft-hearted and a little bit eccentric dreamer. He travelled extensively with them during the years 1855, 1856 and 1860, visiting Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland and Great Britain. He thought that exposure to many different things would only benefit his children, so they went to many different schools and had many different home teachers (See Edel, *The Untried Years*, 115).

As a result of the constant change of residence Henry could not help but feel disconnected at some point with Europe and then with the United States. To him it felt that every time he had managed to make friends on one side of the Atlantic, his parents decided to move elsewhere (See Edel, *The Untried Years*, 143-145 and James, *Autobiography*, 220).

During his own travels to Europe as a young man, Henry observed but also criticized the way American families behaved when it came to the topic of child rearing. He disapproved of parents that did not take the time to explain

things properly to their offspring. “What children want is the objective, as the philosophers say” (James, qtd. in Shine 40).

Sometimes he was sure that American parents simply were too lenient when it came to their duties as parents. He was impressed with the almost rigid set of rules European families succumbed to. Upon encountering a French family in a holiday resort he noted, “People went about in compact, cohesive groups [...] three young girls compressed into the centre, the preservation of whose innocence was their chief solicitude. [...] the French have ordered this as well as they have ordered everything” (James, qtd. in Shine 97).

The young James was impressed to see the “*mère de famille*” who was monitoring everything her children, especially the young daughters, were allowed to do. It reminded him how different his parents had handled his upbringing, since as a “hotel child” he had been allowed to “dawdle and gape” around (See James, *Autobiography* 26-30).

6.2 The Case of Minny Temple and Alice James

Among Henry James’s many important female friends no-one’s life took such tragic turns as his sister’s and his cousin’s. It is plausible to believe that through them James learned an awareness for the injustice life and society could have in store for young females.

In the summer of 1864, Henry spent much time in the White Mountains, a place close to Boston where his cousin Minny Temple lived. She was charismatic and vivid, a young girl who adored society events such as balls but who was also witty and reflective. He almost daily visited her together with Oliver Wendell Holmes, a Harvard law student and friend of his brother William (See Edel, *The Untried Years*, 235-236). The only aspect overshadowing these happy vents was Minny’s ill state of health. She was suffering from pulmonary disease.

Two renowned James biographers, Leon Edel and F.O. Matthiessen suspected Henry James had been in love with his cousin. The author himself never admitted to it in his autobiography. However in his letters to his brother William, his sister Alice and his mother his devotion to her is evident: “Everyone was supposed, I believe, to be more or less in love with her: others may answer for themselves: I never was, and yet I had the great satisfaction that I enjoyed pleasing her almost as much as if I had been I cared more to please her perhaps than she ever cared to be pleased.” (James, qtd. in Matthiessen 260)

As often described in his novels, Henry was rather averse to the idea of marrying his own cousin, no matter how strong the attraction.

While Henry was travelling through Europe on his own in 1869, immensely enjoying it and writing repeatedly to his cousin Minny about it, her health was declining rapidly. She suffered from a haemorrhage and her right lung had started to collapse; her death was imminent. While Henry visited Nice and Monte Carlo, Minny died on the 8th of March 1870, aged 25 (See Edel, *The Untried Years*, 319-327).

In letters to his mother and brother, Henry insisted to be told every little detail of her last hours. “Just as I am beginning life she has ended it.” (James, *Autobiography* 305), he told his brother William shortly after her death. Many of his literary creations, such as Isabel Archer and Milly Theale, carry a lot of the vivacity and the fatality the young author felt to be irrevocably connected to his cousin (See Edel, *The Untried Years*, 331-337).

His sister Alice, born in 1848, was suffering from various illnesses all her life. Bad health itself was very common among the children in the James family. William and Henry repeatedly suffered from back pain, Henry also suffered from a severe case of typhus fever when he was a little boy.

Due to her ill health, Alice started to faint and have back problems in her early teens, Alice James often felt envious of her two older brothers, who successfully left the family homes to make a name for themselves.

She started a diary because “I think that if I get into the habit of writing a bit about what happens, or rather doesn’t happen, I may lose a little of the sense of loneliness and desolation which abides with me.” (Alice James, qtd. in Matthiessen 274)

Her anger about being “physically so debile” in a family of “notable brothers” was apparent in her writing. She refused to be just a “sick carcass”, so she kept in close touch with her two older brothers and her friends Edith Wharton and Constance Fenimore Woolson (See Matthiessen 272-275).

Her immobility frustrated her and caused her not simply physical pain but nervous breakdowns as well. One doctor diagnosed her with hysteria, a frequently diagnosed disease among the females of society in these times. Among its symptoms were: paraplegia, aphonia, hemi-anaesthesia and violent epileptoid seizures. Today’s psychologists and psychiatrists might diagnose it as neurasthenia, hypochondriasis, depression, conversion reaction and ambulatory schizophrenia (See Smith-Rosenberg 101).

To assume what causes, physical and psychological, originated Alice’s symptoms would go far beyond the scope of this paper, nevertheless it is possible that hysteric fits were Alice’s response to the restricted space she as a woman living in Victorian America could inhabit.

She lived with her parents until both her father and mother died. Only then did she agree to live with Henry in his home in England.

They had always been close and she praised his caretaking of her, “[...] I have never seen an impatient look upon his face or heard an unsympathetic or misunderstanding sound cross his lips. He comes at the slightest sign, and ‘hangs on’ to whatever organ may be in eruption, [...]” (Alice James, qtd. in Matthiessen 279).

Alice started to suffer from breast cancer in 1890 and she was informed soon that her condition was terminal. In one of her last letters to William she wrote:

[...] so when I am gone, pray don’t think of me simply as a creature who might have been something else, had neurotic science been

born. Notwithstanding the poverty of my outside experience, I have always had a significance for myself, [...] and what more can a human soul ask for? (Alice James qtd in Matthiesson 282)

This letter confirms that although Alice did not have a very active life, she did have a rich inner life. A rich inner life is something she has in common with many fictional characters her brother created in his novels.

Shortly after her death Henry James made sure that her correspondence and diaries were published as he held them in high regard as he told his brother William in 1895, “[...] her style, her power to write – are indeed to me a delight.” (James, qtd. in Matthiessen 284).

7 The Psychological Realism of Henry James

A realist novel generally tries to stay true to the subjective impressions of its protagonists and also tries to render things as they really are. The novel of psychological realism was still considered a new approach around the time Henry James became a successful novelist; it attempted to favor character over action or plot (See Levine 5-7).

7.1 Realistic Requirements

Edith Wharton, a friend and novelist colleague of Henry James argues that the balance between character and situation determines the power of a novel. The novelist's chief aim is "not to ask what the situation would be likely to make of his characters, but what his characters ... would make of the situation." (McNees 41)

She believed that novels in the hands of English-speaking writers always tended strongly towards character and manners rather than towards situation. Wharton did not want the novel to be limited to either situation or character. "The conflict, [...], is latent in every attempt to detach a fragment of human experience and transpose it in terms of art, that is, of completion." (McNees 47)

Percy Lubbock, who himself developed Henry James's view of the novel further, saw the point of view as the most important tool of the realist novel. The point of view defines the relation between the narrator and the story. It establishes that the narrator is rooted within the world of the novel, he argued (See McNees 73-76).

As the story is told from the angle of a character within the story, although the story is not about the character whose angle we are invited to share, events and scenes are told in passing, nothing is explained or analyzed, keeping the readers on their toes.

Lubbock argues that through this method, telling the story from the viewpoint of a reflector character, the author acquires the ability to disappear behind the text, as the views and opinions the reader encounter are the ideas of the character and not of the author. "The chosen seer" (McNees 77), as Lubbock calls him, can become open and then impenetrable within mere moments, just as the narration sees fit (See McNees 76-79).

F.R. Leavis, the prominent British scholar and writer, demands that the novelist and its subjects should engage life in a truly moral sense, not just aim to entertain (See McNees 177-178).

He calls Jane Austen a pioneer for the English novel who greatly influenced both George Eliot and Henry James.

He calls James a psychologist open to study the world and its inhabitants, ready to leave his origins, which are rooted in puritan ethics, far behind to gain experience and impressions that he then brought to life in his novels. James's novels were always concerned with moral substance, which puts him close to George Eliot, Leavis insists (See McNees 183-185).

Henry James stated his own view on the novel and the requirements it should meet in his essay *The Art of Fiction* in 1884. James insisted, "The only obligation to which in advance we may hold a novel [...] is that of it being interesting." (*The Future of the Novel* 9)

In order for the novel to be interesting it has to depict real life, the novelist further argued. " [...] the only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life." (*The Future of the Novel* 5)

James saw the possibilities of the realist novel as endless, "[...] there is no limit to what he [the novelist] may attempt as an executant - no limit to his possible experiments, efforts, discoveries, successes." (*The Future of the Novel* 10)

7.2 The Narrative Art of Henry James

Henry James felt strongly about his personal ideas of the novel and what he wanted to render through it. His style was later on often referred to as psychological realism (See Perosa 14-15). He thinks the novel an endless source for stories, "I see dramas within dramas...innumerable points of view. A psychological reason is, to my imagination, an object adorably pictorial; [...]" (*The Future of the Novel* 23).

What became more and more important to James was the angle or perspective to choose for the act of narration. "Any point of view is interesting that is a direct impression of life [...] make that into a picture, a picture framed by your personal wisdom [...] the field is vast for freedom, for study, for observation, for satire, for truth." (*The Future of the Novel* 29).

The more he refined his narrative art, the more he moved from the use of an omniscient narrator to a third-person narrator, from the use of a teller to a reflector character as defined by F.K. Stanzel (See Stanzel 11).

The narrator can be either a teller character, which means he is a speaker of the narrative story, or he is a reflector character, which means the he is a knower of the narrative story.

Most of the time these two types of character overlap within a novel. This is the case in some Henry James's novels, e.g. in *Washington Square* where a teller or authorial character is sometimes present although the novel is mostly told from a reflector character's point of view. Such incidents are referred to as the use of free indirect style (See Stanzel 9-11).

7.3 The Question of Perspective

The most important thing to decide is from which point of view to tell the story. James and many of his contemporaries think that instead of employing an omniscient narrator, who would have an external perspective, they would rather render the story through an internal perspective, through the eyes of a character, who is himself part of the narration.

Such a reflecting character then not simply tells the story, he reflects upon it and the narration presents his fragmented knowledge and perceptions of what is happening (See Stanzel 56-59).

Henry James was very partial to this kind of fragmented perspective, to which he refers as the scenic method.

James thinks this would enable him to, “do things from my own point of view – that of an imagined observer, participator, chronicler. I must picture it, summarize it, impressionize it, in a word – compress and confine it by making it the picture of what I see.” (*Notebooks* 160).

7.4 Teller versus Reflector Character

To give a verbal picture of what one is seeing is the distinguishing factor between a teller and a reflector character. The act of telling is posed against the act of showing what is going on and what is going on can be presented in dialogue and non-dialogue segments of a narration.

“A teller character narrates, records and informs” (Stanzel 144) about what is going on while “a reflector character mirrors” (Stanzel 144) the events of the external world in his mind. He “perceives, feels, registers” (Stanzel 144) but always remains silent and never overtly narrates what is going on. Both an authorial and a first-person narrator can be teller characters but only a third person or figural narrator can relate events as they impact the consciousness of his fictional mind (See Stanzel 142-145).

The insights the figural narrator gains during the novel are often depicted through interior monologue. The emphasis in such a scene is on the experiencing self, the internal perspective and the restriction of knowledge. The interior monologue differs from a narrated monologue because the monologic self has no desire to share his revelations with others. Interior monologues and figural narrations can seamlessly combine within one narrative and Henry James used them very often in his works (See Stanzel 225-228).

7.5 Stanzel on the Style of Henry James

In relation to James's use of mode, person and perspective, Stanzel notes the use of what he termed the free use of indirect style. Sometimes James wavers between the conventions of first person and third person narrators. He does this more often in his tales and short stories than in his novels. In the novels he opts for third person narration most of the time. The author often allows his figural narrators to reminisce from a point in time subsequent to the narrated events, e.g. in *The Pupil* and *The Lesson of the Master*.

Sometimes Henry James offers within a figural narrative, passages featuring an authorial narrator who abruptly enters the world of the other characters and whose narrative present becomes simultaneous with the time and the events the characters experience, e.g. in *Washington Square* and *What Maisie Knew*.

It is a tendency Stanzel recognizes not only in Henry James but also with other Victorian novelists. In his later novels James intensifies his use of figural narrative situations (See Stanzel 94- 98 and 190).

8 Assembling The Jamesian Character

Henry James creates characters with a rich inner life, a highly cultivated awareness and consciousness of themselves and others.

The author's heroes possess the capacity for "tragic fates and unappeasable demands" (King 19). They live in a world of complex interpersonal relationships. Their awareness, consciousness, concealment and silence intensively shape the Jamesian character.

T. S. Eliot once wrote an article concerning James and his artistic legacy, which was published by the American periodical *Vanity Fair* in 1924. He says, "James did not provide us with ideas, but with another world of thought and feeling." (Krook 2)

The following pages give an overview of the psychological ingredients of Jamesian characters.

8.1 Jamesian Protagonists

His characters analyze, they criticize and question the world around them. This is very interesting in connection with the international theme and the influence that old traditions and societal rites can have on a young susceptible mind, e.g. a young American. However, James never attached positive or negative character traits exclusively to one nationality (See Krook 7-8).

The selected novels for this thesis hardly touch James's international theme but show that he could create both deceptive and decent characters belonging to the same nationality (See Krook 9).

Some critics have called his social material limited, as it seemed that he portrayed only the classes he intimately knew, the English provincial middle classes and the moneyed classes of the United States.

It is true that James deals only with a fragment of society, as his protagonists do not struggle with the question of how to make ends meet. They travel and

live in luxury, reside in exquisite townhouses, and are able to ignore the pains and struggles of the impoverished segments of society.

Henry James nevertheless criticizes the life of his time, i.e. the part of society in which he lived. He portrays the moneyed classes of America since they were the supreme instrument of power and influence in his world. They had replaced the old European aristocracy, as money and no longer a name or title ensured superiority (See Krook 10-13).

Krook sees the “character value” for James’s novels in the fact that they are exemplary characters thrust upon the stage of the world to negotiate their way through life (See Krook 13).

James’s millionaires and heiresses have in his novels exactly the same dramatic function as the kings, queens and princes in Shakespeare’s plays. They are representative of all humanity in the modern world [...] they embody in short, the dominant [...] ideal of human possibility in that society. (Krook 13)

The “vessels of consciousness”, as Krook calls James’s characters, are a form of poetic idealisation and intensification that James used to render an image of the human condition as he perceived it (See Krook 22-25).

Krook thinks that ”This is the sense in which it is true to say that in the Jamesian world the fundamental human passions co-exist in forms most complex, most subtle, most elusive.” (Krook 24).

8.2 Jamesian Plots

Henry James emphasized private relationships in his novels. The stranglehold that familial relations hold over his characters is immense, as Gilbert Osmond exerts over his daughter Pansy in *Portrait of a Lady*, Dr. Sloper over Catherine in *Washington Square* or Lionel Croy over Kate Croy in *The Wings of the Dove*. The characters may find themselves trapped in rigid, cold and authoritarian environments. His protagonists, like the hero in a Greek tragedy,

are prevented from achieving their desires by the rules of society as well as their family situations. Forces are at work, which makes the individual's decision for him or her, but these forces remain beyond his or her grasp. The characters fight for integrity and identity. The more they fight, the more they become aware of the pressure they are subjected to (See King 19-21).

The knowledge that the characters gain, namely that they are less free than they thought, has them embrace even more the bit of freedom they can have.

Instead of running after ineffectual desire, they concentrate on mastering the inner life, to seek progress in terms of consciousness. James believed the strongest sentiment in the human heart was the sentiment of freedom, which according to the author even exceeded the sentiment of duty. Nevertheless, his protagonists often arrange their lives around the demands of duty. Feelings of duty in James's children and young adult characters are often essential to understanding their actions.

Being conscious of the complexities of human life and interaction often elevates his protagonists but sometimes also leads them to an entire renunciation of life (See King 30-35).

8.3 Jamesian Silences

Silence is present in all of Henry James' novels, novellas and tales. Silence can come in the form of an active decision of a character, e.g. Maisie Farange, or it can come as a more passive choice, e.g. Catherine Sloper, who rather chooses to remain tacit than to oppose her father directly. Dr. Sloper himself uses silence as a way to monitor his daughter.

Silence can wash somebody out of the picture just as it happens to Lionel Croy, Kate's father, whose unspeakable deeds turned him into an outsider among his own family.

Kate's aunt Maud uses it to her advantage as well, as she demands that Kate disassociates herself from her father (See Auchard 64-68).

Henry James showed us characters that seem to spend the majority of their life waiting in silence (See Stowell 30-31). During these tranquil moments his heroes perceive so much that “language apparently becomes incidental” (Stowell 30).

James also used silence as a way of not telling or reporting certain events in some of his novels. In *The Wings of the Dove*, he voluntarily leaves out the last conversation between Milly and Merton as well as revealing the content of the young heiress’s last letter to the young journalist to his readers. Henry’s brother William was so moved by this omission, he commented on it in a passionate letter to his author-brother:

‘I have read *The Wings of the Dove* but what shall I say of a book constructed on a method which so belies everything I acknowledge as law? You’ve reversed every traditional canon of story telling (especially the fundamental one of *telling* the story, which you carefully avoid) and have created a new genre littéraire which I can’t help thinking perverse, [...] I don’t know whether it’s fatal and inevitable with you, or deliberate and possible to put on and off. At any rate it is your own.’ (William James, qtd in Matthiesson 38)

Whether or not it was Henry James’s own achievement, his novels often sought to name or describe something that Victorian ideology had no words for, i.e. the struggle of women and children within the upper middle and upper classes. As Wittgenstein formulated, “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.” (Wittgenstein, qtd in Steiner 29)

8.3.1 Silence and Concealment

In Henry James's stories silences weigh down on the minds of his protagonists. "Polite silences over tea" (Auchard 8) reveal the abysses hidden in the mind of the teacup-holder.

James was fascinated with the use of silence in literature, philosophy and journalism, e.g. in the works of Thomas Carlyle. In a review concerning his letters he wrote in 1883:

'Carlyle's expression was never more rich than when he declared that things were immeasurable, unutterable, not to be formulated...it is not a wonder that he had an ideal of the speechless.' (Henry James, qtd in Auchard 8)

Very often the vitality in the novels derives from silences. At times the silences appear to be polite but most often they are hostile and deceptive. Silence itself becomes charged with expression and meaning and determines the force of character interaction. Moments of silence and concealment often lead to important epiphanies. They reveal the characters' relationships to the outside world (See Auchard 8 and Stowell 31 and 33).

Milly Theale, a young heiress from the U.S., in *The Wings of the Dove* desires silence when it comes to her severe illness just as Kate Croy and Merton Densher desire silence when it comes to the shady plan they have set in motion concerning young Miss Theale (See King 153).

James charges the last scenes between Kate and Merton with intense silences. Merton does not want to talk about his last interview with Milly. Kate burns the letter Milly has sent to Merton rather than reading it herself although he would not object to it. The protagonists remain an impervious surface to each other (See Stowell 38), "an ocean of ambiguity" (Stowell 38).

In his earlier novel *Washington Square*, concealment is a decisive factor in the confrontation between father and daughter. The less Austin reveals what he is thinking to his daughter Catherine, the more power he gains over her. He manipulates her through his concealment and Catherine is as terrified of him as Pansy is of her father Gilbert in *The Portrait of a Lady* (See Auchard 65).

Once the doctor's inscrutable statements transform themselves into more explicit threats or demands, the balance of power shifts between them. Now Catherine denies her father the satisfaction of knowing what is going on in her mind and her world. After he nearly threatens her life on their journey through Europe, Austin's hold over Catherine becomes more and more slippery. His cruel words spur her into taking active steps in her own life. She starts to keep things from him.

Albeit unknown to the young heroine, this is the most effective form of punishment she could ever have chosen for her father. The more explicit he becomes, the less frightened his daughter seems to be (See Auchard 66-67).

On another level, little Maisie Farange in *What Maisie Knew* discovers that she has been the evil little messenger between her divorced parents and tries to establish a form of peace between them: she keeps quiet, she conceals that the father has railed against the mother, she decides not to repeat it. Unfortunately, this only worsens Maisie's situation. As her parents can no longer use her to inflict pain on the other, they cease to be interested in her entirely (See Jones 5-6).

8.4 The Female Characters of Henry James

The most remarkable characters Henry James created, with the exception of Christopher Newman in *The American* maybe, were all female. His young women, whether they are European or American, are ruled by their minds, their ideas and their thirst for knowledge and experience.

Jamesian females very often have to negotiate between what they want for themselves and what both society and parental authority had envisioned for them. This negotiation often leads to the need to escape societal chains altogether. Yet many of James's heroines never attempt this step, e.g. Catherine never abandons her father Austin. Isabel never separates from her husband Gilbert. The females in his tales often find themselves captured

between defying parental or ideological authority and negotiating their way through this difficult situation (See Coulson 36-42).

Henry James perceived women in the society in which he lived as always being in the eye of an, often male, observer. Women were always looked at for their beauty, their virtue or their potential as wife and mother. They were in a way an object that is always open to meticulous scrutiny. His “portrait heroines”, as Coulson names them, often try to use the way people see them for their own good, e.g. Madame Merle and Kate Croy.

Most of the time a complete separation from ideological and parental authority is not the solution Henry James designed for his female protagonists. As they negotiate their place in society James’s wives, daughters and lovers always remain within reach of this authority (See Coulson 55-59).

9 The Fictional Families of Henry James

The parents and children Henry James creates are diverse. He depicts neglected children, spoiled and wicked children as well as vicious, dominating, caring or overexerted parents. The created family dynamics more than once end fatally for the children.

9.1 The Child in Victorian Literature

The majority of children portrayed in Victorian novels suffer under their environmental conditions. Authors like Charles Dickens and George Eliot depicted the hardship of working class children who had to work in the factories or beg for food in the streets. Upper middle class and upper class children were seldom portrayed in novels; however the concept of the neglected child, whether physically or emotionally was a central theme back then.

The apparent lack of love between parent and child was an issue for all the novelists. In *Dombey and Son* and *Hard Times* Dickens depicted daughters suffering from a loveless upbringing (See Köttsdorfer 160-163).

Very often Dickens and also James eliminated the mother from the plot of the story right at the beginning. In Victorian family ideology the mother was central and vital for her children. Through the removal of such a central figure from the plot, the novelists could put more emphasis on the hardship endured by the child protagonist (See Dever *From Dickens to Freud* 22).

9.2 The Jamesian Child

Henry James showed much interest in the quality of a child's early experiences and the implications for his or her future development. He perceived their state as sometimes helpless and exploited. He was convinced that early childhood impressions shaped the future characteristics of infants. The more he touched upon the matter of children and child rearing, the more James interpreted the

child's character as determined by his environment. He portrayed the cause-and-effect relationship between child and parent with great interest (See Shine 82).

Some of his tales and novels often describe the case of child who turns out to be a superficial and haughty individual to be rooted in the lack of or the excess of parental attention. One of his strongest beliefs was that parents were the ones who had to answer and take responsibility for their children's actions. That the emotional and material environment of a child is vital to its psychological development is a fact no one would dispute today but the fact that Henry James was not just accepting but sure of it already in the 1880's is remarkable. In one of his early novellas, *Daisy Miller*, he had already singled out the lack of commitment on the side of the parents as detrimental to the child's development (See Shine 42).

More often Henry James shows children who are not spoiled and silly but who are clever and perceptive and suffer because of this, e.g. Morgan in *The Pupil*, Miles and Flora in *The Turn of the Screw* and Maisie in *What Maisie Knew*. These children act upon their own impulses and wishes and rather than portraying the child as trespassing against the law of the adult society, James prefers to depict the victimized child, who is at the mercy of its guardians, one who becomes a victim on the altar of parental egotism (See Shine 72-75).

Even if Jamesian fictional children occasionally meet tragic ends, e.g. the son in *The Author of Beltraffio*, the novelist never pictured them as mere victims. James likes to use them to expose the frailty of the adult world. Not only do the children become judges of their elders but they also start to actively wish and even demand a psychologically healthier climate. Highly perceptive Jamesian children, like Morgan or Maisie, gain an insight into the world of the grown-ups and pay the price of awareness, of understanding the falsity of the grown-up world in which they live. Nevertheless this awareness that makes the child-characters search for their selfhood, for a better life for themselves (See Shine 84, 85 and 88-91).

9.3 The Jamesian Parent

Although far from declaring all children flawless individuals, Henry James as an author puts the blame for spoiled and psychologically damaged children where he thought it belonged: with the parents. Many critics of his time did not like his approach and called him morbid for being preoccupied with such problems (See Shine 55-62).

James thinks that parents had the duty to act responsibly around their children so that they could learn from their example. More than once, did he choose to portray the way in which parents cause irreversible damage in their children's lives, making it impossible for them to turn into functional adults (See Shine 72-75). Parents, in the world of James, are willing and able to sacrifice their offspring "on the altar of their personal egotism" (Shine 74).

He describes the consequences of unfit parents in *Daisy Miller*, published in 1875. Daisy and her brother Randolph suffer under an incompetent mother and an absent father who are not able to provide the care, restrictions and the guidance they need. Social and emotional vacuums are among the main evils in the Jamesian universe and Daisy Miller's parents are guilty of creating just that. In a very similar way the parents of little Morgan in *The Pupil* are good for nothing but focused on social enjoyment and monetary success. Their immature behaviour destroys their son. The emotional and intellectual relationship between a parent and a child is crucial of James's novels and tales (See Shine 40-42).

However, it is not only the lack of parental responsibility and duty that is threatening, the opposite is possible as well. In both *Washington Square* and *The Wings of the Dove* the author describes inadequate father-daughter relationships resulting from a complete lack of a parental love for the offspring.

Washington Square depicts a very problematic child-parent relationship. This story of a father-daughter dependency is devastating as the result of a rigid

concept of duty. The plot dramatizes the effects of parental hostility on the mind of a sensitive young girl (See Shine 43-47).

In *What Maisie Knew*, James tells the entire story from the point of view of a very young girl, who is pushed around between her divorced parents.

Maisie stumbles into situations that confuse her and which she misreads and misjudges. However, the girl tries to smooth out the tensions she is able to perceive, to please and to manipulate the adults that surround her in order to survive as her situation constantly switches between being easy and desperate. Maisie may start out as a temporary possession or a source of distraction for the adult characters but James furbishes her with enough receptive capability to evolve beyond this stage.

10 Strains in Family Relationships

The following analysis of selected passages from each novel will try to clarify the problematic nature of the child-parent relationships in James's books and tales. Henry James not only criticized the ruling family ideology, he dramatized the emotional exploitation often visited by the parents on their neglected children. His families walk on mental minefields and manipulation and concealment are both the parents' and the daughters' weapons of choice.

I will give a brief summary of each novel, comment on the narrative situation and describe the genesis before the detailed analysis of the family relationships begins.

10.1 Washington Square

Published as a serial in 1880, *Washington Square* tells the story of a complicated father-daughter relationship in New York. The obedient and shy Catherine acts against her domineering father's wishes when she takes a romantic interest in Stuart Townsend, a young man her father Austin suspects of being a fortune hunter. Against the father's wishes she engages herself to him. The father's very autocratic handling of the entire affair opens a rift between them, which cannot be resolved, although the father's suspicions about the young man turn out to be true.

10.1.1 Narrative Situation

Although in a few paragraphs ruptured by an omniscient narrator, using what Stanzel referred to as "free use of indirect style" (Stanzel 94), the novel is told both from the father's and the daughter's points of view using third person narration. The narrative point of view repeatedly changes, showing how father and daughter feel and think about the other and how this shapes their decisions.

10.1.2 Textual Genesis

While in London, Henry James befriended Fanny Kemble⁵, a famous actress and writer. His novel *Washington Square* came to be based very much on a story Kemble told him about one of her brothers in the autumn of 1879. It depicted the unhappy engagement of her own brother Henry Kemble:

H.K. was a young ensign in a marching regiment, very handsome (beautiful) said Mrs.K., but very luxurious and selfish, and without a penny to his name. Miss T. was a dull, plain, common-place girl, only daughter of the Master of King's Coll., Cambridge, who had a handsome private fortune [...] She was very much in love with H.K., and was of that slow, sober, dutiful nature that an impression once made upon her, was made for ever. Her father disapproved strongly (and justly) of the engagement and informed her that if she married young K. he would not leave her a penny of his money. It was only in her money that H. was interested; (*Notebooks* 12-13)

There are no further entries concerning the novel in his notebooks. When James compiled a list of works to include in the New York edition of his works, he chose not to include *Washington Square*.

10.2 What Maisie Knew

First published in 1897, the novel depicts a few years in the childhood of little Maisie Farange, who is being pushed around between her real parents and step parents. The parents are divorced and have nothing left for each other but hatred and disdain. They

are not interested in their child's well-being or education. They are simply interested in finding new spouses and their own amusement. Maisie's only

⁵ Fanny Kemble (1809-1893) was a famous British actress and writer. In 1832 she accompanied her father on a theatrical tour through the states where she met Pierce Butler whom she later married. She moved to his plantation estate in Georgia. However, she was so appalled by the living conditions of the slaves her husband kept that marital tensions soon lead the couple to be divorced in 1849. The actress was very outspoken against slavery and kept a diary depicting her life on the Georgian plantation, which was published in the United States and England before the Civil War broke out. She returned to the stage after her divorce and successfully toured the East coast of the United States. Neither Butler nor Kemble ever remarried.

Cf. (<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1569.html>>).

access to the world is through her parents, their new spouses and her governesses.

The adults utilize the girl for their own needs: to pass on information, to repeat offensive words and phrases. The child is nothing but a tool used to emotionally hurt the other one. Still, the little girl learns to find her way around the adults world she is being cast into and even gains a true guardian in the end: the old and peculiar governess Mrs. Wix.

10.2.1 Narrative Situation

James was extremely meticulous in trying to render the whole story through the eyes of a little girl. “Make my point of view, my line, the consciousness, the dim, sweet, sacred, wondering, clinging perception of the child, and one gets something like *this*.”(Murdock, Notebooks, 236), he wrote in his notebooks in 1894. The story thus is told in figural narration. As James mentioned in his notebooks later on, “It takes place before Maisie – **everything takes place before Maisie**. That is a part of the essence of the thing – that with the tenderness she inspires, the rest of the essence, [...] the golden threads of my *form*.” (Notebooks 238)

Apart from the opening scene of the narrative, the courtroom scene, which is rendered through the eyes of a friend of Maisie’s mother Ida, within the entire narrative uses Maisie as a chief reflector character in order to convey the story to the reader.

10.2.2 Textual Genesis

While attending a dinner party in London in 1892, Henry James heard a true story of how the divorce of an unhappily married couple impacted the life of their only child:

Two days ago, at dinner at James Bryce’s, Mrs. Ashton, Mrs. Bryce’s sister, mentioned to me a situation that she had known of, of which immediately struck me that something might be made into a tale. A child (boy or girl would do, but I see a girl, which would make it different from the pupil) was *divided* by its parents in consequence of their being divorced. (Notebooks 126)

A few days later James took to the idea to make the child his chief reflector character for the novel:

Best of all perhaps would be to make the child a fresh bone of contention, a fresh source of dramatic situations, *du vivant* of the original parents. Their indifference throws the new parents, through a common sympathy, together. Thence a “flirtation”, a love affair between them which produces suspicion, jealousy, a fresh separation, etc. – with the innocent child in the midst. (*Notebooks* 127)

Both *What Maisie Knew* and *The Pupil* were included in James’s New York Edition, published between 1907 and 1909.

10.3 The Wings of the Dove

Published in 1902, the book tells the story of Kate Croy, Merton Densher and Milly Theale taking place mostly in London. Kate is in love with Merton but both suffer under the financial constrictions of their situation. Kate’s obscure father Lionel and her widowed sister Marian both pressure her to live with their rich aunt Maud Lowder, who plans to marry her off to an English Lord. When Milly, a rich but severely sick American heiress, appears on the scene who is a bit enamoured with Densher, Kate persuades Merton to woo Milly, who then would marry him and leave money to him. The young man agrees but in the end Kate loses him in her quest for financial independence from her complicated family.

10.3.1 Narrative Situation

Again James chose to depict the story using figural narration. He shifts mainly between Kate’s, Merton’s and Milly’s point of view but he also delves into the minds of Maud Lowder, Mrs. Stringham and Lionel Croy.

10.3.2 Textual Genesis

Henry James first had the idea for the novel in 1894. It all began with his interest in a young, life-loving American heiress who is terminally ill and the concept of a young man who knows her and likes her but who is not in love with her although she is in love with him. It is safe to say that Kate Croy and Merton Densher did not have any actual counterparts in the real world of Henry James but Milly Theale surely can be read as an homage to his cousin Minny Temple who died at a very young age:

She is in love with life, her dreams of it have been immense, and she clings to it with passion, with supplication. [...] The young man, in his pity, wishes he could make her taste of happiness [...]. His impulse of kindness, of indulgence to her. [...] But the young man is entangled with another woman, committed, pledged, 'engaged' to one – and it is in that a little story seems to reside. (*Notebooks* 169)

As he was still compiling thoughts for his new novel, James decided that an interesting thread of the story lay in the young man's entanglement with the other woman. He saw it as important that the financial and the family situation of the man and the other woman were desolate:

Say he is definitely engaged to this elder girl and has been engaged some time, but that there is some serious obstacle to their marrying soon. It is what is called a long engagement. They are obliged to wait, to delay, to have patience. He has no income and she no fortune, or there is some insurmountable opposition on the part of her father. Her father, her family, have reasons for disliking the younger man; the father is infirm, she has to be with him to the end, he will do nothing for them, etc., etc. [...] The fiancée is generous, she is also magnanimous – she is full of pity too. [...] But they are weary of waiting, the two fiancés – and it is their own prospects that are of prime importance to them. [...] The fiancée has a plan – she suddenly has a vision of what may happen. She forbids her lover to tell the girl they are engaged. Her plan is that he shall give himself to her for the time, be 'nice' to her. [...] She foresees that, under these circumstances, the girl will become capable of some act of immense generosity – [...] She therefore *checks* her lover's impulse, and he rather mystifiedly and bewilderedly assents. He 'reads her game' at last – she doesn't formally communicate it to him. [...] I seem to see a penniless peer, whom my elder girl refuses. Her father will help her if she does that – if she makes the snobbish alliance. Her merit, her virtue is that she *won't* make it, and it is by this sacrifice that she

holds her lover – *en le faisant valoir* – and makes him enter, as it were, into her scheme. (*Notebooks* 171-173)

Critics have often likened the character of Milly Theale to Henry James's favorite cousin Minny Temple. The parallels are evident, however my interest lies in displaying the situation of Kate, especially her dealings with her family. *The Wings of the Dove*, the first of what F.O. Matthiessen would call James's trilogy, as it was followed by *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl*, was included in the New York Edition.

11 The Cruelties of the Home

Each family, perhaps with the exception of Kate's, belongs to the upper middle or upper classes. Kate has her rich aunt Maude with who she is living who strictly belongs to the upper classes. According to Victorian family ideology these families should be places of protection, serenity and care. James shows that anything but this was the case whether or not his protagonists adhere to the role models and ideas as depicted by Victorian ideology (See McCurdy 21-25). James often seems to introduce children and young women who display the same amount of immaturity, no matter if the children are between the ages of eight and fourteen or the female characters between twenty and twenty-five. This, however, does not transport a paternalistic view on the part of the author. The equivalence between children and women in the bourgeois economy James portrays rather demonstrates the virtual hostility this society expresses towards the personal growth of children and women (See Rowe 21-22).

Dr. Sloper in *Washington Square* is an almost complete embodiment of male Victorian virtues: he thinks about money, the inheritance he will leave his daughter and he sees himself as her chief protector.⁶ He has no high opinion of the female intellect; he solely appreciates their moral worth.

He regards Catherine as too soft-minded to make decisions for herself and he likes his ability to control and even intimidate her. Catherine is shy, irresponsible, addicted to telling the truth and more than anything she hopes that she can please her father. In many ways she is as much an embodiment of female Victorian virtues as Austin is of male virtues.⁷ Nevertheless he is a vicious patriarch who wants to control his daughter completely and Catherine is a victim of her passivity, her surroundings and her inability to detach herself from her father.

⁶ Cunningham discusses goods and goodness for the middle class reader. Most novels written in the 1880's concerned themselves with financial security, status and wealth.

⁷ Digby talks about dualisms at work in Victorian society. Men were to occupy the more active and public place in it while women the more passive and withdrawn place and Demos analyzes the picture of the American family with the father as the chief voice of authority over both his wife and his children.

Washington Square certainly is a story where a great part of the blame lies with the father as Henry James turns him into a character readers may loathe and the daughter into a character readers may sympathize with but also pity. It appears that his story of a devastating father- daughter dependency fails out of a total absence of love and out of an over abundance of duty (See Shine 43-47).

While it feels as if ideological archetypes populated *Washington Square*, there hardly seems to be any such archetypes in *What Maisie Knew*. Neither Ida nor Beale come even close to what marriage manuals or self-proclaimed ideologists would have advocated as, being proper. They are egoistic, pleasure-seeking individuals and it is not above them to use their daughter to further their own cause.⁸ They do not care about her education, they simply want her as a little messenger of insults and intrigues between them. Maisie like many other Jamesian children appears to be sacrificed on the altar of parental egotism. There is hardly a single responsible adult in Maisie's environment to provide any form of guidance, order or care. Maisie is the victim, neglected and abandoned by her guardians (See Shine 72-75).

For a long time nobody takes responsibility for Maisie's welfare and education. The daughter is an asset, owned by her parents and step parents. She is something to be possessed, while she herself is completely and utterly disowned (See James *Maisie* 5). The little girl can only learn from the short glimpses of her surroundings she manages to catch. Mrs. Wix is the only protagonist who displays moral virtue, who admits that morals are important to her and who wishes to endow her little charge with them. She believes in the inherent goodness of the little girl and insists that corruption comes to the little girl from outside.

In *The Wings of the Dove* the displayed families vary between being outright inadequate and just slightly off the mark. Kate Croy's father, without a doubt, is hardly a Victorian gentleman, in fact he has done something so unspeakable and inexplicable that he is no longer accepted in good society. He is "too bad almost to name, [...]" (*Wings* 460) as aunt Maud claims. Still, Kate clings to

⁸ Shuttleworth says the following about the duties thrust upon a bourgeois mother. She was to only exist for her husband and her children without ever thinking about social events or her own interests.

her father and appears, like Catherine, almost unable to distance herself from him. Both her father and her older sister regard it as justified to use her for their own benefit. They call it her duty to obey. Kate, on the other hand, does not want to be buried in “inexhaustible sisterhood” (*Wings* 22).

Her aunt Maud, although she may appear morally superior to her father and sister, has no intention to see Kate happy but to see her sensibly married off to a British peer. She wants to use her as an asset in the marriage market and is not interested in a continuation of Kate’s romance with Densher.⁹

Kate is conscious of herself, her worth and her wishes and she is more than willing to arrange things for herself (See King 30-33). Unlike passive Catherine, she plans for possible marriage and ways to acquire money so that she can have the man she desires, Merton Densher.

The Wings of the Dove more than the other two novels indicates how the marriage market and not romantic ideas of love govern the thoughts of lower middle class women like Kate, who, unlike Catherine or Milly, do not have financial means on which to fall back. Her aunt is not above offering her beauty and youth as an attraction for Lord Mark, an English Lord to whom she would like to marry her niece. Kate comprehends how much she is in the eyes of others, how severely she is scrutinized by her environment, be it her aunt, her obscure father or her impoverished widowed sister and how this shapes her options to choose for herself (See Coulson 53).

⁹ Herman writes about the reality of the marriage market where women could hardly if ever marry for love, as they were taught in marriage manuals that they should present themselves as eager merchandise for young men. Love was after a certain fashion exchanged for material support. Cunningham mentions the topics of Henry James and that he repeatedly introduced the idea of young people being nothing more than mere articles disposed of by rich owners.

12 Unfit and Vicious Parents and their Perceptive and Underestimated Daughters

The following chapters offer an in-depth look at the cruel and sometimes perilous situation between the parents and the daughters in the books.

12.1 Obedience without Reward: The Case of Catherine Sloper

From the beginning the relation between Catherine and her father Austin is strained. Her father, a renowned New York physician, is a widower. Her mother, after whom she is named, died in childbed a few days after Catherine was delivered.

Austin Sloper does not have a high regard for his daughter's intelligence, beauty or purpose. To him she is, "an infant of a sex which rendered the poor child, to the Doctor's sense, an inadequate substitute for his lamented first born, of whom he had promised to make an admirable man. The little girl was a disappointment" (*Washington Square* 5)

Henry James often removed the figure of the mother entirely from his novels or displayed her as entirely unfit to be a mother. In *Washington Square* Catherine's circumstances are hardened by the fact that her mother died right after her birth so she lost what was considered the main attachment figure for a child.¹⁰

The Doctor tries to cope with this disappointment through an education furbished up with "a stock of unexpended authority" (*Washington Square* 6) by which he is certain that the girl was to have "profited largely" (*Washington Square* 6). He wants his daughter to behave according to his own ideas of what a young female should be like.

¹⁰ Dever discusses absent mothers in Victorian novels. The maternal presence often equals security and safety, something irretrievable taken away from the protagonists of many novels. This often led to a sentimentalized plot of the dead mother.

He invites his silly sister Lavinia Penniman to come and live with them, so that Catherine may have a romantic and sentimental companion of her own “imperfect sex”. He is certain that Lavinia will not tarnish Catherine:

‘When Catherine is about seventeen’, he said to himself, ‘Lavinia will try and persuade her that some young man with a moustache is in love with her. It will be quite untrue; no young man, with a moustache or without, will ever be in love with Catherine. But Lavinia will take it up and talk to her about it. [...] Catherine won’t see it, and won’t believe it, fortunately for her peace of mind; poor Catherine isn’t romantic.’ (*Washington Square* 10)

This leaves the daughter with only two role models: her aunt and her overly demanding father. Mrs. Penniman, a widow, does not concern herself with anything serious; she rather spends her days reading romance novels and daydreaming:

Mrs. Penniman was a tall, thin, fair, rather faded woman, with [...] a taste for light literature, and a certain foolish indirectness and obliquity of character. She was romantic, she was sentimental, she had a passion for little secrets and mysteries [...] She was not absolutely veracious; [...] She would have liked to have a lover, and to correspond with him under an assumed name in letters in a shop. I am bound to say that her imagination never carried the intimacy farther than this. (*Washington Square* 9)

Austin Sloper’s derogatory opinion on his female relatives, the one is silly and shallow, the other one simple and disappointing, make him a typically Victorian patriarch: women, in his mind, are more feeble and simpler in mind than men and unable to take care of themselves.¹¹

His opinion of Catherine is rather fixed, as he points out to his other sister, Mrs. Almond: “‘My allusions are as kind as yours, Elisabeth,’ said the Doctor, frankly. [...] Catherine is not unmarriageable, but she is absolutely

¹¹ Weisbrod & Sheingorn analyze arguments used by judges based on the belief that women had a more inferior mind set than men. Their condition was referred to as delicate, their grasp of mind called inferior, bashful and timid.

unattractive. [...] They prefer pretty girls – girls like your own. Catherine is neither pretty nor lively.’” (*Washington Square* 36-37).

Dr. Sloper’s own understanding of paternal duty defines his actions towards his daughter and it is only through strictness and hardness that he can show her any concern at all. Instead of corroborating the idea of the Victorian family, James tells a story where role-models devastate the family (See Shine 44-47).

The Doctor regards Morris Townsend, his daughter’s love interest, as completely unfit to be what he is sure his daughter needs, “[...] to be a protector, and care-taker of my child, who is singularly ill-adapted to take care of herself. It is there that he doesn’t satisfy me. I confess I have nothing but my impressions to go by; but I am in the habit of trusting my impression.” (*Washington Square* 77-78).

In his notebooks, Henry James refers to the daughter’s mind as being ruled by impressions once made upon it. It is very interesting to see that in the novel he gives the father exactly the same quality.

Catherine, it seems, has managed to acquire all the skills Victorian conduct books for women advocate¹²:

Catherine, who was extremely modest, had no desire to shine, and in most social occasions, as they are called, you would have found her lurking in the background. [...] Her father’s opinion of her moral purity was abundantly justified; she was excellently, imperturbably good; affectionate, docile, obedient, and much addicted to telling the truth. (*Washington Square* 10)

But all these qualities have never been enough to satisfy her father, to gain his approval or gratitude:

¹² Herman talks about marriage manuals and the role advocated for women. A female above all else had to be trustworthy, virginal, modest, silent and above any form of moral reproach.

Her deepest desire was to please him [Austin Sloper], and her conception of happiness was to know that she had succeeded in pleasing him. She had never succeeded beyond a certain point. Though on the whole he was very kind to her, she was perfectly aware of this, [...] Dr. Sloper would have liked to be proud of his daughter; but there was nothing to be proud of in poor Catherine. There was nothing, of course, to be ashamed of; but this was not enough for the Doctor [...]. (*Washington Square* 11)

Throughout the novel, the young female hardly, if ever, shows signs of being conscious of her father's mistreatment of her.

I would like to argue that Catherine is the one Jamesian daughter who for a very long time is not aware of the wrongs her surroundings do her.

The father obviously does not reward her display of passionless submission. The submission, in fact, rather leads to misconceptions about her. "[...] she was irresponsive because she was shy, uncomfortably, painfully shy. This was not always understood, and she sometimes produced an impression of insensibility. In reality she was the softest creature in the world." (*Washington Square* 12)

Catherine, who at times appears to be completely determined by external factors, acts openly against her father, who always has his "cold eyes fixed on her" (*Washington Square* 44), when she develops an interest in the form of Morris Townsend, who at first gives every appearance of being a Victorian gentleman.

The young woman so appreciates his attentions, she looks forward to anything he could be wanting to tell her while she finds that she is herself at a loss for words:

She wondered what she ought to say, and what would be the consequence of her saying nothing. [...] He looked straight into Catherine's eyes. She answered nothing; she only listened. [...] Catherine, though she felt tongue-tied, was conscious of no embarrassment; it seemed proper that he should talk, and that she should simply look at him. (*Washington Square* 18-19)

It is the daughter's interest in the young gentleman which disturbs the status quo between father and daughter. As the father thinks that this unfit and untrustworthy young man might become a son-in-law he starts to intervene.

Her infatuation with Morris Townsend to Austin is simply a phase she has to overcome. “ ‘She must get over it. He is not a gentleman.’ [...] But the thing is for Catherine to see it.’ [...] ‘I will present her with a pair of spectacles!’ said the Doctor.” (*Washington Square* 41-42)

The young woman might think that her father is wrong but she would never admit it even as the young man complains about it to her. It is simply beyond her passive and obedient nature to criticize her father at all:

‘Your father has insulted me.’ ‘Insulted you?’ ‘He has taunted me with my poverty.’ ‘Oh, you are mistaken – you misunderstood him!’ Catherine spoke with energy, getting up from her chair. [...] ‘He laughed at me for having no position! I took it quietly; but only because he belongs to you.’ ‘I don’t know,’ said Catherine; ‘I don’t know what he thinks. I am sure he means to be kind. [...]’ (*Washington Square* 53)

It is her strong and almost tenacious belief that her father always means well that holds the young woman up:

She could not imagine herself imparting any kind of knowledge to her father, there was something superior even in his injustice and absolute in his mistakes. But she could at least be good, and if she were only good enough, Heaven would invent some way of reconciling all things [...]. (*Washington Square* 84-85)

Austin Sloper never moves an inch from his stern patriarchal position concerning the inadequacy of Mr. Townsend as a son-in-law:

‘I have told you what I think. If you see him [...], you will be an ungrateful, cruel child; you will have given your old father the greatest pain of his life.’ This was more than the poor girl could bear; her tears overflowed, [...] instead of letting her sob out her misery on his shoulder, he simply took her by the arm and directed her course across the threshold, closing the door gently but firmly behind her. (*Washington Square* 104)

Dr. Sloper demands obedience from his daughter, expects that she acknowledge his right to judge her actions because it is his duty as a father to act so. His thoughts are to be relied on, while his daughter's do not count. For the longest time Catherine Sloper thinks that tacitly waiting for him to change his mind will bear fruit, as she never suspects his deeply rooted malevolence.

As Jones and Shine have put it Catherine is too unsuspecting of the maliciousness and the duplicity of the world to ever find her way around it. *Washington Square* therefore contrasts the subtle with the gross; it renders a perfect picture of innocence being subjected to torture by evil minds (See Shine 47 and Jones 106-108).

I would agree in so far as that Catherine Sloper certainly is a character that needs to be pushed very far before she starts to suspect the wicked intentions of others.

In fact it is only after her father likens her to a sheep he has fattened up and that Morris Townsend will now lead to the shambles that Catherine for the first time attempts to distance herself from her father and to commit herself to Morris Townsend:

Catherine made the reflection that she had never seen him so excited. It gave her pleasure, somehow, to note this fact. [...] Without waiting for him to ask, she told him that her father had come back in the same state of mind [...] 'He won't relent, and nothing good will come of it. I know it now – I have a very good reason.' 'And pray what is your reason?' She hesitated to bring it out, but at last it came. 'He is not very fond of me!' [...] 'I don't mind about his disliking you now; I mind everything less. I feel differently; I feel separated from my father.'*(Washington Square 144-145)*

At first it even consoles her that she can be a source of satisfaction and pride for her fiancé, a possible compensation, since she never succeeded in satisfying her father.

However, Morris's true intentions as a fortune hunter are revealed when he is unwilling to marry her without first securing her father's inheritance.

Townsend breaks off their engagement. As the young woman reacts to it he chastises her:

A sudden fear had come over her; it was like the solid conjunction of a dozen disembodied doubts, and her imagination, at a single bound, had traversed an enormous distance. All her feeling, for the moment, centred in the wish to keep him in the room. Morris bent his head and kissed her forehead. ‘When you are quiet, you are perfection,’ he said; ‘but when you are violent, you are not in character. (*Washington Square* 162)

It seems that Catherine never has a chance for personal happiness. Like her father Austin, her fiancé demands that she lives up to his idea of her. While the one man in her life wants her to be quiet, the other one wants her to be obedient. In between these two options, Catherine cannot negotiate her own happiness and neither Morris nor Austin are ever truly interested in what the young woman thinks or feels (See Coulson 40-43 and Jones 108).

12.2 Trapped between Opposing Parties: The Case of Maisie Farange

In *What Maisie Knew*, Henry James plainly and in unadorned fashion renders the fate of a young child who is pushed from one side to the other, from one parent to the other, without anyone willing to take care of the little girl. Very much like little Morgan’s parents in James’s short story *The Pupil* published in 1891, Maisie’s parents are highly mendacious and dishonourable. Nobody seems interested in the needs of the child, they are hardly ever discussed.

In the introduction to the novel James already alludes to the bitter fate of his little heroine, “The wretched infant was thus to find itself practically disowned, rebounding from racquet to racquet like a tennis-ball or a shuttlecock.” (*Art of the Novel* 140)

Victorian society felt above all else that there had to be a sense of propriety that guides and guards every aspect of public life. All the adults around the little girl hardly, if ever, live up to these rules.

The little girl spends most of her time confined to her nursery or taking walks in the park with her governesses. Her understanding of the world is based on the glimpses she catches of the adult world around her.

As pointed out by Granville H. Jones and Joseph Ward Maisie stumbles into situations that confuse her and that she misreads and misjudges. However, the girl tries her best to survive as her situation constantly switches between easy and desperate (See Jones 10-11 and Ward 152).

Maisie's confusions and wanderings drive the novel forward as well as the fact that while a six year-old girl might not understand what is going on, the grown-up reader does.

James describes the unhealthy environment that is threatening his little protagonist right from the beginning.

The parents have just achieved their divorce and the judge has decided to split the little girl up between them, as it appears that not one parent is better equipped to take care of the child than the other. As it was often the case in real society the court intervenes rather than to automatically give the father custody over his child.¹³

[...] the little girl was disposed of in a manner worthy of the judgement-seat of Solomon. She was divided in two and the portions tossed impartially to the disputants. They would take her, in rotation, for six months at a time; she would spend half a year with each. This was odd justice in the eyes of those who still blinked in the fierce light projected from the tribunal – a light in which neither figured in the least as a happy example to youth and innocence. (*Maisie* 17)

Maisie's parents, Ida and Beale Farange, are inscrutable figures and hardly seem to be responsible adults:

She [Ida] was a person who, when she was out – and she was always out – produced everywhere a sense of having been seen often, the sense indeed of a kind of abuse of visibility, so that it

¹³ Cf. what Grossberg writes about decisions made by judges concerning custody rights over children. At first women were often ruled to be unfit to take care of their children. The father was often seen as the natural guardian for the child invested by God and only in the 1820's and 1830's courts started to rule in favor of the mother, calling the tender age of childhood the time when the gentleness of a mother was most needed; see Grossberg 288 and 291-293.

would have been, in the usual places, rather vulgar to wonder at her. [...] Like her husband she carried clothes, carried them as a train carries passengers [...] Beale Farange had natural decorations, a kind of costume in his vast fair beard, burnished like a gold breastplate, [...] he had been destined in his youth for diplomacy and momentarily attached, without a salary, to a legation. (*Maisie* 20)

According to Victorian manuals neither the father nor the mother live up to what a mother and a father ought to be. Ida is always after social amusement and distraction, i.e. everything that should feel appallingly wrong to a genuine bourgeois mother, whose place was to be in that invisible sphere between husband and child, always ready to help the one or the other (See Shuttleworth 35).

Ida certainly is one of the most vicious mothers James has ever created.

Both the mother and the father keep questionable company, friends who keep discussing them and their marriage, acquaintances always lost in a chat about the latest fashion and the newest scandal.

“The many friends of the Faranges drew together to differ about them; contradiction grew young again over teacups and cigars. Everybody was always assuring everybody of something very shocking, and nobody would have been jolly if nobody had been outrageous.” (*Maisie* 19)

The mental abuse Maisie suffers sometimes distracts from the fact that physical abuse might also take place. James designs these passages rather ambiguously but the possibility of physical abuse should not be overlooked (See Rowe 21).

After all the male friends at Beale’s “the gentlemen who came to see her father [...]. Some of these gentlemen made her strike matches and light their cigarettes; other, holding her on knees violently jolted, pinched the calves of her legs till she shrieked – her shriek was much admired – and reproached them with being toothpicks.” (*Maisie* 21-22).

James designs the parents as rather capable of questionable actions since what keeps Ida and Beale chained to each other at first is the constant fighting about the child. It appears, “[t]he mother had wished to prevent the father from, as

she said, ‘so much as looking at’ the child: the father’s plea was that the mother’s lightest touch was ‘simply contamination’.” (*Maisie* 19)

Maisie is, this seems certain, suffering, no matter under whose roof she is staying:

They wanted her not for any good they could do her, but for the harm they could, with her unconscious aid, do each other. She would serve their anger and seal their revenge, for husband and wife had been alike crippled by the heavy hand of justice, which in the last resort met on neither side their indignant claim to get, as they called it, everything. (*Maisie* 18-19)

Maisie’s parents will make the child’s time with him or her, a very uncomfortable event, “Their rupture had resounded, and after being perfectly insignificant together, they would be decidedly striking apart.” (*Maisie* 18)

Under these circumstances Maisie’s childhood can be problematic and strained at best. This is evident to the woman from whose point of view the court’s decision is rendered, who is described as “distantly related to Mrs. Farange” (*Maisie* 18). She pities the child:

‘Poor little monkey!’ she at last exclaimed; and the words were an epitaph on the tomb of Maisie’s childhood. She was abandoned to her fate. What was clear to any spectator was that the only link binding her to either parent was this lamentable fact of her being a ready vessel for bitterness, a deep little porcelain cup in which biting acids could be mixed. (*Maisie* 18)

Nobody cares about her education, especially not her parents. They hire governesses because they do not want to have anything to do with their own child. Over time the little heroine grows more and more accustomed to her situation, as she changes between her mother’s and her father’s residence:

She vaguely knew, further, somehow, that the future was still bigger than she, and that a part of what made it so was the number of governesses lurking in it and ready to dart out. Everything that had happened when she was really little lay dormant, everything but the positive certitude, [...] that the natural way for a child to have her parents was separate and successive, like her mutton and her pudding or her bath and her nap. (*Maisie* 26)

What Maisie also starts to believe for a fact is that her parents are not interested in her. She thinks it due to a fault in her appearance, her personality. She is perceptive and conscious enough to interpret her circumstances that shape her life even as they remain beyond her grasp, a typical Jamesian character trait, as King has pointed out (See King 19-21).

As one parent repeatedly does not come to pick her up from the other parent at the arranged date, she grows more and more certain of it. "As the months went on the little girl's interpretations thickened, [...] She got used to the idea that her mother, for some reason, was in no hurry to reinstate her [...]." (*Maisie* 38)

The daughter's rare encounters with her mother are so painful and strained that Maisie concludes, "'Mamma doesn't care for me,' she said very simply. Child as she was, her long history was in the words; and it was as impossible to contradict her as if she had been venerable." (*Maisie* 68)

Her words will become true as both her father and her mother cease to be content with her and, like a commodity or an asset in their possession, practically turn her over to their new spouses.

The governesses and new spouses are the other people the reader encounters through the eyes of the child. Maisie likes them very much and constantly thinks about them more than she ever thinks about her parents, who seem to only float in and out of the world the little girl inhabits. They pass through it like speedy trains, the governesses make a more permanent impression. Maisie clings to the idea that her governesses and step-parents do love her.

In the circle of surrogate parents and appointed governesses there is Miss Overmore, described as her first real governess. Her charm and beauty make an impression on the young child. "'I think you're lovely,' she often said to her;" (*Maisie* 26).

Although, originally employed by her mother, Miss Overmore ends up changing employers as she then works for Beale, whom she marries a little later. Beale is certain Miss Overmore can help him protect Maisie against his ex-wife and Maisie takes to the idea:

Maisie liked her so, and had so the charmed sense of being liked by her, [...] The wonder now lived again, lived in the recollection of what papa had said to Miss Overmore: 'I've only to look at you to see you're a person I can appeal to for help to save my daughter.' Maisie's ignorance of what she was to be saved from didn't diminish the pleasure of the thought that Miss Overmore was saving her. It seemed to make them cling together in some wild game of going round. (*Maisie* 27)

The next governess Maisie is to receive is Mrs. Wix, a widow. She is not beautiful or charming like Ida or Miss Overmore are, "She had struck her [Maisie] at first, just after Miss Overmore, as terrible; but something in her voice at the end of an hour touched the little girl in a spot that had never been yet reached." (*Maisie* 30)

The older woman possesses a quality that the girl has rarely encountered in a female before: "[...] she had been, with passion and anguish, a mother, and that was something Miss Overmore was not, something (strangely, confusingly) that mamma was even less." (*Maisie* 30)

At times the little girl has insights into her surroundings and she then represents most ardently the "idealised human condition" (Krook 23) James liked to show in his protagonists, as Dorothea Krook has pointed out. Maisie may be a child but she can understand complex things (See Krook 22-25).

Of course, her understanding may not always be complete and immediate. In the case of Mrs. Wix the girl misjudges her at first:

She wore glasses, which in humble reference to a divergent obliquity of vision, she called her straighteners, [...] the rest of the melancholy garb could only have been put on for herself. With the added suggestion of her goggles it reminded her pupil of the polished shell or corslet of a horrid beetle. At first she had looked almost cross and cruel; but this impression passed away with the child's increased sense of her being in the eyes of the world a figure mainly to laugh at. (*Maisie* 31-32)

However, it is Mrs. Wix who throughout the novel tries to take care of Maisie, tries to teach values to the little girl:

They dealt, the governess and her pupil, in 'subjects' [...] she took refuge on the grounds of fiction, through which she indeed there

curled the blue river of truth. She knew swarms of stories, mostly of the novels she had read; [...] They were all about love and beauty and countesses and wickedness. Her conversation was practically an endless narrative, a great garden of romance, with sudden vistas into her own life and gushing foundations of homeliness. (*Maisie* 32)

Mrs. Wix is the only one in charge of the girl who insists on rules of propriety, who will openly tell the child that the grown-ups around her commit moral transgressions. She is the only one to tell Maisie about these things at all. Her actions are guided by her affection for the little girl, who reminds her of her own daughter whom she had to bury at the age of four.

Mrs. Wix is determined by the idea that a child needs love and care above all else, a view certainly not shared by the Christian thinkers on education, who emphasized the child's ability to err and sin.

(Cf.< <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/sewell/4c.html#classxn>>)

She is convinced that Maisie will understand reason and can judge from her own experience, a perspective rather advocated by Jean Jacques Rousseau or John Locke, who supported the scientific approach to education.

(Cf.< <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/sewell/4c.html#classxn>>)

The governess tells Maisie that Miss Overmore and Sir Claude, the child's stepfather, have started an affair while still being married to her birth parents and that in living with them, the girl would be a part of a very opaque relationship:

'Well,' said Mrs. Wix, 'nobody, you know, is free to commit a crime.' 'A crime!' The word had come out in a way that made the child sound it again. 'You commit as great a one as their own – and so should I – if we were to condone their immorality by our presence.' Maisie waited a little; it seemed so fiercely conclusive. 'Why is it immorality?' she nevertheless inquired. Her companion now turned upon her with a reproach softer because it was somehow deeper. 'You're too unspeakable! Do you know what we're talking about?' In the interest of ultimate calm Maisie felt that she must be above all clear. 'Certainly; about their taking advantage of their freedom.' (*Maisie* 188-189)

Maisie at first defends Miss Overmore, whom she thinks good and pure because of her beauty since in her childish mind beauty equals goodness. Mrs. Wix however, turns her logic around:

‘She’s beautiful and I love her! I love her and she’s beautiful!’ [...] ‘And I’m hideous and you hate me?’ Mrs. Wix fixed her a moment, then caught herself up. ‘I won’t embitter you by absolutely accusing you of that; [...] But do you mean to go so far as to tell me that you *want* to live with them in their sin?’[...] Haven’t you really and truly *any* moral sense?’(*Maisie* 191-193)

Maisie has moral sense, indeed, and at the end of the novel decides to live with the old governess rather than her step parents.

Sir Claude, Ida’s new spouse, has all the appearance of a charming and responsible character and also initially adores the little girl very much.

“She felt the moment she looked at him that he was by far the most shining presence that had ever made her gape [...] he took hold of her and kissed her [...] It was as if he had told her on the spot that he belonged to her, so that she could already show him off and see the effect he produced.” (*Maisie* 51-52).

Maisie adores him very much in return, and for the longest time believes that he will be her surrogate father; that he will stay on with her even after his marriage with Ida has failed. It saddens her to discover that he clings more to his newly found love interest, Mrs. Beale, the former Miss Overmore, than to her. Nevertheless, Sir Claude is a character that very passionately wants to be a father whereas Beale, Maisie’s actual father, is uninterested in being one.

James believed that children needed guidance just as much as they needed love and care and an excess or lack of both could prove harmful to the child (See Shine 42).

In *What Maisie Knew*, the protagonist suffers from having no role model or rules to cling to at all.

12.3 Questionable Loyalties: The Case of Kate Croy

In *The Wings of the Dove*, the family relationships are kept on the sidelines rather than constituting the main plot.

Therefore Kate Croy's surroundings cannot easily be interpreted. She comes from a lower middle class background, her mother is dead, her older sister widowed and impoverished while her father Lionel has committed a deed so unspeakable he has been forced to lead a life on the fringes of polite society.

Again James creates a family where the mother has been conveniently removed from the entire plot altogether. However the mother raised the children herself since she did not die in childbed, a case so often depicted in Victorian fiction. But it leaves Kate with no mother to turn to and certainly aggravates her situation.¹⁴

The mother was victimized by the father as are his children. Her maternal legacy, it seems, lies in the fact that she is remembered as a victim of her husband's errors.

Kate Croy suffers from an aspect of reality that most Jamesian heroines never really have to deal with. Her financial subsistence is not sound and secure. While James frequently portrays the moneyed classes as his main protagonists (See Krook 10-13) this is not the case here.

She has to make an advantageous match unless she wants to take up a real form of work, be it as a teacher or a governess as it was most often the case with young middle class females. Like Catherine and Maisie, Kate has to deal with difficult relatives and the strained way they treat each other.

Kate's family has and had to deal with setbacks in the past and they have not yet reached a point in their life where they could feel something close to contentment:

“Her father's life, her sister's, her own, that of her two lost brothers – the whole story of their house had the effect of some fine florid, voluminous phrase, say even a musical, that dropped first into

¹⁴ Dever talks about the representation of maternal loss in Victorian novels as a way to produce structures of displacement and hardship for the protagonist.

words, into notes, without sense, and then, hanging unfinished, into no words, no notes at all.” (*Wings* 2)

The very first scene in the novel displays Kate’s relationship with her father. What exactly has happened in the Croy family is not revealed; it is hardly alluded to but the scandal has been so serious that Kate’s sister Marian refuses to even speak to him.

Apart from the certainty that it was her father’s wrongdoing that has caused everything to collapse, little is revealed about his wrong doing,

His plausibility had been the heaviest of her mother’s crosses; inevitably so much more present to the world than whatever it was that was horrid – thank God they didn’t know! – that he had done. He had positively been, in his way, by the force of his particular type, a terrible husband not to live with; his type reflecting so invidiously on the woman who had found him distasteful. (*Wings* 7)

Marian even refuses to meet him but Kate is still partial enough to him that she comes when he beckons. Nevertheless she has decided to live with her rich Aunt Maud instead with him. Since her father does not have the means to support her, he rather looks to her to support him.

Yet she is impressed with her father, she is attached to his charm and beautiful appearance:

He was so particularly the English gentleman and the fortunate, settled, normal person. Seen at a foreign *table d’hôte*, he suggested but one thing: “In what perfection England produces them!” He had kind safe eyes, and a voice which, for all its fullness, told, in a manner, the happy history of its having never had once to raise itself. (*Wings* 5)

He may be very handsome but Kate is aware of his more sinister qualities as well:

He had ceased to be amusing – he was really too inhuman. His perfect look, which had floated him so long, was practically perfect still [...] He looked exactly as much as usual – all pink and silver as to skin and hair, all straightness and starch as to figure and dress – the man in the world least connected with anything unpleasant. (*Wings* 4)

Lionel has a strong sense of himself and it appears as if Kate shared this self-confidence with him. Unlike Catherine in Henry James's *Washington Square* she has a strong sense of herself:

She was handsome, but the degree of it was not sustained by items and aids; a circumstance moreover playing its part at almost any time in the impression she produced. [...] She had stature without height, grace without motion, presence without mass. Slender and simple, frequently soundless, she was somehow always in the line of the eye – she counted singularly for its pleasure. (*Wings* 2-3)

Kate has come to accept that others find her attractive and she tries to maneuver her way through life by using her assets. Miss Croy is one of James's portrait heroines who knows herself to be an object of scrutiny and who is willing to use that for her own benefit (See Coulson 49-54). She has also come to understand that her position in society is weakened because of her gender:

She didn't judge herself cheap, she didn't make for misery. [...] She hadn't given up yet, [...] There was a minute during which she, though her eyes were fixed, she quite visibly lost herself in the thought of the way she might still pull things round had she only been a man. It was the name, above all, she would take in hand, the precious name she so liked and that, in spite of the harm her wretched father had done it, was not yet past praying for. [...] but what was a penniless girl to do with it but let it go? (*Wings* 3)

Kate keeps returning to her father for visits, advice, support or even assistance. Like Catherine, Kate is a daughter ruled by a sense of duty to others; in her special case this means her father, her sister and her aunt. Lionel has summoned her and she appears albeit she knows:

No relation with him could be so short or so superficial as not to be somehow to your hurt; [...] He had written to her that he was ill, too ill to leave his room, and that he must see her without delay. [...] but she now again felt, the inevitability of freedom he used with her with, all the old ache, her poor mother's and her very own. (*Wings* 3-5)

The young woman waits in his apartment until he has arrived as she is eager to find why he called for her.

Lionel has long since reduced the love and care for his children to simple business speech:

“[...] The family sentiment, in our vulgarized, brutalized world, has gone utterly to pot. There was a day when a man like me – by which I mean a parent like me – would have been for a daughter like you a quite distinct value; what’s called in the business world, I believe, an ‘asset’”. He continued sociably to make it out. “I’m not talking only of what you might, with the right feeling do *for* me, but of what you might – it’s what I call opportunity – do *with* me.” (*Wings* 12)

Since he no longer considers himself an asset, her father likes to think of her as an asset he could use. She should go and live with her wealthy aunt. “[...] There is no limit to what your aunt can do for you.” “Do you mean in the way of marrying me?” “What else should I mean? Marry properly –“ (*Wings* 13). Lionel is well aware of his daughter’s value in the marriage market.

Just like her father’s disheveled quarters in Quirk Street, Marian’s home in Chelsea is nothing to be proud of. The elder sister, who hardly manages looking after her own children, looks to Kate for support as well, very much like Lionel does.

As the first-born her sister Marian Condrip expects Kate to follow her advice and wishes, “[...]Marian took her for granted: her own state of abasement as the second-born, her life reduced to mere inexhaustible sisterhood.” (*Wings* 22).

She wants Kate to help her but Marian is not convinced of Kate’s genuine will to help her. “ ‘I can’t imagine’, Marian on this occasion said to her, “ ‘how you can think of anything else in the world but the horrid way we’re situated.’ ”(*Wings* 25)

Kate sees her sister and her dire circumstances, what widowhood and raising children have done to her. These influences the young woman’s own thoughts of her choices, especially marriage:

She was little more than a ragged relic, a plain, prosaic result [...] only to be left crumpled and useless and with nothing in her [...] She had grown red and almost fat, which were not happy signs of mourning; [...] If that was what marriage necessarily did to you,

Kate Croy would have questioned marriage. It was a grave example, at any rate, of what a man [...] might make of a woman. (*Wings* 26)

Because of her beauty, charm and good relations to her aunt Maud, Marian Condrip is sure that Kate will be able to do things for her.” [...] she was all the more sharply and insistently Kate’s elder and Kate’s own. Kate’s most constant feeling about her was that she would make her, Kate, do things.” (*Wings* 23)

Marian has ceased to have any contact with her father and does not understand why Kate still visits him:

Marian gasped in her distress. “What in the world is he *to* us? [...]” They faced each other – the tears were in Marian’s eyes. Kate watched them there a moment and then said: “I had thought it well over – over and over. But you needn’t feel injured. I’m not going. He won’t have me.” Her companion still panted – it took time to subside. “Well, *I* wouldn’t have you – wouldn’t receive you at all, I can assure you – if he had made you any other answer.” (*Wings* 29)

Marian, like Lionel, wants Kate to live with her aunt so that she will eventually marry rich and through her newfound wealth help her poor sister.

Aunt Maud Lowder is the only member of Kate Croy’s family who is wealthy. As part of the upper class aunt Maud resides at Lancaster Gate. Kate moves in with her shortly before her mother dies:

She had gone to Mrs. Lowder on her mother’s death – gone with an effort the strain and pain of which made her at present, as she recalled them, reflect on the long way she had travelled since then. There had been nothing else to do – not a penny in the other house, nothing but unpaid bills that had gathered thick while its mistress lay mortally ill, [...]. (*Wings* 17)

Aunt Maud has taken her in but she bases her care on “sharp intervention”. She does not like Marian and the husband she chose and Kate often thinks of her aunt’s place in her immediate family. “The main office of this relative for the young Croys – apart from giving them their fixed measure of social greatness – had struck them as being to form them to a conception of what they were not to expect.” (*Wings* 18)

Kate accepts Maud’s plans for her although “nothing could have been more uneasy than her suspicion of her relative’s view of this truth. Her relative was

prodigious – she had never done her relative justice. [...] Aunt Maud was yet a presence from which a sensitive niece could feel herself under pressure.” (*Wings* 19-20)

The young woman is acutely aware of the fact that her aunt’s plan for her carries an implicit danger to her own sense of freedom and her own choices. “It was perfectly present to Kate that she might be devoured, and she likened herself to a trembling kid, kept apart a day or two till her turn should come, but sure sooner or later to be introduced into the cage of the lioness.” (*Wings* 21)

Kate is surrounded by people, who want to control her. Her father is a shady figure, who still wants to be the puppet master in her life. Marian views her as a form of financial support as she urges her to stay on with her rich aunt. Just like Lionel, Maud Lowder wants to use Kate’s assets, her good looks and her charm to marry her off to someone with considerable financial means. Kate shows enough consciousness to comprehend the difficulties of her situation but still lets herself be trapped in what her sister and aunt regard as her duty to them (See King 30-35 and Coulson 53-54).

None of these relatives show real care for the young woman’s feelings, her wish to marry a young but penniless journalist. They expect her to be a good, obedient and selfless daughter and sister. Kate is a perfect example for the cruelty of the marriage market as it existed in Victorian society, where middle class women had no choice but to marry for financial and not for romantic reasons.¹⁵

13 The Negligence and Exploitation of three Daughters

What seems to define the relationships between daughters and their parents in the novels under consideration is neglect, exploitation and concealment.

¹⁵ Herman discusses the corruption of the marriage market as a place where love was exchanged for financial and material security.

Parents in these novels view their children as object they can utilize, manipulate and control. Children become small battlegrounds for possession and in the course of that, Jamesian children become almost lucid tableaux of exemplary victimization (See Coulson 35-36).

The relationships are unhealthy as they are most often built on emotional cruelties, enforced obedience and strained deliberate silences. Unlike the fate of children and young adolescents often portrayed by Charles Dickens or George Eliot, Jamesian children never really suffer poverty or material needs. Instead they suffer from mental and emotional neglect of the most severe kind. Their parents on whom they are dependant see them and use them as assets, as means to an end. Kept in their nurseries and parlors, the daughters are presented when needed. Otherwise their parents very often do not want to be bothered with them at all.

Henry James believed children to be determined by their environment and their experiences. In the victimized children and adolescents he portrayed, Henry James attempted to display the frailty of the adult world but also how fatal unfit parents could be for the lives of their children (See Shine 72-75).

James created parents so vicious and wicked as they take the abuse of their own children to such extremes as murder in *The Author of Beltraffio* and *The Turn of the Screw* that they almost appear as their children's first and only threat to a healthy existence, sometimes an existence at all (See Rowe 21-22).

In the case of Austin and Catherine Sloper in *Washington Square* it seems that paternal control is more important than anything else could be. The more and more the Doctor feels that his control over his daughter is slipping the more aggravated he becomes.

Maisie is trapped in between a number of adults who are all untrustworthy and too complicated to see through. Mostly, these adults use her as the means to an end, as a little messenger carrying words, as a spy.

In Kate's corner of the world it has already become very apparent to her that others see her as a useful object, as an agent that will be able to do something for them. Kate, no matter how much she likes to be helpful to her father and sister, decides that she wants something for herself, that she wants to use others just the way she is used by them.

These strained and unhealthy relationships between parents and children inspire strategies used on both sides to control the other. In the Jamesian world of characters one of these tools is his protagonists' impeccable faculty for silence. Next to acts of exploitation, manipulation and negligence silence is a very important factor in analyzing these family relationships.

Silences in Henry James can come both as a deliberate and a more unconscious form a character's behavior. It can appear in the shape of obedience, acceptance or even submission. It can be used in order to control and, of course, as a way of concealing knowledge from another character. It can be a very active, a very conscious decision, e.g. Maisie in *What Maisie Knew* very deliberately decides to remain silent in order to change her situation with her parents for the better. It can be a more indirect way of keeping a situation under control, as is the case with Austin and Catherine in *Washington Square*. Henry James, in committing his protagonists to silence, emphasizes situations in which language becomes incidental and deficient, yet he also further illustrates his character's rich inner life (See Auchard 64-68 and Stowell 30). Silence is used as a way to remain in power and as a way to hold power over someone else as it concurrently empowers and weakens characters.

13.1 The Daughter as an Object of Manipulation: Catherine and Austin

Austin might view his relationship to his daughter as her being bound by duty, but what makes this father so outspokenly vicious among the group of patriarchs created by Henry James is the fact that the incident between Catherine and Morris Townsend is a form of entertainment to him. Already certain that his daughter, who is neither lively nor pretty, will never be of interest to men like Morris, Dr. Sloper:

[...] was more than anything else amused with the whole situation.
[...] More than this, he promised himself some entertainment from the little drama – if drama it was – of which Mrs. Penniman desired to represent the ingenious Mr. Townsend as the hero. He had no

intention, as yet, of regulating, the *dénouement*. [...] and, lastly, he was very curious to see whether Catherine might really be loved for her moral worth. (*Washington Square* 39)

He watches the visits the young man makes to his daughter passively and calmly but never doubts that his control over Catherine will prevail. He even mocks her by inquiring about Morris's visits and if he has yet proposed to her:

'Well my dear, did he propose to-day?' the Doctor asked. This was exactly what she had been afraid he would say; and yet she had no answer ready. Of course she would have liked to take it as a joke – as her father must have meant it; [...] She didn't like it – it made her unhappy. But Catherine could never be sharp; and for a moment she only stood, [...] looking at her satiric parent, and giving a little laugh. [...] 'Perhaps he will do next time!' she exclaimed, with a repetition of her laugh. (*Washington Square* 34)

The doctor does not hide his perception from the young man but rather openly tells him so during a dinner party:

'My dear young man,' he said at last, 'you must be very susceptible. As Catherine's father, I have, I trust, a just and tender appreciation of her many good qualities; but I don't mind telling you that I have never thought of her as a charming girl, and never expected anyone else to do so.' (*Washington Square* 66)

'I am perfectly resigned to her thinking me a tyrant for a twelvemonth.' [...] 'Are you sure your daughter will give me up?' [...] As for Catherine's giving you up – no, I'm not sure of it. But as I shall strongly recommend it, as I have a great fund of respect and affection in my daughter's mind to draw upon, and as she has the sentiment of duty developed in a very high degree, I think it extremely possible. (*Washington Square* 69)

Austin does not think his daughter will ever openly disobey him, so the longer Townsend keeps returning for visits to his house, the more aggravated he becomes:

He saw in a moment, however, that his daughter was painfully conscious of his own observation. [...] The Doctor almost pitied her. Poor Catherine was not defiant; she had no signs of bravado; [...] The Doctor felt, indeed, so sorry for her that he turned away, to spare her the sense of being watched; [...] 'It must be deucedly pleasant for a plain, inanimate girl like that to have a beautiful young fellow come and sit down beside her [...] No wonder she likes it, and that she thinks me a cruel tyrant; [...] he said to himself that he was perhaps after all taking things too hard and crying out before he was hurt. (*Washington Square* 49-50)

The father is fully aware of what he puts his daughter through by constantly belittling her feelings for the young man. Conscious of the pain he creates, he still does not alter his behaviour. *Washington Square* may be the most vicious show of a stranglehold between a parent and a child James ever created (See King 19-21).

The longer he cannot detect a change in his daughter's behaviour, whom he thinks "as intelligent as a bundle of shawls", the more hurt the father feels. "[...] she is not going to break down. She is going to drag out the engagement, in the hope of making me relent." [...] 'You speak as if it surprised you.' 'It is immense; there will be a great deal to observe. 'You are shockingly cold-blooded!' said Mrs. Almond."(*Washington Square* 115)

While the father observes her efforts, Catherine for the longest time believes that her father will change his mind if she only is good enough. She does not see how he is manipulating her, how her suffering amuses him.

It takes all her courage to tell her father about the status of her engagement and to endure his severe judgement of it:

'[...] I don't like your engagement. [...] You should have consulted me before you settled it. I have been too easy with you, [...] It was because I was afraid you wouldn't like it!' she confessed. [...] I have my impression of him. You don't know him either.' She stood there before the fire, with her hand clasped in front of her, and her father, [...] made this remark with a placidity that might have been irritating. (*Washington Square* 62)

She sat down at last, with her head bent and her eyes still fixed upon him; strangely enough – I hardly know how to tell it – even while she felt what he said went so terribly against her, she admired his neatness and his noble expression. There was something hopeless and oppressive in having to argue with her father; (*Washington Square* 63-64)

It is obvious to Krook that James's characters are exemplary characters put on the stage of life to negotiate their way through it (See Krook 10-13).

Catherine is a very good example of powerlessness, of being chained by unrelenting shackles. Angering her father puts an immense strain on her,

especially as he says, ” [...] by engaging yourself to Morris Townsend you simply wait for my death.” (Washington Square, 102) and leaves his daughter feeling that “She had exhausted all arguments, all replies.” (*Washington Square* 103)

Through the eyes of Catherine, James shows a daughter so caught up in her high esteem of her father that she never even suspects that he could be manipulating her. For a while Catherine even thinks of herself as ungrateful and bad, “At moments it seemed to her that she believed him [her father], [...] She was bad; but she couldn’t help it.” (*Washington Square* 108)

The story does not so much describe the fate of a weak-minded daughter and her strict but caring father as it tells the story of a jealous father who had made up his mind long ago that his daughter was naïve and weak and who will not abandon from his point of view. Catherine’s sublime sense of duty is almost painful to read. All her actions appear to be driven by the sense of duty towards her father. To disobey him would be to act badly. Her irrevocable commitment to her father Catherine resembles Pansy Osmond in *The Portrait of a Lady* (See Jones 106-107).

In a last attempt to change her mind, Dr. Sloper takes his daughter on a tour through Europe, hoping that she might forget the young man along the way. Repeatedly he asks her whether or not she has changed her opinion regarding the young man.

Since she does not, Austin’s anger finally boils over and he lashes out at his daughter while they are walking through the Swiss countryside:

He stopped in front of her and stood looking at her, with eyes that had kept the light of the flushing snow-summits on which they had just been fixed. Then abruptly, in a low tone, he asked her an unexpected question – ‘Have you given him up?’[...] ‘No, father!’ she answered.[...] ‘I am very angry.’ She wondered what he meant – whether he wished to frighten her. If he did, the place was well chosen; this hard, melancholy dell, abandoned by the summer light, made her feel her loneliness. She looked around her, and her heart grew cold; for a moment her fear was great. [...] ‘You try my patience,’ her father went on, [...] at bottom I am very passionate; and I assure you I can be very hard.’ She could not think why he

told her these things. Had he brought her here on purpose, and was it part of a plan? What was the plan? Catherine asked herself. Was it to startle her suddenly into a retraction – to take an advantage of her by dread? Dread of what? [...] There was a kind of still intensity about her father which made him dangerous, but Catherine hardly went so far as to say to herself that it might be part of his plan to fasten his hand. The neat, fine, supple hand of a distinguished physician – in her throat. Nevertheless, she receded a step. ‘I am sure you can be anything you please,’ she said. And it was her simple belief. (*Washington Square* 132-133)

Catherine, although very scared of her father in this momentary outbreak of emotion still follows him as she has always done. As they leave the Swiss mountain site in a carriage, Austin deals her one last blow, “‘Should you like to be left in such a place as this, to starve?’ ‘What do you mean?’ cried the girl. ‘That will be your fate – that’s how he will leave you.’” (*Washington Square* 134)

His daughter, of course, insists that this is not true but Austin just reads it as one more sign of her childish and foolish obstinacy.

Her unyielding mind astounds the doctor so much that his resolve finally shatters, on their last evening in Liverpool before they board the steamer back to America.

‘He [Morris] ought to be very thankful to me, do you know. I have done a mighty good thing for him [...] your value is twice as great [...] a year ago, you were perhaps a little limited – a little rustic; but now you have seen everything [...] We have fattened the sheep up for him before he kills it!’ (*Washington Square* 136)

From this confrontation in Europe Catherine returns as a changed young woman, as she now actively tries to leave her father by marrying Morris Townsend. After the last, very angry exchange between father and daughter, Catherine returns to America ready to marry Mr. Townsend as she now admits, “‘I don’t mind about his disliking you now; I mind everything less. I feel differently; I feel separated from my father.’” (*Washington Square* 144-145)

It is her tragedy that her father for all his cruel remarks and threatening words really was right about the young man. After the argument with Morris Townsend resulting in his breaking off the engagement, the young woman feels emotionally crushed:

She was smothered and stunned; she buried her head in the cushions, sobbing and talking to herself. [...] She had to show herself half an hour later, and she was sustained at table by the immensity of her desire that her father should not perceive that anything had happened. (*Washington Square* 164-165)

Neither Morris Townsend, Aunt Penniman nor Austin Sloper ever manage to understand what Catherine thinks or feels. Her calm mask never slips and not once does her family penetrate it.

Washington Square contrasts the vulgar with the sensitive, the delicate with the overbearing and the gross with the subtle. Somewhere in between all of this young Catherine Sloper tries to exist and fails. She certainly belongs to the column of one of James's failed children (See Jones 107-108).

In the one true attempt at being stubborn, Catherine refuses to tell her father that the engagement has been broken off. The doctor does not like this abrupt ending to his game of manipulation. He tries to extract information from her again and again, as he tries to persuade his daughter to confess her defeat:

'It doesn't seem to me that you are treating me just now with all the consideration I deserve,' he said in a moment. [...] 'I shall not go away!' Catherine said. The Doctor raised his eyebrows. 'Has he backed out?' 'I have broken off my engagement.' [...] The Doctor was puzzled and disappointed, but he solved his perplexity by saying to himself that his daughter simply misrepresented – justifiably, if one would, but nevertheless, misrepresented – the facts. He eased off his disappointment [...] by a few words he uttered out loud. 'How does he take his dismissal?' 'I don't know!' said Catherine [...] 'You mean you don't care? You are rather cruel, after encouraging him and playing with him for so long!' The Doctor had his revenge after all. (*Washington Square* 176-177)

Still Dr. Sloper, it appears, never takes genuine satisfaction in his daughter's broken engagement. He feels like he has yet to corroborate his victory even years later:

'[...] Promise me not to marry Morris Townsend after I am gone.' [...] 'I very seldom think of Mr. Townsend.' 'It will be very easy for you to go on, then. Promise me, after my death, to do the same.' [...] 'I don't think I can promise that.' She answered. [...] The

Doctor was silent a minute. 'I ask you for a particular reason. I am altering my will.' [...] 'I can't promise,' she simply repeated. 'You are very obstinate,' said the Doctor. All her feelings were merged in the sense that he was trying to treat her as he had treated her years before. She had suffered from it then; and now all her experience, all her acquired tranquillity and rigidity, protested. [...] Poor Catherine's dignity was not aggressive; it never sat in state; but if you pushed far enough you could find it. Her father had pushed very far. (*Washington Square* 184-185)

Austin's efforts to influence his daughter and Catherine's own attempts to resist them render most conversations between them eventually to nothing but a power play.

Catherine suffers in these games as much as she does from the mistreatment she receives from everyone around her.

13.1.1 Control through Silence: The Strategies of Father and Daughter

In *Washington Square* silence is a very important tool both for Austin and Catherine. Who is silent and who is concealing facts shapes what father and daughter think about each other as much as accepted and indoctrinated views of a daughter's place and a father's duty do.

Austin Sloper's power, it seems in the beginning, represents itself through his silent stares, his cold hard eyes, which are always fixed on his daughter. Catherine even thinks of his faculty for silence as intimidating, "There was a kind of still intensity about her father which made him dangerous [...]" (*Washington Square* 133). His silence, his concealment is for the longest time the decisive factor in the novel when it comes to power, as Catherine fears her father's wrath immensely (See Auchard 64-65).

"[...] going home with her father and feeling him near, the poor girl, [...]" began to tremble again. Her father said nothing; but she had an idea his eyes were fixed on her in the darkness." (*Washington Square* 54)

The father never explicitly tells the daughter what his punishment would be, he just implies it:

‘Is it to give him up?’ said Catherine. ‘Yes, it is to give him up.’ And he held her still, with the same tenderness, looking into her face and resting his eyes on her averted eyes. There was a long silence; [...] Her father kept looking at her with his sharp, pure eyes. ‘You make nothing of my judgement then?’ ‘I can’t believe that!’ [...] ‘You may do as you choose,’ he added, turning away. ‘I may see him again?’ ‘Just as you choose.’ ‘Will you forgive me?’ ‘By no means.’ (*Washington Square* 101)

Catherine matches her father’s silence, as she does not discuss Morris’s visits to her home with her father during the time of his courtship. Certainly she would like to win her father over through silent docility:

Her father suspected Morris Townsend’s visits; and noted her reserve. She seemed to beg pardon for it; she looked at him constantly in silence, as if she meant to say that she said nothing because she was afraid of irritating him. But the poor girl’s dumb eloquence irritated him more than anything else could have done. (*Washington Square* 44)

When the daughter finally tells her father about her engagement, Austin’s silence towards her has great influence on her.”“I have something to tell you,’ she began very mildly; [...] He waited – waited, looking at her, while she stared in a long silence, at the fire.” (*Washington Square* 60)

The paternal silence is so imposing she does not dare to break it. “There was something hopeless and oppressive in having to argue with her father; [...] He was so quiet; he was not at all angry, so she, too, must be quiet. But the effort to be quiet made her tremble.” (*Washington Square* 63-64)

The daughter simply has no words, no actual words to persuade her father. Her stillness hurts her but she has nothing else to offer.

Catherine accepts her father’s disapproval of her engagement still thinking she can win him over through silent patience.

She had not spoken to him again after that scene in the library, [...] and a week had elapsed without making any changes in her manner. [...] She said nothing, either tacitly, or explicitly, and as she was never very talkative, there was now no especial eloquence in her reserve. [...] She was simply very patient. (*Washington Square* 82-83)

Austin, stirred up by her silence, contemplates taking her to Europe, mainly to provide for his own entertainment.

He thought a little of offering to take her to Europe; but he was determined to do this only in case she should seem mutely to reproach him. He had an idea that she would display a talent for mute reproaches [...] I know not whether he had hoped for a little more resistance for the sake of a little more entertainment; (*Washington Square* 82)

When he does take her travelling, the polite silences between them start to irritate him further. "Her father never looked at her, never spoke to her. [...] She looked at him as much as she dared (for she was afraid of seeming to offer herself to his observation), and she pitied him [...]." (*Washington Square* 121). Catherine is aware of his scrutiny, of being in his eye. She becomes, as Coulson remarked, a portrait heroine aware of her boundaries (See Coulson 53).

While wandering through Venice, Rome or Zurich both exhibit a great capacity for silence, "The Doctor [...] never spoke to his daughter of their little difference; partly on system, and partly because he had a great many other things to think about." (*Washington Square* 131)

It almost seems that an open argument is not possible between father and daughter, instead it is simply silent scolding to wear the other down.

"Catherine was always at her post, and had a firm and ample seat. [...] she had completely divested herself of the characteristics of a victim, and during the whole time that they were abroad she never uttered an audible sigh." (*Washington Square* 131)

Silence lends power to Catherine and Austin alike. After his explicit threats in Europe, the daughter is able to separate herself from her father, and even before that she is able to find power through silence.

His silences used to make her tremble but as his threats turn into actual words, Catherine gains the upper hand. Once the doctor's cruel and offending statements have become explicit insults, the balance of power shifts between them, as Auchard has remarked. Although Catherine never discovers it, her

silence is the most adequate punishment she could provide for her father (See Auchard 66-67).

Feeling separated from her father coincides with Catherine's decision to keep her broken engagement from him as long as possible. It hurts Austin immensely as the narrator ascertains, "[...] it was his punishment that he never knew – his punishment, I mean, for the abuse of sarcasm in the relations with his daughter." (*Washington Square* 178)

Catherine keeps her ability for silence and silent observations until the very end. She decides to retreat from leading an active social life into silence, a very cruel "life in death" (*Silence in Henry James* 113). She turns her face to the wall like Milly Theale in *The Wings of the Dove* will. She is the first Jamesian heroine to discover that the seeming vacuities in life can inform human experience (See Auchard 113-114).

When she meets a matured and slightly less attractive Morris Townsend, her assessment of him takes place in her mind only:

Catherine still said nothing, and he may well have recalled with apprehension her ancient faculty of silence. She continued to look at him, however, and as she did so she made the strangest observation. It seemed to be he, and yet not he; it was the man who had been everything, and yet this person was nothing. (*Washington Square* 195)

Her father and her former fiancé both have pushed Catherine Sloper very far. The daughter has retreated into silence as a form of self-protection (See Auchard 114).

The silences in *Washington Square* illuminate how there are no words to express the conflict between a father and a daughter when the relationship is rooted in control and obedience only.

13.2 The Child as the Bone of Contention: Maisie, her many Parents and her Process of Decision Making

It is the tragedy of Maisie's situation that she is used as the means to an end. All the adult relations surrounding her, with the exception of Mrs. Wix, sooner

or later come to see her as nothing but a little agent they can use to reach their own goals. The novel surely is an outcry against the inhumanity of the egoistical adult world delivered through the eyes of a child (See Shine 112).

Maisie's living conditions offer no form of stability at all. She is shoved back and forth between her father and her mother. She encounters governesses who become new spouses and step parents who become lovers. These rather obscure and highly irresponsible parental figures drag her from London to Brighton, to France and back again.

Because of her age, legal status and the court's decision, she is at the complete mercy of the adults that surround her.

The novel roughly depicts three to four years of her life. The girl is "[...] at the age for which all stories are true and all concepts are stories. The actual was the absolute, the present alone was vivid." (*Maisie* 24)

In small steps Maisie finds a means to negotiate her way through the adult world she never truly understands. At times however she is able to scratch its surface. Maisie, as one of James's most perfect vessels of consciousness, develops an awareness for the things revolving around her, for the duplicity of the adults that shape her world. Like Morgan in *The Pupil*, she becomes a little conscience set against parental dereliction (See Shine 89-91).

Jones, in his analysis of *What Maisie Knew*, dismisses all the adults as questionable individuals; her real parents, her step parents and her governess Mrs. Wix. None of them take care of her because they like the girl but because she can be of use to them. In his view, Maisie chooses to be with Mrs. Wix as a way of instinctively choosing the moral act. The older woman has given up everything to be with her and Maisie complies out of her wish to be helpful to somebody. Yet Jones implies that to the older woman Maisie is nothing but a surrogate for her own dead daughter. But he calls the novel and the little girl's decision an example of growth through perception (See Jones 10-11).

I agree that Maisie's faculty for perception is a thing that grows as the novel progresses, but I disagree with Jones when he calls all the adults around her unfit and morally questionable. I do think that Mrs. Wix is honourable in her love for Maisie whether or not she carries the memory of a buried daughter with her or an infatuation for Sir Claude.

It is not that I think Maisie incapable of understanding moral acts or decisions, but I would rather like to suggest that the girl chooses her old governess because she wants to be with someone whose prime interest is to take care of her and nothing else. The child's needs are of absolutely no consequence to any of the other grown-ups, as my selected passages will illustrate. More than an act of pity or morality, choosing Mrs. Wix exemplifies Maisie's astute intelligence.

Differentiating fact from fiction, the truth as it is, instead of the stories the adults around her tell her, is perhaps Maisie's greatest task to accomplish in the novel. The little girl has vague ideas about what it is that the grown-ups around her are doing, "Everything had something behind it: life was like a long, long corridor with rows of closed doors. She had learned that at these doors it was wise not to knock – this seemed to produce from within such sounds of derision." (*Maisie* 36-37)

At first the little girl who is "practically disowned" is but a tool used by her parents.

In the case of Ida and Beale it is clear what purpose Maisie will have for them after their divorce. "She [Maisie] would serve their anger and seal their revenge [...] these were the [...] the principles in which Maisie was to be educated – she was to fit them together as she might." (*Maisie* 18-19)

Ida and Beale begin to see Maisie as a tool for revenge. They use her to hurt the ex-partner:

The evil they had the gift of thinking or pretending to think of each other they poured into her little gravely-gazing soul as into a boundless receptacle, and each of them had doubtless the best conscience in the world as to the duty of teaching her the stern truth that should be her safeguard against the other. (*Maisie* 24)

Maisie does not know how to react when the parents start to abuse one another in front of her, she does not know what she should feel obliged to show: understanding, gratitude or anger:

Her [...] term with her father, who spared her only in not letting her have the wild letters addressed to her by her mother: he confined himself to holding them up at her and shaking them, while he

showed his teeth, and then amusing her by the way he chuckled them, across the room, bang into the fire. [...] The greatest effect of the great cause was her own greater importance, chiefly revealed to her in the larger freedom with which she was handled, pulled hither and kissed, and the proportionately greater niceness she was obliged to show. (*Maisie* 21)

Her caretakers are also quick to remind her what a burden she is to them as the maid Mrs. Moddle tells her once:

She was familiar, at the age of six, with the fact that everything had been changed on her account, everything ordered to enable him [Beale] to give herself up to her. She was to remember always the words in which Moddle impressed upon her that he did so give himself: 'Your Papa wishes never to forget, you know, that he has been dreadfully put about.' (*Maisie* 22)

Too young to understand the sarcastic and biting remarks her parents use in front of her, the child simply relays the messages as they are given to her:

[...] when, in the carriage, her mother, all kisses, ribbons, eyes, arms strange sounds and sweet smells, said to her: 'And did your beastly papa, my precious angel, send any message to your own loving mamma?'

Then it was that she found the words spoken by her beastly papa to be, after all, in her little bewildered ears, from which, at her mother's appeal, they passed, in her clear shrill voice, straight to her little innocent lips. 'He said I was to tell you, from him, 'she faithfully reported, 'that you're a nasty horrid pig!' (*Maisie* 24)

Maisie is a victim, not just a product of her environment, as James liked to point out in his child-characters. She acts on impulse, not knowing or understanding when she trespasses or when she adheres to the law of the adult world (See Shine 72-75).

The girl is at a loss which effect her messages have on her parents because she does not understand their intentions. Miss Overmore does not tell her what to do either when the little girl directly asks her:

Does he know he lies?'- that was what she had vivaciously asked Miss Overmore on the occasion [...] *Does he know-?*' Miss Overmore stared; [...] *Why papa.*'
'That he "lies"?''

‘That’s what mamma says I’m to tell him-“that he lies and he knows he lies”.’ Miss Overmore turned very red, though she laughed out till her head fell back; [...]’ *Am I to tell him?*’ the child went on. It was then that her companion addressed her in the unmistakable language of a pair of eyes of deep dark grey. ‘I can’t say No’, they replied as distinctly as possible; ‘I can’t say No, because I’m afraid of your mamma, don’t you see? Yet how can I say Yes, after your papa has been so kind to me, [...].’ (*Maisie* 26-27)

The adults in Maisie’s life do not tell her the truth, mainly because they already have their own agenda regarding the child. The child is a possibility for them to exchange insults. This starts with her parents and extends to her governesses and step parents. Miss Overmore turns from simply being her beautiful governess into the new Mrs. Beale. Sir Claude progresses from being her new stepfather into being Mrs. Beale’s lover. The daughter desperately tries to find stability and meaning within these always changing situations.

As Miss Overmore grows more and more interested in Beale, she tries to convince the little girl to favor him over her mother as this would make it easier for them to see each other. “It was Miss Overmore’s private conviction, and a part of the same communication, that if Mr. Farange’s daughter would only show a really marked preference she would be backed up by ‘public opinion’ in holding on to him.” (*Maisie* 29)

Following her governess’s wishes would not be a problem for Maisie because Ida hardly ever spends time with her as she rather puts her in the care of Mrs. Wix and Sir Claude.

Her stepfather spends a great amount of time with the little girl as Ida loses interest in both him and her daughter. “It took the form of her ladyship’s refusal for three days to see her little girl – three days during which Sir Claude made hasty merry dashes into the schoolroom to smooth down the odd situation, to say, ‘She’ll come round, you know;’” (*Maisie* 58)

Ida does not come around. “Her ladyship’s duty took at times the form of not seeing her child for days together, and Maisie led her life in great prosperity between Mrs. Wix and Sir Claude.” (*Maisie* 60)

Ida after a certain fashion turns over her child to her new husband as she has obviously ceased to be useful to her. “I’ve washed my hands of you; I’ve made you over to him, and if you’re discontented it’s on him, please, you’ll come down. So don’t haul poor *me* up – I assure you I’ve worries enough.” (*Maisie* 70-71)

When both her father and her mother truly abandon her and leave her to their new spouses, their daughter accepts her sentence with all the dignity she can muster. Until the end though she is driven by her Jamesian sense of duty, a concern for her parents’ wellbeing. Even in her last conversations with her parents, the daughter carries a genuine apprehension for Ida and Beale, no matter how vicious they are.

As she meets one of Ida’s new love interests while out for a walk in the park with Sir Claude, Maisie deeply wishes and hopes that this man, only referred to as the Captain, really does love her mother. Her conversation with him reveals her awareness of her mother’s lack of interest in her:

‘Say you love her, Mr. Captain; say it, say it!’ she implored. Mr. Captain’s blue eyes fixed themselves very hard. ‘Of course I love her, damn it, you know!’ At this she also jumped up; [...] ‘So do I then, I do, I do, I do!’ she passionately asseverated. ‘Then will you come back to her?’ [...] ‘She won’t have me.’ [...] ‘She won’t have me in any place.’ [...] ‘Will you come now? – go with us for an hour?’ Maisie considered. ‘She won’t have me even now.’ She could see that he had his idea, but that her tone impressed him. (*Maisie* 113)

The little girl has accepted that Ida, but also her father Beale have distanced themselves from her. Still, in her last interview with her father, his parting words still come as more of a surprise to her than Ida’s subsequent goodbyes.

While Beale already thinks of ways he might get rid of her most conveniently, his daughter is touched, almost awed by seeing him again, by his proximity and softness, the absence of biting verbal missiles:

“ [...] there was an increasing sweetness for his daughter in being with him so long without his doing anything worse. The whole hour of course was to remain with her, for days and weeks, ineffaceably illuminated and confirmed; by the end of which she was able to

read into it a hundred things that had been at the moment mere miraculous pleasantness. (*Maisie* 130)

Her father, before severing his ties to his daughter irrevocably, cloaks his true intentions under his plan to invite her to accompany him and his new lover to America:

‘Do you mean to say you’d really come with me?’ She felt as if he were now looking at her very hard indeed, and also as if she had grown ever so much older. ‘I’ll do anything in the world you ask me, papa.’[...]‘That’s a way, my dear, of saying, “No thank you!” You know you don’t want to go the least little mite. You can’t humbug me [...]. Now’s your chance, you know – you will only be half-clever if you don’t[...]. And I’m obliged to you for making up such a face.’ (*Maisie* 134)

Maisie is at a loss for words. By this time she has come to think of her parents as problematic entities that she tries her best to pacify and oblige. She does not want to leave her real father behind, yet she has grown close to her other attachment figure, e.g. her step parents.

She was conscious enough that her face indeed couldn’t please him if it showed any sign – just as she hoped it didn’t – of her sharp impression of what he now really wanted to do. Wasn’t he trying to turn the tables on her, to embarrass her somehow into admitting that what would really suit her little book would be, after doing so much for good manners, to leave her wholly at liberty to arrange for herself? She began to be nervous again. (*Maisie* 134)

Maisie declines his half-hearted offer to come with him and as a result her father without further ado sends her back home to her mother’s house. Ida at this point has already left Sir Claude behind and pursues new love interests. Her last interview with her mother is as gruesome as Maisie’s last moments with Beale were. However the child’s reactions imply her growing awareness of herself and her situation.

Ida approaches her while the little girl is in Brighton with her stepfather. After mysteriously alluding that she suffers from a serious illness, her mother explains to her, “‘I’ve ceased to contend with him [Sir Claude], and with you too, who have made most of the trouble between us...if he takes you, you know, he takes you. I’ve struck my last blow for you; I can follow you no longer from pillar to post.” (*Maisie* 156)

Stoically, Maisie sits through this last interview with her mother because rejection and reproach is all she has ever received from Ida:

All her interviews, all her ordeals with her mother had, as she had grown older, seemed to have, before any other, the hard quality of duration [...] It was her anxiety [...] her fear of some hitch, some check of the current, one of her ladyship's famous quick jumps. She held her breath; she only wanted [...] to see the things through [...] there were things that Ida said that she perhaps didn't hear, and there were things she heard that Ida perhaps didn't say. (*Maisie* 156)

When her daughter expresses her hope that her mother will be happy with the Captain she met at the park, Ida calls her a “dreadful dismal deplorable little thing” (*Maisie* 160) before she leaves her alone. As a malignant parting gift, Ida lets her daughter know that her father wishes her dead. Even after her last excruciating conversation with her father, this still leaves Maisie emotionally devastated:

[...] Maisie dropped upon the bench again and for some time, in the empty garden and the deeper dusk, sat again and stared at the image of her flight had still left standing. It had ceased to be her mother only, in the strangest way, that it might become her father, the father of whose wish that she were dead the announcement still lingered in the air. (*Maisie* 160)

With such unfit parents as her only means of support it is understandable that the young girl wants to change her situation for the better. She welcomes the idea of her step parents and governesses caring about her and wanting to be a part of her life. She likes the idea that Sir Claude and Mrs. Wix get along, that they are “shoulder to shoulder”.

However Maisie's desire to hold on to her caretakers is ruptured by the ever-changing variables in her surroundings: Ida and Beale both leave their new spouses behind and take new lovers. Almost at the same time Sir Claude and the new Mrs. Beale become lovers. They start to use her as a reason to see each other.

Because she has already accepted that her parents have written her off, Maisie tries to hold on to the adults that do seem to care about her: Sir Claude, Mrs. Beale and Mrs. Wix. She does not mind the affair between Mrs. Beale and Sir Claude, because she does not know or understand its improper nature. All she sees is that they want to take care of her. Maisie likes the idea that she may help them, as her stepfather tentatively begins to make her a part of his plan:

‘Do you think she [Mrs. Beale] really cares for you?’ ‘Oh, awfully!’ Maisie had replied. ‘But I mean, does she love you for yourself, as they call it, don’t you know? Is she as fond of you, now, as Mrs. Wix?’ The child turned it over. ‘Oh I’m not every bit Mrs. Beale has!’ Sir Claude seemed much amused at that. ‘No; you’re not every bit she has!’[...] I think she’s [Mrs. Beale] charming. But we must talk very straight. If you’ll help me, you know, I’ll help you,’ he concluded in the pleasant fraternizing, equalizing, not a bit patronizing way which made the child ready to go through anything for him [...] It gave her moments of secret pleasure – moments of believing she might help him indeed. (*Maisie* 64-66)

It will only be much later that Maisie will come to recognize that Sir Claude’s agenda is not to be a good father to her but to find a way to legitimize his affair with Mrs. Beale. Maisie fancies the possibility to determine her life’s direction for herself. “It may indeed be said that these days brought on a high quickening of Maisie’s direct perceptions, of her sense of freedom to make out things for herself.” (*Maisie* 78). As Shine argues, James not just simply tells the story of a victimized child as he did in *The Turn of the Screw* or *The Pupil* but also a child that actively wishes and wants an environment that was to his liking (See Shine 84-85). Maisie certainly does.

Mrs. Wix is the only one who knows that what Mrs. Beale and Sir Claude do is not correct, at least on a moral scale. Sir Claude, however, meanwhile reassures Maisie that he is looking out for her only, not for a possibility to be with Mrs. Beale. Mrs. Wix, on the other hand, knows that he is constantly seeing Mrs. Beale. When she tells Maisie about this, the child is furious and hurt:

‘He has been seeing Mrs. Beale.’ ‘Sir Claude?’ The child remembered what he had said. ‘Oh no – not *seeing* her!’ ‘I beg your

pardon. I absolutely know it.' Mrs. Wix was as positive as she was dismal. Maisie nevertheless ventured to challenge her. 'And how, please, do you know that?' She faltered a moment. 'From herself. I've been to see her.' [...] 'There may be some mistake. He says he hasn't.' [...] 'Do you perhaps mean she [Mrs. Beale] lies? She lies whenever it suits her, I'm very sure. [...] Do you mean perhaps *he* lies?' 'Gracious goodness, no!' Maisie shouted. [...] She [Mrs. Wix] threw herself afresh upon her pupil and wept over her with the inevitable effect of causing the child's own tears to flow. But Maisie couldn't have told you if she had been crying at the image of their separation or at that of Sir Claude's untruth. (*Maisie* 89-90)

Maisie clings to the idea that her step parents are really only interested in her wellbeing, especially Sir Claude :

'If we're not good for *you*, 'he exclaimed, 'I'll be hanged if I know who we shall be good for!' Mrs. Beale showed the child an intenser light. 'I daresay you will save us – from one thing and another.' [...] 'We are doing a good deal for you, young woman.' [...] She [Maisie] coloured with a sense of obligation and eagerness of her desire it should be remarked that nothing was lost on her. 'Oh I know!' (*Maisie* 97)

Lured by her ever present feeling of gratitude and her wish to oblige Maisie believes that they only act in her best interest.

Sir Claude invites Maisie to go travelling with him. In France they are joined by Mrs. Wix and later by Mrs. Beale. It is Maisie's wish for all of them to stay together, but as it turns out, the adults will not comply with the young girl's wishes:

'[...] Why shouldn't we be four?' she finally demanded. [...] 'Four improprieties, do you mean? Because two of us are decent people! Do I gather you to wish that I should stay on with you [...] 'Stay on as *my* companion – yes. Stay on as just what you were at Mamma's. Mrs. Beale *would* let you!' the child said. (*Maisie* 188-189)

With Beale and Ida gone the child's situation becomes more and more confusing. She has to realize that even the beautiful and charming new Mrs. Beale and Sir Claude have their own agenda where she is concerned.

Mrs. Wix, this impression becomes more and more apparent to the little girl, is here because she really wants to take care of her. “[...] whatever I do, I shall never let you out of my sight!” (*Maisie* 190), the older woman insists.

It quickly becomes obvious that these Mrs. Wix, Mrs. Beale and Sir Claude will never get along with each other. Maisie, yet again trapped between opposing parties, in her most powerful attempt yet to arrange things for herself, asks the adults what they are willing to give up to be with her:

‘Would you accept her [Mrs. Beale] then? That’s what I ask,’ said Maisie. ‘As a substitute? Mrs. Wix turned it over; she met again the child’s eyes. ‘She has literally almost fawned upon me.’[...] ‘You don’t answer my question,’ Maisie persisted. ‘I want to know if you accept her.’ Mrs. Wix continued to hedge. ‘I want to know if you do!’ Everything in the child’s person, at this, announced that it was easy to know. ‘Not for a moment.’ (*Maisie* 213)

While Mrs. Wix would hardly accept Mrs. Beale’s assistance in helping her raise Maisie, Mrs. Beale does not even consider giving up Sir Claude in order to raise Maisie:

‘*Will* you give him up?’ Maisie persisted to Mrs. Beale, ‘To *you*, you abominable little horror?’ that lady indignantly inquired, ‘and to this raving old demon who has filled your dreadful little mind with her wickedness? Have you been a hideous little hypocrite all these years that I’ve slaved to make you love me and deludedly believed you did?’ (*Maisie* 246)

It is with sad understanding that the girl understands that her beautiful stepmother’s primary interest is Sir Claude, not herself. This helps her as she makes a decision rather to wait to see how the adults will decide. “[...] somehow, now that it was there, the great moment was not so bad. What helped the child was that she knew what she wanted.” (*Maisie* 242-244) In the end Maisie favours Mrs. Wix over Sir Claude and Mrs. Beale. She returns to London with the elderly governess.

What in fact it is that Maisie wants is was avidly debated among scholars. Granville Jones sees Maisie’s last decision as a conscious choice of a moral act. He argues that she chooses the old governess because she wants to feel

needed by somebody. In a similar way Muriel Shine views Maisie as wanting to give something to others, to do something for others. She argues that in order to feel complete the child has to feel to be a part of something. Joseph Ward concludes that Maisie stays on with Mrs. Wix out of her understanding that people belong in pairs, like Ida and Beale before or Sir Claude and Mrs. Beale now (See Jones 10-11, Shine 119 and Ward 163).

Shine repeatedly argues that awareness is the greatest and most important gift Henry James bestows on his child protagonist (See Shine 85). It is a gift he gives to Morgan in *The Pupil* as well as to Maisie. I think it is exactly because of this unique awareness that the girl chooses to be with Mrs. Wix. She chooses the person who can give something to her, not vice versa.

13.2.1 Survival through Silence: Maisie and her Tools for Crisis

Maisie's world is like a rollercoaster ride as she is pushed from one awkward situation into the next. She is still a child and:

Her little world was phantasmagoric – strange shadows dancing on a sheet...She was in short introduced to life with a liberality in which the selfishness of others found its account, and there was nothing to avert the sacrifice but the modesty of her youth. (*Maisie* 21)

She is sentenced to pure spectatorship. Especially the nasty little messages her parents expect her to pass on back and forth between them, puzzle Maisie. She is too young to grasp the offence behind calling someone a liar or a pig, so she simply repeats what her parents tell her when asked.

Ida and Beale, as they have nothing left but the constant bickering between them, enjoy using their daughter this way. “[...] she was the little feathered shuttlecock they could fiercely keep flying between them.” (*Maisie* 24)

The little girl, although she does not understand the bitter meaning of her words, is perceptive enough to see that her words do damage. She realizes this as danger emanating from her:

She had a new feeling, the feeling of danger; on which a new remedy rose to meet it, the idea of an inner self, in other words of concealment. She puzzled out with imperfect signs, but with a prodigious spirit, that she had been a centre of hatred and a messenger of insult, and that everything was bad because she had been employed to make it so. (*Maisie* 25)

Maisie blames herself for the reactions she witnesses. She is conscious enough to see the hurt her words produce but in her childish logic she guesses she must be at fault somehow, she must somehow be to blame since after all “everything had been changed on her account” (*Maisie* 22).

Out of her imperfect understanding Maisie decides to keep deliberate silences, to refrain from repeating things she has been told.

In a first attempt to keep the peace, to make her living situation with each of her parents more agreeable to them and to her, Maisie makes up her mind that “Her parted lips locked themselves with the determination to be employed no longer. She would forget everything, she would repeat nothing [...]” (*Maisie* 25)

However, since her parents keep asking her about the other and they observe an actual change in their daughter’s behaviour, Maisie soon suffers the consequences of her own strategy since her parents then subsequently lose every interest in her (See Jones 5-6).

However she bravely stays on her course:

[...] when, as a tribute to the successful application of her system, she began to be called a little idiot, she tasted a pleasure new and keen [...] as she grew older, her parents in turn announced before her that she had grown shockingly dull [...]. (*Maisie* 25)

For the little girl it is a victory so Maisie decides to keep her silence, to diminish, in a way, her parents’ fun by holding words back, “She spoiled their fun, but she practically added to her own. She saw more and more; she saw too much.” (*Maisie* 25)

As the daughter turns silent, her parents are quick to decide that their offspring is simply dull. The silence Maisie deliberately chooses to pursue defines her relationship to the outside world (See Auchard 8 and Stowell 31 and 33).

“The theory of her stupidity, eventually embraced by her parents, corresponded with a great date in her small life: the complete vision, private but final, of the strange office she filled.” (*Maisie* 25)

Interpreting what she is seeing the girl reads her mother’s disinterest in her and her refusal to see her as her fault, she perceives herself as the source of a struggle, “Maisie found in this exchange of asperities a fresh incitement to the unformulated fatalism in which her sense of her own career had long since taken refuge; [...] the nature of the struggle she appeared to have come in the world to create.” (*Maisie* 45)

In making silence her strategic tool Maisie develops a faculty she had first noticed in her beautiful governess Miss Overmore, “[...] Miss Overmore, her first governess, who on a momentous occasion had sown the seeds of secrecy; sown them not by saying anything, but by a mere roll of those eyes which Maisie already admired.” (*Maisie* 25)

Maisie, now that she commits herself to acts of secrecy, feels more like an adult than before. She tries to teach this new tactic to her favourite doll:

There were at any rate things she really couldn’t tell even a French doll. She could only pass on her lessons and study to produce on Lisette the impression of having mysteries in her life, wondering whether she succeeded in the air of shading off, like her mother, into the unknowable. (*Maisie* 37)

The more silent the daughter grows, the more her parents’ interest in her fades away. It is only when Maisie decides that she will no longer repeat words that her mother employs, Miss Overmore and new spouses e.g. Sir Claude, emerge on the narrative stage.

As Ida fades into the shadows, Sir Claude starts to oversee Maisie’s education and her well being. Maisie assumes from this that he is more of a gentleman than her own papa. The child takes to the idea that secrecy and appearing to be in the know of facts and things persuades the adults around her to take her

more seriously. The girl would like them all to see her as an adult as she believes that “the grown-up time was the time of real amusement and above all of real intimacy.” (*Maisie* 51)

Yet her deliberate silence further complicates her situation, especially in respect to her mother, who not only refuses to see her and sends Sir Claude to her instead, but also because once Ida recognizes how well her new spouse and her daughter get along, she gets so furious that she lashes out at her child because of her silence. “[...] You never open your mouth to me – you know you don’t; and you chatter to him like a dozen magpies. Don’t lie about it – I hear you all over the place. [...] She suddenly thrust the child away and, as a disgusted admission of failure, sent her flying across the room into the arms of Mrs. Wix [...]” (*Maisie* 72)

Mrs. Wix tries to soothe her, “ ‘Well my dear, it’s her ladyship’s game, and we must just hold on like grim death.’ ” (*Maisie* 72)

Maisie is reduced to watching, to mere spectatorship as the adults around her make decisions and alter her situation (See Ward 153). As she watches, she perceives that they conceal deeds while she only conceals her thoughts. Her step parents can act while Maisie can only think. “There had been times when she had to make the best of the impression that she was herself deceitful; yet she had never concealed anything bigger than a thought.” (*Maisie* 69)

However, the little girl clings to her own system of silence and refuses to play messenger any longer. After a rather abrupt meeting with Ida in the park while out for a walk with Sir Claude, he wants to know what his wife has told her but Maisie feigns ignorance as his demeanour – he just had a loud argument with Ida - reminds her too much of the way her parents used to fight:

She had never seen Sir Claude look as he looked just then; [...] His conversation with her mother had clearly drawn blood, and the child’s old horror came back to her, begetting the instant moral contraction of the days when her parents had looked to her to feed their love of battle. [...] ‘Well, who in the world *is* that fellow?’ She felt herself flooded with prudence. ‘ Oh *I* haven’t found out!’ [...] ‘He didn’t speak of your mother?’ ‘Oh yes, a little!’ ‘Then what I ask you, please, is *how*?’ She kept silence - so long that he presently

went on: 'I say, you know – don't you hear me?' At this she produced: 'Well, I'm afraid I didn't attend to him very much.' Sir Claude, smoking rather hard, made no immediate rejoinder; but finally exclaimed: 'Then my dear – with such a chance – you were the perfect dunce!' (*Maisie* 115-116)

It is in moments like this that it becomes clear to the reader that Sir Claude may be just as bad as Ida or Beale, but it takes his young charge much longer to see it.

Next to the deliberate silences Maisie has decided herself to keep, there are the less deliberate silences she sits through as things around her change dramatically again and again. It is in these silent moments that Maisie slowly develops her own sense of wrong and right.

As Mrs. Beale and Sir Claude spend more and more time together, the girl tacitly wonders if they are doing anything bad. The adults obviously have come to an arrangement:

[...] the arrangement in which Maisie was included only to the point of knowing it existed and wondering wistfully what it was. [...] The only shadow in such bright intervals was that, as Maisie put it to herself, she could get nothing by questions. [...] Things, then, were in Maisie's experience so true to their nature that questions were almost always improper; but she learned on the other hand soon to recognize how at last, sometimes, patient little silences and intelligent little looks could be rewarded by delightful little glimpses. (*Maisie* 118-119)

Maisie believes in their good intentions as Mrs. Beale assures her that they are not doing anyone any harm. Maisie holds on to this belief as she wants to believe in her step parents. It is in France that the girl comprehends that Mrs. Overmore and Sir Claude are much more interested in each other than they are in taking care of her. Mrs. Wix, as the young charge remembers, has also always been a little bit infatuated with her stepfather since every one was "in love with Sir Claude" (*Maisie* 62).

Sir Claude clearly charms Mrs. Wix, however I do think that she is able to judge the reality of her situation. Shortly after having met him for the first time, Maisie asks her old governess about him and the old lady replies, as Mrs. Wix is the one who always answers questions:

[...] Maisie, receptive and profound, suddenly said to her companion: 'And you, my dear, are you in love with him too?' Even her profundity had left margin for a laugh; so she was a trifle startled by the solemn promptitude with which Mrs. Wix plumped out: 'Over head and ears. I've *never*, since you ask me, been so far gone.' (*Maisie* 62-63)

As free as the older woman is in admitting her infatuation, so free is she in accepting the fact that the feeling is not mutual. She did offer herself to Sir Claude as a companion and surrogate mother for Maisie but he declined the offer. Mrs. Wix has come to accept this.

Once Mrs. Wix arrives in France she reveals that Ida wants her to take care of Maisie. "She wants me to have you!" (*Maisie* 169); but she also uncovers the acts of adultery committed by her step parents to Maisie and refuses to have Maisie defend them.

The child is startled as she tells her " [...] they're false and they're wicked and I forbid you! It's to keep you decent that I'm here and that I've done everything I have done. It's to save you – I won't say from yourself, because in yourself you're beautiful and good!" (*Maisie* 174)

Maisie has never thought much about morals or a moral compass one should have as an individual. But when her governess confronts her with the facts of her step parents' affair. The girl starts to wonder, in a silence that for once she has not forced upon herself but that has forced itself upon her:

This friend had been converted in short from feebleness to force; and it was the light of her new authority that showed from how far she had come. [...] it was not less through her candour than through her playfellow's pressure that after this the idea of a moral sense mainly coloured their intercourse. She began, the poor child, with scarcely knowing what it was; (*Maisie* 193)

It is only now that Maisie finally begins to understand that she cannot pass judgment on the adult world because she does not really understand it. All she has are glimpses and pieces to look at:

She judged that if her whole history, for Mrs. Wix, had been the successive stages of her knowledge, so the very climax, of the

concatenation would, in the same view, be the stage at which the knowledge should overflow. [...] she was distinctly on the road to know Everything. She had not had governesses for nothing: what in the world had she ever done but learn and learn and learn? [...] There were broodings indeed and silences, and Maisie sank deeper into the vision that for her friend she was, at the most, superficial, and that also, positively, she was the more so the more she tried to appear complete. Was the sum of all knowledge only to know how little in his presence one would ever reach it? (*Maisie* 194-199)

Maisie slowly begins to understand the world as a sum of surfaces. She can perhaps never come to understand the world in its entirety (See Stowell 32-36). So, rather than to pretend to know it all she will judge what she really knows. For the longest time she has clung to the idea that governesses were more respectable. Now the little girl has to deal with the possibility that Mrs. Beale and Sir Claude are just like her parents.

As Mrs. Beale arrives and the adults start to decide who should keep her, the little girl starts to make calculations herself. Nothing, it seems, can be done to reconcile Mrs. Wix and Mrs. Beale. However, Maisie is interested in Sir Claude's decision and whether or not he would stay on with her and Mrs. Wix. Maisie can see his silent pondering, his stalling in making a decision as he takes her out for breakfast:

[...] she had a complication of thought that grew every minute; grew with the consciousness that she had never seen him in this particular state in which he had been given back. [...] This difference was in his face, in his voice, in every look he gave her and every movement he made. [...] she had seen him nervous, she had seen everyone she had come in contact with nervous, but she had never seen him as nervous as this....Why was such a man so often afraid? It must have begun to come to her now that there was one thing just such a man above all could be afraid of. He could be afraid of himself. (*Maisie* 223)

While he will not admit to his adultery or that he wants Maisie to decide for him and Mrs. Beale, he still tries to sound her out on what the women have told her.

Again Maisie employs her system of silence, "Maisie felt the weight of the question; it kept her silent for a space during which she looked at Sir Claude, whose eyes remained bent. 'Nothing,' she returned at last." (*Maisie* 224)

At last he asks her if she would be willing to separate from Mrs. Wix.

“ [...] he made his effort. ‘Should you see your way to let her go?’ She got bewildered. ‘To let who - ?’ Mrs. Wix simply. I put it at the worst. Should you see your way to sacrifice her? [...] ‘And stay on with you alone?’ He gave another push to his coffee-cup. ‘With me and Mrs. Beale.’” (*Maisie* 229)

Maisie would very much like to stay on with her stepfather but he won’t stay with her without Mrs. Beale. In the final argument between the four, the older woman’s willingness to be with Maisie and Maisie only is what substantiates the child’s final reasoning:

[...] ‘Have you lost it again?’ Maisie surveyed – for the idea of describable loss – the immensity of space. Then she replied lamely enough: ‘I feel as if I had lost everything.’ Mrs. Wix looked dark. ‘Do you mean to say you have lost what we found together with so much difficulty two days ago?’ [...] her arms made a short jerk. What this jerk represented was the spasm within her of something still deeper than a moral sense. (*Maisie* 242-244)

Deeper than her newly acquired moral sense, Maisie detects inside her the wish to be with someone who will give up all else but not her. Again it is a decision the child makes in silence, in the realms of her sense of self. Mrs. Beale refuses to give her stepfather up for her and Mrs. Wix, and Sir Claude is unable to give Mrs. Beale up for Maisie:

‘Yes, my dear, I haven’t given you up,’ Sir Claude said to Mrs. Beale at last, [...] I never will. There!’ he dauntlessly exclaimed. ‘He can’t!’ Mrs. Wix tragically commented. [...] Maisie addressed Mrs. Wix. ‘Shan’t we lose the boat?’ ‘Yes, we shall lose the boat,’ [...] Sir Claude had reached the other door and opened it. Mrs. Wix was already out. On the threshold she paused; she put her hand to her stepfather. He took it and held it a moment, and their eyes met as the eyes of those who have done for each other what they can. ‘Good-bye,’ he repeated. ‘Good-bye.’ And Maisie followed Mrs. Wix. (*Maisie* 248)

Maisie’s final decision and subsequent action come abruptly as the novel ends only a few lines after this last quotation. Although silence was a thing she introduced into her entire conduct with the adults, the child decides to go with the person who has been the least silent, who has made it clear, that taking care

of her is her sole interest. Maisie's deliberate silences have sieved out the adults uninterested in her well-being. Her in-deliberate silences have made her aware of the fact that she does not understand the external world in its whole complexity.

13.3 The Daughter as an Item of Utility: The Ties of Kate Croy

The family relations of the Croys are reduced to the use one can make of the other. Kate Croy finds herself in the middle, i.e. she is the one who is used by everyone. She has not yet married, she has not done anything so scandalous like her father Lionel that would force her into retreating from society. Yet this young woman is in the eyes of everyone in her family. Kate is perhaps one of the Jamesian daughters most aware of her vulnerability and the scrutiny under which she is kept (See Coulson 51-53).

Although thoroughly recognized as Milly Theale's antagonist in the novel by the readers and the scholars, Kate's other entanglements are often overlooked. Her family reduces her to the things she can do for them, but on the other hand Kate also hopes they might do something for her. A part of her hopes that Lionel will understand her love for Merton Densher. Unfortunately he does not, but nevertheless, her wishes concerning this matter shape her conversation with him. She is aware of her complicated situation, of the pressure she is subjected to. The forces at work to make her decisions for her are nobody else but her family (See King 19-21).

Kate is weary of Lionel but concerned as he summons her to him because he is ill. Kate knows, "He gave you funny feelings, he had indescribable arts, that quite turned the tables: that had been always how he came to see her mother so long as her mother would see him." (*Wings* 5).

Kate thinks her father handsome and knows that Lionel, as always, judges her looks:

He judged meanwhile her own appearance, as she knew she could trust him to do; recognizing, estimating, sometimes disapproving [...] she had often wondered what on earth, at the pass he had reached, could give him pleasure, and she had come back, on these

occasions, to that. It gave him pleasure that she was handsome, that she was in her way a sensible value. (*Wings* 5-6)

Despite knowing that her father would just use her, Kate wants to live with him instead of her aunt Maud:

[...] within a minute she had brought it out. “Yes – even now I’m willing to go with you. I don’t know what you may have wished to say to me [...] things have changed, and I’ve only waited, for seeing you, till I should be quite sure. I am quite sure. I’ll go with you.” It produced an effect. “Go with me where?” “Anywhere. I’ll stay with you. Even here.” (*Wings* 6)

Her father does not want her to stay with him since then she would not be of any use to him:

Lionel Croy hung about in his disengaged way – [...] in consequence of her words, looking for a pretext to back out easily [...] He wished her not to come to him, still less to settle with him, and had sent for her to give her up with some style and state; a part of the beauty of which, however, was to have been his sacrifice to her detachment. There was no style, no state, unless she wished to forsake him. (*Wings* 6)

Kate wants to stay with her father; not only out of filial duty, but also because she feels that with him, she might be able to use the system, which pressurizes her for her own goals. She tries what Victoria Coulson has termed not a complete separation but a form of negotiation between her own system and her family’s, i.e. Lionel’s (See Coulson 49 and 55-59).

In order to discourage her, Lionel tries to insinuate that she is not honest in her decision to stay with him, that he has seen through her scheme. A tactic often used by Jamesian parents to confuse their offspring, but Kate is more than able to confuse him as well, “Do you really ask me to believe that you’ve been making up your mind to that?” She had to consider her own line. “I don’t think I care, papa, what you believe. [...] It has seemed to me that you may be lived with, but not that you may be understood. I’ve not the least idea how you get on.” (*Wings* 8).

Kate would rather live with her father, despite her destitute financial situation after her mother's death, than with her rich aunt. She tells him this rather straightforwardly:

“[...] you strike me, you know, as – in your own way – much more firm on your feet than I am. Don't put me therefore as monstrous that the fact that we are, after all, parent and child should at present in some manner count for us. My idea has been that it should have some effect for each of us. I don't at all, as I told you just now,” she pursued, “make out your life; but whatever it is I hereby offer you to accept it. And, on my side, I'll do everything I can for you.” “I see,” said Lionel Croy. Then, with the sound of extreme relevance, “And what *can* you do?” (*Wings* 10)

Lionel, who does not really want his daughter to live with him, reduces their relation to what the one can do for the other. The little money she can bring from her maternal inheritance hardly interests him:

“I should have thought you might perhaps guess. Let me at any rate tell you. Aunt Maud has made me a proposal. But she has also made me a condition. She wants to keep me.” [...] “She means that she'll 'do' for you handsomely if you'll break off all relations with me. You speak of her condition. Her condition's of course that.” “Well then,” said Kate, “it's what has wound me up. Here I am.” [...] “Do you really suppose me in a position to justify your throwing yourself upon me?” She waited a little, but when she spoke it was clear. “Yes.” “Well then, you're a bigger fool than I should have ventured to suppose you.” (*Wings* 9)

He is not upset by Maud's condition that his daughter shall cease all relations with him. He is interested in what the aunt might do for Kate and what Kate in return could do for him, “ [...] What are her promises? Just what does she engage to do? You must work it you know.” [...] “I'm not, after all, quite the old dad not to get something *for* giving up.” (*Wings* 11).

For Lionel it is clear how he can best use his daughter even if Kate is not sure he understands the implications:

“[...] I think I should leave you in no doubt,” she pursued, “that if I were to sign my aunt's agreement I should carry it out, in honour, to the letter.” “Rather, my own love! It's just your honour that I appeal to. The only way to play the game *is* to play it. There's no limit to what your aunt can do for you.” “Do you mean in the way of

marrying me?” “What else should I mean? Marry properly----“ ”And then?” Kate asked as she hung fire. “And then – well, I *will* talk with you. I’ll resume relations.” (*Wings* 13)

Kate has yet to understand that her father has no problem in washing his hands of her temporarily, at least until aunt Maud has married her off to a rich man:

“You may not believe me,” she pursued, “ but I came here really hoping you might have found some way. I’m very sorry, at all events, to leave you unwell. [...] Let me out it – unfortunately without a witness,” she added after a moment, “that there’s only one word you really need to speak.” [...] He at last brought himself round. “Do you know, dear, you make me sick? I’ve tried to be clear, and it isn’t fair.” But she passed this over; she was too visibly sincere. “Father!” “I don’t quite see what’s the matter with you,” he said, “ and if you can’t pull yourself together I’ll – upon my honour – take you in hand. Put you into a cab and deliver you again safe at Lancaster Gate.” (*Wings* 14)

It is Lionel’s view that the only thing she can do for him is to live with her aunt Maud. “It’s my conception, in short, of your duty.” (*Wings*, 2), he tells his daughter.

Kate decides to leave her father behind for the moment after this last exchange, “Then you can do nothing at all for me?” He showed her then, this time unmistakably [...] how vain her appeal remained. “I’ve never pretended to do more than my duty; I’ve given the best and the clearest advice. [...] If it only displeases you, you can go to Marian to be consoled.” (*Wings* 16-17)

The fact that her father has denied her wish hurts Kate, however not to the point of defying him. She even defends him to Merton Densher:

“[...] He won’t help me, won’t save, won’t hold out a finger to me,” Kate went on, “he simply wriggles way, in his inimitable matter, and throws me back.” “Back then, after all, thank goodness,” Densher concurred, “on to me.” But she spoke again as with the sole vision of the whole scene she had evoked. “It’s a pity, because you’d like him. He’s wonderful, he’s charming.” (*Wings* 49)

As Kate goes from her father’s quarters in Chirk Street to her sister’s house in Chelsea, she finds no consolation, only the reassurance that Marian, like her father, wants her to do something for her. She wants Kate to stay with aunt Maud, gain financial security and not think about romantic nonsense like falling in love with Merton Densher:

Marian again met her with a readiness that was practically pert. “To *have* it, first. Not, at any rate, to go on not having it. Then we should see.” “We should indeed!” said Kate Croy. It was talk of a kind she loathed, but if Marian chose to be vulgar what was one to do? [...]“I like the way you arrange things – I like what you take for granted. If it’s so easy for us to marry men who want us to scatter gold, I wonder we any of us do anything else. [...]”. (*Wings* 28)

Like Lionel, she considers Kate’s actions as her sisterly duty towards her, “ [...] I shouldn’t insist to you once for all on the plain truth of the whole matter. The truth, my dear, of your duty. Do you ever think about that? It’s the greatest duty of all.” “There you are again,” Kate laughed, “ Papa’s also immense on my duty.” (*Wings* 29-30).

Marian’s plan for Kate, like Lionel’s, is very obvious. “ She desires her to “work” Lancaster Gate as she believed the scene of abundance could be worked. ” (*Wings* 30).

Kate, after having gained no sympathy from either father or sister, returns to Lancaster Gate, where her aunt has “decided to keep me” (*Wings* 15). The lure her aunt offers is material wealth, not care or love as Maud has made plans to marry Kate off to Lord Mark, a rich English gentleman.

Aunt Maud, coming from her mother’s side of the family, has made it clear that Kate must sever all her connections to her father and her sister in exchange for her life with her, “ “The condition Aunt Maud makes is that I shall have absolutely nothing to do with you [Lionel]; never see you, nor speak, nor hold any sort of communication with you. What she requires is that you shall simply cease to exist for me.””(*Wings* 11).

Kate is taken in by the things aunt Maud calls her own, her beautiful gowns, her elegant town house, “She saw as she had never seen before how material things spoke to her. [...] She liked the charming quarters her aunt had assigned her – liked them literally more than she had in all her other days liked anything;” (*Wings* 19).

However, Kate also clearly perceives that Maud’s gifts and assignments are nothing but shackles to bind her to her aunt’s will as she is introduced into the

“cage of the lioness” (*Wings* 21) as she perceives aunt Maud’s “looming personality” (*Wings* 20):

It was by her personality that Aunt Maud was prodigious, and the great mass of it loomed because, in the thick, the foglike air of her arranged existence, there were parts doubtless magnified and parts certainly vague. The represented at all events alike, the dim and the distinct, a strong will and a high hand. [...] The cage of the lioness was Aunt Maud’s own room, her office, her counting-house, her battlefield, her especial scene, in fine, of action, situated on the ground-floor, [...] The lioness awaited – the kid had at least that consciousness; was aware of the neighbourhood of a morsel she had reason to suppose tender. (*Wings* 20-21).

Kate cautiously and silently observes her aunt, for the time being, forsaking all her other relatives.

She also, however, starts to manipulate her aunt in her sense as she decides to secretly get engaged to Merton Densher no matter what her relatives’ wishes. Since she knows that they object to her wishes, she secretly and quietly makes her own plans regarding her future.

Kate has the awareness of her dire situation all the “portrait heroines” of James have in common. She goes further than Catherine ever did in trying to arrange a life according to her own wishes. If she were to comply to her relatives’ wishes her small portion of freedom would diminish even further (See Coulson 52-53 and King 30-35).

13.3.1 Fading into Silence: The Strategies of Kate and Lionel

Kate’s silences are a part of the decisions she makes after being turned away by her sister and her father. Her silences structure the way she handles her feelings for Merton Densher, something her father and sister are aware of although Kate tries to hide it from them (See Auchard 85).

The other silence that is constantly kept up between protagonists concerns the nature of Lionel’s crime. Although he has shamed his wife and his children,

not one of them is willing to name his crimes. Lionel demands silence and acceptance.

All the protagonists offer nothing but speculations concerning the nature of his crime, as Kate once explains to Merton:

“I don’t know and I don’t want to. [...] ‘Papa has done something wicked’ and the curious thing was that I believed it on the spot. [...] We had our sense, always, that all sorts of things had happened, were all the while happening to him; [...] We were not, however, to ask mother – which made it more natural still, and I never said a word. But mother, strangely enough, spoke of it to me, [...] He had not been with us for ever so long, but we were used to that. [...] She came out as abruptly [...] ‘If you hear anything against your father – anything I mean, except that he’s odious and vile – remember it’s perfectly false.’ That was the way I knew - it was true, though I recall that I said to her then that of course I knew it wasn’t.” (*Wings* 47)

It appears as if Lionel’s crime were to be understood only in silence. Aunt Maud, who must know about his lapses, only vaguely comments on him when Merton asks her. “ ‘He’s too bad almost to name, [...]’ ” (*Wings* 460), she tells the young man.

His daughters, however, shelter him and his crimes in the end. Many critics have argued that Lionel’s misdeeds might include homosexual relationships, a way of life that was still illegal in the early 1900’s and therefore could only take place in absolute secrecy and silence (See Pigeon 109-111).

Lionel’s crime represents something for which society apparently has no words so it requires total silence and secrecy. It is a silence that washes him out of the picture of the novel most of the time (See Auchard 64-68).

When, at the beginning of the novel, Kate talks to her father, asking him to take her in, Lionel’s refusal does not only stem from his wish not to have to care for her but also from his knowledge about her feelings for the young journalist, “ ‘The matter is that you’re in love, and that your aunt knows and – for reasons, I’m sure, perfect – hates and opposes it. Well she may! It’s a matter in which I trust her with my eyes shut. Go, please.’ ” (*Wings* 15).

It is the same case with her sister Marian, who senses her interest in Merton Densher as the reason she hesitates to live with her rich aunt:

“You don’t feel” – Marian brought it all out – “as if you would like to marry Merton Densher?” Kate took a moment to meet this inquiry. [...] “I don’t know what makes you talk of Mr. Densher.” She observed. “I talk of him because you don’t. That you never do, in spite of what I know – that’s what makes me think of him. [...]” (*Wings* 27)

While Kate apparently still talks to her sister about him, she hardly ever mentions him to her aunt. Between the young woman and her aunt silence is the rule. As she settles down in her new surroundings, Kate quietly observes Maud. “She made, at all events, discoveries every day, some of which were about herself and others about other persons.” (*Wings* 19).

Kate remaining a permanent guest in her house equals a form of quiet capitulation as Maud has made her wishes concerning her niece very clear.

“ She [Kate] held that she had a right to sadness and stillness; she nursed them for their postponing power. What they mainly postponed was the question of surrender – though she could not yet have said herself of what: a general surrender of everything – “ (*Wings* 20).

Kate keeps observing her aunt’s behavior and tries to analyze her:

These larger conditions all tasted of her [Maud], from morning till night; [...] Kate had spent [...] hours of observation that were not less pointed for being spent alone; [...] Her niece had a quiet name for her – she kept it quiet; thinking of her with a free fancy, as somehow typically insular, she talked to herself of Britannia of the Market Place – [...] she was learning, after all, each day, to know her companion, and what she had already most perceived was the mistake of trusting to easy analogies. (*Wings* 20-21).

Kate Croy keeps her observations to herself. “Kate was accordingly, to her own vision, not a hypocrite of virtue, for she gave herself up; but she was a hypocrite of stupidity, for she kept to herself everything that was not herself.” (*Wings* 24).

In the beginning Kate views her new life with her aunt as a form of self-sacrifice for her sister and her father. As the novel progresses Kate more and more uses her silent decisions to arrange the situation herself.

She secretly stays in touch with Merton Densher, concealing this effectively from her aunt and the young American heiress Milly Theale, who soon enters the scene.

She confesses to Densher, who complains about her faculty to keep silent, “You don’t, you know, really tell me anything.” (*Wings* 47), that she does not like her situation at all, “I wished to escape Aunt Maud. But he insists that it’s through her and through her only that I may help him [Lionel]; just as Marian insists that it’s through her, and through her only, that I can help *her*. That’s what I mean,” she again explained, “by their turning me back.” (*Wings* 49).

Her plan of deception, no matter how unethical and objectionable it might be, stems from her desire to have a life of her own:

Her father and sister had their answer to this – even without knowing how the question struck her, they saw the lady of Lancaster Gate as panting to make her fortune, [...] Kate knew what to think of her own power thus to carry by storm; she saw herself as handsome, no doubt, but as hard, and felt herself clever but as cold; [...] she couldn’t settle to be either finely or stupidly indifferent. Her intelligence sometimes kept her still – too still – but her want of it was restless. (*Wings* 40).

Kate’s silence is a sign of her trying to make a plan for herself, a sign of her trying to find a possibility to circumvent her father, her sister and her aunt in order to live openly with Merton, not just having a hushed up affair. Her plan involves using Milly Theale’s feelings for Merton Densher to their advantage. However when her little intrigue fails, when Merton starts to develop a genuine affection for the American heiress and their scheme is exposed, Kate retreats into silence. It was something she desired as her illicit plan began (See King 153).

In the end the once required silence is what drives Merton and Kate apart. She does not want to explain herself to Merton, she just wishes him to follow through with their plan. “I call it perfect – from my original point of view.” (*Wings* 452). Her original point of view was to use Milly’s – the dove’s – affection for Densher so that she would leave him some of her money in her will. Merton’s will is not as strong as Kate’s; he suffers from pangs of guilt.

Kate then takes refuge with her sister Marian, abandoning her rich aunt. But she is not just hiding from the young journalist, she is helping her sister attend to their father, who has shown up at Mrs. Condrip's doorstep, seeking refuge as well. He is terrified of something, which is again not explained. Merton offers Kate his help but she rejects it:

“Did I understand from Mrs. Lowder that your father's in the house?” If it never had taken her long, in such excursions, to meet him, it was not to take her so now. “In the house, yes. But we needn't fear his interruption” – she spoke as if she had thought of that. “He's in bed.” “You mean with illness?” She sadly shook her head. “Father's never ill. He's a marvel. He's only – endless.” Densher thought. “Can I, in any way, help you with him?” “Yes.” She perfectly, wearily, almost serenely, had it all. “By our making your visit as little of an affair as possible for him – and for Marian too.” “[...] When did he come?” “Three days ago – [...] But he was – well, in terror.” “In terror of what?” “I don't know. Of somebody – of something. He wants, he says, to be quiet. But his quietness is awful.” “[...] What has he done?” It made her slowly rise, and they were fully, once more, face to face. Her eyes held his own, and she was paler than she had been. “If you love me – now – don't ask me about my father.” (*Wings* 476-477)

In the end it appears that Kate will retreat from the world into silence, like so many Jamesian heroines before her. She will take refuge with her “endless” father. Lionel's silence has been impenetrable throughout the whole novel but rather than risk a financially unstable future with Merton, Kate chooses to remain with her sister and father. She surrenders into quiet “inexhaustible sisterhood” (*Wings* 22) and daughterhood.

Kate has planned, has concealed her knowledge as she approached the world around her, hoping to gain a temporary position of power but her act has not turned out as she had planned it (See Couslon 54 and 58).

14 Conclusion

From my first encounter with Jamesian themes and subjects onwards I was fascinated with the complexity he displays in his characters' relationships to

one another. Jamesian characters, especially females, are gifted with keen awareness and consciousness as they view the world around them.

James creates protagonists, villains and heroes alike, who fascinate, frighten and frustrate his readers. Especially the family relationships in his novels and tales interested me immensely, so in my readings and research I focused on this particular aspect of his works. My aim was to understand the mechanics of parent-child relationships in a Jamesian world.

What became apparent to me after a short while was that Henry James repeatedly creates families where no sentiment of love, understanding or genuine interest for the child is existent on the parents' side. The novelist creates the realm of the family as a battleground where every word uttered is menacing, where every conversation is hurtful. As John Rowe has pointed out, James displays the vileness of parents, and their total failure to care for their children, to protect them, and he often designs them to be the primary threat to the life of their offspring (See Rowe 21).

Henry James took a critical view towards his own parents and childhood. In his autobiography he commented on his early years as a boy when he traveled with his parents from the United States to Europe and back again as a time when he "breathed the air of inconsistency". He believed the external environment to be potentially detrimental to a child and an adolescent, he was certain that children required both objective goals and loving care. However, although James thought of rules as important when it came to child rearing, he was keen on the fact that love was the most important thing when it came to bringing up a child.

James lived in a time and society when Victorian ideals of men, women and the family ruled public opinion, designated the restricted place and value of women and children within this society.

I have looked at Victorian ideologies and at the legal status of women and children in order to better understand fictional Jamesian family dynamics. The corporate philosophy in the second half of the 19th century advocated and prescribed a passive, obedient and silent position for females. At first they should be obedient, docile and decorous daughters, then they should turn into

just as obedient, docile and above all silent wives and mothers. Children often had a fate similar to those of women. Legally, they were assets in their father's estate and they had to be just as obedient and silent as women had to be to prove their moral worth.

This ideology worked best for the upper middle class and upper class families where the women, because of their rather secure financial situation, did not have to find work. These mostly bourgeois families, according to the Victorian ideology, should have every possibility to provide a stable and secure home with a caring mother who would justly divide her love between her husband and her children.

I think that James because of the ideas that dominated the society around him, from the beginning perceived women and children as powerless objects of intense scrutiny within a society dominated by males. His view on females has sometimes been called paternalistic but I find that this is a misunderstanding of what the author wanted to show. Henry James at times portrayed female characters, which lacked independence and self-reliance because he came from a society that explicitly advocated these qualities in females (See Rowe 20). What his female protagonists never lack though is a supreme mind, a faculty for consciousness and the awareness to perceive the ordeals through which they are put. Next to detecting the problematic and even dreadful position of women, the novelist also reveals another lie advocated by Victorian ideology; the bourgeois family as a haven of security, love, care and protection. Within the family relationships I analyzed I found abysses of neglect, exploitation and abuse (See Shuttleworth 33).

Washington Square, *What Maisie Knew* and *The Wings of the Dove* all variegate on the cruelties that are possible within a family. The stories offer an intimate play of manipulation and exploitation of a daughter at the hands of her parent(s). In *Washington Square* and *What Maisie Knew* this play takes up the centre stage of the narrative whereas in *The Wings of the Dove* the family relations of Kate Croy do not make up the essence of the narrative but they are devastating whenever portrayed. Each family is fragmented since either the mother is long dead and buried or the two parents are alive but have been

divorced. Portraying ruptured families, especially erasing the mother from it, was often practiced by Victorian novelists most often by Charles Dickens and Henry James.

There is no limit to the wickedness these Jamesian parents are capable of when it comes to hurting their child. The daughters repeatedly find themselves at the complete mercy of their parents.

In the novels Henry James, as my close reading has shown, puts the blame unequivocally on the parents and he portrays the child as innocent whose corruption is brought about by the adults.

I have found that the relationship between parent and child in each novel can be reduced to a continued game of manipulation and exploitation.

The trenches between the daughters and their respective parents are irreconcilable. The families that should be able to provide everything are a prison and Catherine, Maisie and Kate stand in the midst of very strained, very problematic family situations.

In each novel I looked at how parents and relatives reduce the daughter in question to an object they wish to control and abuse as they see fit. The daughters are manipulated, utilized, even forged into a weapon for one parent to use against the other. The needs of these children, whether they are between the age of 6 and twelve like Maisie or whether they are in their early twenties like Kate and Catherine, are of no consequence to their immediate surroundings.

My readings have detected the family within the Jamesian canon to most often be a place of warfare, where children become “little battlegrounds of possession “ (Coulson 36). Conversations between father and daughter are not governed by a sense of normalcy or trust but a sense of danger, the feeling that to reveal too much might leave one with dire consequences. The key element between the fathers and the daughters is control. The only task on the side of the father seems to be how to best control his child, how to ensure her obedience. In *Washington Square* control and duty are the only interests Austin Sloper has in his daughter Catherine Sloper. The only comfortable quality to be

detected in Doctor Sloper is that he wants to protect his daughter even if his way of protecting her is excruciating for Catherine.

Ida and Beale Farange do not even attempt to show a genuine interest in their daughter Maisie. They want her only for the evil they can do the other one through her. The little girl is used as a messenger of verbal insults.

Lionel Croy is not interested in supporting his daughter or seeing things from her perspective. As he is himself troubled by wicked deeds he has done, he sees his daughter as his only remaining asset and finds it only natural to use her to achieve his own goals.

My analysis of each Jamesian daughter has shown that while they have undeniable parallels, each one reacts differently to the wrongs done to her. Catherine, Maisie and Kate are driven by a desire to please their parents, by an inherent wish be useful to them. They blame themselves for the rejection they experience and for the longest time they accept the strict rules and the intense scrutiny under which they are put if only their parents will show them affection in return. When it comes to understanding, to being aware of the injustice visited upon them, I have found them to be very different characters.

Catherine has almost no sense of self throughout the entire novel. She cannot conceive of her father as a person who would do wrong, so strong is her belief in his superiority. It is only when he becomes overly erratic, overly aggravated and outright threatening that she begins to realize how far her father has pushed her, how immensely he has abused her.

Maisie tries to win the approval of her parents but eventually she comes to realize that they do not care for her, that they try to exploit her. She realizes the duplicity of the adults surrounding her and finally becomes aware enough to see who is true and who is false.

From the very beginning Kate knows that the other family members see it as her duty to help them. She tries to please them but has to realize very early that they only want her for the things she can do for them, the people she can utilize for them. Kate decides to manipulate just as others manipulate her. She schemes to have her way, and fails.

What I could further derive from my analysis is that in an environment so hostile, the only way to react for these daughters is to elude, to retreat, to seclude themselves from the world around them. The daughters develop a faculty for silence. Face to face with a society that ideologically does not want them to have a voice or an opinion in general and hostile, parents in particular, Maisie, Kate and Catherine retreat into silence as they acknowledge their predicament.

Jamesian silences are always powerful. In my selected novels they lend an advantage to the oppressed, the daughters, and their oppressors, their parents, alike. For Catherine it even becomes not only her only weapon against her father but also her last refuge.

The detailed look in this thesis that I have taken at the family relationships has unmasked the duplicity James detects within the bourgeois upper-middle class family of the Victorian ideology. Henry James does not take sides, and does not advocate a compliance with these rules. Especially *Washington Square* shows how this ideological model proves crushing to everyone. He, however, recommends a certain amount of moral integrity, as in the case of Mrs. Wix in *What Maisie Knew*. Critics have called James's materials limited because he always depicted middle class and upper class societies. I strongly disagree. On the contrary, his intense concentration on these families and classes displays an even greater emotional atrocity; the complete complacency towards their children these parents show. Frightening fathers and monstrous mothers lurk in every corner of these fictional Jamesian families (See Rowe 21-23).

Through the eyes of the daughters James tells his readers about the frailty of the adult world. His daughters are, one but dimly but the two others most severely aware of the injustice their parents inflict upon them. Their growing awareness makes them react and actively ask for a different, a better situation as they refuse to be sacrificed on the altar of parental egotism (See Shine 73-75).

The more James matured as an author the more he not only explicitly stated the potential depth of parental cruelty but also his juvenile characters' awareness of the mischief in which they find themselves and their desire to alter their situation.

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German Abstract/ Deutsche Kurzfassung

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit befasst sich mit den Beziehungen der Romanfiguren im Werk von Henry James. Im Vordergrund stehen die

familiären Beziehungen in den drei Romanen *Washington Square*, *What Maisie Knew* und *The Wings of the Dove*. Die Annäherung an dieses Thema erfolgt auf einer erzähltechnischen und einer sozial-historischen Ebene.

Der einführende Teil der Arbeit wirft einen Blick auf die im 19. Jhd. vorherrschende Familienideologie und das damit verbundene Rollenbild von Mann, Frau und Kind. Es folgen ein kurzer Überblick über die gesetzlichen Veränderungen und Neuerungen für Frauen und Kinder zwischen 1830 und 1900 und ebenso ein kurzer Einblick in die verschiedenen Ideen zur Kindererziehung der damaligen Zeit.

Der nächste Abschnitt befasst sich kurz mit der eigenen Familiengeschichte von Henry James und wirft besonderes Augenmerk auf die Beziehung, die der Autor zur seiner Schwester Alice James und seiner Cousine Minny Temple pflegte.

Weiters gibt die Arbeit einen Einblick in die Erzählkunst von Henry James, seine eigenen Gedanken zum Wesen des Romans und die Einzigartigkeit seiner literarischen Schöpfungen. Neben William Dean Howells und Mark Twain gilt Henry James als einer der wichtigsten Vertreter des Psychologischen Realismus im Amerika des 19. Jahrhunderts.

Der Hauptteil der Arbeit analysiert die komplexe und oft schwierige Beziehung, in welcher Kinder und Eltern einander in der fiktionalen Welt des Henry James gegenüber stehen.

Der Fokus liegt dabei auf der Rolle und dem Los, welches den Töchtern in den ausgesuchten Romanen zuteilwird.

Der Autor Henry James, bestens bekannt für die Gegenüberstellung von amerikanischen und europäischen Charakteren und Gepflogenheiten, liefert in den ausgesuchten Romanen eine sensible Kritik an der viktorianischen Gesellschaft sowohl in Europa als auch in Amerika und der Ungerechtigkeit und Hilflosigkeit, mit der Frauen und Kinder konfrontiert waren.

Gerade die Frauenfiguren des Henry James sind sich des engen Raumes, der ihnen innerhalb der Gesellschaft zukommt, durchaus bewusst. Sie versuchen diesen zu verlassen oder zumindest zu ihren Gunsten zu verändern, scheitern aber häufig an eben diesem Wunsch. Henry James ist jedoch nicht als patriarchaler Autor zu verstehen sondern als Künstler, der mit viel Feingefühl und einer scharfen Beobachtungsgabe die Absurdität und Grausamkeit familiärer Beziehungen offengelegt hat.

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