ISSN: 2472-3703 DOI: 10.6911/WSRJ.202111_7(11).0010

Research on the Causes, Representations and Defense Mechanisms of Anxiety: A Case Study of Henry James's What Maisie Knew

Siya Liu

School of Basic Teaching Apartment, Southwest Petroleum University, Nanchong, 637001, China

Abstract

What Maisie Knew, first published in 1897, was one of Henry James's novels that concerns childhood. The protagonist, Maisie, who was experiencing the divorce of her parents, suffered from anxiety. This essay, by applying Melanie Klein's psychoanalytical approach, first examines the causes and representations of her anxiety, then investigates the defense mechanisms Maisie developed to fight against it, at last explores the disappearance of it so as to demonstrate the protagonist's growth in the course, which is how Maisie grew into an independent subject from an exploited object in the course of defending her anxiety.

Keywords

Anxiety; Growth; Defense mechanism; What Maisie Knew.

1. INTRODUCTION

"As is so often the case with James, the problem is not one of opaqueness. Rather, there is too much to be discerned: overtones, symbols, disturbing implications confront the reader on almost every page." (Wilson 279) Harris W. Wilson's comments on Jamesian writing, on the one hand, indicate the difficulties the critics must confront and overcome when involved in James criticism; on the other hand, they also suggest the very attractions James's works possessed for enormous critics - their inviting diverse readings while defying assured and certain interpretation. Of all the works of James, What Maisie Knew presents a particularly difficult problem of interpretation, and no other of James's novels has been read more contrarily than What Maisie Knew.

What Maisie Knew tells a story about a little girl called Maisie, whose parents got divorced at the very beginning of the novel. The child's custody was granted to both after interminable divorce proceedings, yet a joint custody didn't make a better life for the child but made her the vessel for bitterness and the messenger of insult for her warring parents. With her expanding consciousness, Maisie determined not to be utilized by her parents any more and the parents lost their interest in her therefore. Later her mother remarried her lover Sir Claude and her father remarried Miss Overmore, her previous governess, and Maisie was abandoned to her stepparents Mrs. Beale and Sir Claude by her irresponsible parents, which unexpectedly brought the two together. Mrs. Wix, the elder narrow-minded governess of Maisie, took the affair between Sir Claude and Mrs. Beale as immoral and tried to persuade Sir Claude into giving up Mrs. Beale and living with her and her student. Yet this man was so weak that he surrendered himself to his sexual desire for Mrs. Beale and gave up Maisie. And the child resigned herself to Mrs. Wix in the end.

ISSN: 2472-3703 DOI: 10.6911/WSRJ.202111_7(11).0010

As a pioneering work of Henry James, what sets What Maisie Knew apart from his other works and ensures its cutting edge is its centering upon the consciousness of a child, which endows this novel with more ambiguities and opaqueness. Psychoanalysis, as an efficient way to probe into the inward world of the analysand, would be necessary and helpful to read the psycho of the character and pierce the ambiguities and opaqueness of the work. Questions like what Maisie knew, what she didn't knew, why she knew or didn't, whether she was intentionally self-deceived and alike would be better answered by way of psychoanalysis.

2. THE CAUSES OF ANXIETY

2.1. Maisie's Fear of Abandonment

"If a child's central instinct is survival, her central fear is abandonment." (Hughes 242) For a child like Maisie in whose life love or care is deficient or even completely absent, this statement could not be more truthful. Frustrations of emotional needs and bodily needs are regarded as the two main causes giving rise to Maisie's fear of abandonment.

In the short untitled prologue before Chapter 1 of What Maisie Knew, Henry James has foretold an unsettled life of his little protagonist. The custody of Maisie was granted to both after interminable divorce proceedings. "She was divided in two and the portions tossed impartially to the disputants…she would spend half the year with each." (James 3) The ever-changing habitats, in the first place, are deficient in love and care. Considering the "mutability in the little girl's career" (James 59), lavishing too much love on her becomes unnecessary for either parent. The place she lives in is "as dull as a cold dinner" (James 59). In the schoolroom are only some "meagre appointments" and "grim texts" (James 59) put up on the wall. The lack of school supplies says much about the absence of love and care; the coldness in the schoolroom then demonstrates the indifference of the mother. How little concern or love the girl has been given in the cold shabby room thus could be imagined.

If the unmet emotional needs triggered a fear of abandonment in Maisie, the frustrations of her bodily needs had this fear further intensified. In "Narration and Nurture in What Maisie Knew", Merla Wolk points out that "Separation refers on its most basic psychic level to the separation from the mother's breast" (198). As the first supply of food for the baby, mother's breast is a symbol of source of nurture on which the baby lives. Its presence guarantees the satisfaction of the baby's bodily needs, while their absence foretells the frustrations. Ida, Maisie's mother, didn't show any concern about Maisie, yet she was still the source of nurture for this little girl. Separation from Ida suggests a threat to the supply of her basic needs. When Ida was away, "dinner became a reckless forage in pantries and side boards" (James 57). Her absence became for Maisie many "hungry moments" (57). When the absence became more often, Maisie realized there was nothing waiting for her but a fate of abandonment sooner or later. Just as she expressed to Sir Claude, "she never went home nowadays without expecting to the temple of her studies empty and the poor priestess cast out" (James 84). Maisie's presupposition of her fate exactly conveyed her fear of abandonment.

The frustrations of emotional needs and bodily needs Maisie experienced contributed to a fear of abandonment in this girl. For a child of six years old without any skills to survive, abandonment foreshadows death, and being abandoned is felt as being persecuted. This manifests itself in Maisie's foreseeing her fate in chapter 7 - with six protections, she was to be in the streets, where Mrs. Wix's daughter poor Clara was killed.

2.2. Inaccessible Discourse

If survival is one's basic need, entering the social reality and constructing one's subjectivity is a higher pursuit. Language as the principle of constructing the social reality and webs of

ISSN: 2472-3703 DOI: 10.6911/WSRJ.202111_7(11).0010

meaning defines and dominates one's subjectivity and identity. Failure in entering the discourse and constructing subjectivity is believed as another cause of Maisie's anxiety.

In preface to What Maisie Knew, James has presented his readers the inadequacy in language of his little protagonist "Small children have many more perceptions than they have terms to translate them" (294). Yet putting perceptions into words is the essential way to understand them. Insufficient vocabulary would inevitably bring children difficulties in apprehending things and grasping the significance. Adult families are at this time supposed to perform a translator and amplifier making it clear for the child what a term means and suggests and helping them learn to name. Yet everyone in Masie's family is self-interested and language is only for their selfish utilizations. Rather than clarifying things for the child, these adults intentionally make their language ambiguous and obscure to prevent the child from grasping the significance. And the contingency of their language renders more confusions and mystifying for the child.

Ida is the first one to deny the interpretative efforts of the child. In the opening pages, Maisie expressed to Ida that she thought her governess Miss Overmore would go with her when she was transferred to her father, but only received a hard and angry reply "'It doesn't in the least matter, you know, what you think,'… 'and you had better…learn to keep your thoughts to yourself.'" (James 16). Without any respect or care for the thought of the child, let alone any affirmation, Ida stopped Maisie from learning more and apprehending more by forbidding her naming more about her thought at the very beginning.

Beale is another source of ambiguity. Early in chapter 5, James has revealed to his readers the sexual promiscuity between Beale and Miss Overmore, while left his little protagonist Maisie alone ignorant of it. The child is puzzled of the words her father addressed Miss Overmore "you dear old duck" (James 24), however, knowing nothing of the sexual implications in it. When she tried to figure it out, all she got were prevarications of adults. For instance, the obviously unrelated "'Oh, a long-legged stick of a tomboy: there's none so good as that'" (James 25) was the reply given by her father to her question "'what reason is proper'" (James 25). Miss Overmore alike added to the bewilderment of the child. She denied her staying with Beale and declared she had been all the while with her "tremendous good friends" (James 25), an unclear referent apparently, in the absence of Maisie.

If learning to name defines one's identity and subjectivity, Maisie never achieves for she was never given the chance to understand the principles, let alone master them. Being rejected by the adult world and the social reality inevitably becomes one of the two main sources which give rise to Maisie's anxiety.

2.3. Insecurity and Sensitivity

Insecurity and sensitivity are found as the two primary representations of Maisie's anxiety. Maisie's sense of insecurity reveals itself just as her story begins. Her nurse Moddle took her to Kensington Gardens and sat on the bench watching if she had been playing too far. Moddle's desire was merely that Maisie stayed in sight and the child always met it so easily, because there was a worry in the child that "what should become of her, if, on her rushing back, there should be no Moddle on the bench" (James 9). The child's sense of insecurity is also evident in her fear of being taken away by her mother from her father's house. As the author relates, the child's knowledge that one day her mother would come to take her away "would have darkened all the days if the ingenious Moddle had not written on a paper, in very big, easy words, ever so many pleasures that the child would enjoy at the other house" (James 10). The promises on the paper such as "a mother's fond love" and "a nice poached egg to your tea" (James 10) to assure and comfort the child just reflect the child's insecurity and uncertainty of these things.

ISSN: 2472-3703 DOI: 10.6911/WSRJ.202111_7(11).0010

Because of the lack of security, Maisie, at many times, tended to judge people in terms of the security in them, which in turn bespeaks the insecurity in the child herself and her inner need for security. For example, Maisie considered her governess Miss Overmore as a being more exalted than her nurse Moddle, because the former, however hungry, never disappeared from the class. The standard of security was also applied by the child to her judgement of Mrs. Wix. The child found her governess, in her ugliness and her poverty, conveyed that "she was peculiarly and soothingly safe; safer than anyone in the world…. Mrs. Wix was as safe as Clara Matilda…" (James 21). The child's unconscious emphasis on security or safety, as the author notes, when judging people, exactly suggests her need for it as well as her lack of it.

If insecurity is the relatively more obvious representation of anxiety, sensitivity is more covert one. In What Maisie Knew, readers could find, the little protagonist is obsessed with observations of adult's life around her and is very sensitive to the changes in her environment. As the author showed us, the child ingratiated herself with her father to "enable him to give himself up to her" (James 9); she conformed to Miss Overmore to ensure her governess could love her as she loved the latter; she easily met her nurse's desire of not playing too far in case of abandonment. Although no hysterical symptoms are present in this anxious child, her sensitivity and scrupulousness allowed us readers to see the unsettlement and anxiety hidden inside her.

Although at most times, James's little protagonist acts like a sophisticated adult, who accepts the misfortunes of her life calmly and peacefully, without crying or struggling, yet through the analysis above, we can find under the sophistication beyond her age is insecurity and sensitivity that any child could develop in such a deplorable situation as Maisie.

3. MAISIE'S DEFENSE MECHANISMS AGAINST ANXIETY

3.1. Splitting, Idealization and Denial

According to Klein, when experiencing anxiety, the ego will split the objects into good ones, which gratify the ego, and bad ones, which frustrate it, meanwhile, idealizing the former and denying the latter so as to defend against anxiety.

There are many episodes sprinkled throughout the novel that delineate the development of these defense mechanisms in Maisie. In Chapter Six, James notes, "Parents had come to seem precarious, but governesses were evidently to be trusted" (James 32). As is indicated, Maisie, at this moment, has split the objects in relation to her into good ones, her two trustworthy governesses, and bad ones, her precarious parents.

The two governesses are regarded as good objects because they satisfy Maisie needs for love and care. Although the child sees it perfectly that neither Mrs. Wix nor Miss Overmore could fulfill the child's greedy desire for unlimited, immediate and everlasting gratification, it could not prevent the child from exaggerating the good aspects of them for purpose of helping herself defend against anxiety. Despite the dependence and impotence of Mrs. Wix, Maisie chose to amplify the positive and powerful side of her governess and idealized her as a reliable and intrepid protector. Despite her fully aware of her instrumentality for Miss Overmore, Maisie turned blind to the negative sides of Miss Overmore as she did to Mrs. Wix.

Ida and Beale were classified into the bad objects. Ida left an impression of "danger and pain" (114) for this girl. Maisie was precocious to learn that her mother didn't care about her, as she expressed to Sir Claude "'Mamma doesn't care for me'", "'Not really'" (James 63). And she was extremely afraid of Ida for her violence. Yet when she was served the chance to save herself from the fear and anxiety by denying the existence of the persecutory objects and her painful experience, she embraced it without any hesitation. The episode in which the Captain talked about Ida to Maisie is particularly telling in reflecting Maisie's inner desire to deny and

ISSN: 2472-3703 DOI: 10.6911/WSRJ.202111_7(11).0010

annihilate the bad objects. The Captain spoke of Ida with the admiration and respect that Maisie never heard from any other people. Instead of asserting the contrary that she found herself, at this moment, Maisie totally surrendered herself to the words of the Captain and accepted the new and positive image of her mother. Beale was less violent than his wife yet much more irresponsible and unprincipled. But when Beale pretended to care for Maisie and show tenderness to her, Maisie, as she did in response to the Captain, was moved and excited in tears. Even though she knew very well Beale had his purpose for treating her with tenderness and goodness and she also had experienced too much of Beale's indifference and irresponsibility, Maisie chose to deny all of them at the moment.

Splitting, idealization and denial these defense mechanisms Maisie adopted in response to anxiety allow readers to see the child's efforts in protecting herself from being trapped in her traumatic experiences. And at the same time, readers are also enabled to recognize the fact that the seemingly misinterpretations of Maisie are not due to the limited knowledge of the child, but her psychological strategies.

3.2. Defense for Omnipotence

If splitting, idealization and denial are ways from outside to annihilate the persecutory objects, defense for omnipotence is the way from inside to gain strength. Maisie's defending her omnipotence is by asserting her instrumentality for other people. This is evident mainly in her self-authored utilizations in her relationship with Mrs. Wix and her voluntarily undertaken role in the relationship between Mrs. Beale and Sir Claude.

Mrs. Wix had a daughter who had been killed in an accident, which had her heart broken so that she always mentioned it to her student. And the child first became for her a good listener of her tragic experience, and then an imagined substitution of her dead daughter. "she is your little dead sister" (James 20), as Mrs. Wix told the child. As for this suggestion of the governess, the child took it immediately. She showed great interest in everything about this little sister, and she even went together with Mrs. Wix to see the little huddled grave of this sister. If Mrs. Wix was greatly comforted by giving Maisie the new identity, so was the child by accepting it. Being the substitution of Mrs. Wix's daughter and thus being her support, the child for the first time found the significance of her existence.

Maisie's defense for her omnipotence is more apparent in her self-assertive role in bridging the relationship between her stepmother Mrs. Beale and stepfather Sir Claude. In Chapter eight, when Sir Claude came to Beale's home to take Maisie back, Mrs. Beale flirted with him, and ended up in saying Maisie brought her and Sir Claude together. The latter approved of it and replied "'She has brought you and me together'" (James 49). Not discerning the flirtatious implications in the words of her stepparents, the child broke out with enthusiasm "'I've brought you and her together'" (James 49). Her exclamation seems to claim the significance of her existence and declare to her stepparents "If were not me, your relationships could not be possible". Being useful means being not abandoned. The child had learned this lesson early from her parents.

3.3. Maisie's Romantic Fantasies

Apart from the omnipotent control of outer objects and defense for the omnipotence of herself, creating romantic fantasies is another important tactic Maisie adopted to defend against anxiety. By resorting to childish romantic imagination and creating beautiful fantasies, Maisie attempted to defuse the traumatic nature of her experiences and get her anxiety relieved.

Seeing the world in terms of a story is a distinct feature of a child. Yet if this is out of instinctive tendency at the very beginning, it becomes the child's consciously defensive strategy to relieve anxiety as the story unfolds. The child's romantic imagination started from her stepfather Sir Claude. It budded in the child since her first look of his photograph. As James depicted, "Maisie

ISSN: 2472-3703 DOI: 10.6911/WSRJ.202111_7(11).0010

lost herself in admiration of the fair, smooth face, the regular features, the kind eyes, the amiable air, the general glossiness and smartness of her prospective stepfather" (38). By heavily using fancy words like "fair", "smooth", "kind", "amiable", "glossiness" and "smartness", James reminded his readers of the child's imaginative extravagance of the image of her stepfather. If the effect of a photograph is huge enough, seeing him personally is much more impressive. Sir Claude is imagined as a knight by the child according to the massive hints in the descriptions given by the author. He is "radiant" in the first place, which is exactly in accord with the image of a knight. Then he is believed by the child that he could draw the pain from her predicament, save her from the maltreatment of her nurse and make up for her lessons in the dead schoolroom. These are also what a knight always does. More importantly, his taking hold of the child and kissing her made readers easily associate with a knight's kissing the princess. In a word, all these descriptions suggest that Maisie has pictured Sir Claude as a knight, and accordingly, herself as a princess in distress. It is easy to see the motive of Maisie's creation of the knight image for herself if readers give a thought to the plight of Maisie at this time. All the misfortunes she expected to get rid of are exactly what she was experiencing at the moment, including maltreatment, indifference and a fear of abandonment. Yet by creating such a beautiful and helpful knight image, imagining herself as a princess, and believing the former would come to save her from all her misfortunes, Maisie covered her traumatic experience with a veil of romance and made it less painful and miserable.

To wrap up, these mechanisms play a role mainly in two ways. One is to deny the badness, and the other exaggerate the goodness. They could help the child to get comfort and relief for a while, yet they can also make the child produce misinterpretations about her world and thus they are to the disadvantage of the child's perception and understanding of the reality in the long run. To grow up in a real sense and deal with anxiety effectively, the child must enhance her sense of reality and confront the world bravely. That is what Maisie did in the later stage.

4. THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ANXIETY

4.1. Maisie's Disillusion of Fantasies

Maisie's growth is characterized by her growing awareness of the unreal fantasies and her increasing sense of reality. Just as Walter Isle once suggested, Maisie's "real education, her development as an individual, is marked by her growing ability to distinguish between real and unreal, between true and false" (154-5). If in England Maisie was still a child who dwelled in her childish romantic fantasies and arrived at her conclusions by mere sensation of simple, unrelated perceptions and feelings, she began to question the source of real knowledge and grew mature in France.

Maisie's enormous romantic fantasies about Sir Claude collapsed in France. He drew the pain from her predicament and saved her from the maltreatment. And the foreign travel he initiated further made the child believe he could bring her a bright future and allow her to continue to live in her romantic fantasies. Yet things turn to be different during this travel. As James W. Gargano once indicated, Maisie would finally be compelled to learn, "a lesson terrible to a child, that her fairy-tale hero is incapable of ideal behavior in the real world" (40). Maisie began to learn this when she talked about their journey to Paris with Sir Claude. When she asked without a single scruple her partner when they could start for Paris. The answer, however provided by her partner gave the child "the least little chill" (James 171), "'I don't quite know about Paris'", "'Certainly, Paris is charming. But… I mean it's so beastly expensive'" (James 171-2). This was the first time that Sir Claude had spoken bluntly about his limited pockets to the child. And the child was also for the first time aware of the fact that even her hero was not omnipotent. He couldn't bring her to Paris as he could not continue to be her romantic fantasies. The

ISSN: 2472-3703 DOI: 10.6911/WSRJ.202111_7(11).0010

unreachable Paris, therefore, in a sense foreshadowed the disillusion of the child's romantic fantasies.

Maisie's fantasies were completely destroyed when she and Sir Claude failed to catch the train to Paris. When she was required by Sir Claude to give up Mrs. Wix and live with Mrs. Beale and him, the child perfectly saw the weakness of Sir Claude and his irredeemable sexual desire for Mrs. Beale. Yet frightened as she was, and clearly as she saw that he would be more likely to refuse her suggestion, the child was still bold to ask if he would go to Paris with her. Sir Claude's reaction just verified her conjecture and while he was dawdling, the train left. Paris was the ideal place for housing all of Maisie's fantasies and her suggestion at this time could be deemed as her last struggle for her fantasies with her full knowledge of her situation. Obviously, the ending failed her. All of her romantic fantasies died away as the train to Paris went afar.

To defend against anxiety and get comfort, Maisie created for herself enormous romantic fantasies. Dramatically, it is the disillusion of all the fantasies that made Maisie get rid of the anxiety and find comfort at last. Yet not paradoxically at all. Behind the seemingly contradictory causes and effects is Maisie's remarkable growth and maturity.

4.2. The Establishment of Subjectivity

If getting out of the romantic fairy-tale world is Maisie's first step towards growth, establishing her subjectivity in the real world marks her development as a subject. Maisie's established subjectivity is mainly reflected in two aspects, namely, the acquisition of true knowledge and the formation of self.

Maisie was once trapped in the dark and closed schoolroom during her days in England. All that she was exposed to were her governesses, nurses and her not very watchful parents, from whom she acquired her negligible knowledge. Yet the travel to France opened the door to a new world for her. She was brought to a bright and free world, in which her mind got sharpened and she began actively to participate in perceiving the world and looking for the real. Maisie's quickly picking up French and learning to name things and understand their meanings exactly marked her entering into the discourse. She was no longer trapped in the ambiguity or excluded from the webs of meaning. With the acquisition of true knowledge by her quickly learning new things and accepting them, Maisie morphed into an independent and active subject from the previously ignorant and passive object.

Maisie's subjectivity is also evident in the formation of self. She had once catered to the needs of others in order to enter the social reality. Yet with her growing maturity, the child learned more about the desires of herself and she began to live for her own wants. When Sir Claude pretended to play fair with Maisie and asked her to sacrifice Mrs. Wix, despite her love and passion for her stepfather, the child wasn't fooled by his suggestion, but in return demanded Sir Claude to give up Mrs. Beale. She was fully aware of Sir Claude's sexual desire for Mrs. Beale, and she was also clear about her own desire for her stepfather. She wanted to have him alone for herself. When Sir Claude was so eager to get rid of Maisie that he told Mrs. Wix that Maisie refused his proposal of giving up Mrs. Wix, instead of being manipulated by Sir Claude and allowing him to be in charge of her own life, the child found her voice, "'I didn't refuse. I didn't'" (James 259). From this episode, we can see Maisie has grown from an ignorant child who could only please others and listen to others to an independent subject who could bravely speak out her desires and refuse the manipulation of others.

Growing ability to tell true from false and the formation of an independent self demonstrate that Maisie was no longer the ignorant and dependent object. She has grown into an independent subject who could think independently and act on her own.

ISSN: 2472-3703 DOI: 10.6911/WSRJ.202111_7(11).0010

4.3. Maisie Growing out of Anxiety

Maisie's anxiety didn't vanish overnight just as her growth didn't happen in one day. There are some remarkable turning points that could delineate the process of the disappearance of Maisie's anxiety.

The first turning point that marks the beginning of the disappearance of Maisie's anxiety was when her efforts to catch the train to Paris failed. "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 as Sir Claude's, and then she saw that his was not." (James 252) James drew a striking contrast between Maisie and Sir Claude here. Maisie's fear and anxiety went away just as the train did, while Sir Claude was still afraid of himself so hopelessly. Maisie saw her fears and desires, and she dared to struggle for them and accept an unsatisfying result peacefully. Sir Claude saw his too, but he surrendered himself to them and preferred to be tortured by them rather than confront them.

James's most artful contrast was in the last scene of the novel:

It sank slowly and imperfectly; but at last, in mid-channel, surrounded by the quiet sea, Mrs. Wix had courage to revert, 'I didn't look back, did you?'.

'Yes. He wasn't there,' said Maisie.

'Not on the balcony?'

Maisie waited a moment; then, 'He wasn't there,' she simply said again. (265)

This conversation happened in the last scene was brief yet quite rich in meaning. On the one hand, James drew a contrast between Maisie and Mrs. Wix in the small talk. Mrs. Wix dared not to look back to see whether Sir Claude was still there and she "had courage" to ask Maisie about that till they were in mid-channel. Just like Maisie, Mrs. Wix, harbored her desire for Sir Claude as well. She was not willing to accept the fact that this man finally gave them up because of his weakness. Maisie, however, looked back fearlessly and accepted the fact peacefully. By using the word "simply" to describe Maisie's tone in answering Mrs. Wix's question, James had the child's calmness and fearlessness presented. On the other hand, a contrast was also made between Maisie and Sir Claude here. Maisie saw back while Sir Claude disappeared from the balcony. The former dared to face the result, while the latter dared not. He surrendered himself to his desire and disappointed the child whom he once promised that he would stay forever with. Therefore, he went away as soon as possible so as not to be tormented by his conscience. By drawing these two contrasts, James presented his readers a fearless and mature Maisie.

Just as Maisie once said, "I feel as if I had lost everything" (James 257), so she did. She lost her parents, her stepparents, her romantic fantasies and her childhood. Nevertheless, she lost her anxiety in the process as well.

5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, this essay probes first into the causes and representations of Maisie's anxiety, then into the defense mechanisms she developed to fight against the anxiety and at last into the disappearance of the anxiety. In the course of the development of Maisie's anxiety, readers are not only allowed to catch a glimpse of the exploitation on the childhood by the irresponsible and selfish adults, but also have an insight into the psyche of the child and have a better understanding of it. And most importantly, they are enabled to see the growth of the child, who has grown into an assertive subject from a passive object. Her childhood was gone, so was her anxiety. There are evils in What Maisie Knew, admittedly, yet the integrity and innocence the child preserved in a corrupt and deplorable environment are the key points that James meant to highlight. Growing in the silt but not imbrued, Maisie is the most beautiful flower in her creator's writing.

ISSN: 2472-3703 DOI: 10.6911/WSRJ.202111_7(11).0010

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work is supported by Social Science Foundation of Nanchong City (NC21C140).

REFERENCES

[1] Armstrong, Paul B. "How Maisie Knows: The Phenomenology of James' Moral Vision." Texas Studies in Language and Literature 20.4 (1978): 517-537.

[2] Banta, Martha. "The Quality of Experience in What Maisie Knew." New England Quarterly 42.4 (1969): 483-510.

[3] Everett, Barbara. "Henry James's Children, in Children and Their Books: A Celebration of the Work of Iona and Peter Opie, ed. Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 317-315.

[4] Edgar, Pelham. Henry James: Man and Author. New York: Russell & Russell, 1927. Print.

[5] Engel, Susan. "Looking Backward: Representations of Childhood in Literary Work." The Journal of Aesthetic Education 33.1 (1999): 50-55.

[6] Foster, Dennis. "Maisie Supposed to Know: Amo(u)ral Analysis." The Henry James Review 5.3 (1984), 207-216.

[7] Goodman, Charlotte. "The Sins of the Fathers and Mothers: The Child as Victim in Modern Literature." Modern Language Studies 15.2 (1985): 47-54.

[8] Hughes, Clair. "'Sex in the Chapeau'-Accessories to What Maisie Knew." The Henry James Review 31.3 (2010): 239-245.

[9] Heller, Lee E. "The Paradox of the Individual Triumph: Instrumentality and the Family in 'What Maisie Knew'." South Atlantic Review 53.4 (1988): 77-85.

[10] Hynes, Joseph A. "The Middle Way of Miss Farange: A Study of James's Maisie." ELH 32.4 (1965): 528-553.

[11] [Jeffers, Thomas L. "Maisie's Moral Sense: Finding Out for Herself." Nineteenth-Century Fiction 34.2 (1979): 154-172.

[12] James, Henry. What Maisie Knew. London: Penguin Group, 2010.

[13] James, Henry. "The Art of Fiction." Longman's Magazine 4 (1884): 1-9.

[14] Klein, Marcus. "What to Make of Maisie." New England Review 27.4 (2006): 134-157.

[15] Klein, Melanie. Envy and Gratitude and Other Works. The International Psycho-Analytical Library 104, 1975.

[16] Locke, Richard. Critical Children: The Use of Childhood in Ten Great Novels. New York: Columbia UP, 2011. Print.

[17] Marotta, Kenny. "What Maisie Knew: The Question of Our Speech." ELH 46.3 (1979): 495-508.

[18] Michals, Teresa. "Henry James and the Invention of Adulthood." Novel 44.2 (2011): 229-248.

[19] Özlem ÖZEN. "Different Realms of Perception in What Maisie Knew." Selcuk University Social Institute Journal 25 (2011): 203-207.

[20] Smith, J. Oates. "Henry James and Virginia Woolf: The Art of Relationships." Twentieth Century Literature 10.3 (1964): 119-129.

[21] Smith, Geoffrey D. "How Maisie Knows: The Behavioral Path to Knowledge." Studies in the Novel 15.3 (1983): 224-236.

ISSN: 2472-3703 DOI: 10.6911/WSRJ.202111_7(11).0010

[22] Teahan, Sheila. "What Maisie Knew and the Improper Third Person." The Turn of the Screw and What Maisie Knew. Ed. Neil Cornwell and Maggie Malone. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. 220-236. Print.

[23] Wasiolek, Edward. "Maisie: Pure or Corrupt?" College English 22.3 (1960): 167-172.

[24] Wilson, Harris W. "What Did Maisie Know?" College English 17.5 (1956): 279-282.

[25] Wolk, Merla. "Narration and Nurture in What Maisie Knew." The Henry James Review 4.3 (1983): 196-206.