

1997

Growing Old and Growing Wise? Parenting and Maturation in Henry James' Selected Tales and Novels

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Growing Old and Growing Wise? Parenting and
Maturation in Henry James' Selected Tales and Novels
(TITLE)

BY
Judit Magyar

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts in English

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1997

YEAR

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Thesis Abstract

My thesis examines young people portrayed in Henry James' selected novels and tales, exploring the theme of the maturing process, with special emphasis on the influence of the adult world on the psychological development of the young. To this end, I focus on the following works: Daisy Miller, The Portrait of a Lady, "A London Life," "The Pupil," What Maisie Knew, "The Turn of the Screw" and The Awkward Age. James, through the experience of his young characters, explores not only the depths of moral corruption in society, but also the necessary steps to be taken in order to promote a child's moral development. Most of the young characters I observe are surrounded by irresponsible, negligent and superficial parents or relatives. Although they are often provided with tutors or mentors, in most of the cases of failure they do not receive sufficient support from them. What is worse, the young characters are betrayed by the people whom they trust. Only children who begin with a certain psychological make-up, and also find emotional support and responsible guidance from some adult(s), are able to survive or mature successfully.

My study suggests that the key to the Jamesian concept of healthy maturation is the necessity of balance between emotional and mental growth. The young people in the selected works, who are governed by their emotions, fail to reach complete maturation. On the other hand, those who are capable of maintaining a balance between heart and mind, overcome the obstacles presented by adults.

In addition, gender plays a decisive role in the way James deals with his characters. He believes that females are endowed with superior sensibility; thus his female characters often succeed while the males fail.

James' hypotheses on child-rearing, maturation and cognitive faculty are substantially vindicated by contemporary and modern psychology. In this study I support my reading by the relevant psychological theories of Henry James' brother, William James, as well as by those of James Sully and Jean Piaget. Their pertinent concepts shed light on Henry James' own ideology.

James was preoccupied with the eternal question of the role of "nature" and "nurture" in child-rearing, which is closely connected to the exploration of the maturing process. He sought to reconcile the "natural" and "artificial" approaches to child-raising and created the synthesis of the two by calling into existence his "*jeune fille*." However, to be able to do so, James had to investigate all the consequences of the influence of a loveless, egoistical, hypocritical society. By the end of his "journey," James was no longer able to provide even his favorite characters with ideals; they must be satisfied with moral victory at the price of happiness. In my study, I try to retrace James' steps in his explorations.

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Growing Old and Growing Wise?

Parenting and Maturation in Henry James' Selected Tales and Novels

Introduction

Henry James, one of the greatest literary figures of all times, is well known not only for his literary masterpieces, theoretical and aesthetic observations and critical reviews, but also for his interest in, and understanding of, psychology. As an anonymous contemporary of James notes, he is a "psychologist who writes novels," while his brother, William James, is a "humorist who writes on Psychology" (Barzun 1).

Henry James showed an understanding of the psychology of personal growth ahead of his time, and his observations pervade his works. In his tales and novels James explored both sides of the eternal debate of "nature or nurture." Consequently, his main focus became the maturing process and the influence of the adult world on the psychological development of the young. We cannot discuss the psychological aspects of James' works without mentioning the influence of his brother, William James. They always read each other's works, and as Jacques Barzun notes "Henry evidently adored William from childhood, as his

words to the end of his life testify" (218). Barzun also states that "in moral outlook William and Henry were at one. The pragmatism that Henry avowed to William taught that ethics, honor, virtue were the matching of promises or pretensions with conformable conduct" (217).

The dilemma of morality and immorality is closely connected to the responsibilities of child-rearing. As we shall see, the immorality of parents may, and in James' fiction will, have a negative psychological impact on the mental and emotional development of children. This is best illustrated by the example of Morgan Moreen in "The Pupil," who falls victim to the irresponsibility of his parents. They do not realize how much his heart has been weakened, thus when they expose him to an emotional shock, he dies.

Henry James closely followed the maturing process of children and in his works he exemplified the obstacles that may hinder healthy maturation. Maturation, according to The International Dictionary of Psychology, is "the development of an organism into an adult, whether effected by genetic or environmental factors; the term is used of mental and emotional development as well as physical" (265).

The key to the Jamesian concept of healthy maturation is the necessity of balance between emotional and mental growth. When someone's emotional maturation catches up with his or her mental maturation, or vice versa, the final balance will promote healthy and complex personality. In his Notes and Reviews James clearly reveals his views:

We firmly believe that children in pinafores, however rich their natural promise, do not indulge in extemporaneous prayer, in the cognition of Scripture texts, and in the visitation of the poor and needy, except in very conscious imitation of their elders. The best good they accomplish is effected through a compromise with their essentially immoral love of pleasure. To be disinterested is among the very latest lessons they learn, and we should look with suspicion upon a little girl whose life was devoted to the service of an idea. In other words, children grow positively good only as they grow wise, and they grow wise only as they grow old and leave childhood behind them. To make them good before their time is to make them wise before their time, which is a very painful consummation. (149-50)

He draws attention to the danger of disturbing this delicate balance--e.g., growing up mentally but not emotionally. Adults (parents/mentors) often fail the young by imposing a split between the mind and the heart in the children. Whereas adults provide mental instruction, they are unwilling to or incapable of granting emotional guidance. The little boys, Miles and Morgan, exemplify the possible outcomes of this sort of child rearing. No matter how mature they are mentally, they do not mature emotionally, nor will they be able to cope emotionally with overwhelming situations, as seen in the rejection Morgan suffers from his parents and Pemberton.

Unlike boys, some of James' fictional girls are capable of achieving the delicate emotional and mental balance. Accordingly, gender plays a decisive role in James's world, as we learn from his preface to What Maisie Knew:

I at once recognized, that my light vessel of consciousness, swaying in such a draught, couldn't be with verisimilitude a rude little boy; since, beyond the fact that little boys are never so "present," the sensibility of the female young is indubitably, for early youth, the greater, and my plan would call, on the part of my protagonist, for "no end" of sensibility. (26)

The key word in this passage, *sensibility*--that is awareness and responsiveness-- , is closely connected to emotional maturation. Among the successful children we do not find any males; James' boys never reach an emotionally mature state during their short lives.

Even though James was mainly preoccupied with the emotional aspects of maturation, he was also intent on exploring the importance of genetic endowment as part of the nature-nurture dichotomy. Various critics argue that James granted his favorite characters superior qualities. Dorothea Krook, for instance, states that these characters are "endowed with the gifts of intelligence, imagination, sensibility and a rare delicacy of moral insight; and they are all extraordinarily articulate about all that they see and understand" (15). This statement suggests that these characters, like Maisie Farange, or Nanda Brookenham, appear preposterously super-human, but I think James' resources when creating his individuals were more realistic than Krook intimates. He made

use of the predisposition, or pre-existent psychology, of his characters. Numerous innate qualities, like one's gender, IQ, to a certain extent sensibility, or temper play definite roles in forming one's personality. James seems to ascribe great importance to the genetic determinacy of some of his characters. For instance, the self-sacrificial benevolence of Nanda Brookenham in The Awkward Age can only be explained by her predisposition and gender. Giving up the sole man she loves in order to make her mother happy indicates her innate goodness.

James took every aspect of human nature into consideration when shaping the personality of his characters, especially children. Consequently, when dealing with his young people, we must observe their gender, predisposition, and their physical, mental and emotional development. By the end of the twentieth century it has become obvious that family and society have decisive roles in stimulating the children's cognitive development. James was well aware of this fact, and thus he focused his attention on the interaction among children and adults. Whenever children appear in James' works, the behavior of adults will leave its marks on the young characters. The novel What Maisie Knew epitomizes how a child's emotional and mental growth would be affected by the deeds and words of the adults surrounding her.

James' scrutiny of parental duties leads to the forming of his own educational theory. His starting point was the comparison of the American and the European systems of child-rearing. As Leon Edel sums it up, James "protested against the permissiveness in America's upbringing of its young," but "he also

admired their spirit, their candor, their innocence" (The Treacherous Years 256). For James, innocence does not equal lack of knowledge--not even if this insight equates the knowledge of evil--but purity of heart. Innocent, good people must recognize evil and meet the challenges it presents. When confronting evil, they must consciously acknowledge its impact on the human psyche. It is through this awareness that they can overcome it.

In the French system of child-rearing James cherished the role of the mother: "To be a *mère de famille*," James wrote, "is to occupy not simply (as is mostly the case with us) a sentimental, but a really official position" (qtd. in Shine: 97). Shine explains:

The French mother controlled the destiny of her daughter and was obligated to pass the legacy of power on to her. Such responsibility requires strength and selfless dedication, qualities that, for James, were inseparable from the parental function. (97)

Thus the complexity of James' dilemma is clearly stated: how to amalgamate the positive values of the American and French systems? His educational theory will give the answer. Furthermore, for James existence was worthless, or even void, without "seeing" and "knowing," that is without awareness. Life and fiction both confirm the sad fact that awareness results in the "recognition of evil and exposure to it" (Shine: 98). However, we must distinguish between mental and emotional exposure. Miles ("The Turn of the Screw"), Morgan ("The Pupil") and Laura ("A London Life") are exposed both mentally and emotionally to evil. They

cannot bear the double burden of it; they collapse under its pressure. The boys die, and Laura becomes madly obsessed with her sister's sin.

Maisie (What Maisie Knew) and Nanda (The Awkward Age), on the other hand, do not get involved emotionally to the extent the previous characters do. Their exposure to evil is basically mental: they think and rethink events and words, as if putting together the pieces of a puzzle. Although they are affectionate girls and love is a primary necessity in their lives, they are able to transcend their emotional disappointments. In other words, whereas Miles and Morgan cannot bear the flash of insight and their overflowing emotions kill them, Maisie and Nanda learn from their experiences and do not let their sentiments vanquish them.

James attempted to reconcile moral excellence and the knowledge of evil resulting from knowledge, although he did not succeed in doing so without some sacrifice on the part of his heroes and heroines. As we shall see, innocence does not necessarily lead to moral superiority in the Jamesian world, but individual happiness is often sacrificed for the sake of moral superiority over others.

The tales and novels selected for this study--"Daisy Miller," "The Turn of the Screw," "The Pupil," "A London Life," The Portrait of a Lady, What Maisie Knew and The Awkward Age--amply illustrate James' thoughts on child-adult relationships, maturation and cognition. Without denying the artistic achievements of the author, I would like to justify his observations from a predominantly psychological viewpoint.

I. The Tales

The young people in Henry James' novels and tales share one characteristic: they are all confronted with evil. This evil finds its roots in the corruption of the adult world surrounding them. James, through the experience of his young characters, explores not only the depths of corruption in society, but also the steps necessary to promote a child's moral development. Parents and relatives in these works are usually irresponsible, egoistical and hypocritical, which type of behavior often leads to the destruction of children. Although children are often provided with tutors or mentors, in most of the cases of failure the young people do not receive sufficient support from them. What is worse, the young characters are betrayed by the people whom they trust. The contrast between the failing and succeeding characters sheds light on James' concept of the maturing process and on his educational theory. Let us first examine the cases of failure and detect the reasons for the characters' unsuccessful lives.

One of the earliest failures is embodied by the protagonist of Daisy Miller. Daisy Miller, a young American girl, travels with her mother and younger brother in Europe. In Geneva she meets Winterbourne, a young American who has been living in Europe for a while. Winterbourne is immediately attracted to the pretty girl: "He had a great relish for feminine beauty; he was addicted to observing and analysing it" (7). Daisy also amazes him by her unconventional conduct: "Poor Winterbourne was amused, perplexed, and decidedly charmed. He had never

yet heard a young girl express herself in just this fashion" (10). His first impressions reveal a great deal of both himself and Daisy. Winterbourne is very likely a person whose emotional sensibility has not kept pace with his intellectual development. On the other hand, Daisy's originality and freshness will not surrender to Winterbourne's stiff value system.

Daisy takes an interest in him, too, because she lacks company in Europe: There isn't any society; or, if there is, I don't know where it keeps itself. Do you? ... I'm very fond of society, and I have always had a great deal of it. ...

"I have always had," she said, "a great deal of gentlemen's society." (10)

As they enjoy each other's company in Geneva, they make plans to meet in Rome. By the time Winterbourne arrives there, Daisy has already found an admirer in the person of the Italian Giovanelli. The upper-class society--that is the expatriate aristocracy--rejects Daisy Miller because her behavior does not fit their rules, as the following dialogue between Winterbourne and Mrs. Walker demonstrates:

"What has she been doing?"

"Everything that is not done here. Flirting with any man she could pick up, sitting in corners with mysterious Italians; dancing all the evening with the same partners; receiving visits at eleven o'clock at night. Her mother goes away when visitors come." (36)

Consequently, Mrs. Walker cuts Daisy publicly at her party:

When Daisy came to take leave of Mrs. Walker, this lady conscientiously repaired the weakness of which she had been guilty at the moment of the young girl's arrival. She turned her back straight upon Miss Miller, and left her to depart with what grace she might. (41)

When Winterbourne detects Daisy tête-à-tête with Giovanelli at the Colosseum at midnight, he joins his social class and gives Daisy up: "She was a young lady whom a gentleman need no longer be at pains to respect" (48). Daisy realizes that she has lost Winterbourne's respect, and it is too much to bear:

"Well, what do you believe now?"

"I believe that it makes very little difference whether you are engaged or not!"

He felt the young girl's pretty eyes fixed upon him through the thick gloom of the archway; she was apparently going to answer. ...

"I don't care," said Daisy, in a little strange tone, "whether I have Roman fever or not!" (49-50)

She probably ignores Winterbourne's advice to take medicine immediately, catches malaria and--tormented by uneasy thoughts--she dies.

The cruelty of the adult world is often depicted in James' tales and novels, and in many cases the vicious adult world is represented by one's own parents. We shall see the destructive forces of parental neglect and even hatred in such tales as "A London Life" and "The Pupil." However, in the case of Daisy it is not the parent--the mother--who is at fault but the rigid expatriate society. Actually, Mrs.

Miller is as ignorant of social rules and games as Daisy herself and cannot really cope with the responsibilities of motherhood. Daisy's brother, Randolph, enjoys absolute liberty; his mother is incapable of controlling him. His teeth are falling out because of eating sugar and candy all of the time, but he keeps up his habit. Mrs. Miller cannot even persuade him to go to bed: "she wants to try to get him go to bed. He doesn't like to go to bed ... She will talk to him all she can; but he doesn't like her to talk to him" (16). She fails as a mother with her son, as well as with her daughter. These young characters lack what Sully calls "the combined personal influence and instruction of the mother, which is the essence of all moral training" (230).

However, it would be hasty to conclude that Mrs. Miller's weakness is the only reason for Daisy's tragic end. I cannot even say that being rejected by the snobbish society of the Europeanized Americans has the decisive hand in the matter. As Carol Ohmann observes, Daisy's "social awareness is so primitive as scarcely to exist," and thus she "never realizes the consternation she causes in Rome" (29). I would argue with the statement that she "never realizes" the effects of her behavior. When she was cut by Mrs. Walker, "Daisy turned very pale" and she "turned away, looking with a pale grave face at the circle near the door; Winterbourne saw that, for the first moment, she was too much shocked and puzzled even for indignation" (41). She is aware of the course of events, but it is true that her knowledge will not change her manners. Society, for the most part, does not harm her to a fatal extent.

What leads to Daisy's disillusionment is her misplaced trust in Winterbourne. He is important for Daisy throughout the story for different reasons. First of all, he often acts as an instructor, or mentor, to Daisy. For instance, when they visit Chillon he tells her about the history of the place. "Well; I hope you know enough!" she said to her companion, after he had told her the history of the unhappy Bonivard. 'I never saw a man that knew so much!' (24). Even if she does not pay very much attention to the information she receives--"The history of Bonivard had evidently, as they say, gone into one ear and out of the other" (24)--, she appreciates Winterbourne's knowledge: "Daisy went on to say that she wished Winterbourne would travel with them and 'go round' with them; they might know something in that case" (24).

At critical moments Daisy always discusses her problems with him, although she scarcely follows his advice, as it happens in the following scene:

"Does Mr. Winterbourne think," she asked slowly, smiling, throwing back her head and glancing at him from head to foot, "that--to save my reputation-- I ought to get into the carriage?" ... He looked at his exquisite prettiness; and then he said very gently, "I think you should get into the carriage."

Daisy gave a violent laugh. "I never heard anything so stiff! If this is improper, Mrs. Walker," she pursued, "then I am all improper, and you must give me up. Good-bye; I hope you'll have a lovely ride!" and, with Mr.

Giovanelli, who made a triumphantly obsequious salute, she turned away.
(35-36)

Winterbourne tries to save Daisy by attempting to guide her according to the expectations of society, but for Daisy those social values are nonexistent. She does not need false merits and affectation; what she needs is real emotions, especially love and respect. She is too American and too innocent. At the beginning, Winterbourne also sees her in this light and admits: "She is very innocent" (34) and "I suspect, Mrs. Walker, that you and I have lived too long at Geneva!" (37). Still, he endeavors to explain the rules to Daisy:

But if you won't flirt with me, do cease at least to flirt with your friend at the piano; they don't understand that sort of thing here."

"I thought they understood nothing else!" exclaimed Daisy.

"Not in young unmarried women."

"It seems to me much more proper in young unmarried women than in old married ones," Daisy declared.

"Well," said Winterbourne, "when you deal with natives you must go by the custom of the place. Flirting is a purely American custom; it doesn't exist here. (40)

Clearly, Daisy is falling in love with Winterbourne. When she guesses that he must have a relationship in Geneva, she immediately becomes jealous: "... she opened fire upon the mysterious charmer in Geneva" (24). When they meet in Rome for the first time, she has already been escorted by Giovanelli for a while.

Still, she misses Winterbourne, and she expresses it by teasing and scolding him for not going to see her earlier:

... when she heard Winterbourne's voice she quickly turned her head.

"Well, I declare!" she said.

"I told you I should come you know," Winterbourne rejoined smiling.

"Well-I didn't believe it," said Miss Daisy.

"I am much obliged to you," laughed the young man.

"You might have come to see me!" said Daisy.

"I arrived only yesterday."

"I don't believe that!" the young girl declared. (27)

What we witness here is the behavior of a young girl who feels neglected; she believes she has had to wait too long for Winterbourne. At this stage of the novella she is governed by her emotions, not realizing "the zeal of an admirer who on his way down to Rome had stopped neither at Bologna, nor at Florence, simply because of certain sentimental impatience" (29). Winterbourne is annoyed by Daisy's "want of appreciation" (29), but such emotional battles are common between young people attracted to each other.

Unfortunately, Winterbourne fails both as mentor and as potential lover. Daisy can do nothing with his "stiff" (40) pieces of advice; she would need understanding, support and respect, not constant urging to change her views and personality. Winterbourne feels he is wrong somewhere:

... he was angry at finding himself reduced to chopping logic about this young lady; he was vexed at his want of instinctive certitude as to how far her eccentricities were generic, national, and how far they were personal. From either view of them he had somehow missed her, and now it was too late. She was "carried away" by Mr. Giovanelli. (45)

Winterbourne's intellect guides him wrongly because his sensibility or heart lacks development. He "misses her" completely, and to such an extent that even his last observation proves to be false. Daisy is not "carried away" by the Italian; she simply flirts with him. Mr. Giovanelli is amusing, good company, and her flirtation is a proper means of keeping Winterbourne uneasy and interested. The person for whom she really cares is Winterbourne; that is the reason she insists on her death-bed that he be informed she was not engaged. Mrs. Miller tells him that "Half the time she doesn't know what she's saying, but that time I think she did. She gave me a message; she told me to tell you. She told me to tell you that she was never engaged to that handsome Italian" (50).

However, it is too late for the unimaginative and conventional Winterbourne to forget about Daisy's manners and believe in her innocence. Only after her death does he understand that "she would have appreciated one's esteem" (52). As Carol Ohmann confirms, "Winterbourne learns too late. He has become too rigid in his values" (29). What is worse, Ohmann continues, "his knowledge does not change him. Like so many Jamesian heroes, Winterbourne has lost the capacity for love, and he has lost the opportunity to come to life" (29).

Although Daisy is a much more valuable person, James sacrifices her--as a kind of literary foil--to magnify Winterbourne's rigidity and shortsightedness. The ending emphasizes Daisy's moral superiority over Winterbourne by proving her innocence. Giovanelli informs Winterbourne at her funeral:

"And she was the most innocent."

Winterbourne looked at him, and presently repeated his words, "And the most innocent?"

"The most innocent!"

Winterbourne felt sore and angry. Why the devil," he asked, "did you take her to that fatal place?" (51)

Winterbourne comprehends that his conceptions of Daisy were wrong: "... it was on his conscience that he had done her injustice" (51). Still, his experience does not affect him very much, as the last lines of the story demonstrate: "Nevertheless, he went back to live in Geneva, whence there continue to come the most contradictory accounts of his motives of sojourn: a report that he is 'studying' hard--an intimation that he is much interested in a clever foreign lady" (52).

Innocence does not always equal moral superiority, especially when it is a sheltered, unknowing innocence. However, Daisy preserves the purity of her heart despite her knowledge of hypocrisy, one of the evils young characters in James' fiction often face. She does so by not yielding to the false expectations of the snobbish European society and by sustaining her fresh, original personality.

Nonetheless, Daisy dies disillusioned and she is not the only deeply injured child in James' fiction.

Miles and Flora in "The Turn of the Screw" also fall victim to their honest trust in their mentor, their governess. The plot of the tale is well-known to everybody who reads James: a young governess taking care of two children, Flora and Miles, at Bly, sees the ghosts of two former servants, named Miss Jessel and Peter Quint. She is convinced she must save the children from these ghosts who want to possess them. She fails in her attempts; Flora becomes seriously ill and Miles dies.

The tale has provoked endless discussion among literary critics. It offers basically two radically different readings: in the first case the governess is fighting with evil ghosts who try to take possession of the children. In the second case she is deluded and projects her imagination and hysteria onto the innocent victims, the children. Both readings have been substantially supported by well-known critics, and it is not the task of this study to join either group. I would rather discuss the psychological aspects of the tale, with the aim of clarifying the psychological forces leading to the tragic end.

Miles and Flora, orphaned, are thrust upon their detached, bachelor uncle who lives in distant London and sends them to live on his estate at Bly. It is a well-known fact that for children love and stability are critical elements of psychological development. For Flora and Miles love is of basic importance; Miles impresses the governess with his "indescribable little air of knowing nothing

in the world but love" (21). However, they cannot expect such feelings from their closest relative. Their negligent uncle not only refuses to visit them, but he does not even want to hear of his niece and nephew. Douglas, the first narrator, explains the uncle's "main condition" (9) to his audience: "... she should never trouble him--but never, never: neither appeal nor complain nor write about anything; only meet all questions herself, receive all moneys from his solicitor, take the whole thing over and let him alone" (9). As Terry Heller points out, he commands the governess' silence, thus making her a screen between himself and the children. Consequently, all three become invisible for him, and he can continue with his usual lifestyle. We cannot truly blame this bachelor for not volunteering as a foster-father "without the right sort of experience or a grain of patience" (7). Nevertheless, the situation sets the psychological background for the oncoming events.

The children had been raised by Miss Jessel, the mistress of Peter Quint, two ambiguous figures who probably did not set the best example for them. It is implied in the text that Miss Jessel became pregnant and died, perhaps committed suicide. When the governess asks Mrs. Groose about Miss Jessel, the old woman is evasive on the subject:

"Was she careful--particular?"

Mrs. Groose tried to be conscientious. "About some things--yes."

"But not about all?"

Again she considered. "Well, Miss--she's gone. I won't tell tales." (20)

The question thus arises: to what extent have Flora and Miles been influenced by these immoral persons? Have they become corrupt, as the governess supposes later?

The governess sets herself the task of finding out. However, her means are very limited and cut short mainly by the rules and beliefs of Victorian society. James is very careful about the setting, and according to Terry Heller, "In this society the moral innocence of children is presumed and an adult's responsibility is to preserve it" (89). Therefore, she cannot and does not speak to the children about the former servants or the ghosts. Although her greatest desire is to learn how much the children know, she would not risk "destroying" their innocence until she is convinced of the opposite--i.e., of their immorality. She does it out of good will, but for James the significance of her silence is impediment. As we have seen in the introduction, he believed that with learning experience came wisdom and, ultimately, goodness. Therefore, silence deprives the children of experience.

However, the governess also provides love; there is no reason to question the honesty of her feelings. She admires Flora and Miles, and for a while they feel secure with her. The governess remembers this time as follows:

It was the first time, in a manner, that I had known space and air and freedom, all the music of summer and all the mystery of nature. ... They [Flora and Miles] gave me so little trouble--they were of a gentleness so extraordinary. ... They had the bloom of health and happiness... (23)

Nonetheless, the atmosphere of security suddenly turns into an admonition of horrible danger: "The change was actually like the spring of a beast" (23). The handling of this situation calls for a strong and mature person. Unfortunately our sensitive young girl is found lacking in those qualities. According to the first reading I have already mentioned, the ghosts have taken possession of the children, thus sending Flora away means that she remains possessed by the ghost of Miss Jessel, as suggested by Beidler (195). Miles, on the other hand, regains control over himself, but the act of "dispossessing" is too violent and his fragile little body cannot bear it (Beidler 198). In accordance with the second reading, the governess collapses under the psychological pressure of her repressed sexuality and hysterical fantasizing. In that case she causes Flora's illness and chokes or frightens Miles to death.

We might accept either of the readings; neither of them changes the fact that the governess could have saved them both if she had had more awareness (first reading) or self-knowledge (second reading). She thinks that she can save Flora and Miles by not letting them see the ghosts; but as Beidler reminds us:

She does not, in any case, recognize the real danger to the children: that the malignant spirits of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel can possess her young charges and in that manner lure them into evil, into death, and into damnation. (225)

Evidently, being possessed by bad spirits is an experience that James would like to spare any child; it would not lead to wisdom and goodness, unlike earthly,

learning experience. Such possession would not facilitate either the mental or the emotional development of children, as they would not be in control over themselves.

It is significant that Miles, the male, dies while Flora, the female, escapes. Their genders make all the difference. As James believed in the superior sensibility of girls, he made Flora quick to recognize the emotional obsession in the governess. Flora asks to be removed from the governess: "I think you're cruel. I don't like you! ... Take me away, take me away--oh, take me away from *her*!" (119). Flora is stronger than her brother physically, too. Miles, a boy who is weak in heart, both literally and in a figurative sense, sees too suddenly and too late; he must die. Finally, we must not forget that the governess fails to act on a fact she learns soon before Mile's death--that he is ill--feverish. Her negligence is unpardonable.

Morgan Moreen, the protagonist of "The Pupil," is even worse off than Daisy or Miles. His parents (and not simply an uncle) are the ones who push him off on Pemberton, his young tutor. He is hired by the Moreens, who instead of paying his salary count on his staying for the sake of Morgan. He grows very much attached to the boy and stays as long as he can afford it. Then he leaves and works elsewhere for a year. Suddenly, Mrs. Moreen informs him that Morgan is seriously ill and implores him to visit her son. Pemberton agrees and the Moreens offer the two boys the opportunity to go off and live together. In that instant Morgan's little heart stops beating.

Morgan's family lives in a mist of self-delusion, and their snobbery is satisfied at the expense of responsibility. As Pemberton sees them, "The Moreens were adventurers ... their whole view of life ... was speculative and rapacious and mean" (200). In such an atmosphere it is quite stunning that such a perceptive little boy could preserve his moral values and insight. He knows that his parents are "lying" and "cheating" (208) and rejects every excuse that Pemberton tries to find for them. Pemberton finally admits: "'You do know everything!'" (208). Morgan seems to know everything, but he does not understand his parents' motives for their immorality:

I don't know what they live on, or how they live, or *why* they live! What have they got and how did they get it? Are they rich, are they poor, or have they a *modeste aisance*? Why are they always chiveying about--living one year like ambassadors and the next like paupers? Who are they, any way, and what are they? I've thought of all that--I've thought of a lot of things. They're so beastly worldly. That's what I hate the most--oh, I've seen it! All they care about is to make an appearance and to pass for something or other. What do they want to pass for? What do they, Mr. Pemberton? (208-209)

Morgan, like any normal child, aspires to stability and honesty. He cannot make out his parents, although he is trying to. "I'm not afraid of reality" (202), he says. As a result of his constant pondering, he learns more about the cruelty of life than most children of his age would, and he becomes in a sense precocious. Pemberton observes that "he [Morgan] was perpetually making one forget that

he was after all only a child" (221). James disdains parents who make their child wise before his time; he wants parents to provide their offspring with a trouble-free childhood: "there were *happy hours* when he [Morgan] was as superficial as a child" (213, italics mine). Children are supposed to be happy, carefree beings protected by their parents, not puzzled and frightened little adults. James strongly believes that making children good and wise before their time "is a very painful consummation" (Notes and Reviews 150). Pemberton's cruel statement clearly demonstrates how painful precocious wisdom can be for Morgan: "You are too clever to live!" (210). Cleverness makes Morgan good, but his goodness is combined with overflowing emotions. Therefore, he cannot become wise: he dies before he could utterly control his emotions. Wisdom requires one to overcome one's sensations and Morgan has not reached that stage yet. His emotional maturation will never be fulfilled as Pemberton's words prove to be prophetic: Morgan will not live a long life.

The immediate cause of his death is still subject to critical debate. It could be generated by his disappointment either in Pemberton, who would not take him from his parents, or in his parents, who are ready to give him up--or both.

However, we must consider two decisive factors. First of all, Morgan's body has been physically weakened by his sick heart. Secondly, his soul has been weakened by his constant trepidation over his parents' situation and behavior. Consequently, in the final scene, it is an extremely fragile--both physically and emotionally--young boy who learns the "unexpected consecration of his hope--too

sudden and too violent" (223). James is not explicit about Morgan's disappointment in Pemberton or in his parents during this scene, as the never-ending critical debate illustrates. Thus the last words of Pemberton imply an accusation of the Moreens: "He couldn't stand it, with his infirmity," said Pemberton--"the shock, the whole scene, the violent emotion." (224). The key word here is "infirmity," which refers not only to Morgan's physical condition, but also to his long-established emotional insecurity. And we have seen that for the latter solely his parents are liable. Irresponsibility and failure to meet the basic needs (honesty, love and safety) of a supersensitive boy like Morgan Moreen may have fatal effects.

So far we have seen the tragic outcomes of parental irresponsibility, lack of love, insecurity and misused trust. Nevertheless, James' explorations display more variety in the possible consequences.

In "A London Life" we meet two completely self-absorbed parents, Selina and Lionel Berrington, who have two sons, Ferdy and Geordie. Selina, a real beauty, is involved in numerous adulterous relationships while utterly neglecting her family. Laura Wig, her sister who has been living with them on their estate for a year, is unable to cope with the situation. In Muriel Shine's view:

her hysteria over the situation in her sister's home, her inability to accept the reality of evil, and her failure to come to terms with it prefigures the young governess in "The Turn of the Screw." ... Laura's vision of reality is

warped, a condition that, for James, signified stunted intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth. (54)

Laura, unlike Maisie Farange in What Maisie Knew, is unable to maintain a balanced view of the situation, although she could turn for help to a mentor-like figure, Lady Davenant, or to Mr. Wendover, a young man who truly loves her. If she accepted their help she could gain enough support. But she rejects them, desperate and believing in her righteousness. Early in the novel she seems to realize her weakness and wants to surmount it: "... she wanted rather to be taught a certain fortitude--how to live and hold up her head even while knowing what things horribly meant" (277). She wants "Lady Davenant to show her how not to feel so much. As regards feeling enough, that was a branch in which she had no need to take lessons" (277). In other words, she wants her mind to dominate her decisions. She is mature enough mentally to realize the need for rationality, but she is not mature enough emotionally to carry her plan out.

Therefore, as her knowledge of Selina's horrible deeds accumulates, she loses her head and her previous desire to acquire a sort of "indifference that might be philosophic and noble" (277). She cannot control her emotions any more. Thus her final discussion with Mr. Wendover ensues as follows:

"What have you to say? It's my own business!" she returned under her breath. "Go out, go out, go out!"

"Do you suppose I'd speak if I didn't care--do you suppose I'd care if I didn't love you?" the young man groaned close to her face.

"What is there to care about? Because people will know it and talk? If it's bad it's the right thing for me! If I don't go to her where else shall I go?"

"Come to me, dear, dear Miss Wing!" Mr. Wendover went on. (432)

Laura is not able to see lucidly the alternatives life offers her. Her vision, like that of the governess, is clouded by overwhelming emotions. She is one of James' young characters whose emotional maturity is far behind their mental maturity, similarly to Miles, Morgan and the governess.

Her cousins, on the other hand, "adapt" to the situation, though not with the integrity of Maisie. Due to the parental neglect, they grow utterly insensitive and unresponsive. Shine is right when saying that "James knew that children absorb, as if by osmosis, the feelings, attitudes and prejudices of their elders" (55). Laura, realizing how neglected her nephews are, feels sorry for them, but at the same time she comprehends that the boys have already become little Selinas and Lionels:

It was difficult to take a sentimental view of them--they would never take such a view of themselves. ... At any rate they would never in the world make a reflexion, be capable of a reaction, on anything with which their arms and legs, and perhaps their "tummies," weren't primarily concerned (294).

As a result of the dehumanizing process taking place inside them, they are reduced to an animal-like state. They are directed by their primary drives--"tummies" (hunger), arms and legs (movement and fatigue). Even their

nicknames, Scratch and Parson, remind Laura of dogs, Muriel Shine notes (55). It is not surprising that they have no emotional life; they hardly ever see their parents: Selina "was not familiar with her children's governess; she was not even familiar with her children themselves" (288). Lionel "was fond of his children, but saw them hardly oftener than their mother, and they never knew if he was at home or away" (296). This atmosphere gradually oppresses the boys' innate emotional life; they already reject experiences that would stir feelings in people: "Oh music--we don't go for music!" said Geordie with clear superiority" (296). As Laura sadly observes, "Geordie would grow up a master-hand at polo and care more for that pastime than for anything in life, and Ferdy perhaps would develop into 'the best shot in England'" (294). They will fit the segment of British aristocracy their parents belong to, and their children will probably be raised the same way. By giving his social critique of this class, James also emphasises the social responsibilities of parents (Shine 57).

All the above-discussed children and young characters belong to the category of failure cases, the females avoiding physical destruction, the males not. Miles and Morgan die because of the contrast between their physical/mental capacities and emotional surplus. The females, Flora and Laura are spared physically, but not mentally and emotionally; they are still very much influenced by their emotions. Daisy, as we have seen, dies, but her death is not psychological: she catches malaria. The significance of her death is contrary to that of the boy's destruction: it emphasizes Winterbourne's wrongness. The family

backgrounds of these characters are very similar in that they all lack some of the basic needs for healthy maturation. The young individuals we are going to observe now are successful ones, who, although coming from equally deficient backgrounds, are strong enough physically as well as mentally and emotionally to grow up despite the negative impact of the adult world.

II. Sheltered Innocence or Freedom of Spirit? Pansy Osmond in The Portrait of a Lady

Pansy Osmond of The Portrait of a Lady can also be considered as victim of her parents, precisely of her father, Gilbert Osmond. As Mrs. Mukherji puts it, "Osmond commits the cardinal sin of appropriation of another self. He treats people like objects and Pansy is one of these" (588). Pansy, "a little convent flower," submits herself to her father's will. She is one of the gentle, sheltered European *jeune filles* who do not revolt but accept. "I must never displease papa," (471) she says, pronouncing the governing principle of her life. It may deprive her of free choice and happiness, but it does not deprive her of free spirit. She does not renounce her feelings and thoughts: "I'll not give you up--oh no!" Pansy says to Mr. Rosier (332). Even Isabel admits once that "Her transparent little companion [Pansy] was for the moment not to be seen through" (357). When Pansy chooses, nobody can enter her inner world.

She is not allowed to marry the man she loves because of the modesty of his income; Osmond aspires higher. However, she maturely resigns happiness. Toward the end of the novel she explains her feelings to Isabel:

"You're not happy, Mrs. Osmond," said Pansy.

"Not very. But it doesn't matter."

"That's what I say to myself. What does it matter?" (471)

Isabel here is already an experienced, married woman who has even lived through losing her only child. The words "it doesn't matter," reflecting resignation, originate in bitter experiences--like the ones Isabel had lived through. But the very young, inexperienced Pansy employs the same words and shares the same feelings. This short dialogue indicates her insight and maturity. She has, in many respects, surpassed Isabel. Muriel Shine is right to say that Pansy

... is able to exercise judgement where Isabel fails. Pansy and Isabel become emblematic in the novel of two kinds of innocence. Isabel's innocence cannot come to terms with the fact of evil; Pansy's is a wise self-protective innocence, coexisting with an apprehension of evil, the recognition and acceptance of it as part of life. (103)

Pansy, like Maisie Farange, was not born with such an integrity. On the contrary, James warns us that "... we should look with suspicion upon a little girl whose life was devoted to the service of an idea" (Notes and Reviews 149-150). In Pansy's case this sole idea is her unquestioned obedience to her father. However, as she grows and matures both mentally and emotionally--partly with the help of Isabel--she "grows wise" and starts to have other ideas as well. She adores her step-mother and she is in love with Edward Rosier. She manages to reconcile her ideas, not letting her emotions overcome her. She is not a child anymore who fixes all her emotions on one unique idea or person.

Like the young girls of James' later novels, Pansy emerges morally superior at the price of happiness. She does not give up either of her ideals--her devotion to her father or to her lover:

At this Pansy stopped her with the assurance that she would never disobey him [Osmond], would never marry without his consent. And she announced, in the serenest, simplest tone, that, though she might never marry Mr. Rosier, she would never cease to think of him. She appeared to have accepted the idea of eternal singleness, but Isabel of course was free to reflect that she had no conception of its meaning. She was perfectly sincere; she was prepared to give up her lover. This might seem an important step toward taking another, but for Pansy, evidently, it failed to lead in that direction. She felt no bitterness toward her father; there was no bitterness in her heart; there was only the sweetness of fidelity to Edward Rosier, and a strange, exquisite intimation that she could prove it better by remaining single than even by marrying him. (400)

Pansy does not disobey, but she is not unfaithful to her lover either. Smartly, she satisfies both her desires without breaking either of her promises. Her choice may not render any of the concerned parties completely content, but she finds a solution that ensures her inner peace and moral excellence. She is able to do so because she does not let her emotions oppress her mind. Unlike Laura, she does not pursue frantically her ideal. Instead, she calmly arranges things to her

advantage. Again, the importance of balance between mental and emotional capacities is exemplified with the contrast between these two girls.

Mrs. Mukherji does not seem to realize Pansy's maturity when she says that Pansy "cannot cope with her experience ... at the end she goes back to her sheltered existence" (587). First of all, she is *sent* back to the convent. It is true, she does not possess her body, but she does control her mind and emotions. She is able to establish balance between the two, regardless of where she is physically. For James this ability is the leading criterion for a mature person, and as such Pansy does not seek "sheltered existence" but freedom of spirit.

III. What Maisie Knew and Learned

In 1887 one of James' most remarkable characters was born: Maisie Farange, the protagonist of What Maisie Knew. We witness her maturation, a process that expands over approximately ten years. Her parents get divorced and each keeps her for six months, hardly being able to wait for the end of their terms when they can toss her back to their ex. The parents, Ida and Beale Farange, take lovers and remarry, but the step-parents, Mrs. Beale and Sir Claude, take interest in Maisie and in each other. They become lovers and the natural parents move on to new attachments. All these bewildering movements take place under the careful observation of Maisie, who sees everything and gradually comes to understand "the game."

Her parents display all the negative character traits of the Moreens or the Berringtons: they are selfish, negligent and irresponsible. They go even further in their anti-parental behavior by committing the greatest possible sin: they inject their mutual hatred into their daughter. Right from the beginning, Maisie is a "ready vessel for bitterness, a deep little porcelain cup in which biting acids could be mixed. They wanted her not for any good they could do her, but for the harm they could, with her unconscious aid, do each other" (36). Maisie, this amazingly sweet and adorable little girl, is such a burden to her parents that they give her up completely towards the end of the novel, never wanting to see her again. They turn blind eyes on Maisie's honest desire to please everybody; she only wants to

be good. She is a little philosopher who seems to convey William James' idea that "the essence of good is simply to satisfy demand" (The Writings of William James 621). She is willing to satisfy any demand she can just to please those she loves. "I'll do anything in the world you ask me, papa" (152), she says when Beale Farange asks her to go to America with him. Living with his father and the Countess is the last thing she would like to do herself, but for her papa she is willing to sacrifice her own desires. Her benevolence is not enough for her parents, though.

And still, in spite of all the hatred coming to her, the "young" Maisie would forgive them all the insult they had infused into her if she saw a slight chance of being loved:

Ida kissed her again on the brow. "Thanks, love, I had tea before coming."

She raised her eyes to Sir Claude. "She is sweet!" He made no more answer than if he didn't agree; but Maisie was at ease about that and was still taken up with the joy of this happier pitch of their talk. ... It made her so happy and so secure that she could positively patronize mamma. She did so in the Captain's very language. "She's good, she's good!" she proclaimed. (171-172)

Although Maisie does not receive real affection from Ida or Beale, her governess, Mrs. Wix grants her true, though somewhat possessive, love. She is not as beautiful as her parents, or the other governess, Miss Overmore (later Mrs. Beale)--far from it. Maisie, whose aesthetic sense is highly developed and

instantly admires anybody with physical beauty (Mrs. Overmore, Sir Claude, the Captain, her parents), immediately senses the motherly warmth under Mrs. Wix's homely appearance:

Neither this [Mrs. Wix's poverty], however, nor the old brown frock nor the diadem nor the button, made a difference for Maisie in the charm put forth through everything, the charm of Mrs. Wix's conveying that somehow, in her ugliness and poverty, she was peculiarly and soothingly safe; safer than anyone in the world, than papa, than mama ... (50)

This passage proves that what Maisie really needs is not the affectation of beautiful but superficial adults, but safety and love; she has the same needs as every normal child, like Morgan, Miles, Flora, or even Daisy. The most suitable persons for providing these needs are the parents, evidently, but if one's own parents are deficient in this role then a substitute figure is necessary. In the previously discussed tales the children did not find proper substitutes: Daisy Miller is not accepted or mentored by any woman of "society" (even Mrs. Walker's sole motive is to take care of appearances and decorum) and Winterbourne fails in this role, too; the governess in "The Turn of the Screw" is too young and immature, not having children of her own; Pemberton in "The Pupil" cannot afford financially to become Morgan's "father" or "mother," even if he were emotionally suited to the role.

In this respect Maisie has a definite advantage because Mrs. Wix embodies the real mother-figure: "What Maisie felt was that she [Mrs. Wix] had

been, with passion and anguish, a mother, and this was something Mrs. Overmore was not, something (strangely, confusingly) that mamma was even less" (48). She has Mrs. Wix instead of "mamma," but this situation is strange and confusing for even a young girl of six or seven. In the young Maisie we can detect a split between mind and heart; she knows Mrs. Wix via the heart, but the others (mother and Mrs. Overmore) via the mind. At this stage of her life her emotional maturity is still behind her emotional maturity, due to the neglect and lack of love she experiences on the part of her parents. Nonetheless, she will more or less catch up emotionally, too, towards the end of the novel, thanks to the love she receives from Mrs. Wix.

The other character who could, and to a certain degree does, provide emotional feedback is Sir Claude. His interest in Maisie is even more unselfish than that of Mrs. Wix, who, besides her motherly feelings for Maisie, is concerned with her own future: "... this lady was still more scared on her own behalf than on that of her pupil" (96). Sir Claude truly loves Maisie, but he is the victim of his passions. The "old," grown-up Maisie is ready to realize it: "Mrs. Wix was right. He was afraid of his weakness--of his weakness" (225). He is too weak to give up Mrs. Beale and he is unable to produce security. Still, he offers Maisie her freedom and free choice, although both of the choices mean emotional deprivation. Maisie can either choose Mrs. Wix and give up Sir Claude, the most important person in her life, or she can give up Mrs. Wix and accept the artificial, partly Ida-

like motherhood of Mrs. Beale as the price of keeping Sir Claude. Her ideal solution--i.e., living alone with Sir Claude--is denied her.

Still, at the end she makes her choice, and a very mature one: "What helped the child was that she knew what she wanted. All her learning and learning had made her at last learn that" (262). What she wants both emotionally and mentally is "Him [Sir Claude] or nobody" (231). As Mrs. Wix is neutral--"Oh you're nobody!" Maisie reassures her (231)--, she stays with her. Maisie does not make a compromise for anybody's sake; she has grown up, or we can say that she has lost her childhood.

As I said, both her possibilities set limitations, but she knows she does not want to find herself in a situation where Mrs. Beale would have the superior authority. What makes her mature is exactly her ability to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the choices offered to her.

We have seen that despite the moral deprivation and the consequent emotional poverty saturating her early childhood, Maisie is able or likely to reach complete maturation. It does not necessarily mean her future is in the best hands, on the contrary. Her future with Mrs. Wix raises concern--the distinct possibility of a stunted life. Nonetheless, as Maisie was able to learn and guide herself even when she was living with her monstrous parents, we have hope that she will surmount the limitations of Mrs. Wix on her own. An intriguing question thus arises: what makes her different from the young heroes and heroines of the previous tales and novellas?

First of all, she is female. We have seen in James' preface to this very novel how much importance he attributes to gender.

Secondly, Maisie learns gradually. As Geoffrey D. Smith suggests, "At an age when most children are instructed in proper behavior, Maisie must learn on her own" (225). Daisy Miller, although much older, should also be able to read certain signs and adapt accordingly, but she is too introverted, self-confident and innocent. Moreen, as we have already seen, is naïve, because he expects both from Pemberton and from his parents something that they are not willing or capable to give--love. Miles is too weak psychologically as well as physically, thus the flash of insight at the end (second reading) and/or the dispossession of his body by the ghost (first reading) are sufficient to kill him.

What is more, Maisie learns to mistrust the behavior of the adults. According to Smith, "Only when she begins to question the sincerity of her family and friends and to test their ostensible aims against their behavior does she become capable of self-defense in the adult world" (224). In other words, if a child wants to survive, he or she must acknowledge all the hypocrisy of the adult world and face it both mentally and emotionally, even if it is painful. We have seen that the children who only acknowledge and face it *mentally* can easily be destroyed by it *emotionally*.

Maisie, on the other hand, gradually learns to detect and face lies: "... he [Sir Claude] somehow got out of the room, leaving Maisie under the slight

oppression of these words as well as of the idea that he had unmistakably once more dodged" (202). Later on, Maisie catches him lying again:

"Is Mrs. Beale in there?"

Sir Claude looked blankly at the same object. "I haven't the least idea!"

"You haven't seen her?"

"Not the tip of her nose."

Maisie *thought*: there settled on her, in the light of his beautiful smiling eyes, the faintest purest coldest conviction that he wasn't telling the truth. (238, italics mine)

She realizes that Mrs. Beale is very important to Sir Claude--why else would he lie?--and this realization will lead to her later choice. James is very careful in his distinction between what is thought and what is felt. What Maisie knows, or thinks she knows, will shape and harden her feelings. She knows her partners and knows what she can expect from them.

Maisie has no illusions at the end. An excellent presentation of her clear sight is her talk about Ida with the Captain. He asks Maisie whether she would come back to her mother:

"Then you will come back to her?"

Maisie, staring, stopped the tight little plug of her handkerchief on the way to her eyes. "She won't have me."

"Yes she will. She wants you."

"Back at the house--with Sir Claude?"

Again he hung fire. "No, not with him. In another place."

They stood looking at each other with an intensity unusual as between a Captain and a little girl. "She won't have me in any place."

"Oh yes she will if *I* ask her!"

Maisie's intensity continued. "Shall you be there?"

The Captain's, on the whole, did the same. "Oh yes--some day."

"Then you don't mean now?"

He broke into a quick smile. "Will you come now?--go with us for an hour?"

Maisie considered. "She wouldn't have me even now." (131)

We must note that Maisie had been brought to tears by the Captain when he was describing her mother as "an angel," and she also admires the Captain. And still, under such an emotional pressure she is able to "consider" and preserve her objectivity. Maisie finds her balance of mind and feelings regardless of the situation. Her "stubbornness" is not a childish resistance but the result of a very intense reflection. She knows her mother and does not let anybody mislead her. Certainly, she was not born with this mistrust; experience has taught her. But experience cannot oppress her desire to be loved, thus instead of approaching any new acquaintance with mistrust (as an adult with Maisie's experience would do), she clings to the possibility of being loved. Early in the novel Sir Claude is questioning Maisie about her relationship with Mrs. Beale, trying to detect the governess' real feelings towards her. He suspects her of using Maisie as a pretext while setting him a "trap":

Then he said in abrupt reference to Mrs. Beale:

"Do you think she really cares for you?"

"Oh, awfully!" Maisie replied.

"But, I mean, does she love you for yourself, as they call it, don't you know?"

Is she as fond of you, as Mrs. Wix?"

The child turned it over. "Oh I'm not every bit Mrs. Beale has!"

Sir Claude seemed much amused at this. "No; you're not every bit she has!"

He laughed for some moments, but that was an old story to Maisie, who was not too much disconcerted to go on: "But she'll never give me up."

"Well, I won't either, old boy; so that's not so wonderful, and she's not the only one. But if she's so fond of you, why doesn't she write to you?"

"Oh on account of mamma." This was rudimentary, and she was almost surprised at the simplicity of Sir Claude's question. (82-83)

Evidently, this conversation reflects Maisie's lack of experience with Mrs. Beale and she is wrong in her appreciation. But she is so starved for love that she is able to explain and turn over everything that might prove that Mrs. Beale's love for her is not disinterested. At this stage of her life, her heart still misinforms her mind. Listening to her heart is a very human quality in Maisie, but it does not mean her emotional maturity will not develop in time. Evidently, early in the novel she is mature mentally more than emotionally, but by the end her emotional maturity catches up with her mental maturity.

She will learn how to read Mrs. Beale, too, and will not make any compromise with somebody who has once betrayed her. She immediately senses Mrs. Beale's transformed behavior towards her: "Mrs. Beale, however, made her no response, thereby adding to a surprise of which our young lady had already felt the light brush. She received neither a greeting nor a glance" (258). Consequently, Maisie does not conceal her feelings either; even Sir Claude can see her emotions: "'She hates you--she hates you,' he observed with the oddest quietness to Mrs. Beale." Therefore, we can say Maisie is mature in the sense that she learns from her experience, but she is a child in the sense that she does not generalize her bad experiences. In other words, deception by one person does not lead to her deception by adults in general. Whenever she makes new acquaintances, her approach is always optimistic. For instance, she would not suppose anything wrong about the Captain or the Countess at first sight. Her heart still holds out with hope, she would forget all the bad experiences for the sake of being loved, and thus her heart is still immature at this point.

Nevertheless, the approximately sixteen year-old Maisie at the end of the novel has already learned all her lessons, both mentally and emotionally, thus leaving her childhood behind. James masterfully builds up step by step the maturing process of his little protagonist, not trying to endow her with unrealistic or superhuman qualities. She is lucky with her pre-disposition, but still she must go through all the tribulations of growing up. Actually, the end of the novel is rather tragic if we consider Maisie's future with Mrs. Wix. What can Maisie learn

from her? Although Mrs. Wix loves her, she is very narrow minded and poorly educated. Maisie's job is not done yet; she will have to fight for everything she wants to achieve in life.

IV. The Awkward Age of Innocence and Experience

Maisie Farange observed, learned, experienced and lost a huge amount of illusion about the adult world. Her ability to see and know aroused her awareness and enabled her to become more mature than the adults surrounding her.

In The Awkward Age we meet another young girl, the nineteen year-old Nanda Brookenham. She is very similar to Maisie in her clear-sightedness and quick mind, and her fate might foreshadow what would happen to Maisie a few years after breaking up with her step-parents. Nanda is not able to marry the man she loves, Vanderbank, because she knows too much for his taste. She reads adult French novels, discusses unhappy marriages, and is aware of the dubious relationships among the members of her mother's entourage. Intelligence and perceptivity permit knowing, but knowledge is not a purely positive attribute for young girls living in such a corrupt world as they do. According to Margaret Walters,

if knowledge, or knowing is a key to The Awkward Age--as to the other novels of this period--it's an ambiguous one ... All the central passages of The Awkward Age are about what Nanda knew, and about what that knowing means. (192)

Knowledge is even more ambiguous if we consider that what these girls know mentally does not correspond to what they know they need emotionally. The gradual establishment of balance between mental and emotional needs is the focus of both novels.

James presents simultaneously a "knowing girl," Nanda, who sits in the drawing room of her mother, and a secluded one, Aggie, who knows nothing about the world or people. Aggie lives in her sheltered innocence while she is waiting to get married. As Muriel Shine states, James was preoccupied with the eternal question of the roles of "nurture" and "nature" in child-rearing. He sought to reconcile the natural and artificial approaches to child-raising and created the synthesis of the two by calling into existence his "*jeune fille*" (96-96). While Daisy Miller and Isabel Archer represent the innocent "naturally raised girl" and Aggie, like Pansy Osmond, "artificially sheltered innocence," Nanda comes closest to the ideal for Henry James. In Leon Edel's words, she is "pure in heart but her exposure to her mother's world makes her tough in mind" (258). If she did not live in Mrs. Brook's house, she would probably be more sentimental; her emotions would play a bigger role in her decisions.

Nevertheless, in her present situation she cannot afford to depend upon emotion; she must catch up mentally with the witty entourage of her mother if she does not want to become their toy, like Aggie. Secretly she longs to be as innocent and pure--not only emotionally but mentally, too--as her friend, Aggie:

"Now the beauty of Aggie is that she knows nothing--but absolutely, utterly: not the least little tittle of anything. ... it is the way we ought to be!" (259).

Still, her "toughness in mind" (Edel 258) promotes her complete maturation. She will make her decisions listening to her mind, not to her heart. This is the only way she can give up Van and accept Mr. Longdon. She is not a child whose decisions are purely emotional but a mature person who has found emotional and mental balance.

One could say then that Mrs. Brook's way of child-rearing is efficacious: her daughter becomes a mature person. Unfortunately, the society she lives in is not prepared for such maturity in a girl of marriageable age. They expect only childish emotions; the mind should be as pure as the heart. And who would know best the ways of society if not Mrs. Brook? Nanda has not become what she is due to the caring and loving concern of her parents, but because she could make the best of her situation. Mrs. Brook first was simply experimenting with her, then by compromising her she made Nanda impossible in the eyes of society. It is *in spite* of Mrs. Brook and *not because* of her that Nanda is capable of sustaining her inner balance.

Nevertheless, she also needs her predisposition and an efficient mentor for that. Lacking in these, she could have turned into a Daisy or Isabel. Daisy Miller, as we could see, also enjoyed unlimited freedom of choice and it became somehow disconcerting, as usually happens to young people. Isabel Archer falls

into the same trap. She also must find her own answers to crucial questions and she often chooses the wrong ones.

The girls raised by the French system emerge as either unworldly and even ignorant, like Aggie, who is unable to have a meaningful conversation. Although she is a pure, innocent and lovely girl, she does not mature healthily because she lacks the strong, dedicated parental figures who are the basis for the success of the artificial method. The effect of this absence will be devastating for Aggie: as soon as she is released into the world by means of marriage, she starts flirting with her mother's lover. In the person of Nanda, James tried to reconcile the two systems. She is a "modern girl": like Daisy and Isabel, she is given freedom. She may choose friends like the unhappily married Tishy Grendon who might infect Nanda's mind with her sinister thoughts about marriage. She may read French books which were designed for an adult audience. She may come and go as she pleases.

However, she is not a second Daisy or Isabel--she is not innocent. Muriel Shine justly observes:

Like Morgan Moreen, Nanda "sees" her family's moral turpitude and is ashamed; unlike the doomed boy, she is able to successfully assimilate the knowledge, repudiate the society that her parents represent, and find a better moral climate in which to make a life for herself. (150)

In essence, Daisy does the same, but she knows less of the evil than Nanda. Still, Daisy is the one who is sacrificed. James himself needed twenty years to

determine what "innocence" meant for him. Nanda represents the final version of the knowing innocent girl.

Nanda is endowed with awareness, empathy and intelligence; she is very much aware of the rules and games of society illustrated by her mother's circle. Daisy could have been saved in a superficial way by adapting to the rules of the European society, which was not necessarily corrupt but strict and snobbish. Nanda, on the other hand, would be lost by adapting. She already knows the evil; she has "become a sort of little drainpipe with everything flowing through" (260). Still, she can escape with the help of someone who trusts her. Unluckily for her, Vanderbank, the man she loves, does not realize that mental and emotional unity, that is "integrity can coexist with a knowledge of evil in one individual" (Shine 155).

Mitchy, on the other hand, would accept Nanda as she is: [Mitchy]: "'What you take, you mean, you keep?' [Nanda]: 'Well, it sticks to us. And that's what you don't mind!'" (260). Mr. Longdon is of the same opinion as Mitchy, and finally Nanda accepts Mr. Longdon's offer. However, neither he nor Mitchy can help Nanda to achieve a fulfilled life (Shine 155). Nanda, like Maisie and Pansy, pays a high price for her insight, and still we consider these three girls victorious. In the Jamesian world personal happiness is less gratifying than moral superiority.

As I said, Nanda nearly embodies the ideal *jeune fille* for James; she is intelligent, sees, knows and makes good use of her freedom. In Dorothea Krook's words, "she has precious Jamesian lucidity--insight, understanding of all that this

world stands for" (154). The only missing part of her education is the help of a responsible mother. This is one of the items in the French system with which James wanted to provide his ideal *jeune fille*.

Nevertheless, Nanda's mother is anything but a devoted mother. She is beautiful, witty, a good talker with insight, but as Leon Edel observes, she is also disillusioned, ambiguous and arbitrary (The Treacherous Years 257). She is not willing to give up either the "good talk" in her drawing room or Vanderbank whom she loves, although she knows very well that her daughter is in love with him, too:

... He's [Mr. Longdon] ready to settle if I'm [Van] ready to do the rest."

"To propose to her [Nanda] straight, you mean?" ...

"Of course you know," said Mrs. Brook, "that she'd jump at you."

He [Van] turned away from her now, but after some steps came back.

"Then you do admit it."

She hesitated. "To you." (216-217)

Perhaps we should not judge Mrs. Brook too harshly for clinging to her entourage, as giving it up would mean resigning her main interest in life. She admits that "good talk" is everything to her: "If we're not sincere, we're nothing" (223). James puts it clearly in his preface to the novel that the conversation in salons like Mrs. Brook's is worth preserving only if it gives place to real talk, that is not to a modified, proper, meaningless discussion suiting young girls. The "wide glow" of these

liberal firesides ... was bright, was favourable to 'real talk,' to play of mind, to an explicit interest in life, a due demonstration of the interest by persons qualified to feel it; all of which meant frankness and ease, the perfection, almost, as it were, of intercourse, and a tone as far as possible removed from that of the nursery and the schoolroom ... The charm was, with a hundred other things, in the freedom--the freedom menaced by the inevitable irruption of the ingenuous mind; whereby, if the freedom should be sacrificed what would truly become of the charm? (10-11)

James himself seems to sympathize with Mrs. Brook's hunger for intellectual play and shows certain understanding. However, as soon as it interferes with motherly obligations, James is no longer forgiving. His preface continues with the following: "The charm might be figured as dear to members of the circle consciously contributing to it, but it was none the less true that some sacrifice in some quarter would have to be made" (11). James is clear about his stance; the sacrifice should be made on the mother's side. He illustrates it by attributing to Mrs. Brook darker tones and by turning her into a monstrous figure. The best demonstration of it is her cruel exposure of Nanda at Tishy Grendon's party. Nanda found a French book that Van had brought for her mother and which apparently has an "awful" subject. Nanda has read the book to see if she can recommend it to Tishy. At the party someone finds the book and Mrs. Brook seizes the opportunity to prove to the whole company--and especially to Van--that Nanda has lost her innocence.

Mrs. Brook asks Nanda three times in front of all the people whether she read the book and finally

... she again challenged her child. "Have you read this work, Nanda?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Oh, I say!" cried Mr. Cashmore, hilarious and turning the leaves. (310)

Mrs. Brook, although she denies it, wants Vanderbank for herself. The undertone, the style, the unspoken implications of her discourse with Van in the chapter bearing her name clearly indicate her desire. When she learns that Mr. Longdon has set his mind on marrying Nanda to Van, she does all she can to prevent his plan. And the best way to do so is to support Van in his belief that Nanda is unmarriageable.

Jealousy of one's own daughter, the extreme manifestation of selfishness, is probably the most repulsive character trait in Mrs. Brook. Nonetheless, Nanda is not broken by her mother's cruelty. She loves her mother, and in her final discussion with Van she urges him not to abandon Mrs. Brook but to love her: "I don't want her to lose everything. Do stick to her. ... You're more to her, I verily believe, than anyone ever was" (356).

In this respect, too, Nanda is similar to Maisie. We could witness a scene in What Maisie Knew that bears much resemblance to the one between Nanda and Van. Maisie beseeches the Captain for the sake of her "mamma": "Say you love her, Mr. Captain; say it, say it!" she implored" (131). Neither of the men can resist; they both stick to the mothers. The extreme unselfishness and inner beauty

of these girls can only be explained by their genetic endowment--i.e., innate disposition.

Nanda, like Maisie, leaves her family behind, although not married but probably adopted by Mr. Longdon. His guidance and mentoring are indispensable for Nanda's "escape," but again he can only help someone who is able to recognize the opportunity and embrace it even if it is a compromise for her. Laura Wig, for instance, could have changed her course of life by accepting Mr. Wendover and it would not have meant resigning happiness. Nevertheless, she lacked Nanda's insight and courage to face reality and persisted in chasing her ideals.

Nanda "sees through the corruptions and falsities of 'the world'" (Krook 156) and chooses Mr. Longdon's unworldly world. Even James' most mature, almost ideal young character is denied happiness, which reflects James' disappointment in society. Leon Edel is right to say, "Like all of James' late heroes and heroines, Nanda has to arrive at self-awareness through a vision of the cold determining world with which she must make her peace" (The Treacherous Years 258).

V. The Maturing Process and Cognitive Faculty

Beth Sharon Ash says in her study of The Portrait of a Lady that "Successful psychological maturation has been traditionally understood as a resolute turning away from the mother toward the authority of the father" (127). She also mentions the psychologist Erik Erikson, who declared that development equals a move "from dependence to self-help [and self-esteem], from women to men, [and] from perishable to eternal substances" (127).

In the course of examining the maturing process of James' fictional children we must not pass by these principles without considering them. We might even find further explanations for the failure of some of the young characters. Miles and Flora, for instance, are surrounded exclusively by women. Miles senses the abnormality of the situation, as he asks to be sent back to school:

"You know, my dear, that for a fellow to be with a lady *always*--! ... Ah, of course, she's a jolly, 'perfect' lady; but, after all, I'm a fellow, don't you see? that's--well, getting on" (89). Then, he becomes specific and assertive: "I want my own sort!" (91). He is ready to "turn to the authority" of a male, having no father around. His demand is denied, and consequently his healthy maturation is rendered impossible. The governess sees in retrospect that she alone would not be enough for him any longer: "I now see how, with the word he spoke, the curtain rose on the last act of my dreadful drama and the catastrophe was precipitated" (89).

Morgan Moreen is in the middle of the maturing process: he did not receive sufficient love from his mother, and thus his turning away from her is delayed. He is not ready to give her up yet, and this reluctance leads to his death, according to one of the readings. "But I thought he *wanted* to go to you [Pemberton]!" wailed Mrs. Moreen. 'I *told* you he didn't, my dear,' argued Mr. Moreen" (224). Maisie Farange also lacks maternal love, but being a female and possessing stronger emotional foundations, she is able to turn away from her real mother and transfer her love to Mrs. Wix (a motherly figure) and later to Sir Claude (a fatherly figure). Maisie is not rejected emotionally by either of them; and she knows they both love and support her.

The second way of reading the end of "The Pupil" can also be explained by the same psychological drive: Morgan wants to turn to a male figure, Pemberton, but he rejects him: "When Morgan stammered 'My dear fellow, what do you say to *that*?' he felt that he should say something enthusiastic. But he was still more frightened at something else that immediately followed"(223-224). Pemberton is not enthusiastic but frightened, and Morgan perceives it. In both cases he is in a transition period that would require special care and attention from his family and friends, but they fail to realize it. Instead of gradually introducing him to the new situation in their lives, they expose him to a shock--"too sudden and too violent" (223)--he is unable to bear.

Interestingly enough, the lack of motherly love has the opposite effect on Maisie: her maturing process is not postponed but accelerated. By the end of the

novel Maisie has matured not only mentally, but emotionally too: the principal governing force in her life is not emotional any more but mental, unlike in the case of many above observed young people. Maisie would not make any compromise for the sake of Sir Claude, although he is at the center of her emotions. She loves Mrs. Wix, too, but she would easily give her up if Sir Claude did the same with Mrs. Beale: "I won't even bid her [Mrs. Wix] good-bye," she says (256).

Again, these opposing effects on the two adolescents can only be explained by Maisie's and Morgan's difference in sex and predisposition. As we see, females are more flexible emotionally and are endowed with more complex sensibility, according to James. In addition, Maisie is fortunate to find a supportive male figure, Sir Claude. Even if he does not meet her (and the reader's) expectations in every respect--he lies to Maisie and he is unable to overcome his weakness and give up Mrs. Beale--, Sir Claude at least helps Maisie to move "from dependence to self-esteem" (Ash 127). Whereas Maisie had been addressed by her parents as "precious idiot" (177), and had been thrust away "as a disgusted admission of failure" (90), Sir Claude approaches her very gently. As he is extremely important for Maisie, his every word and action boost Maisie's self-esteem. He is the first person to say she is pretty, and calls her "the gentlest spirit on earth" (106). Even if his first compliment seems superficial, coming from a male, it would please any girl or woman to hear it from such a handsome man. In addition, Sir Claude is the one who defines her choices at the end, helping her

clarify her possibilities. By that time Maisie's self-esteem has ripened and she makes the good choice. She turns "from perishable to eternal substances" (Ash 127). She is not a child any more who is entirely directed by her emotions, but a mature person, who is able to leave behind others' (Sir Claude's) emotional vortex. In this respect she is more mature than Sir Claude, who cannot overcome his passion and leave Mrs. Beale. Maisie abandons her perishable childhood mentality, based purely on emotions which are categorized along the lines of "good" or "bad." She achieves the state of maturity where she can rise above emotions when making decisions.

Maisie chooses Mrs. Wix because she, like Maisie, has less emotional problems than Sir Claude. Although Mrs. Wix is attempting to regain her dead daughter in Maisie and her moral code is incredibly narrow, the focus of her love and attention would be Maisie and nobody else. Furthermore, Maisie recognizes that she cannot join someone who is still *struggling* with his emotions and probably will never change. This whole process is beautifully transmitted by James in the scene at the railway station. For a moment Maisie and Sir Claude fancy going to Paris together. Their first reaction is joy; then it is suddenly replaced by fright: "She showed their two armfuls, smiling at him as he smiled at her, but so conscious of being more frightened than she had ever been in her life that she seemed to see her whiteness in a glass" (253-254). However, Maisie's panic, unlike that of Sir Claude, does not last long:

She had had a real fright but had fallen back to earth. The odd thing was that in her fall her fear too had been dashed down and broken. It was gone. She looked round at last, from where she had paused, at Sir Claude's, and then saw that his wasn't. (254)

As usual, Maisie thinks before speaking or acting. Here, she "pause[s]," that is lets her overwhelming emotion pass, and then, when completely in control of herself, she is able to judge the situation. She does not allow her emotions to suppress her mind.

As I mentioned in the "Introduction," Henry James associated the cognitive faculty with moral growth. In the philosophical works of William James, we can also find a few words about cognition and moral growth that influenced Henry James. The former states that "Cognition is a function of consciousness. An act of cognition ... at least implies the existence of a *feeling*" (The Writings of William James 137). In other words, the thinking process is usually accompanied or even prompted by feelings. In the case of Henry James' unsuccessful characters, and mainly the males, thinking is distorted by feelings and vice versa. Morgan Moreen, for instance, is a very perceptive, clever and intelligent boy, but still his feelings distort his mental processes. As James himself states in his preface, he let us enter "little Morgan's troubled vision" (Tales 379). He points out what we learn about the Moreens is not necessarily entirely true: "I must add indeed that, such as they were, or as they may at present incoherently appear, I don't pretend really to have 'done' them" (Tales 379). Morgan's vision is troubled because he

sees his family through his heart; he needs their nonexistent love for him. When he cannot live in self-deception any more, when he must face dark reality, his heart stops under the emotional pressure. He cannot find a balance between heart and mind.

Henry James correlates these three elements--thinking, feeling and cognition--when declaring that children are not born to be morally perfect, wise and disinterested. In order to become "good" they must grow, experience, think about their experiences and learn from them; in other words they must exercise their cognitive faculty to be able to reach maturity. Nonetheless, deprived of parental care and love, children may mature mentally but not emotionally. Morgan, Miles, Flora and Laura all have good educations, but their minds remain under the control of their hearts.

Evidently, an ideal family life promotes relatively facile maturation, especially if the child's innate dispositions are positive and strong. In James' fiction ideal families barely exist. Children are usually released into the world without sufficient emotional support; they usually must learn by themselves at an age when they would need not only mental but emotional guidance, too. By describing such lives, James implies what parents can or should do to help their children in their struggle to grow up.

By presenting the positive values directly, or more often by exemplifying the destructive forces, James makes his standpoint clear. If we observe James' fictitious parents and make an inventory of their positive and negative character

traits, we obtain a long list that constitutes the essential elements of parenting, as seen by the writer.

The tales and novels discussed in this essay suggest that James wants parents to be loving and caring above all. We have seen what can happen if parents promote mental guidance and development but neglect the emotional side of parenting. When the two are unbalanced, children will not be prepared for enduring unexpected emotional outbreaks. This is exactly what happens to the above-mentioned four young characters.

Furthermore, James believed parents also should possess moral strength, integrity and loyalty, which means they are responsible, present, sensitive, intelligent and respectable. My research also discloses that they are supposed to set up a coherent value system in which the order of continuity plays an important role. They should also display unquestioning affection. These qualities, or the lack of them, are all present in the observed tales and novels, but only when put together do they constitute a complex value system so dear to James.

On the other hand, he also explores the absurdity of the idea that children are born with a moral sense and that knowing about evil leads to moral deprivation. Mrs. Wix, for instance, insists on preaching about moral sense when Maisie evidently has not the faintest idea what it means. James implies this with irony when he makes Maisie say and think the following words: "I'd *kill* her [Mrs. Beale]!" That at least, she hoped as she looked away, would guarantee her moral

sense" (217). Mrs. Wix does not realize that she is trying to make Maisie wise before her time.

Vanderbank fails to acknowledge that Nanda's "knowing" about the realities of life does not lessen her values. The governess and Laura Wig fall into the same trap. These two girls are unable to exercise their cognitive faculty, which, for James, "is equated with moral insufficiency" (Shine 135). They suffer from a mental-emotional split; their minds are still commanded by their emotions.

But was James, the writer, right in his psychological observations? The records of cognitive psychology seem to vindicate his concepts.

In the 1960's Jean Piaget introduced his theories on cognitive development, and since then his works have maintained their influence on psychological research. His basic observations support the cognitive pattern of James' literary characters. One of Piaget's fundamental concepts states that "Cognitive acts are seen as acts of *organization* of and *adaptation* to the perceived environment" (Wadsworth 9). In other words, what one perceives intellectually may not be what one is ready to perceive emotionally. The boys we have mentioned are unable to adapt emotionally to their mental perceptions. Maisie, on the other hand, will learn in time how to do it.

As we have seen, Maisie Farange masterfully organizes and categorizes the actions of adults that are at first mysterious. We should recall how she put her mother and Mrs. Beale in their right places and how she reacted to Sir Claude's lies. Her ability to adapt in order to please has also been discussed in detail. She

also adapts mentally in pursuit of what she needs emotionally. Still, it does not mean that emotions overwhelm her. She needs balance, but she can only establish it by exercising her mental capacities. Although her goals are emotional, the means of fulfilling them are mental.

Daisy Miller, on the other hand, is incapable of adapting to or understanding unusual behavioral patterns. She does not adapt mentally for the sake of her emotional needs. It is not surprising that Maisie is among James' successful characters, while Daisy is partly responsible for her rejection by the Europeanized Americans.

The dual importance of experience and pre-existent psychology that James stressed so much in his works is clearly present in Piaget's theory, too: "neither experience alone nor endowment alone can determine cognitive development" (Wadsworth 21), and "the experience alone does not ensure development, but development cannot take place without it" (Wadsworth 23).

Laura Wig and the governess would have overcome the unexpected situations they found themselves in had they been endowed with lucidity, insight and integrity. Lacking these qualities they must fall. Maisie and Nanda, on the other hand, possess some inexplicable character traits that are, according to Piaget's concept, genetically inherited and aid their survival. However, without having experiences and learning from them, their pre-existent psychology would not be sufficient for endurance.

We have seen that the psyche of James' young characters is as elaborate as their literary personas. The title of a "psychologist writing novels" (Barzun 1), given to James by his anonymous contemporary, is well-deserved. The goal of this study was certainly not to deprive James' works of their artistic, aesthetic and literary values. Instead, through an examination of the psychological aspects of his young characters, I simply attempt to provide further proof of James' thoroughness and genius.

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