The Development of Consciousness of An Unfledged Maisie in A Wildly Dysfunctional Family.

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Abstract
After her parent's bitter divorce, Young Maisie Farange finds herself shuttled between her selfish mother and vain father, who value her only as for provoking each other. And when both take lovers and remarry, Maisie solitary, observant and wise beyond her years is drawn into an increasingly entangled adult world of intrigue and sexual betrayal, until she is finally compelled to choose her own future.

This paper follows the child's capacity for intelligent "wonder" and the development of her Consciousness until she get confidence to make a decision with whom she is going to live. Maisie is neglected and exploited by everyone around her. She dwells with extraordinary acuteness on the things that may pass between adult and child. She passes from wonder to knowledge in very short time. Finally, she triumphs in the midst of overwhelming circumstances.
Chapter 1: The Development of Consciousness

Henry James' *What Maisie knew* follows the development of consciousness of the title character (Maisie) from the earliest childhood to precocious maturity. Maisie is the sensitive daughter of divorced and irresponsible parents. Her keen observation of the irresponsible behaviour of almost all the adults she lives with, eventually, persuades her to rely on her most devoted friend, Mrs. Wix, even though the frumpy governess is by far the least superficially attractive adult in her life.

From the title of the novel, knowledge and education form the major subject in the bittersweet tale of Maisie's development. Henry James, convincingly, follows the growth of Maisie's consciousness from its first faint glimmerings of awareness to its final comprehensive understanding of her situation. The story follows five years of Maisie's life, during which she navigates through the complexities of her family's life, growing from a sensitive child to a precocious teenager.

Chapter 2: The Impact of Divorce

With the disintegration of her family, Maisie experiences a significant shift in her perception of the world. She observes the behavior of the adults around her, noting their flaws and mistakes. This perspective helps her gain a realistic understanding of societal norms and the consequences of actions. Maisie's observations are pivotal in her development as she learns to navigate the complexities of her new surroundings.

Chapter 3: The Role of Friendship

Mrs. Wix, Maisie's governess, becomes a crucial figure in her life. Despite her modest appearance and unconventional behavior, she emerges as a source of stability and support. Mrs. Wix's influence on Maisie is profound, guiding her through the early stages of her development and helping her make sense of her world.

Chapter 4: The Challenges of Adulthood

As Maisie matures, she faces the challenges of adolescence and the complexities of the adult world. Her observations of the behavior of the adults around her deepen her understanding of human nature and society. This period is marked by Maisie's shift from a child to a young woman, learning to negotiate the complexities of her new role.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In conclusion, Henry James' *What Maisie knew* is a profound exploration of the development of consciousness. Through Maisie's eyes, we witness the transformation of a child into a young woman, navigating the challenges of her family's disintegration and learning to make sense of the world around her. The novel serves as a testament to the power of observation, friendship, and resilience in shaping an individual's perception and understanding of the world.
life; from nine years old till thirteen, on other word, till she becomes on the verge of maturity.

James presents a little girl as the protagonist of the novel since girls have more developed sensibilities and sensitivities than boys.

[The] light vessel of consciousness,... could n'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 indubitably.¹

He sees English society as becoming more corrupt and decadent, so he chooses a young girl for being fresh and unspoiled yet. The eye which wonders rightly is capable of endowing what it looks upon with "a precious element of dignity". (p. 7) This is what Henry James said in the preface to the novel. It is "by her freshness" that Maisie adds "the stuff of poetry and tragedy and art" to "appearance in themselves vulgar and empty enough". (p.7) The child has simply to wonder about them. Then she begins to have meanings, aspect, solidities, connexions -- connexion with the universal -- that they could scare have hoped for. (p.8) She is the spectator of endless series of adulterous liaisons in which her parents engage ². It is her fate to "understand much more than any other little girl, however patient, had perhaps ever understand before". (p.39)

James wishes wonder to be about something; he also sees that the act of wondering gives "aboutness" -- the needed meaning -- to the object under contemplation. Wonder is often about terrible, dangerous things (such as the events which beset Maisie's own young life), but in turn the wonderer is "guarded and preserved" (p. 10) by the active, contributive close -- circling wonder.³

The small expanding consciousness would have saved, have to become presentable as a register of impression; and saved by the experience of certain advantages, by some enjoyed profit and some achieved confidence, rather than coarsened,
blurred, by ignorance and pain. This better state, in the young life, would reside in the exercise of a function other than that of disconcerting the selfishness of the parents.

(p.2-3)

However, James Chooses the subject of a young girl, hovering uneasily between the innocence of childhood and a mature knowledge of the world's evil until we witness "the death of her childhood". (p.7) Maisie Farange is somewhat young but precocious child must suffer the torments of awkward age: "it [is] to be the fate of this patient little girl," James writes of Maisie "to see much more than she at first understood, but also even at first to understand much more than any little girl, however patient, had perhaps ever understand before". (p.15) As that time in which the mind is uncomfortably suspended somewhere in the obscurity between childish apprehension and adult knowledge "the infant mind would at best leave great gaps and voids" (p.5) of conscious awareness which she strives very hard to acknowledge.

Thus, He resolves to present the language that is used by Maisie different for the adults. Since small children have many more perceptions than they have terms to translate them. we witness, in the novel, the child's perception in the process of developing consciousness and even it implies what she can not understand many situations. It is found in the short introductory account Maisie's parents and their divorce issue the tone of "a high farce" which "defuse the traumatic nature of her experiences". Beale Farange obtains his divorce from Ida not because he is less "bespattered" but because:

it was not much that the mother's character had been more absolutely damaged as that the brilliancy of a lady's complexion (and this lady's in court, was immensely remarked) might be more regarded as shaving the spots. (p.11)
James exposes the highly developed levels of discourse which allow immorality both to flourish and to be condemned tone and at the same time the medium which the little girl lives in. He portrays a middle class English society whose members profess a certain standard of moral propriety that they simultaneously undercut by their behaviour; they are hypocrites. Maisie's biological parents divorce. They use their young daughter as a weapon against their hated ex-spouses, first by keeping her longer than the agreed six-month term, and later by not collecting her after the agreed time. Each then carries on various sexual liaisons; Beale eventually marries Maisie's governess, who then carries on an affair with Maisie's new stepfather, Sir Claude. While using Maisie for their own ends, and constantly carrying on these nefarious relations. Then both Ida and Beale soon busy with other lovers besides their spouses. In return those spouses (Sir Claude and the new Mrs. Beale) begin an affair. It is clear that they are making use of Maisie as a pretext as an opportunity for innuendo, but Maisie was ignorant. She sees only gaiety and a jolly reunion in this phase of relations. For example, when Maisie is collected from her mother's house by Beale and Miss. Overmore,

[Maisie] put to Miss. Overmore, after another immense and talkative squeeze, a question of which the motive was a desire for information as to the continuity of a certain sentiment. "Did Papa like you just the same while I was gone?" she enquired—of the sense of how markedly his favour had been established in her presence. (p. 24)

It is soon became obvious that Miss Overmore is now Beale's mistress as she and Beale hurl jocular raillery at one another over the child's head.

Indeed, the beginning of the novel shows that Maisie's Parents treat her like a pawn in their struggle to win possession not of her but the cash deposited "in the interest of the child's maintenance." (p.3) She has her own inheritance it has been expropriated by her extravagant
parents, whose affaires de Coeur appear to become increasingly about money. Beale had "only twenty-five hundred. Poor Ida, who had run through every thing, had now nothing but her carriage and paralysed uncle. The child was provided for, thanks to a crafty godmother, a defunct aunt of Beale's, who had left her something in such a manner that the parents could appropriate only the income" (p. 38). So, they are using their own daughter instead of supporting her like any normal family. Besides, they use Maisie as "a messenger of insult" (p. 20) to each other. They attempt to control and manipulate Maisie, at the same time they claim to possess her. Both parents are treating her as an object to be possessed in a continuing game of revenge against one another: "they had wanted not or any good they could do her, but for the harm they could, with her unconscious aid, do each their" (p. 13).

According to them, Maisie is reduced to the status of a thing to be grasped at and bargained over by various adults more concerned with their own personal prestige than with her individual well-being. Maisie exists for her parents through the capacity to be utilized. Her parents are using her as "the little feathered shuttlecock they could fiercely keep flying between them." (p. 19) She is cast to the level of servant or personal position or a form of private property.

At the same time the conflict between the parents teaches the little girl not to go through it. She has learned that it is wise not to knock on these issues. "life was like a long corridor with row of closed doors". (p. 33) When she fully realizes that her parents use her as a parrot with hurtful messages, she begins not to repeat the sentences she is told, but rather forgets everything and, as a consequence, is called an idiot. This creates the feeling of the inner self because she keeps her thoughts to herself. So, what Maisie knows most is what not to take in, what not to speak about, and what not to ask.
Moreover, Maisie is abused by her father acquaintances. She is handled by gentlemen visitors with freedom … pulled hither and thither and kissed:

Her features had somehow become prominent; they were perpetually nipped by gentlemen who came to see her father and smoke of whose cigarettes went into her face. Some of these gentlemen made her strike matches and light their cigarettes, others, holding her on knees violently jolted, pinched the calves of her legs till she shrieked. (p.16)

Maisie is manhandling as physical abuse, even sexual abuse. She even realizes that she lives in unstable and turbulence environment which makes her alert to the danger she sees around her. James writes: "she had a new feeling. The feeling of danger; on which a new remedy rose to meet it, the idea of an inner self, or in other words, of concealment." (p.20) Her initial concentration on this inner self represents a pragmatic reaction to her environment. She believes that, in order to survive, she must convince people that she is a stupid child. She becomes that stupid child for her parents, and their acceptances of her stupidity gives her freedom to nourish what she thinks of as the secret self they cannot touch. James describes her at this stage as discovering an inner self that is a vessel of secrecy. She learns to be silent as words begin to have meaning for her, and this makes her conceal her knowledge of others.

Maisie’s inner life seems to provide positive results for a while and becomes a source of strength. Henry James says that she found "a pleasure new and keen" through her secrecy and that "she saw more and more." However, he adds that she saw too much (p. 20) The tragic irony of this retreat into an inner self is which suggests a retreat from life. For Maisie, this inner life becomes the womb of her hopes for a new life. But these hopes are continually disappointed; she continually attempts to create a new life but always the end result is
stillborn. Nevertheless Maisie's inner self is connected both to her ability to interpret her visions and to her concealment of this from the others and her fun that derives from this act of concealment while she is becoming sharper in understanding her perceptions.

Maisie's governesses play the role to decode the significance of her secret womb as a source of both hope and death. The first governess is Overmore "who on momentous occasion [ has ] sown the seeds of secrecy, sown them not by anything she said, but by a mere roll of those fine eyes which Maisie already admire[s]. (p.20) Silence is first lesson from Miss Overmore, who rolls her eyes instead of answering a question that should not have been asked. Maisie learns to use silence to evade unpleasant situations. Silence, in this way, becomes her critical system: one is silent about matters one knows would cause trouble. It is through the use of silence that her perceptions are quickened: she did not put a question about Mamma's absent friend, Mr. Perriam, still she found out the answer to the unuttered question in a week (p.93). So, strangely enough, Maisie uses the appearance of stupidity as well as silences in order to find out answers to her unasked questions. Then Maisie goes from Miss Overmore to Mrs. Wix, the new governess. Mrs. Wix becomes the midwife who will deliver dead dreams.  

James writes of Mrs. Wix that "something in her voice at the end of an hour touched the little girl in a spot that has never even yet been reached." (p.26) Then she has finally found someone she could think of as a substitute of a mother. At the same time, Mrs. Wix Finds in Maisie a substitute to her missing daughter. Gradually, Mrs. Wix becomes not only a governess but also a tutor and a companion. She shows real emotion to this little girl in every occasion. For instance, in the dentist clinic Mrs. Wix grabs Maisie's hand to encourage her not to scream and Maisie feels "a spasm of stifled sympathy" (p. 29) in the part of her companion. Mrs. Wix's devotion to Maisie is both sincere and genuine, her embraces are somewhat smothering. The salient
feature of her character is her motherliness. \textsuperscript{11}Maisie expresses her feeling towards Mrs. Wix that:

The charm of Mrs. Wix's conveying that somewhat, in her ugliness and poverty, she was peculiarly and soothingly safe; safer than anyone the world, than Papa, than Mama, than the lady with arched eyebrows; safer even, though so much less than beautiful, than Miss. Overmore. (p. 28)

Maisie's looking for substitution is a natural attitude because the real world she is born in is incapable of adequately providing for her both a mother and a father, Beale and Ida, her biological parents claims to be unable to support their own daughter financially and emotionally. She "is divided in two and potions tosse[s] impartially to the disputants." (p. 18) Maisie is like "a drummer – boy … in the thick of the fight" (p. 15) Her life is a kind of horror show of "strange shadows dancing on a sheet" a show in which there will be a "sacrifice" of the "mite of a half – sacred infant." (p. 16)

Although the infant looks amused by Beale's performance and enjoys "the charm of the violence," she knows that she must be cast away from his life sooner or later. Later in the novel, Ida tells Maisie: "Your father wishes you were dead – That my dear, is what your father wishes, you 'll have to get used to it as I 've done -- I mean to his wishing that I 'm dead." (p. 177) On the other hand, Ida's displays of affection have worse effect on Maisie's growth of consciences towards independence. Her embraces to Maisie are often occasioned by comments of Maisie's that reflect her growth perception and understanding. The remarks that invite the hugs are also those that put Mrs. Beale in a bad light, suggesting that the hugs have the intention of reproof by way of stifling.\textsuperscript{12}

As for Mrs. Beale, her insidious use of hugs as ostensibly mild reproof imbues a common of affection with a sense of guilt and
punishment; such embraces create a fundamental and persisting confusion for Maisie because of their chastising effect on her developing cognitive abilities. Ida’s hugs are followed by cold withdrawal of affection, disconcert Maisie. Her false affection has a destructive effect upon Maisie; to know, to see and to understand.¹³

Nevertheless, in emotional scenes with mother and father, Maisie attempts to demonstrate real love. Her mother, whose inability to control her emotions grows throughout the novel, interprets Maisie’s gesture of love as an attack and responds accordingly. Her father simply treats her authentic expression of love with typical cynical indifference. She is trying to extract what she is missing in them; love, kindness and trust. So, she wants to admire, to love and to please them. Unfortunately, they can not react to the basic demand of any infant and they leave her to look for them in other elder people.

Thus, in her search for a father, Maisie finds in Sir Claude the image of missing father. Her relation with Sir Claude becomes an intensification of the relationship she has had with father, moreover with her mother and father. Sir Claude expresses his own affection and parental emotion by holding Maisie’s hand or resting his hand gently upon her. Motivated by her need for affection and a sense of protection, Maisie’s first meeting with Sir Claude makes her feel as if he had told her on the spot that he belonged to her, so that she could already show him off and see the effect he produced.¹⁴

Although Sir Claude returns her love to some degree, it is not enough to give Maisie security and stability, but gives Maisie the sense of confidence and encouragement which confers trust and independence. With all his kindness and sincerity, Sir Claude is not the man who can give Maisie real family life. There is a touch of effeminacy in his character, and his admitted fear of women makes him basically inept as Maisie’s savior. All he does is raise her expectations and then shatter...
them as soon as they are expressed. In some ways, he replaces Mrs. Wix as the conjurer of Maisie’s dead dreams.  

When both Maisie and Mrs. Wix wait anxiously for Sir. Claude’s arrival. Instead of the stepfather, Mrs. Beale arrives alone. Maisie knows Sir Claude’s “dressing bag now -- on with the fondest knowledge -- and there [is] an instant during which its not being there [is ] a stroke of the worst news. She [is] yet to learn what it could be to recognize in some lapse of a sequence the proof of an extinction, and therefore remain[es] unaware that this momentary pang [is ] a foretaste of the experience of death “(p. 228). Actually, her whole relationship with Sir Claude has this “foretaste of the experience of death.” While at a point much earlier in the novel, Sir Claude’s arrival at her house causes Maisie to "look and feel like a duchess " (p. 117). This feeling quickly faded away as the discussion turns to Sir Claude’s broken promises to Maisie.

By the time when Maisie is growing to lose ignorance, she begins to make judgments of her own. But they are not judgments at the kind which the elder might expect. At the same time Mrs. Wix has planted the seeds of “moral sense” in her. In early stage of realizing the moral sense in judgments, Maisie begins to judge according to her concepts, for instance, of the traditional wickedness of adultery; she plays with her doll Lisette, imitating with the entertainment which she herself has provided from some of Ida’s friends:

She was enlighten by Lisette’s questions, which reproduced the effect of her own upon those for whom she sat in the very darkness of Lisette. Was she not herself convulsed by such innocence? In the presence of it she often imitated the shrieking ladies. (p. 55)

Maisie takes the role of the ladies in her mother’s salon, and Lisette is made to take the role of the ignorant child. Lisette’s questions express a darkness of ignorance that makes Maisie shriek like the ladies. Lisette
is asking about where Maisie has been, what she did, but her curiosity is rarely satisfied. Maisie, then, is imitating her mother’s “shading off” into the unknowable. Once she even reproduces her Mamma’s sharp reply “Find out for yourself” (55). She is ashamed by both the sharpness and the repetition afterwards. These imitations, at this stage of Maisie’s education, show that she is ready to find things out for herself.

Maisie’s interest is not in orthodox moral or social rules, her judgments pours in what she is eagerly missing in elder people; love, kindness and trust. A judgment about one of her favourites Sir Claude is made when having previously given Mrs. Wix a present of an umbrella with a malachite knob, he

Came back from Paris – came bring her a splendid apparatus for painting in water – colour and bringing Mrs. Wix, by a lapse of memory that would have been droll if it had not been a trifle disconcerting, a second and even more elegant umbrella. (p.76)

James’s characters boost their own sense of moral superiority by displacing their immorality onto someone else. And Maisie is often the depository of these projections of immorality; she becomes the scapegoat for the adult around her. She is small and powerless, is labeled as immoral by those around her which makes her the central consciousness to adults in the novel. For a while Maisie is marginalized by the adults in her world, but she is the central figure in reveling all the adultery liaison that she sees.

Maisie’s problem is to comprehend the narrations around her; each of the adults tells her a different interpretation of the situation. They accuse Maisie of having no moral sense. But to have a moral sense, one must have a fundamental truth, and in Maisie's world, there is no truth. There is only competing voices. Her challenge is to make sense of
them. Her success comes in the end, when she crosses the channel to France then she gains a moral sense based on knowledge of reality of the elder 's liaison. Sex is the hidden underlying agenda of the people surrounding her, once she knows, she can more easily understand their games.  

The way in which adults are able to project an air of self-righteousness, the way in which they are able to engage the discourse of morality and respectability, is by projecting their lack of these traits onto the powerless Maisie. "Her father had once called her a heartless beast." (p.90) She is also called a "horrid little hypocrite", "a little monster", "a dreadful bouncing business" an "little fright ". Ida makes it clear to Maisie where all the blames lies: "[it's you] who have caused all the trouble between us."(p.174)  

Maisie is neglected and marginalized. She is frequently banished to the shabby schoolroom where one day:-  

[ Sir Claude ] stood before the fire and looked at the meager appointment of the room in a way that made her rather ashamed of them. … without Sir Claude's photograph … the place would have been, as he said, as dull as a cold dinner. … the way Sir Claude looked about the schoolroom had made her fell with humility from the shabby in which she had visited Susan Ash. (p. 82)  

Maisie can sense the feeling of isolation even in her mother's house, and her identifies herself with Susan Ash, her father's under-house maid. Later Beale tells Maisie, "Your mother will have no more to do with you than if you were a kitchen maid she had turned out for going wrong". ( p. 152) Ida, always willing to put blame on her daughter, accuses Maisie of hanging about Claude" in a way that 's barely decent " . [H]e can do what he likes with you " ( p.90) . She says to Maisie, assigning to her daughter responsibility for any immorality.

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Maisie is considered by those around her as inherently immoral and causes of their problem. DeVine believes that Maisie’s attitude is ambiguous to accept mistreatment by gentlemen acquainted of her father. So, DeVine says "her act of preferring gentlemen suggest that all of this physical attention somehow pleased her." But we must not forget that Maisie is looking for the attention of the elders whom she lives with because she is deprived from love and affectionateness since her parents are busy with their own affairs. At the same time they neglect their daughter. Her need for affection is tangled up with her frustrated attempts to interpret the hidden meaning behind the language of the adults surrounding her. Aware that their teasing insulations leave Maisie at a loss, adults wield power over her by manipulating both her emotion and her ability to understand.

Maisie gains knowledge through her necessity to survive and her need to cling to Sir Claude for support, (specially after her parents desert her); she has very few options in this respect. She looks at Sir Claude with "more than Filial gaze," (p. 202) her morality mentor, Mrs. wix, also adores him, and her young stepfather treats Maisie for more parentally in many ways than any of her other "Parents".

James suggests that it is the presence of youth that should encourage the growth of "the moral life" rather than any innate morality in Maisie herself. As he draws the image of an innocent child enmeshed in an evil society. James writes in his preface when he calls Maisie "our little wonder – working agent" (p. 25) who acts "by sowing on barren strands, through the mere fact of presence, the seed of the moral life." (p. 26)

Maisie’s trip to France with Sir Claude is not only a rescue; for her it is an empowering experience. Even while she is at Folkestone. One the verge of crossing to the Continent, we are told that "Maisie had known all along a great deal, but never so much as she was to know.
from this moment on and she learned in particular during the couple of
day that she was to hang in the air , as it were , over the sea which
represented ... a crossing of more spaces than the Channel ."( p.162)
Once she is in France , Maisie seems to grow , to become older . In the
novel , as always in Henry James 's novels, France is more a step in
Maisie 's consciousness development that it is a real place ; it is where
she gains power by gaining knowledge :

On the spot , at Boulogne ... she recognized , she understood ,
she adored and took possession ; feeling herself a tuned to
everything and lying her hand , right and left , on what had
simply been waiting for her , ( p. 182)

With her newly found power , Maisie can now separate herself from
her companion , Susan Ash :
She explained to Susan , she laughed at Susan , she towered over
Susan ; and it was somehow Susan's Stupidity , of which she
had never been so sure , and Susan's bewilderment and
ignorance and antagonism , that gave the liveliest rebound to her
immediate perceptions . ( p.182)

In separating herself from Susan, Maisie separates herself from her
own sense of being marginalized . In other word, she is gaining
confidence and courage . Now , she can "read the unspoken into the
spoken ."( p. 205) She can understand and even speak French :
It was the most extraordinary thing in the world : in the intensity
of her excitement she not only by illumination understood ... French , but fell into it with an active perfection . (p. 254)

She does not speak French as well as Sir Claude , but he is an adult,
and Maisie is on her way to young adult. Here we witness the death of
her childhood . No longer passive , she is now able to negotiate on her
own terms ; she offers to give up Mrs. Wix if her stepfather will give up
her stepmother. She does not get what she wants; she does not get Sir Claude to herself in the end, but she has been able to name the stakes. 21

Does Maisie gain a moral sense in France? This is what Mrs. Wix is accusing her of not possessing: "Haven't you really and truly any moral sense?" She asks Maisie (p. 211), and again later: "Have you absolutely none at all?" (p. 212)

The story tells us of Maisie's growing awareness of the moral sense; it is said:

She began, the poor, with scarcely knowing what it was; but proved something that … she could, before they came back from their drive, strike up a sort of acquaintance. (p. 211)

Paradoxically, By gaining knowledge of the immoral, Maisie has gained a wider moral sense, than what Mrs. Wix has accused her of early. Though it has been suggested throughout the novel that Maisie might not be keeping the torch of virtue alive. (p. 26) The presence of the Golden Madonna at the end of the novel seems to symbolize Maisie's virtue.

When Maisie final fight for Sir. Claude with Mrs. Beale as though she is an adult woman open a new horizon to Maisie to know the moral sense. Eventually, she must decide if she wants to remain with Sir Claude and Mrs. Beale, she realizes that the relationship of her new parents might well end badly as that of her real parents. Thus, she leaves them and goes to stay with Mrs. Wix who is the most reliable adult guardian.

In her last conversation with her mother it is said that "[t]here was literally an instant in which Maisie saw — saw madness and desolation, saw ruin and darkness and death. " (p. 177) Maisie has indeed gained knowledge by the end of the novel but at what cost? through gaining the moral sense of the elders.

The title of the novel is produced in its last three words:]"Mrs. Wix gave her a sidelong look. She still had room for wonder and what Maisie
Knew." (p.268) It is not necessary to wonder because throughout the novel we have watched Maisie how she acquires her knowledge by what is described at one point as learning "to read the unspoken into the spoken"; that means there are certain things cannot be spoken in the circumstances in which Maisie finds herself older and more of the adult world, will be in a position to distinguish between those things which are not said because she is a little girl. Maisie now can discriminate what is said and what is not. Maisie undergoes some revelations to obtain moral judgment through acquiring social skills by being both a participant and a spectator of scenes, she is involved in the events but defends herself by remaining distant, and her experience is that of spectatorship, making things out for herself. Finally she decides to rely on Mrs. Wix because she finds in her a fixed ground that can depend on for her living.

While she does not know "everything" or not in the end, she certainly has learned much about the need to rely on herself rather than on the limited, limiting and selfish adults surrounding her. Throughout the novel we detect Maisie rapid growth of her consciousness through decoding the puzzles and hidden meanings of her circumstances. Her wonder is now largely displaced by the knowledge she has gained through her suffering. But this knowledge, however harrowing its achievement actually was, ultimately confers on Maisie an undeniable autonomy. Maisie's final plight—her recognition of the necessity of choosing the least problematic of the options available to her concerning her future—demonstrates the dysfunction family that tried to constrained and hurt her as an individual. Maisie has been able both to grow morally and to assert her own choice successfully. In other word, she manage to express her own sense of her best interest due to the supportive encouragement of those who truly love her. The novel reveals the rapid growth of Maisie's consciousness to chose her own family that can, at least, provide her the fundamental needs. So, Maisie celebrates her personal triumph in the midst of overwhelming circumstances.
Notes:


All subsequent references for the novel are taken from this edition and referred to by page number in the text.

2- Christina Bitzolakis "Technologies of vision in Henry James 's What Maisie Knew"
   [http://www.finarticles.com\p\articles\mi_qa3643\is_200107\ai_n895853\3\print , 14\12\2006 p.3]


4- Ruth Bernard Yeazell; *Language and Knowledge in the Late Novels of Henry James* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1994) p.34

5- Douglas Hewitt; *English fiction of The Early Modern Period 1890-1940* (New York, Longman Group Uk. Ltd. 1988) p.17

6- Bitzolakis; p.2

7- Jeff Westover "Handing Over Power in James 's What Maisie Knew Author
   HenryJames,http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m242/is_n2_v28/ai_16528208 (Summer, 1994) p. 4

8- Sam B. Girgus; *The Law of The Heart: Individualism and The Modern Self in American Literature* (USA, University of Texas Press, 1979) p.95

9- Ibid
10- Ibid, p. 97
11- Westover, (p.7)
12- Ibid, p.6
13- Ibid, p.7
14- Ibid, p.5
15- Girgus, p. 97
16- Hewitt (p. 19)
17- Christine De Vine " Marginalized Maisie ; Social Purity and What Maisie Knew ", The Victorian Newsletter; (Western Kentucky University, USA, 2001) No. 99, p.9
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