

***The Turn of the Screw* and “Daisy Miller”’: Henry James’s Puritan view on the Ideal Victorian Middle-class**

***The Turn of the Screw* ve “Daisy Miller”’: Henry James’in Puritan Bakış Açısı ile İdeal Viktorya Dönemi Orta-Sınıfı**

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Abstract

This article sheds light upon a nineteenth-century reader-response approach to *The Turn of the Screw* and “Daisy Miller” grounded on an ethical basis that is shaped by dominant Victorian values, beliefs, and ideas concerning the catalytic role of family towards the proper raising of children, the importance of duty, the traits of the ideal woman and mother, and the good or evil nature of people who are members of different socioeconomic classes, all of which are controlling factors of (un)restrained sexuality and its impact on social order. Within this context, the writer of this article claims that in both stories Henry James is interested in pointing out the threat of a general moral corruption that characterizes the Western world of his time, particularly the socio-economically powerful nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxon middle-class, with the latter vacillating between excessive freedom/naivety and excessive rigidity/hypocrisy. Furthermore, the writer claims the complementary character of the two stories. Although “Daisy Miller” chronologically precedes *The Turn of the Screw*, the latter’s examination prior to a discussion of “Daisy Miller” may be helpful because *The Turn of the Screw* is a more complete work in the sense that elaborates more on the moral and psychological condition of characters who strikingly resemble those in the story of “Daisy Miller.”

Keywords: Henry James, Puritanism, Daisy Miller, The Turn of the Screw

Öz

Bu makale, Viktorya dönemi değerleri, inançları ve ailenin çocuklarının uygun şekilde yetiştirilmesindeki katalizör rolü, görevlerin önemi, ideal kadın ve annenin özellikleri, farklı sosyo-ekonomik sınıfların üyeleri olan insanların iyi ya da kötü doğası (bunların hepsi sınırlan(ma)mış cinsellik ve bunun sosyal düzen üzerindeki etkisini kontrol eden faktörlerdir) gibi o döneme ait düşüncelerle şekillendirilmiş etik bir temele oturtulan *The Turn of the Screw* ve “Daisy Miller” eserlerine, 19. yüzyıl okur-yazar yaklaşımıyla ışık tutmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu makalenin yazarı, her iki hikâyede de Henry James’in, zamanının Batı dünyasını, özellikle de sosyo-ekonomik açıdan güçlü (aşırı özgürlük / naiflik ve aşırı rijitlik / hipokrisi arasında bocalayan) 19. yüzyıl Anglo-Sakson orta-sınıfını karakterize eden genel bir ahlaki çöküş tehdidini göstermeye çalıştığını iddia etmektedir. Ayrıca, yazar, iki öykünün karakterlerinin birbirlerini yansıttıklarını iddia etmektedir. “Daisy Miller”, kronolojik olarak *The Turn of the Screw*’den önce yer almasına rağmen, “Daisy Miller” ile ilgili bir tartışmadan önce *The Turn of the Screw*’in incelenmesi yararlı olabilir çünkü *The Turn of the Screw*, “Daisy Miller” hikâyesindeki karakterlere çarpıcı bir şekilde benzeyen karakterlerin ahlaki ve psikolojik durumları hakkında daha fazla ayrıntı vermesi yönünden daha eksiksiz bir çalışmadır.

Keywords: Henry James, Puritanizm, Daisy Miller, The Turn of the Screw

Henry James (1843-1916) was born in New York within a wealthy, educated, and religious family environment that was both loving and oppressive. His father Henry developed his own theological system which promoted the ideas of suffering, submission, and rebirth (Lauter et al., 1998, p. 449). His father’s theological system also echoed a puritanism grounded upon orthodox Christian mysticism in his view on marriage and gender roles, similar to that of John Milton and William Blake; to the ear of a secular contemporary audience, however, his father’s views may sound conservative: “‘Woman,’ he preached, was not truly a person but a ‘form of personal affection,’ and her mission was to redeem man from his natural egotism and brutality” (Lauter et. al., 1998, p. 449). Like in his novella *The Turn of the Screw*, young Henry was supervised by governesses and was tutored both in American and European private and public schools, and like in his “Daisy Miller,” he was fascinated

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by the Old World's distinct social classes and aristocratic civility (Lauter et al., 1998, p. 450). In his twenties, he started his writing career in major American journals, and for the first time, at the age of twenty-six, he experienced a fifteen-month trip to Europe (England, Switzerland, and Italy). In 1875, he moved permanently to Europe (Lauter et al., 1998, p. 450). He lived in Paris for a year, and then, he moved to England, living both in London and the countryside. In 1925, He became a British citizen to show his support for England in World War I (Curry, 2005, p. 113).

This article aims to compare the main characters of Henry James' two popular stories, *The Turn of the Screw*, a ghost story in serialized form in the journal *Collier's Weekly* from January to April 1898 (Righelato, 2006, pp. VII-VIII), and "Daisy Miller," a story under the category of "International novels" that talk about people of various nationalities who, upon interacting, reveal their cultural differences. International novels were the products of the age of the great Atlantic passenger ships that had reduced the distance between America and Europe from twenty to ten days. The story of "Daisy Miller" appeared in two parts in June and July 1878, in the English *Conrhill Magazine* (Righelato, 2006, pp. VIII-IX). Twentieth century criticism favors the psychoanalytical approach to the interpretation of *The Turn of the Screw* and conventional readings of "Daisy Miller" focus on the sociocultural differences between the American and the European cultures—labeling the former innocent and free and the latter sophisticated and morally fixed. This article sheds light upon the nineteenth-century reader-response approach to *The Turn of the Screw* grounded on an ethical basis that is shaped by dominant Victorian values, beliefs, and ideas concerning the catalytic role of family towards the proper raising of children, the importance of duty, the traits of the ideal woman and mother, and the good or evil nature of people who are members of different socioeconomic classes, all of which are controlling factors of (un)restrained sexuality and its impact on social order. Within this context, this article claims that in both stories Henry James is interested in pointing out the threat of a general moral corruption that characterizes the Western world of his time, particularly the socio-economically powerful nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxon middle-class that vascillates between excessive freedom/ naivety and excessive rigidity/ hypocrisy.

Herbert Croly points out that Henry's European experience inspired him to view life in a more objective and comprehensive way and to reach "a moral and mental detachment" (Stafford, 1955, p. 73). Croly's observation becomes the basis on which another claim can be shaped foregrounding the complementary character of the two stories. Although "Daisy Miller" chronologically precedes *The Turn of the Screw*, the latter's examination prior to a discussion of "Daisy Miller" may be helpful; *The Turn of the Screw* is a more complete work in the sense that elaborates more on the moral and psychological condition of characters who strikingly resemble those in the story of "Daisy Miller." Thus, this article consists of two parts. An interpretation of *The Turn of the Screw* within the context of the ideas and values of the Puritan Victorian society covers the first half of this article, whereas in the second half of it, the Puritan reading of *The Turn of the Screw* ushers readers to a comparison of the two stories.

In "Another Reading of The Turn of the Screw," N. Bryllion Fagin (1941) points out James's embracement of puritanism—particularly, "a preoccupation with sin"—and refers to Rebecca West and Cornelia Pulsifer Kelley who foreground Henry James's admiration towards Hawthorne, Bunyan, and Spenser (pp. 198-199). Readers may notice that in both stories, the main characters—the governess and Miles in *The Turn of the Screw* and Daisy Miller and Winterbourne in "Daisy Miller"—are young and members of the middle-class; and in both stories, the main characters either fail to control their unrestrained sexuality (Miles and Daisy Miller) or fail to serve their duty to save their beloved from moral

corruption (the governess and Winterbourne). However, we may not conclude that Henry James is a rigid moralist; in both stories, Henry James, a genuine Puritan, adopts a humanist approach to problematize his readers about extreme practices of controlling and to popularize an ambivalent view on freedom and innocence.

In "Exposure in 'The Turn of the Screw,'" Elliot M. Schrero (1981) points out that when we consider the interrelated roles of family, servants and governess, and children within the Victorian society, ambiguity loses its place in Henry James's story. In the Prologue, Douglas familiarizes his selective audience with background information that, later, may be crucial in understanding the story. The audience learns that the governess's duty is to raise two orphans whose uncle, beyond his financial support, has transferred his parental responsibility to his low servants; the raising of the children takes place in a remote house where many governesses before the narrator of this story have refused to go since it is far away from civilization and the master is always absent (Schrero, 1981, p. 262). In 1898, when James writes *The Turn of the Screw*, James Mark Baldwin warns Victorian fathers not to bestow the physical, intellectual, emotional, and moral growth of their children upon servants, who traditionally are considered morally corrupted. According to Baldwin, the servants' daily presence close to children—who, traditionally, are viewed innocent and thus, sensitive (fully exposed) to danger and evil—is unsuitable (Schrero, 1981, p. 262). Baldwin's advice is part of a tradition on the proper raising of children that is shaped in the late eighteenth century and survives throughout the nineteenth century. Among the most known literary works of this kind stands Maria Edgeworth's collection of children's tales *The Parent's Assistant*, published from 1796 to 1800 and reprinted at least twelve times by 1897, Edgeworth's collaborative work with her father *Practical Education*, published in 1798 and its third edition in 1811, and Mrs. Henry Sherwood's *The History of the Fairchild Family*, which is published from 1818 to 1847 and becomes a popular gift for children until about 1887 (Schrero, 1981, pp. 263-264). Servants' negative influence on children was a belief embraced not only by conservatives but also liberals. For the promotion of his social and political visions in the *Enquirer* (1798), William Godwin writes, "[Servants] will instruct us in the practice of cunning, and the arts of deceit. They will teach us to exhibit a studied countenance to those who preside over us....They will make us confidants of their vices" (Schrero, 1981, pp. 263-264).

Henry James's awareness of an attitude of suspicion towards the morality of servants is echoed in the Prologue of *The Turn of the Screw*, in which Douglas feels the need to inform his audience that all the servants at Bly, from Mrs. Grose (the housekeeper and Flora's temporal superintendent) to the lowest menial, were people of good quality. Mrs. Grose is "an excellent woman" (p.7) and all the others who helped with the kids' raising—"a cook, a housemaid, a dairy woman, an old pony, an old groom, and an old gardener— were all likewise thoroughly respectable" (p. 7). Douglas's comment on the servants provokes the immediate ironic response of one among his audience: "And what did the former governess die of? Of so much respectability?" (p. 7). Douglas's perfect picture of the Bly house is shattered when the readers learn that Peter Quint, the uncle's valet who is an "impudent, assured, spoiled, depraved" man (p. 36) and who resembles "a hound" (p. 36), was in charge of the Bly house until his death and that "he did what he wished [...] With them all" (p. 36); especially with Miles, "Quint was much too free" (p. 29), enjoying to "play with him [...] to spoil him" (p. 29). Moreover, the former governess, Miss Jessel, who supposedly had the supreme authority upon the children, had succumbed to Quint's influence, and despite her class, she had become "infamous" (p. 35) and "dishonoured" (p. 63).

Indeed, Douglas reads a story built upon the evil influence primarily of Peter Quint and secondarily of Miss Jessel—even from as far as their graves— on Miles and Flora, whom

the newly introduced at the Bly house governess-narrator considers her duty and responsibility to save:

I had an absolute certainty that I should see again what I had already seen [Peter Quint's ghost], but something within me said that by offering myself bravely as the sole subject of such experience, by accepting, by inviting, by surmounting it all, I should serve as an expiatory victim and guard the tranquility of the rest of the household. The children in especial I should thus fence about and absolutely save (pp. 28-29).

Why does the new governess display such a zeal regarding the protection of the children? Her persistent close monitoring of Miles and Flora throughout the story is expected by Douglas's audience. Within a "society too much taken up with its balls and millinery, its dinners and matchmaking," as a butler notices in his reply (1892) to a piece against domestic servants written by Lady Violet Greville (Schrero, 1981, p. 265), employers like Miles's and Flora's uncle, who—the governess-narrator thinks—"was not a trouble-loving gentleman, nor so very particular perhaps about some of the company he himself kept" (pp. 29-30) and did not care much about the children's condition (p. 61), hold a great part of the responsibility for the corruption of youth by servants who are "sensualists in a more or less advanced stage of degradation" since "the evil was passed on from older servants to younger ones" (Schrero, 1981, p. 265). Thus, the governess is in *loco parentis*. Schrero quotes George Stephen, a Victorian authority,

'She was to consider herself the delegate of the mother' [...] Her authority included all questions of 'moral and general tuition,' subject only to the control of the mother, whose commands, however, were to be resisted if ill-conceived. (Schrero, 1981, pp. 265-266)

It is the moral and feminine burden of governess to properly raise children—that is, the boy's making of a gentleman and the girl's making of a lady—on whom the fate of society depends. The rise of the middle-class and its socioeconomic empowerment in the nineteenth century changes the meaning of "gentility" which is now perceived an acquired virtue based on Christian morality rather than a hereditary right. The following passages reflect that within the Victorian society moral integrity is strongly associated with the maintenance of social status. Mrs. Grose tells the governess that she warned Miles not to spend much time alone with wicked Quint because "*she* liked to see young gentlemen not forget their station" (p. 39); when Flora denies that she has seen the ghost of Miss Jessel in the lake and puts on "her small mask of disaffection" (p. 77), the governess-narrator sees Flora's "incomparable childish beauty" vanishing (p. 77) and Flora's becoming "hideously hard," "common and almost ugly," and "a vulgarly pert little girl in the Street" (p. 77); and when Mrs. Grose cries out, "*She* [Miss Jessel] was a lady" (p. 35) and "he [Peter Quint] so dreadfully below [...]" He did what he wished [...] with them all" (p. 36), the governess adds, "It must have been also what *she* wished!" (p.36) and Mrs. Grose replies, "Poor woman— she paid for it!" (p. 36).

The possible failure of the governess to control/protect the children from the evil presence of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel would manifest her inadequacy as a governess and would signal her own fall from the respected social status endowed to a good governess. In the conversation between the governess and Mrs. Grose about the former's lost letter to the children's uncle, the governess assumes that Miles has been expelled from school because of stealing her letter addressed to his uncle. According to the governess, Miles is stealing under the influence of wicked Quint who, when he was alive, used to steal and wear the clothes of the children's uncle. The determinate governess states, "I'll get it [a confession of Miles's stealing the governess's letter to his uncle] out of him [Miles]. He'll meet me. He'll confess. If he confesses he's saved. And if he's saved" (p. 83) and Mrs. Grose replies, "Then *you* are?" (p. 83).

Still, with the rise of psychoanalysis, many twentieth century critics look at the governess-narrator as a mad woman. In "Point of View in *The Turn of the Screw*," Alexander E. Jones presents the opinions of twentieth century critics opposing the Victorian reading of the story. Specifically, in 1919, Henry A. Beers said, "the woman who saw the phantoms was mad" (Jones, 1959, p. 113); in 1924, Edna Kenton interpreted the existence and action of both the ghosts and children as "exquisite dramatizations of her [the governess's] little personal mystery, figures for the ebb and flow of troubled thought within her mind, acting out her story" (Jones, 1959, p. 113); and in 1934, Edmund Wilson employed Freudian psychology reading the story as "a neurotic case of sex repression"; the story—in which "the ghosts are not real ghosts but the hallucinations of the governess" who is in love with her employer—is permeated by phallic symbols (Jones, 1959, p. 114). However, in "Exposure in 'The Turn of the Screw,'" Schrero (1981) points out that Victorian medical authorities and statistics on mental patients in England and Wales show that the majority were farm laborers, mechanics and artisans rather than governesses and, in general, teachers (p. 266). Schrero explains that through the passing of years, a governess might feel physically and emotionally tired and socially unappreciated, and thus, she might demonstrate meanness, but not madness, that affects the schoolroom atmosphere. The governess-narrator's young age and excellent working conditions, her living in a beautiful house of which she is in charge and teaching gifted, charming, and affectionate children, are factors that decrease the possibility of the governess's becoming mad (Schrero, 1981, p. 267).

In "Henry James's 'General Vision of Evil' in *The Turn of the Screw*," Thomas J. Bontly (1969) negotiates psychoanalytical and puritan approaches, emphasizing both the catalytic role of the human subconscious in general and the specific moral and religious master narratives of James' time towards the formation of a more complete reading of *The Turn of the Screw*. He points out,

As a ghost story, *The Turn of the Screw* attempts to evoke the thrill of the unknown and the unknowable, and to render the invasion of the unknown perfectly credible. James accomplishes this feat by sustaining two mutually exclusive interpretations of the events—a natural one and a supernatural one. By thus, simulating an "actual" case of ghostly visitation, in which a natural explanation arises to challenge the supernatural one, and almost—but of course not entirely—dispels it, *The Turn of the Screw* achieves its hold on the imagination of those 'not easily caught.' (p. 723)

In the Preface, Henry James says that the governess has "authority" (p. XXXIV) to narrate a credible story, and that the new type of such stories in the late Victorian era included "good ghosts" "clean of all queerness" (p. XXX) that are "poor subjects" (p. XXXIV). Thus, we may conclude that when James decided to write a story of bad ghosts, his intention was not to perplex his late Victorian audience about the sanity of the governess but to make readers perceive the symbolic role of her seeing the bad ghosts of Quint and Miss Jessel—a male and a female for the sake of balance—regardless of whether they are real. In "Henry James's 'General Vision of Evil' in *The Turn of the Screw*," Thomas J. Bontly (1969) embraces Mark Spilka's Freudian reading that does not focus on the neurosis of the governess but on her role as "a representative of the Victorian audience, with all its sexual self-consciousness and anxieties and repressions" (p. 724). Another scholar who advocates the symbolic nature of *The Turn of the Screw*, disregarding, however, any Freudian approach, is N. Bryllion Fagin. In "Another Reading of *The Turn of the Screw*," Fagin (1941) asserts that although Henry James probably was not much aware of Freudian psychology, his ghost story stands among fairy tales that—whether their writers are aware of or not—demonstrate "a profound grasp of subconscious processes" (p. 198). He develops his argument, pointing out James's own literary influences with leading figure that of Hawthorne, whose artistic attitude has been defined by puritan morality and a keen interest in the supernatural and who has been influenced by the religious allegories of Bunyan (*Pilgrim's Progress*) and Spenser (the *Faery*

Queen) (Fagin, 1941, pp. 198-199). Fagin (1941) claims that we can read *The Turn of the Screw* as an allegory that dramatizes the conflict between Good and Evil; within this context, the governess is a guardian Angel who protects innocent Miles and Flora from the apparitions of Quint and Miss Jessel, personifications of Devil (p. 200).

Whereas the governess's madness is not worthy of a debate if we consider the time framework of James' writing *The Turn of the Screw*, the governess's ability/skills to correspond to her heavy duty can be questioned. Expecting the ten-year-old Miles to be at school, the Victorian audience would view him as the victim of the governess's overestimating her ability to handle Miles rather than of her being mentally ill. Schrero (1981) informs that a Victorian governess is in charge of girls from the age of six/seven until their adolescence and boys from the age of six/seven to the age of eight/nine when they acquire a tutor or join a public/private school (p. 265). In the Prologue, Douglas informs his audience that raising the children at Bly estate is the first working experience of the twenty-year-old governess-narrator (p. 6), and he comments that the inexperienced young woman accepted the job of the governess at Bly estate, unable to frame her passion stirred by the uncle's seduction (p. 8). Consumed by her zeal to prove herself a good professional and thus a worthy woman of the uncle's attention and possible love interest, the inexperienced young governess unintentionally exposes Miles to an unnatural environment—the domestic sphere—for a young gentleman. Miles is aware that he must have been at school when he says, "Either you clear up with my guardian the mystery of this interruption of my studies, or you cease to expect me to lead with you a life that's so unnatural for a boy" (p. 62). A governess lacking the necessary skills is also revealed in the dialogue of the governess-narrator and Miles during her night visit to Miles's room. The speech of the governess consists of questions—"What is it [...] that you think of?" (p. 67), "Of what queer business, Miles?" (p. 67), "What do you mean by all the rest?" (p. 67), "You're tired of Bly?" (p. 68), "You want to go to your uncle?" (p. 68), "Is there nothing-nothing at all that you want to tell me?" (p. 69)—apologetic statements in question form—"How could I know it did trouble you, this question, when you never told me so, never spoke of it at all?" (p. 67)—apologetic statements in affirmative form—"Never, little Miles-no, never-have you given me an inkling of anything that *may* have happened there. Therefore you can fancy how much I'm in the dark" (p. 67)—and awkward moments—"I felt I didn't know so well as Miles, and I took temporary refuge" (p. 68) and "I threw myself upon him and in the tenderness of my pity embraced him. [...] My face was close to his, and he let me kiss him, simply taking it with indulgent good-humour" (pp. 68-69).

The dialogue between the governess and Miles also mirrors the young governess's inexperience as a woman. The reader realizes that it is her first close interaction with the other sex, also keeping in mind that she is the daughter of a country parson as we learn from Douglas in the Prologue (p. 6). Therefore, the governess-narrator is incapable to fully understand Miles's male needs and psychology due to her poor experience with men (Bontly, 1969, pp. 724-725). Her lack of knowledge here is understandable and approved by the Victorian audience since she serves her gender role as a pure/innocent young woman. Although Miles is ten years younger than her, he speaks like a mature young man who knows what he wants. Miles practises his gender role as the dominant male speaker toward his female interlocutor. He uses an authoritative speech permeated by an ambiguous sensual/affectionate tone that is accentuated by the repetition of "dear" that is a term echoing paternalism (p. 67), the statement "I think [...] of this queer business of ours" that reveals shared responsibility about an aberrant behaviour (p. 67), and the ironic addressing of the governess as an "old lady" (p. 69) when the latter insists on calling him "little Miles" (p. 68). The governess desperately tries to remind Miles of his young age and her authority over him. Her motherly

affection increases Miles's unrestrained sexuality; unintentionally, she becomes his seductress and the object of his desire.

Such a reading is supported by Douglas's assertion that he met the governess-narrator when he was a college student. In the Prologue, Douglas states, "She was a most charming person, but she was ten years older than I. She was my sister's governess [...] She was the most agreeable woman I've ever known in her position" (p. 4). Here, there is a striking resemblance between Douglas and Miles; both of them are ten years younger than the governess when they meet her and become enchanted by her. Douglas purposely highlights her propriety to erase any image of the governess as the wicked enchantress in the audience's mind. However, the image of the young male enamoured with the young and beautiful governess is a popular Victorian fantasy expressed by the Griffins: "'Well, if I [Mrs Griffin] don't know who she was in love with I know who *he* was.' 'She was ten years older,' said her husband. 'Raison de plus—at that age!'" (p. 5) Thus, Miles's reply "let me alone" (p. 69) reflects the ambivalence of the governess's efforts of control over him. From one side, her close monitoring suffocates Miles—a young man who needs freedom to socialize with males of his age outside the private space—and forces him to exclaim, "'I want to see more life...I want my own sort!'" (Bontly, 1969, p. 725). From the other side, her effort to save him from wickedness linked to his unrestrained sexuality has the opposite results since their continuous interaction maintains/increases his sexual urges.

Regardless of the ghosts' existence, Quint is the only strong male presence in Miles's mind. In all cases, his description as a handsome man with "red hair and red whiskers, the conventional guise of the Devil" (Fagin, 1941, p. 200) manifests that Miles's unrestrained sexuality is acknowledged by the middle-class Victorian society as a human weakness that can be turned into sin with fatal results if it is not controlled. The Victorian middle-class assumes its claims to gentility through the practice of rigid morality, and James provides clues of Miles's middle-class status when Douglas says that the children's uncle inhabits a house in Harley Street, a place where doctors lived. Living in a neighborhood that attracts professionals, he should be a member of the middle-class (p. 6). Passing from the stage of childhood into the stage of adolescence, the young middle-class Miles, with whom Douglas's male audience can be identified in their early adolescence, is confronted by Devil who uses the former's sexuality to corrupt him. Miles could pass this moral test only with the help of a good and strong male presence that is missing from Bly estate (Bontly, 1969, p. 725). Thus, his shocking death at the end of the story functions as the spiritual cleansing of wicked Miles since Quint leaves him alone, as katharsis for the Victorian middle-class audience since order is restored, and as valuable lesson for the governess-narrator who feels the need to write down her horrible experience as a cautionary tale about the dangers to which insufficient parenting exposes children.

The characters in Henry James's "Daisy Miller"—the other cautionary tale about moral corruption in the white world—resemble those of *The Turn of the Screw*. Mrs Miller may be compared to the uncle, Winterbourne to the governess-narrator, Daisy Miller to Miles, Mrs Costello and Mrs Walker to Mrs Grose, and Mr Giovanelli to Peter Quint and Douglas.

Both Daisy and Miles are deprived of parental supervision. In *The Turn of the Screw*, the governess judges Miles's uncle as an unsuitable person for the paternal role. He is an outgoing man, "a bachelor in the prime of life, such a figure as had never risen, save in a dream or an old novel" (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 6), and the children "were, by the strangest of chances for a man in his position—a lone man without the right sort of experience or a grain of patience—very heavy on his hands" (*The Turn of the Screw*, pp. 6-7). The uncle is a man who yearns for social approval, engaging himself in time-consuming, dangerous recreational activities in remote and strange places and boasts about his success through the

ownership of “a big house filled with the spoils of travel and the trophies of the chase” (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 6). Indeed, the uncle is a full-time socializer whose “own affairs took up all his time” (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 7), and thus, he transfers his paternal responsibility to “the best people he could find to look after them” (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 7). Like the governess, in “Daisy Miller,” Winterbourne accuses Daisy’s mother of not fulfilling her maternal role, throughout the story. Mrs Miller values her social life and image more than the well-being of her children: “I’m [Winterbourne] afraid your mother doesn’t approve of my walking with you.’ Miss Miller gave him a serious glance. ‘It isn’t for me; it’s for you—that is, it’s for *her*’” (“Daisy Miller,” p. 22). In the following three passages, Mrs Miller’s indifference to her supervisory role corresponds to that of the uncle who “put the whole thing on her [the governess] as a favour, an obligation he should gratefully incur” (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 6):

Passage One

[...] They [Daisy and Winterbourne] had come up to Mrs Miller, who, as they drew near, walked to the parapet of the garden and leaned upon it, looking intently at the lake and turning her back upon them (“Daisy Miller,” p. 22).

Passage Two

Winterbourne observed to himself that this was a very different type of maternity from that of the vigilant matrons who massed themselves in the forefront of social intercourse in the dark old city at the other end of the lake. But his meditations were interrupted by hearing his name very distinctly pronounced by Mrs Miller’s unprotected daughter. (“Daisy Miller,” p. 24)

Passage Three

Very often the polished little Roman [Giovannelli] was in the drawing-room with Daisy alone, Mrs Miller being apparently constantly of the opinion that discretion is the better part of surveillance (“Daisy Miller,” p. 46).

Furthermore, like the uncle, Mrs Miller has passed her parental duty to servants and seems to accept the situation as normal, ignoring the potential negative influence of lower-class servants—whom she values as respectable people—on her children. When Daisy asks her mother (Mrs Miller) whether she has taken Randolph (Daisy’s young sibling) to bed, the mother replies that Randolph prefers conversing with the waiter (“Daisy Miller,” p. 23). And when Daisy informs Eugenio (the courier) about her late night meeting with Winterbourne, Mrs Miller remarks, “Do tell her she can’t” (“Daisy Miller,” p. 25).

The mysteriousness and wickedness which define the “fearfully extravagant [...] in a glow of high fashion, of good looks, of expensive habits, of charming ways with women” (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 6) uncle and his nephew Miles and which become impediment toward the uncle’s performing his paternal duty corresponds to the unrefinement which defines both Mrs Miller and Daisy and which disqualifies Mrs. Miller for the maternal role. Mrs Costello asserts that Mrs Miller and Daisy are “hopelessly vulgar” (“Daisy Miller,” p. 31) and although “being bad is a question for the metaphysicians” (“Daisy Miller,” p. 31), Mrs Miller and Daisy are “bad enough to dislike, at any rate; and for this short life that is quite enough” (“Daisy Miller,” p. 31).

Winterbourne and the governess are also characters in James’s two stories who can be compared. Both young characters have embraced a middle-class Victorian attitude towards life. Social image dominates true self, and consequently, self-respect (the private sphere) is formed and maintained through the public performance of gentility, an essential part towards one’s maintenance of social respectability and status. A noteworthy illustration is Winterbourne’s encountering Daisy for the first time, during which he thinks, “How pretty they are!” (“Daisy Miller,” p. 10). The use of the pronoun “they” instead of “she” manifests that Winterbourne views Daisy as a representative of the female American youth. Thus, Winterbourne fails to see Daisy as an individual. Although in his heart “he [Winterbourne] found it very pleasant” to meet a talkative girl (“Daisy Miller,” p. 13) and

noticed that the girl's eyes were singularly honest and fresh ("Daisy Miller," p. 11), Daisy's relaxed behavior empowers her American identity that provides a fixed image of the young female in the mind of Winterbourne who thinks that "she was very unsophisticated; she was only a pretty American flirt" ("Daisy Miller," p. 15). Similarly, the governess is convinced of Miles's complete absence of self; Miles is possessed by Quint, the epitome of immorality. That is, Quint's identity, which is coming from the outer world is imposed on Miles's inner world—"For wickedness. For what else—when he's so clever and beautiful and perfect? Is he stupid? Is he untidy? Is he infirm? Is he ill-natured? He's exquisite—so it can be only *that*" (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 65).

Moreover, in "Daisy Miller," Winterbourne's conversation with Daisy's little brother Randolph reflects his nostalgia for everything American: "American candy's the best candy" (p. 9), "Are American little boys the best little boys? [...] I see you are one of the best!" (p. 9), "American men are the best" (p. 9), and "American girls are the best girls" (p. 9). Although he seems to have adapted to European culture, he still feels emotionally connected to his "fellow-countrymen" ("Daisy Miller," p. 9). Still, although he is excited, Winterbourne tries to control himself, and thus to save his public image as a young gentleman, behaving properly towards the young lady. Both in "Daisy Miller" and *The Turn of the Screw*, Winterbourne and the governess calculate their behavior. Winterbourne "wondered whether he had gone too far [talking to Daisy]" ("Daisy Miller," p. 10), and the governess wonders, "what will they [Miles and Flora] think of that? Doesn't it [affectionate behavior] betray too much?" (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 41). Eventually, both characters take the risk to bend the rules of propriety when the conditions foster such decision. Winterbourne becomes more relaxed towards Daisy when he realizes that he must not practise his duty as a gentleman because she is not practising her duty as a lady: "He [Winterbourne] was ceasing to be embarrassed, for he had begun to perceive that she was not in the least embarrassed herself" ("Daisy Miller," p. 11). Similarly, the governess breaks the rules to perform her duty as a motherly figure: "Oh I [the governess] brought it out now even if I *should* go too far—I just want you to help me to save you!" But I knew in a moment after this that I had gone too far" (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 69).

Another similarity between Winterbourne and the governess is their close monitoring of Daisy and Miles respectively, believing that it is their duty to protect the youth from bad influences. In the early stages of a potential love affair with Daisy¹, Winterbourne enacts the paternal role, an important role of the male lover who must protect the female from public danger and must secure her morality by limiting her access to public space. The following excerpt from "Daisy Miller" is a scene in the Pincian Gardens where Winterbourne accompanies Daisy who has arranged a meeting with Giovanelli:

'I certainly shall not help you to find him,' Winterbourne declared. 'Then I shall find him without you,' said Miss Daisy. 'You certainly won't leave me!' cried Winterbourne. She burst into her little laugh. 'Are you afraid you'll get lost—or run over? But there's Giovanelli, leaning against that tree. He's staring at the women in the carriages: did you ever seen anything so cool?' [...] 'Do you mean to speak to that man?' 'Do I mean to speak to him? Why, you don't suppose I mean to communicate by signs?' 'Pray understand, then,' said Winterbourne, 'that I intend to remain with you.' [...] 'I have never allowed a gentleman to dictate to me, or to interfere with anything I do.' 'I think you have made a mistake,' said Winterbourne. 'You should sometimes listen to a gentleman—the right one!' ("Daisy Miller," pp. 36-37)

¹ Mrs Walker says, "I wished to beg you [Winterbourne] to cease your relations with Miss Miller—not to flirt with her" ("Daisy Miller," p. 41) and Winterbourne replies, "I'm afraid I can't do that [...] I like her extremely" ("Daisy Miller," p. 41). Also, Winterbourne confesses, "I wish you [Daisy] would flirt with me, and me only" ("Daisy Miller," p. 44).

The dialogue above, permeated by sexual hints, reminds us of the dialogue between the governess and Miles in his bedroom. It is too revealing about Winterbourne's zeal to protect Daisy. He is jealous of Giovanelli with whom Daisy has started to develop a close relationship. Winterbourne is convinced that Giovanelli's intentions are immoral, whereas his intentions are pure. Giovanelli has a bad influence on Daisy because he sustains her unrestrained sexuality, "counting upon something more intimate" ("Daisy Miller," p. 37). However, Winterbourne, like a guardian Angel, prevents the worse from happening: "He had not bargained for a party of three" ("Daisy Miller," p. 37). Winterbourne perceives himself a true gentleman, and thus, he believes his presence has a positive influence on Daisy.

The fatal incident of Daisy's spending time with Giovanelli at the Colosseum during the night signals the loss of Winterbourne's hope in saving Daisy Miller who appears, according to him, to be too corrupted to be saved. When Daisy asks Winterbourne whether he believed she was engaged the other day, he replies, "I believe that it makes little difference whether you are engaged or not" ("Daisy Miller," p. 54). In *The Turn of the Screw*, a similar attitude is adopted by the governess in the incident of the last appearance of Miss Jessel to Flora² in the lake. Miles distracts the governess, playing the piano, and Flora steps out of the house. When the governess realizes Miles' deceptiveness, she feels betrayed; her immediate reply to Mrs. Grose's question "You leave him—?" is "So long with Quint? Yes—I don't mind that now" (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 72). Like the governess's words, Winterbourne's words prepare the readers for Daisy's untimely death. Paradoxically, in both stories death has a constructive nature. The governess records her experience to teach a life lesson through which she may save future generations, and Winterbourne starts to shape his own conscience/self through Daisy's death—"One day he spoke of her [Daisy] to his aunt—said it was on his conscience that he had done her injustice" ("Daisy Miller," p. 56)—and confesses to his aunt, "I was booked to make a mistake. I have lived too long in foreign parts" ("Daisy Miller," p. 56). This confession may be read as Winterbourne's proud embracement of his American identity. However, a reading that goes beyond the significance of national labeling and sheds light on how vital for the human society is the shaping of real self that is constructed on a balanced morality may be more plausible since the readers learn that Winterbourne returns to Geneva and not to America.

Daisy and Miles make up another pair of similar characters. Still, there are gender differences between the two characters related to their age as well as their nature. Daisy is seven years older than Miles, but her social circle—represented by Mrs Walker—views her as a naturally uncultivated woman ("Daisy Miller" p. 41) and Winterbourne perceives her as "an extraordinary mixture of innocence and crudity" ("Daisy Miller," p. 29). In opposition, Miles is treated by the governess as a young adult and an equal interlocutor. The governess confesses,

It was extraordinary how my absolute conviction of his secret precocity—or whatever I might call the poison of an influence that I dared but half-phrase—made him, in spite of the faint breath of his inward trouble, appear as accessible as an older person, forced me to treat him as an intelligent equal" (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 68)

Miles is also seen by the governess as a man whose gentleness is an innate virtue. Being unable to trace a possible external source of Miles's wickedness, the governess is convinced that he is an angel (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 22). Similarly, Mrs Grose highlights that "She likes to see young gentlemen not forget their station" (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 39). Daisy and

² We may notice that Flora, like Daisy, becomes ill when she passes from the private space into the public space during the night. But Flora is a secondary character, the younger and more innocent female version of Miles. Miles is responsible for Flora's disappearance from the house since he has probably planned it.

Miles abide to the archetypes of Eve, symbol of the female's internal corruption, and of Adam, symbol of the male's external corruption, respectively.

Daisy's and Miles's portraits are based on common assumptions about the female gender and the male gender. Particularly, a woman—naturally unrefined—never becomes a mature/complete being unless she passes through a full-scale process of learning, fully embracing, and practicing society's codes of proper behaviour, whereas a man is born a complete being whose virtues only need to be fostered within a healthy social environment. It may be further noted that Miles, a young charismatic man, can be intellectually influenced/controlled only by a male positive or negative role model—like Peter Quint—since a man knows how to appeal to people's *logos* (rational thinking), whereas he can be emotionally manipulated by a female figure—like the governess—since a woman knows how to appeal to people's *pathos* (emotions). However, both characters' excessive beauty is equally suspected. Like Miles's charming appearance, Daisy's beauty is immediately noticeable. The narrator informs us that "She saw strikingly, admirably pretty" ("Daisy Miller," p. 10). External beauty may be easily associated with sexuality, which, according to the dominant class-culture, must be suppressed because it encourages people's surrender to their emotions/instincts/personal passions rather than their rational thinking/cultivation/duties. Consequently, when the mixture of beauty and sexuality appears in public sphere threatens the stability and order of the Victorian society.

Daisy Miller and Miles are young individuals who desire to familiarize themselves with the adult world on a social level and feel suffocated under close supervision. Addressing Winterbourne, Daisy's statement "I have never allowed a gentleman to dictate to me, or to interfere with anything I do" ("Daisy Miller," p. 37) echoes Miles's words "To let me alone" (*The Turn of the Screw*, p. 69), addressing the governess. Annie P. Miller's nickname "Daisy" echoes her wild character and Miles's name reveals the big span of his behavior (from angelic to evil and vice versa), being always prompt to stretch the boundaries of his behavior. Beyond the fact that both names reveal the existence of two unconventional characters, they also reveal a difference related to the characters' different gender. The nickname "Daisy," a flower whose roots lie within the earth, connotes stasis/passivity, a feminine trait, whereas the name "Miles" connotes motion/activity which is a masculine trait.

However, the term *stasis* not only connotes fixedness but also resistance. Indeed, Daisy adopts a fixed position of resistance towards the gossips of her surrounding environment: "I, thank goodness, am not a young lady of this country. The young ladies of this country have a dreadfully pocky time of it, so far as I can learn; I don't see why I should change my habits for *them*" ("Daisy Miller," p. 44). Few lines later, Daisy adds, "I'm a fearful, frightful flirt! Did you ever hear of a nice girl that was not?" ("Daisy Miller," p. 44) and indirectly referring to the behavior of Mrs Walker's—a representative of the dominant class-culture—she states, "It seems to me much more proper in young unmarried women that in old married ones" ("Daisy Miller," p. 45). Daisy opposes middle-class monologic discourse on morality, questioning its universal value and uncovering its hypocrisy. Her feminist discourse projects individual conscience as superior to social assimilation, elevating the status of women from mere social puppets to individuals that dare to voice their own needs and desires within a patriarchal society that systematically promotes the model of the silent, passive, and sexually restrained woman. Daisy's rhetoric—especially the use of the adjectives "fearful" and "frightful"—manifests her critical approach towards the middle-class people of her social circle who, encountering Daisy as the "other," feel dissatisfaction, unrest, and fear. Daisy's embracement of her individuality is empowered when she redefines

the concept of the “nice” girl. She presents herself as a positive female model that does not feel guilty to accept her beauty and sexuality as female virtues instead of female weaknesses.

Paradoxically, Daisy employs morality, a concept with which the late Victorian society is preoccupied, as the foundation of her own ethos; her pure and sincere morality does not allow her to conform to the moral standards of the patriarchal society, foregrounding the latter’s hypocrisy. In other words, Daisy attacks the male status quo by using the latter’s means of control. Without denying her femininity, Daisy usurps the title of Angel and redefines it based on the needs of a woman as a person and not a male property, viz., the angel is emotionally and intellectually strong enough to join the public sphere and to experience all facets of life. Daisy harshly criticises Mrs Walker, a married woman who perpetuates female subjugation by practising mimicry in order to attain male approval. Daisy points out that Mrs Walker’s initiation to a lifestyle proposed by the male authority is only superficial. Mrs Walker’s name functions as an acknowledgment of her dubious morality since it attaches to her the popular image of the woman who wanders around and possesses life experiences, mainly of sexual nature. Mrs Walker may have taken the social title of the angel in the house, but this does not mean that she really is. Daisy cleverly employs the rhetoric of morality to show that female hypocrisy not only puts obstacles to women’s physical, intellectual, and emotional independence but also threatens patriarchy. In the case of Mrs Walker, her flirting offends the principles on which the institution of marriage is built on. Indeed, Daisy’s words remind us of Mary Astell’s views presented in her “Some Reflections upon Marriage.” According to Astell, a woman’s ultimate end should not be to become a wife; however, if she chooses this path, she must fully sacrifice her “own will and desires” and “pay such an entire submission for life, to one [her husband] whom she cannot be sure will always deserve it” (Abrams, 1993, p. 2288).

Through his reply to Daisy’s rebellious speech, Winterbourne, like the governess, reveals how easily he can be influenced by his social surroundings: “When you deal with natives you must go by the custom of the place. Flirting is a purely American custom” (“Daisy Miller,” p. 45). Winterbourne’s words do not necessarily depict reality since Europeans and Europeanized Americans, like Giovanelli and Mrs Walker respectively, flirt as well. However, his words echo national stereotypes sustained and promoted by middle-class Americans, like Mrs Costello and Mrs Walker, who live in Europe. Like the governess who values Mrs Grose’s opinion—the latter functioning as the guarantor of the governess’s worth to attain a respectable social position—Winterbourne’s respectability and maintenance of his high social status depend on his acceptance by the American community in Europe. But why does the American community stress the importance of these stereotypes? The rise of an economically powerful Middle-class in the mid-Victorian era had to be maintained through social respectability associated with strict morality since that was the virtue missing from a degenerate Aristocracy. Middle-class’s effort to prove its worth over Aristocracy through the creation of a myth about middle-class descendency becomes double for Americans like Mrs Costello, Mrs Walker, and Winterbourne who live in Europe. Although these American characters have lived for many years in Europe and have fully adapted to European standards of living, they are defined by a collective American consciousness that traces back to the time of the new nation’s establishment. It is not by accident that Henry James refers to Geneva as the city of Calvinism, reminding us that the first inhabitants of America were middle-class Puritans, that is, nonconformists who were marginalized in Europe because they demanded free expression of their religious beliefs along with more political rights. If America and Europe were placed in a system of binary oppositions, America would be the disobedient child and Europe the strict mother; America would be associated with new culture and morals, whereas Europe would be associated with tradition, conformity, and aristocracy.

Thus, Europeanized Americans' respectability is always on stake both because of their national and class backgrounds, and their strict morality, even if it is only verbally expressed, becomes imperative towards the maintenance of their high socio-economic status on an "alien" soil.

Another possible comparison drawn between the characters of *The Turn of the Screw* and "Daisy Miller" is that of Giovanelli and Peter Quint. Both of them are handsome, like to flirt with women,³ and are members of the lower-class:

'He [Giovanelli] is not a gentleman,' said the young American; 'he is only a clever imitation of one.⁴ He is a music-master, or a penny-a-liner, or a third-rate artist. Damn his good looks!' Mr Giovanelli had certainly a very pretty face; but Winterbourne felt a superior indignation at his own lovely fellow-countrywoman's not knowing the difference between a spurious gentleman and a real one ("Daisy Miller," p. 37).

Moreover, like Quint, whose presence at the end of the story provokes Miles's heart failure in the arms of the governess, Giovanelli plays a key role in Daisy's death since she dies from malaria after spending time with him at the Colosseum, during the night.

The role of the European Giovanelli is catalytic for two reasons. The first reason is that he belongs to the lower-class. Giovanelli's resemblance to Peter Quint, brings to the surface Henry James's interest in the emergence of a vocal and influential lower-class. While throughout the two stories, Peter Quint and Giovanelli appear as corrupters of middle-class Miles and Daisy respectively, satisfying middle-class stereotypes about lower-class people, in the end, Quint's role/presence becomes ambivalent—about whom the readers wonder whether he ever existed—and Giovanelli becomes the symbol of true culture that is defined by simple thinking and pure morality since he is the only one in the story that succeeds in solving the mystery that surrounds Daisy's personality. The second reason of Giovanelli's importance is that his opinion about Daisy in the epilogue of "Daisy Miller" reminds us of Douglas's opinion about the governess in the prologue of *The Turn of the Screw*. Through the opinions of Giovanelli and Douglas, Henry James plays tricks on his readers, trying to manipulate their minds and hearts. "Daisy Miller," which chronologically precedes *The Turn of the Screw*, illustrates James's intention to invade the consciousness of his readers by producing a monologic work in which the restoration of a single truth takes place through Giovanelli's last statement: "She was the most beautiful young lady I ever saw, and the most amiable [...] And she was the most innocent" ("Daisy Miller," p. 56). Very few people would question the validity of Giovanelli's last statement who, in the epilogue of the story, is transformed from a common man to a *deus ex machina*. In contrast, *The Turn of the Screw* is a dialogic work in which the more mature Henry James makes Douglas to speak in the prologue, leaving adequate space to the readers to draw their own conclusions in the open to multiple interpretations epilogue.

Various interpretations of Henry James's stories may be applicable, including an interpretation that views Henry James as a Puritan who critically approaches strict morality and exposes its impracticality within a middle-class society that fosters individualism. The clash between duty (strict morality)—which encourages conformity—and individualism (free expression of personal will and desires)—which exalts nonconformity—haunts the human conscience and fosters feelings of frustration in the heart of not only James's middle-class Victorian readers but also today's middle-class readers. Reading "Daisy Miller" and *The Turn of the Screw* as individual cases of middle-class people challenged by this inner conflict

³ "Mr Giovanelli, who spoke English very cleverly—Winterbourne afterwards learned that he had practised the idiom upon a great many American heiresses—addressed her [Daisy] a great deal of very polite nonsense" ("Daisy Miller," p. 37).

⁴ These words remind us of Quint, who was wearing his master's clothes.

and endowing the reading of the two stories with a Puritan understanding of the nature of human experience, Henry James's audience may reflect on the basic human need of the harmonious collaboration of morality shaped by one's identification as a member of society/the whole and free personal expression grounded on one's life purpose of discovering his/her true Self.

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