Seeking for Sexual Identity: Homosexuality and Homoerotic Desire in Henry James's Novels

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Seeking for Sexual Identity:
Homosexuality and Homoerotic Desire in Henry James’s Novels

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Contents

1. Introduction ................................................................. 1
2. Queer Desire in James's Ghost Stories—“The Romance of Certain Old Clothes” and “The Friends of the Friends” ......................... 10
3. A Subtle Homoeroticism in a Homosocial Bond in Washington Square . 29
4. Homoeroticism and Desire for Father Figures in The Portrait of a Lady. 50
5. The Process of Lost Love: Romantic Friendship in The Bostonians . . . 67
6. A Negative Legacy and Homoeroticism in The Princess Casamassima . . 86
7. Physical Contact and Homosexuality in The Spoils of Poynton .... 101
8. A Melting Pot of Affections in The Other House ..................... 120
9. Homosexuality and Class in The Turn of the Screw .................... 140
10. Redemption of a Son in The Ambassadors ............................. 161
11. Homoerotic Romance in The Wings of the Dove ..................... 182
12. Conclusion ................................................................. 215
Works Cited ................................................................. 219
1. Introduction

The most notable characteristic of Henry James's writing is arguably the ambiguous style, which is caused by his interest in subtle indescribable elements of human relationships. This ambiguous style and shifts in theme makes it difficult to explore consistency and development in James's writing. However, if we look at his novels from a particular viewpoint, we could see that many of his novels are organized by a principle: same-sex love. His works have been traditionally classified into three groups: in the first phase, James wrote novels on the theme of contact between heterogeneous cultures; in the second phase, he attempted social novels; and in the third phase, usually described as the major phase, James dealt with an international theme in a more intricate way. This classification, however, cannot explain the development of his career adequately because the theme suddenly changed in the second phase. It also neglects the importance of the works written between the second and the third phase.

It would not be a problem that his writings do not have any consistent theme if James were the kind of writer who loved randomness in plot and theme; however, as we all know, he was particular about what he was writing. *The Ambassadors*, which is composed very carefully, is a good example: it follows a man's awakening consciousness in third person narrative. Similar to *The Ambassadors*, *What Maisie Knew* sees events from a girl's viewpoint, which reveals the secrets of adults; but the hidden meanings of these events are not explained clearly since the girl herself
does not understand them. By this method, readers are able to know the mental growth of the protagonists as an objective fact; and at the same time, this method creates an effect of suspense and enables us to follow each step of the protagonists’ spiritual growth from within. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, the most characteristic elements of the work are the wicked characters who trouble the heroine. The evilness is conveyed by an accumulation of ominous atmosphere. It is difficult to point out the exact villainy by Gilbert Osmond and Madame Merle, but we clearly sense their sinister nature after having finished reading this novel. All of these works required a careful and skillful writing ability. In addition, James revised most of the works at least twice: he rewrote for a book form shortly after the serialization for magazines, and at the last stage of his writing career he went through the overall revision of his works for the New York edition. Most of the books not included in the New York edition were revised for publication in another country. When he revised his stories, he wrote down numerous balloons of comments in the narrow margins of his manuscripts. Most revisions are concerned with a word or a phrase: he considered well whether each word was related to the theme of the novel.

James rewrote his works not only until he grasped what he would like to express in a single work but also until the themes of all the works were collectively unified. Viewed in this light, it is highly possible that James would have a theme which he developed throughout his life. This thesis argues that same-sex love is the key to understanding his works. Before arguing the importance of reading James’s novels from the perspective of same-sex love, we need to define the usage of the terms. This
paper will refer to sexual desires between characters of the same sex as homosexuality and ambiguous same-sex affections as homoeroticism. The difference lies in the presence or absence of physical desires. Strictly speaking, James did not write about sexual relations between same sex characters; according to Robert Milder, in the nineteenth century, homosexuality meant a sexual act or genital fantasy (74). The word “fantasy” is important especially when we read James’s homoerotic novels. As Hugh Stevens states, James had an interest not in the homosexual act itself but in same-sex affection (“Queer Henry” 124). In this case, it might be proper to call the relationship homoeroticism; but, some characters such as Fleda and Mrs. Gereth are repeatedly placed in sensual physical contact, if not through genital acts. In such cases, their desires are figuratively expressed as if they actually did perform sexual acts; hence, this paper will call these same-sex desires as homosexual. The term “homosexuality” is also used in considering each characters’ sexuality. If a character has a tendency to choose a character of the same-sex as a sexual object, this paper will refer to their sexual orientation as homosexuality. Other characters have romantic feelings including a wish to stay with their friends, jealousy, and an excessive sorrow over their loss of their friends. In these cases, this paper will refer to the mixture between friendship and romantic love as homoeroticism.

James remained single all his life although some women secretly wanted to marry him. He felt comfortable in women’s society as though he were a boy talking with his mother, but he rather feared building intimate relationships with women. This position as an observer in the marriage
market made him an incomparable novelist. However, it does not follow that he maintained a serene state of mind; instead, he struggled to know his sexual identity. This struggle seems to be reflected on his works. Hyacinth Robinson in *The Princess Casamassima* is distressed by his difficult circumstances: he wanted to join ordinary people who build intimate relationships with the opposite sex and to know the world directly, but he realized that he cannot join them, which brings him to commit suicide in despair. This position of Hyacinth’s as an observer reminds us of the author himself. Olive Chancellor in *The Bostonians* also wants to have Verena Tarrant to herself, but she fails to act on her resolution. Olive cannot ignore the normative voice from the outer world. Similar to Olive, Rose Armiger in *The Other House* cannot declare that she will not marry men but will live with the memory of her female friend. Neither Olive nor Rose can establish a solid sexual identity. Many characters in James’s stories are thus always troubled by their ambiguous sexual identities: they cannot enter the heterosexual world, but still cannot build intimate relationships with same-sex friends. Their sufferings come from James’s conflicting feelings.

The theme of homosexuality in James’s works has been explored since the 1990s, when Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Wendy Graham, Eric Savoy, Terry Castle and Michael Moon published their brilliant studies on James and homosexuality, by which Jamesian scholars began to take homosexuality seriously as an object of study (Stevens, *Henry James and Sexuality* 61). Especially Sedgewick has published the most influential study on homosexuality in James’s works by employing “The Beast in the Jungle.” She clarified that the short story described the main character’s
consciousness of “the closet.” Following her lead, critics began to discuss the narrative style or the structure of the novels as reflecting the consciousness of homosexuals or the relationship between the divergent and normative. Thus the theme of homosexuality itself has been discussed over a few decades. However, the works that those studies deal with heretofore have been limited to certain stories: *Roderick Hudson*, *The Bostonians*, “The Beast in the Jungle,” “The Figure in the Carpet,” and “The Author of ‘Beltraffio’” are often dealt with. Stevens discussed queerness in *In the Cage* in *The Cambridge Companion to Henry James*, which is an innovative criticism and leads us to further queer readings of James’s works. Savoy also tries to clarify the interrelation between the international theme and homosexuality by employing “The Jolly Corner” (“The Queer Subject” 2-3). However, there are many stories which have not been read from the perspective of homosexuality yet. Moreover, except for an anthology edited by John R. Bradley, previous studies on homosexuality in Henry James’s works have concentrated on understanding large frames such as narrative structure. They mentioned scenes and passages from the stories in passing, but did not focus on the characters’ emotional turmoil. They also pointed out homosexual tendencies in various characters in a rambling manner and did not consider the relationship of each characters’ sexuality to the theme of the novels. They did not consider how the author’s consciousness of sexuality changed in each phase. This thesis will clarify these points by considering the association of characters’ sexuality with the themes of the novels and by focusing on characters’ mental sufferings. The works this thesis will discuss mark important turning points in James’s consciousness.
of sexuality. Making clear the characters’ plight in society, we will learn through their consciousness what James suffered. Most of the works dealt with in this thesis have not been discussed fully in previous studies; hence, this thesis will contribute to the development of practical queer readings of James’s works.

Firstly this thesis will argue that “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes” describes homoeroticism between sisters. James had admired his brother William, and this admiration seems to have led to an interest in homoeroticism. “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes” reveals the germ of James’s interest in homoeroticism and his irritation at his failure to unite with his brother. These feelings are pursued more deeply in Washington Square. The battle between a father and his daughter’s fiancé is the central theme in this novel. We will look at a subtle homoeroticism latent in heterosexuality in this chapter. Then we will move on to The Portrait of a Lady, which is the most important novel in the first phase since themes, characters, and motives in other short stories are incorporated into this novel. Similar to “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes” and Washington Square, it is a story of marriage; but, homoerotic desire for father figures appears at crucial turning-points and interferes with the completion of the marriage plot. In line with the traditional classification, this thesis insists that these works constitute the first phase.

After depicting the homoeroticism latent in heterosexuality, James began in the second phase to consider how same-sex desires are generated or thwarted in society. In The Princess Casamassima, Hyacinth regards himself as a double of his mother and his father as an object of desire.
Parental love was broken by a class-conscious society, and thereby homoerotic yearning for the paternal figure was generated. In *The Bostonians* published in the same year, James focused on the fact that a customary female relationship breaks a same-sex bond.

The most crucial phase lies in an interval between the social novels in the middle phase and masterpieces in the major phase. This paper will refer to this interval as the third phase to make the works in this period independent. Due to the change in the culture, James seems to have grown his consciousness of homosexuality. Thanks to the developments in medical science concerning sexuality and to a public performance or a campaign on behalf of homosexuality such as John Addington Symonds and Oscar Wilde did, homosexuality was discovered and became visible.\(^1\) James himself became aware of his homoerotic feelings for younger men. During this period, he began to exchange passionate letters with those men. He often rented out rooms at the Lamb House to male artists for use as a studio and thereby lived with them. Another secret James kept was his relationship with Constance Fenimore Woolson, who was James's closest female friend. They spent much time together alone. James did not intend to marry her; hence he kept his association with her secret from other friends. Their relationship ended with Woolson’s suicide. Under these circumstances, James considered more deeply the subject of homosexuality. In *The Spoils of

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\(^1\) Regarding the factors in the cultural change, Bradley refers to the publication of *The Renaissance* by Walter Pater and the demonstration against homosexuality and prostitution in Hyde Park in 1885 as well as the Amendment Act in 1885, the Cleveland Street scandal, the Oscar Wilde trials in 1895, Symonds's books about Greek pederasty, and medical books on homosexuality (59).
Poynton, James considered how homosexuals at the time could not recognize their sexuality. From this novel, passionate physical contact between same-sex characters began to be described. In The Other House, James described the mental suffering of a conscious lesbian for the first time. A year later, James finished writing The Turn of the Screw, in which he viewed that homosexuals from the upper-classes were agonized by both their sexuality and their sense of responsibility for middle-class spinsters’ plights. In this phase, James developed the method of double-entendre and the description of homoerotic physical contact; hence, the importance of the third phase should be more stressed.

Finally, in the fourth phase, James became concerned with more personal problems. He had wondered how he should name his sexual identity: he did not want to marry or love women, but he did not reject their society. James was also attracted to men, but he feared coming out as a homosexual and having sexual relations with them. James loved young artists more deeply than before during this period, but he could not build any intimate relationships with them. His deeper affection for men is described in The Ambassadors: Louis Lambert Strether decides to protect his beloved young man at any cost. Although hurt by the young man’s indifference, Strether chooses to record the memory of the days when he stayed with him. James gradually began to accept his complex sexual identity: he chose men for his partners, but he was not willing to have sexual relationships with them. In The Wings of the Dove, Susan Stringham adores her young partner and composes her legend. By sublimating Milly as a poem, Susan succeeds in loving Milly without becoming addicted to her or
suffering from her indifference. As well as Susan, James gave up solid homosexual relationships in the real world and sublimated his own homoerotic feelings for men into a work of art. At the same time, he stopped thinking about the possibility that he might have been able to love women.

Seen from the importance of the third phase, in which social, authorial, and personal issues around homosexuality considerably changed, James's whole works should thus be classified into four phases so that we can evaluate the works written in the third phase properly—not as a mere study for the masterpieces in the major phase but as works with intrinsic value. Most of the works discussed in this thesis are not included in the New York edition, and accordingly the importance of these works has been ignored by critics. This thesis attempts to show the significance of the unfamiliar works and to highlight James's works from a different viewpoint. Finally, this thesis would like to reveal how James's concern for homosexuality and homoeroticism developed and how important dividing the whole works into four groups is.
2. Queer Desire in James’s Ghost Stories—“The Romance of Certain Old Clothes” and “The Friends of the Friends”

I. Introduction

James’s ghost stories tend to consider the border between norm and aberration. For example, “De Gray: A Romance,” which is based on a vampire legend, describes a wife who sucks the life out of her husband. “Maud-Evelyn” deals with an unsubstantial marriage: a man marries a girl who has been dead for many years and whom he has never met in her life. These two supernatural tales enable us to consider the meaning of marriage. There is another type of supernatural story which considers the subject of identity. “The Private Life” is a story about a ghost writer. He is literally a ghost and vicariously authors books for another writer. Thanks to the ghost, the writer has achieved success. However the narrator wonders by which identity the writer is recognized. “The Jolly Corner” is a story of an alter ego: the protagonist thinks what life he would have led if he had stayed in America instead of living in Europe and begins to see his alter ego. In “The Beast in the Jungle,” the protagonist believes that a great misfortune will befall him, and the presentiment molds his character. In The Turn of the Screw, a boy who is literally or figuratively haunted by a ghost dies when the evil influences are driven away. These ghost stories consider the subject of marriage and identity; and thereby they tackle the subject of cultural norms and those who deviate from them.

The relationship between the dominant culture and the people it marginalizes is also considered from the perspective of sexuality. Sedgwick
reads a homosexual panic into “The Beast in the Jungle” (205-208). *The Turn of the Screw* has a blank in the center of the narrative, and the gap presents a sexual aberration. Readers cannot know clearly what evilness the children harbor, whether or not they are really corrupted by Quint and Jessel, and what Quint did in the past at Bly. All these questions remain unsolved, but the narrative suggests that they are related to Quint and Jessel’s sexual aberration. Stevens regards some ghost stories written in the late 1890s including “The Alter of the Dead,” “The Jolly Corner,” “The Beast in the Jungle” as a reaction to the “appearance” of homosexuality (*Henry James and Sexuality* 117). Stevens also points out that “Owen Wingrave” and “The Real Right Thing” as well as *The Turn of the Screw*, “Beast in the Jungle,” and “The Jolly Corner” reveal James’s anxiety that he may be more horrible in nature than Wilde, whose showy performance James abhorred (132).

Thus queer criticism has thrown new light on James’s ghost stories: however, the first ghost story “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes” has been neglected by critics.2 “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes” is a story about a rivalry between sisters, Rosalind and Perdita, for marriage to Arthur Lloyd. At first, he marries Perdita and after her death, marries Rosalind. The sisters are jealous of each other and continue to contest against each other for a superior position. Finally when Rosalind tries to rob

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2 Diane M. Chambers reads “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes” from Girard’s triangular desire and discovers a problem that Girard’s model supposes only male same-sex relationships (2). Though Chambers does not consider female homoerotic relationships, she discovers that “The Romance” describes the relationship between a female subject and her role model. Yet, she does not argue for homoeroticism.
the late Perdita of precious clothes, Perdita’s ghost inflicts a terrible revenge upon her sister. Rosalind dies, scratched on the face. This story was published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1868 when James was 25 years old. He would go to Europe in a year to re-experience the refinement of European culture as an adult. In short, James was not a famous writer yet, and unlike his abstruse style in the late works, this short story was simply written. Furthermore, unlike the later ghost stories, there is not a psychological reason for the appearance of the ghost; hence, this story has been neglected by critics for a long time.

However, it is worth noting that the sisters have strong love and hate. This chapter will consider how Rosalind’s love for Perdita is defeated and how this story is related to another ghost story “The Friends of the Friends,” which describes a complicated triangular relationship between two women and a man.

II. Henry’s Love for William

“The Romance of Certain Old Clothes” was not included in the New York edition, but James revised it twice; hence, he at least found an importance in this short story. The story was published in 1868 for the first time. During that year, Henry was forced to stay in Cambridge for financial reasons: William went abroad and the Jameses could not afford to allow two sons to live in Europe at the same time. Henry complained about the dullness of life in Cambridge to William: “Life here in Cambridge—or in this house, at least, is about as lively as the inner sepulchre” (*Letters* I: 80). He asked William not to pretend that his life in Germany was as dull as
Henry’s own life in Cambridge. His frustration comes from not only a thirst for European culture but also his wish to imitate his brother. Leon Edel, who sees the fraternal relationship as the model of “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes,” points out the fact that when Henry was writing this story, he ordered the same clothes as William’s (Untried Years 249-50). Forced to live apart, Henry might have felt his brother close to him by wearing the same clothes and imitating his identity.

Henry’s love for William seems to have been stronger than mere fraternal affection. Henry wrote in his letter to his best friend Thomas Sergent Perry that his life was darkened by his brother’s death as if his own life ended: “I sit heavily stricken and in darkness—for from far back in dimmest childhood [William] had been my ideal Elder Brother, and I still, through all the years, saw in him, even as a small timorous boy yet, my protector, my backer, my authority and my pride” (Letters IV: 561). After William’s death, his wife wanted James to write a biography of William. James set about his task, but somehow he wrote his own biography (Autobiography vii). This is the origin of A Small Boy and Others. Henry seems to have thought that his self was inseparably intertwined with William’s. A Small Boy is also longer than what Mrs. William James required; the length reveals how Henry entertained a feeling which he could not compress into a short work.

Henry adored William too much, and Henry’s reverential awe made him fear William. Before writing “The Romance,” William came back from Brazil in 1866, and then Henry’s mysterious back-ache returned (Edel, Untried Years 241). However, soon after William left for Germany, Henry
got well (Edel, *Untried Years* 242). In 1868, William came back to Cambridge, and again Henry’s back was too painful to read or write (Edel, *Untried Years* 243). Thus Henry repeatedly experienced physical disorders at the same time as William’s appearance.

Some critics have pointed out that Henry’s love for William was not fraternal but romantic. Richard Hall investigates Henry’s romantic feelings for William minutely. When Hall discussed this homoerotic and incestuous desire for William with the famous biographer Edel, he agreed with Hall’s opinion (84-85). 3 According to Hall, Maxwell Geismar also realizes that Henry’s yarning for his brother motivated his writing (86). Hall focused on especially an episode which remains a mystery for critics. As Hall notes, one of James’s homosexual friends Edmund Gosse heard a strange episode from James:

I [Gosse] was staying alone with Henry James at Rye one summer, and as twilight deepened we walked together in the garden. I forget by what meanders we approached the subject, but I suddenly found that in profuse and enigmatic language he was recounting for me an experience, something that had happened, not something repeated or imagined. He spoke of standing on the pavement of a city, in the dusk, and of gazing upwards across the misty street, watching, watching for the lighting of a lamp in a window on the third storey. And the lamp blazed out, and through bursting tears he strained to see what was behind it, the unapproachable face. And for hours he stood there,

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3 Edel only suggested Henry’s homoerotic love for William in his biography (Hall 84-85), and Geismar only mentioned it in passing (Hall 86).
wet with rain, brushed by the phantom hurrying figures of the scene, and never from behind the lamp was for one moment visible the face. The mysterious and poignant revelation throttled oneself by an overpowering emotion. And for a long time Henry James shuffled beside me in the darkness, shaking the dew off the laurels, and still there was no sound at all in the garden but what our heels made crunching the gravel, nor was the silence broken when suddenly we entered the house and he disappeared for an hour. (Gosse 34; Hall 88-89)

This episode was again told to Hugh Walpole, another gay companion of James’s, twelve years later (Hall 89): “Sexually also [James] had suffered some frustration. What the frustration was I [Walpole] never knew, but I remember him telling me how he had once in his youth in a foreign town watched a whole night in pouring rain for the appearance of a figure at a window. ‘That was the end . . . [sic]’ he said, and broke off” (Walpole 76: Hall 89). Specifying the period at which the above episode took place, Hall concludes that the man was William (89).4 According to Hall, this episode shows a sexual exclusion, and this theme—a person who is shut out from what he yearned for—is repeatedly used in James’s novels (89).

Henry’s love for William is hard to figure out. The above episodes suggest homoerotic concern and are surely contentious or even speculative

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4 Sheldon M. Novick suggests the possibility that the man James waited for was Paul Zhukovsky (The Young Master 347); but given James’s romantic relationship with Walpole, it is not likely that James was nostalgic for his former lover before his present one. His attachment to William is incestuous; and all the more traumatic and ambiguous at the same time.
too. To consider homoeroticism in James’s fraternal love, let us look at the relation between his possible romantic love for William and some stories. Henry psychologically remained in the old days he spent with his brother. Henry, William and Alice were the closest of the Jameses; and even after other younger brothers left home, the three siblings remained at their parents’ house. In 1868, just before James wrote “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes,” the Jameses moved to the house on Quincy Street which their father, who enjoyed a peripatetic life, chose for their final home (Edel, *Untried Years* 242); and there the grown-up siblings enjoyed one another’s society. James often employed two male characters like brothers and a maternal figure who is clever and calm like James’s sister Alice. For example, in “The Great Good Place,” a middle-aged man George Dane, who had been exhausted in his life, goes to another world. The inhabitants of this other world are like Dane’s brothers; Dane and the other men have the same tastes and thoughts, and they feel comfortable as if they have known each other for many years. They sometimes even return to their childhood by innocently talking nonsense. Dane realizes that the other world resembles a cozy inn in which guests are looked after by a gentle hostess. Among the brothers and the maternal presence, Dane recovers himself. The series of images such as brothers, the maternal woman who supports them, and the childlike behaviors among men remind us of James’s own memory of William and Alice in his childhood. In addition to these images, homoerotic feelings and narcissistic indulgence in brother-like men can be seen: Dane realizes that the help and healing he receives from the brothers are what he has thirsted for for a long time.
“The Jolly Corner” describes the same kind of relationship: there is a heroine named Alice, who tenderly embraces both Spencer Brydon and his double. Critics have argued that Brydon’s chasing after his double suggests a same-sex desire. Stevens, for instance, claims that Brydon’s searching for his double in the house metaphorically signifies a homosexual act: “Brydon’s progress up its ‘ample back staircase,’ during which he feels ‘the sense of a need to hold on to something, even after the manner of a man slipping and slipping on some awful incline’ might suggest anal penetration” (Henry James and Sexuality 138). Savoy also insists that Brydon left home when his homosexuality was discovered by his father and that Brydon is forced to see again the primal scene in returning home (“The Queer Subject” 2). Comparing Brydon with Dane, who is cradled together with his brothers against their mother’s breast in “The Great Good Place,” Stevens concludes that James’s homosexual male characters return to the maternal because they have to turn their back against the law—the paternal (Henry James and Sexuality 118, 144). In the current discussion about James’s possible homoerotic love for William, the most noticeable point is the recurring relationship of intimate men and their female supporter. Through these relationships, James seems to have explored the homoeroticism between himself and William, which was protected by Alice.

Henry might have been inspired in his desire for William by the sense that he was apart from William in the real world. As stated above, Henry

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5 Brydon is distressed by the possibility that he might have become famous and wealthy if he had stayed in America. His alter ego represents this alternative identity in America. Brydon chases after his alter ego in his old house in America in an attempt to settle his identity crisis.
remembered that he was waiting probably for William under a window in vain. Moreover, in his autobiography, Henry remembered that he was always running after William, who has always turned the corner and disappeared when Henry thought he was about to catch him (Autobiography 7-8). This vain chase of Henry’s resembles Rosalind’s chase of Perdita as well as Brydon’s chase of his alter ego and Dane’s chase of his brothers. Rosalind is forced to stay at home seeing Perdita marry, leave her parental home, have a baby, and live in affluent circumstance. For Rosalind, Perdita is superior in every respect; and accordingly, Rosalind feels that she cannot reduce the material and psychological distance from Perdita.

Sex and sibling order are reversed in “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes,” but, as well as William resembling Perdita, Henry is like Rosalind. The most conspicuous characteristics of Rosalind are her imagination and creativity: At the moment Rosalind touches a cloth texture of Perdita’s wedding dress, “Perdita could see that [Rosalind’s] fancy had been stirred, and that she would now fall to work and solve all their silken riddles” (Stories of the Supernatural 13-14). Rosalind is the best dressmaker in her town and makes a beautiful dress the likes of which New Englanders have never seen before. This is similar to James’s imagination: as Virginia C. Fowler points out, James often compares writing with stitching (6). For example, in the preface to Roderick Hudson, James expresses himself as a young embroiderer of the canvas of life [who] soon began to work in terror, fairly, of the vast expanse of that surface, of the boundless number of its distinct perforations for the needle, and of the tendency inherent in his many-coloured flowers and figures to cover and
consume as many as possible of the little holes. (The Art of the Novel 5)

James used the same metaphor in the preface to The Wings of the Dove: “the patterns of Densher’s final position and fullest consciousness there was to have been marked in fine stitches, all silk and gold, all pink and silver, that have had to remain, alas, but entwined upon the reel” (The Art of the Novel 299). Both of them compare the author as an embroiderer and novels as canvases for stitches.

Furthermore, there are characters who have a talent for needlework and fiction-making. Amanda Pyncent in The Princess Casamassima makes fine clothes for her adopted son and thereby creates his identity as a son of a nobleman. Miss Pyncent’s neighbors believe the boy’s identity because of his gorgeous clothes. The boy, too, believes that he originally belongs to a higher social status, and this belief shapes his personality. This creation of character resembles the work of a writer. In Washington Square, Catherine Sloper has a painful experience and thereby gains an objective insight into the world. She becomes a story teller and adviser for younger people in her neighborhood. The story ends with a description of Catherine, who does needlework serenely in her drawing room, keeping a distance from the world. Thus the ability to make fiction and to sew and stitch a cloth are mixed with each other in James’s works. Viewed in this light, Rosalind’s talent is James’s own. In 1868, Henry was forced to stay in America while his brother experienced European culture; however, during these days, Henry enjoyed a feeling of superiority to William for the first time because Henry found out a way to live by his pen while William was still dependent
on their parents and not known to the public. Henry might be proud of Rosalind’s display of creativity, as though celebrating his own little success. Henry’s sense of rivalry and his romantic feelings of Henry’s seem to be reflected on the story.

III. Rosalind’s Love for Perdita

Before Lloyd appeared, the sisters had been on very good terms; they slept in one bed, cooperated in household work, and helped each other make their toilet. Although Lloyd comes between the sisters, they originally loved each other. Even after Lloyd appears, Rosalind continues to love her younger sister; and Rosalind sometimes sees Perdita from Lloyd’s viewpoint. Rosalind is good at coordinating clothes, and thanks to her help, Lloyd is charmed by Perdita. Without romantic feelings for Perdita, Rosalind could not make Perdita attractive to Lloyd. Viewed in this light, homoeroticism lies underneath the heterosexual battle for Lloyd.

While Perdita gradually shifts the object of her love from Rosalind to Lloyd, Rosalind continues to love Perdita. The narrator exposes Rosalind’s desire for Perdita in many places. The scene of Perdita’s engagement is a good example. It is an important turning point in the battle for Lloyd; nevertheless, the suitor does not appear in the scene. Only Perdita appears, running from a wooden gate in a garden. Her cheeks blush, and her eyes are shining with joy, at which excitement of Perdita’s Rosalind secretly gazes. Looking at Perdita kiss her engagement ring and hold up her hand in the sky, Rosalind distorts her beautiful face into a grimace because of jealousy. This scene focuses on the sisters’ relationship and does not describe Lloyd;
this setting itself suggests Rosalind’s feelings for Perdita are more intense than Lloyd’s. Besides, by comparison to later scenes, we realize the possibility that Rosalind feels jealous of Lloyd and is sad about losing Perdita.

Rosalind’s feelings are mysteriously expressed especially in significant scenes: for example, the scene in which Rosalind wears Perdita’s bridal costume including a veil and a pearl necklace just after Perdita takes them off. To wear the costume which is still warm from Perdita suggests the intensity of Rosalind’s love for Perdita. Rosalind seems to attempt to be united with Perdita by wearing the same clothes. However, Rosalind is unaware that Perdita has returned to the room, and Perdita discovers what Rosalind is doing. Rosalind is too obsessed with her figure in the mirror to recognize Perdita: the narrator states that “Rosalind stood before the mirror, plunging a long look into its depths and reading heaven knows what audacious visions” (Stories of the Supernatural 14). After Perdita blames Rosalind for her thoughtless behavior, the narrator follows Perdita, who “hurried away from the room” (Stories of the Supernatural 15) and does not narrate what Rosalind’s “visions” are like. At least, Rosalind’s greedy expression has prevented Perdita from “pull[ing] off the veil and the flowers” (Stories of the Supernatural 14): it is shown as so horrible and queer that the narrator cannot disclose.

The story depicts two conflicting powers: the heterosexual and the homosexual. Perdita wins Lloyd’s love by her “natural” femininity; on the other hand, Rosalind adopts a strategy of performing femininity. She deliberately shows her maternal love to Lloyd by cradling a baby in her
arms, sitting by a hearth, and doing needlework. She completes a picture of the Angel in the House. Rosalind also wears a low-cut dress to make Lloyd conscious of her bosom. Thus Rosalind uses femininity and sexuality in her attempt to win Lloyd’s love, which reveals how she can look at these traditional images objectively. In addition to this, Rosalind’s ambition to obtain Perdita’s clothes can be read as a resistance to heterosexuality. Perdita thinks that fashion repeats itself every twenty years; and if she leaves the clothes to her daughter, she will be beautifully attired in them in the future. Seen from this cycle of fashions, it follows that Perdita’s daughter reaches a marriageable age when she can wear her mother’s clothes. In this story, clothes are used as a means to win male hearts. Hence, we can read Perdita’s conveyance of her clothes to her daughter as sustaining heterosexual culture; and Rosalind, who dispossesses Perdita’s daughter of these clothes, virtually breaks the cycle of heterosexuality.

Given Rosalind’s attachment to Perdita, her robbery of the clothes means not only an offence against heterosexuality but also a manifestation of homosexuality. Rosalind wears Perdita’s wedding dress, lives in her house with her husband and daughter, marries him, and insists on possession of Perdita’s clothes. When Rosalind marries Lloyd, the narrator tells that “Rosalind’s desires, as the reader will have observed, had remained a good deal of mystery” (22) while the narrator says that Lloyd apparently desires Rosalind. The narrator also says that “Rosalind’s thoughts hovered lovingly about her sister’s relics” (22) and suggests that her desires are directed towards the robbery of Perdita’s clothes. As stated above, the clothes are a symbol of marriage and Perdita’s self at the same time; then taking the
clothes from Perdita’s daughter means breaking the continuity of marriage and satisfying Rosalind’s homoerotic desires simultaneously.

Rosalind’s attachment to Perdita is intensified by a painful discovery: Rosalind cries, “I am welcome to what Perdita has left! And what has she left? I never knew till now how little! Nothing, nothing, nothing” (23). Rosalind realizes that Perdita does not love her as much as she does. Perdita knows how Rosalind loves clothes; nonetheless, she has locked them up in a chest. Furthermore, Rosalind has to squarely face the fact that Perdita intends to remove Rosalind when Perdita’s ghost appears. Rosalind is dismayed at the intensity of the ghostly vengeance and learns that there is “[a] terror of something more than death” (*Stories of the Supernatural* 25). Rosalind realizes that Perdita not only has hidden her clothes but also is furious at Rosalind’s pursuit: Rosalind realizes that Perdita’s love for her has died. The “ghostly hands” (*Stories of the Supernatural* 25), which scratch Rosalind’s cheek, were fatal to her not only physically but also psychologically.

Mary Y. Hallab argues that the play titled *Mistletoe Bough: or, The Fatal Chest* by Charles A. Somerset is the model of “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes” (316). According to Hallab, this play depicts an emotional entanglement between two men and a woman: Lady Agnes de Clifford is stabbed and enclosed in the chest on her wedding day by Reginald de Courcy, whose love for Agnes is unrequited: ten years later, when Reginald opens the chest, Agnes’s ghost appears and drives him into suicide (316). According to Hallab, it is highly possible that James saw the play, which was very popular among New Englanders in 1852 and was
played in the theater to which James often went (316). In the play, it is a man who loves and offends a woman and the woman becomes a ghost. The man has romantic feelings for the woman. It is less obvious in the James’s story that the person who opens the chest loves the ghost because of the change from a heterosexual love to a homoerotic sibling love; yet, we learn from the comparison to the play that there is a romantic feeling in Rosalind’s love for Perdita.

The ambiguous desire for a same-sex character in “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes” will also be clarified by comparison to another story, “The Friends of the Friends.” After James dealt with the homoeroticism latent in a story of marriage in “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes,” he developed the theme into a more complicated story. “The Friends of the Friends” was published in 1896 during the aftermath of the Oscar Wilde trials. This story can be read as a story of jealousy: the female narrator of a manuscript breaks her engagement because of her jealousy towards her female friend, who becomes intimate with the narrator’s fiancée. The narrator arranges a meeting of her fiancée and her friend because the narrator thinks that her friend and fiancée will become good friends; however, for some reason, they continue to miss the opportunities to meet. After her female friends’ death, the narrator of the manuscript believes that her fiancée has seen her female friend’s ghost in his bedroom at midnight:

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6 There are three principle characters in the manuscript story: a heroine, her fiancée, and her female friend. A supernatural event fallen on them is described by the heroine. Later, she hands the manuscript over to a person, who narrates the frame story. Thus two narrators exist in “The Friends of the Friends,” and all the characters have no name; hence, this paper refers to the heroine as a female narrator of a manuscript (or the narrator).
and for this reason, the narrator decides to break the engagement to him. It is as if the narrator were jealous of her friend. However, it is possible to read that the narrator is jealous of her fiancée: the jealousy in the story is as ambiguous as that in “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes.”

The narrator thinks that her relationship with her fiancée began when she believed in his supernatural experience. No one except the narrator can understand her fiancée’s incredible story: under this circumstance, they began to love each other. Viewed in this light, it follows that the narrator has introduced a possible lover to the man since the narrator knows that her friend can also understand his supernatural experience. The narrator unconsciously creates a situation in which she shares a desire for her fiancée with her female friend. By sharing her fiancée, the narrator and her friend become identical with each other. This act can be seen in Rosalind’s attempt to become Perdita’s husband’s wife and to wear her clothes. This unconscious interest in sharing a man’s affection reveals the narrator’s homoerotic desire for her friend.

To begin with, the narrator is writing the manuscript probably to adore not her fiancée but her friend. The narrator begins her story with regret about telling a lie not to her fiancée but to her friend. Moreover, the narrator describes her friend as a dazzling presence:

She had also the sort of originality, the intrinsic interest, that led her to be kept by each of us as a private resource, cultivated jealously, more or less in secret, as a person whom one didn’t meet in society, whom it was not for every one [sic]—whom it was not for the vulgar—to approach, and with whom therefore acquaintance was
particularly difficult and particularly precious. (*Stories of the Supernatural* 401)

In this passage, we can find that the narrator adores her friend. Though the narrator does not describe her fiancé affectionately, she does so with respect to her friend: the narrator remembers that “[her friend] laughed and shook her head; she had headshakes whose impulse seemed to come from as far away as the breeze that stirs a flower” (*Stories of the Supernatural* 404). This romantic image given to a casual mannerism shows the narrator’s love for her friend. Finally, after the friend’s death, the narrator begins to see her friend through her fiancé. Whenever he kisses the narrator, she remembers a feel of her friend’s kiss; and the narrator misses her friend. The fiancé resembles the friend closely; hence, his sexual behavior inspires a desire for the friend in the narrator. She gradually begins to share her love for her friend with her fiancé: “He bent over me, and when his face had touched mine I scarcely knew if it were wet with my tears or with his own” (*Stories of the Supernatural* 419). Here she cannot tell who cries for the friend, herself or her fiancé. There is a homoerotic feeling in the narrator’s mind, hidden under the heterosexual embrace.

The narrator suspects that her fiancé and the ghost of her friend met at night in his bedroom. The situation suggests a sexual relationship; and, it is the possibility of her friend’s desire to visit him that the narrator fears most. Having lost her friend, the narrator grieves over her death and her betrayal simultaneously. The narrator repeats over and over the fact that her friend has died and remembers “a vision . . . of the lonely beauty of her end” (*Stories of the Supernatural* 418); meanwhile, “it rolled over [the
narrator] that here was a great affection quenched and how much I loved and trusted her” (*Stories of the Supernatural* 418). The last phrase “how much I . . . trusted her” is ambiguous; it is as if the narrator laments over her broken engagement. However, the preceding part “it rolled over her that here was a great affection quenched” and the phrase “how much I loved . . . her” give the phrase “how much I . . . trusted her” another meaning: the narrator believes that her friend’s love for the narrator is as ardent as her love for her friend, but she has betrayed the narrator by loving her fiancée. She seems to express her suffering from her blighted love for her friend.

Thus the narrator tries to share a man with her friend at first, and then shares her friend with her fiancée; and finally the narrator realizes fully that her female friend loves her fiancée in all seriousness. The discovery causes the narrator to declare that she will not marry him: that she does not share the man with her friend any more. In this manner, the narrator loves her female friend one-sidedly, and the relationship resembles that of Rosalind and Perdita.

### IV. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined how James described his own homoerotic desire for his brother in his first ghost story “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes.” Rosalind’s desire for Perdita is not clearly expressed, but her obsession for Perdita’s position and clothes reveal Rosalind’s romantic feelings for Perdita. The homoeroticism can be clarified by comparison to “The Friends of the Friends,” which also deals with the ambiguous same-sex love hidden in heterosexuality. Rosalind is Henry’s
double, and he possibly loved his brother William in the same ambiguous and intense way as Rosalind loved Perdita. In “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes,” Henry uses a ghost to examine homoerotic desires latent in heterosexual love. As a young artist, Henry consciously or unconsciously expresses his yearning for his brother and the sadness of isolation caused by his one-way affection for William. The subtle homoerotic desire for William motivated Henry to take an interest in same-sex love and to write novels about that subject.
3. A Subtle Homoeroticism in a Homosocial Bond in *Washington Square*

I. Introduction

*Washington Square* is a story about the unhappy engagement of Catherine Sloper. She is the second child of Dr. Austin Sloper and his wife Catherine. Their first child was a son who would inherit Dr. Sloper’s intelligence and occupation; but, the son has died. Dr. Sloper’s wife has also died after the daughter Catherine was born. Dr. Sloper blames himself for the death of his son and his wife; although he is a famous physician in his neighborhood, he has not been able to save his beloved family. Hence, the daughter Catherine becomes the only family for Dr. Sloper. However, Catherine is not as intelligent and beautiful as her mother; and Dr. Sloper treats his daughter coldly. Due to his contempt for Catherine, Dr. Sloper believes that she will be deceived by her suitor Morris Townsend since nobody can love his unattractive daughter, and Dr. Sloper attempts to make Catherine break up with the fortune hunter. After suffering from the dilemma between her loyalty to her father and her fiancée, Catherine decides to live with Morris; however, Morris suddenly leaves her because she will not inherit Dr. Sloper’s property. Catherine comes to realize that her father does not understand how much she respects him and how much pure affection she entertained for Morris. She also notices that Morris has tried to marry her for money; and accordingly she decides to live by herself.

Thus this story narrates Catherine’s tragedy, and critics have
focused on Dr. Sloper and Morris’s harsh treatment of Catherine. However, Catherine is independent of Morris and Dr. Sloper at the ending and gains a peace of mind; on the other hand, Dr. Sloper loses his reasoning power and is obsessed with a horrible idea that Morris will return to steal his money in his death bed. Morris also becomes haggard from his suffering, and his miserable figure is contrasted to Catherine’s calmness. Hence, we need to look at more closely what causes Dr. Sloper and Morris to lose their self-possession. This chapter will consider the homoerotic relationship between Dr. Sloper and Morris. Dr. Sloper is the very type of a patriarchal father and adamantly denies the outsider Morris Townsend. However, Dr. Sloper’s desperate struggle to exclude Morris reveals an unconquerable obsession with Morris. Similarly, due to his patriarchal way of thinking, he believes that Catherine thinks in the same way as he does. By his

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7 F. O. Matthiessen reads this novel as a moral drama: “The human values of the novel are concentrated in the simple moral goodness of Catherine, in contrast to the cruel egotism of her father and the bare-faced venality of her suitor” (122). This interpretation has been followed by later criticism. Critics often discuss which character is a winner, Catherine or her persecutors: Frederick W. Dupee argues that “[a] small but real triumph has been [Catherine’s]: she has survived and become a person without recourse to the selfishness of her tormentors” (65). Millicent Bell has the same opinion: “although Catherine seems powerless, victimized by both father and lover, she does in the end exercise choice, refusing a belated ringing down of the curtain on a marriage ceremony; she is left free to work out her own destiny, however limited” (Meaning in Henry James 52). On the other hand, Darshan Singh Maini insists that “[that] Catherine in despair does not take her life but settles down to the dreary and mildly consolable role of an old maid does not make her life a whit less tragic” (95). Their opinions differ from one another in that Catherine maintains her dignity or leads a miserable life; yet, they have the same view in that this is a story of Catherine’s tragedy.

8 The previous studies only briefly deal with Dr. Sloper’s loss of his self-control and have not considered the reasons for it.
identification with Catherine, Dr. Sloper sometimes sees Morris from Catherine’s viewpoint: Dr. Sloper turns a romantic eye to Morris. Morris is also gradually obsessed with Dr. Sloper and becomes a real fortune hunter in the end. The following discussion will reveal that Dr. Sloper’s obsession with Morris looks homoerotic, that he seems to fear his homoerotic feelings, and that Dr. Sloper’s obsession influences on Morris. He becomes obsessed with Dr. Sloper in proportion to his refusal to accept Morris as a son-in-law.

II. Dr. Sloper’s Patriarchal Character and Homoeroticism

Catherine is an unusual character in James’s works. Other American girls like Daisy Miller, Madame de Mauves, Gertrude Wentworth in The Europeans, Isabel Archer and Henrietta Stackpole in The Portrait of a Lady, Milly Theale in The Wings of the Dove, and Maggie Verver in The Golden Bowl are quick-witted, confident, talkative, and fashionable. James states in his essay “The Speech of American Women” that American girls can express their opinions more freely than European women (60-62); and James seems to have been proud of their free spirit. Although James pretends to sigh over their chattering, his love for their style of speech can be sensed in the essay; and he described their talkativeness as a charm in his works. However, Catherine Sloper is completely different from these American girls; she is slow to think, timid, quiet, and unfashionable.

Catherine always accepts her aunt Lavinia and Dr. Sloper’s advice and is satisfied with the dependency. She is a doll which would faithfully mirror others’ desires. For example, she mirrors Dr. Sloper’s love for his wife. Dr. Sloper still loves his dead wife and named his daughter after his wife so
that Catherine will become the same woman as her mother. Even after Dr. Sloper has realized that his daughter is not as attractive as her mother, he does not give up his ideal. The false hope can be seen in Dr. Sloper’s irony. Though he pretends to be aware of the fact that his daughter is different from her mother, he unconsciously hopes for his daughter to become more intelligent and talented. His ironical speech is an armor which protects him against bitter reality. Similar to Dr. Sloper, Aunt Lavinia has lost her husband and her son. She cares for Morris more than Catherine does; and Lavinia teaches Catherine how to captivate him possibly because she can experience a love romance and motherhood again through Catherine’s relationship with Morris. Lavinia enjoys feeling a palpitation in meeting Morris and at the same time feels a maternal affection for him: her lost son would be the same age as Morris if he were alive. Thus Catherine is described as a means with which other characters achieve their ideal.

Catherine’s unusual personality heightens the effect of Dr. Sloper’s authority. He believes that Catherine thinks in the same way as he does. Owing to his patriarchal tendency, Dr. Sloper despises his daughter for her ignorance and decides everything on her behalf. On the other hand, owing to the same tendency, he often thinks that Catherine should have the same ideas as he. As a result, he sometimes unconsciously identifies himself with Catherine. For example, Dr. Sloper believes that Catherine knows that Morris does not love her. If Dr. Sloper regarded Catherine as unintelligent and dull, he should have thought that she accepts Morris’s love as true. Dr. Sloper unconsciously believes that Catherine has the same thoughts as he. Because of this way of thinking, Dr. Sloper seems to be annoyed by
Catherine’s love for Morris. Although Dr. Sloper cannot accept Morris, Dr. Sloper always feels Morris’s presence as if Catherine’s attachment to Morris were his own feelings. Dr. Sloper tries to get rid of the feelings, but Catherine becomes independent of her father and does not give up Morris. Because of his patriarchal way of thinking, Dr. Sloper cannot exclude Morris from his mind. This identification between Dr. Sloper and Catherine has been neglected in previous studies because of Dr. Sloper’s dominant behavior. Yet, it is this patriarchal tendency that causes him to lose his control.

The ambition to maintain authority develops a rivalry against Morris. Dr. Sloper holds a position of leadership in his town. He is middle-aged and has an adequate knowledge of the society to which he belongs. On the other hand, Morris is a young outsider who came from Europe. Though Morris was born and brought up in New York like Dr. Sloper, Morris has spent pleasurable years in Europe. The pleasure itself goes against the views of New Yorkers in the novel: Dr. Sloper, his neighbors, and his relatives, who were born and brought up in New York, believe that their country is the best. Under this circumstance, Dr. Sloper looks down on Morris at first. However, Dr. Sloper soon realizes that Morris has a broader knowledge than he has. It is because of this worldly knowledge and refinement that Dr. Sloper regarded Morris as a fortune hunter. Dr. Sloper does not know what Morris talks about and believes that he tells lies. This is the act of maintaining dignity. Dr. Sloper regards Morris as “knowing,” an “anecdotal [sic] idler,” a man with “powers of invention,” “too familiar,” a “plausible coxcomb,” “amazingly conceited,” and displaying “impudence” (33, 35, 42-43). These
onslaughts on Morris reveal that Dr. Sloper’s anxiety is aroused by the fact that he is not certain whether Morris tells the truth or not because some of his knowledge is new to Dr. Sloper. For him, Morris is an unfamiliar type of man. This rivalry makes Dr. Sloper more obsessed with Morris.

Dr. Sloper is disturbed by Morris’s judgement of him: “for an instant [Dr. Sloper] asked himself whether, possibly, he did not appear ridiculous to this intelligent young man, whose private perception of incongruities he suspected of being keen” (42). Dr. Sloper is afraid that his dignity might be offended by Morris. This fear is based on a patriarchal ambition, but at the same time it looks like homoerotic obsession with Morris as well since Dr. Sloper is too worried about Morris’s views of him to behave as confidently as usual. In other words, Dr. Sloper wants to be evaluated highly by Morris. This feeling is closer to affection than antipathy. Dr. Sloper also suggests a possibility that he would be injured by Morris: “[Dr. Sloper] said to himself that he was perhaps after all taking things too hard and crying out before he was hurt” (42). This anxiety of being hurt also reveals Dr. Sloper’s double aspects: Dr. Sloper worries about his dignity, but he looks worried about Morris’s judgement of him as well.

Dr. Sloper’s wealth proves his patriarchal power. He was from a poor family, but he has achieved success by his own efforts. Dr. Sloper embodies an American model of ideal masculinity, but he is afraid that his monetary power may be robbed by a fortune hunter. If the lazy man married Dr. Sloper’s daughter, his monetary power would be delivered to the idler. The ideal of labor the father embodies would be spoiled, too. In addition, if the daughter disobeyed Dr. Sloper’s order not to marry the idler, Dr. Sloper’s
authority as a father would be denied as well. Catherine’s marriage to Morris is a matter of Dr. Sloper’s dignity. In order to prevent Morris from intruding into Dr. Sloper’s sphere (his home, his money, and his daughter), Dr. Sloper becomes physically and psychologically concerned in Catherine’s marriage to Morris: Dr. Sloper faces Morris for his personal interest. This attachment to his authority and his attachment to Morris are two sides of the same coin, and the border between rivalry and attachment becomes ambiguous.

Under this circumstance, Dr. Sloper gradually becomes sensitive to the sign of Morris’s presence: Dr. Sloper can tell when Morris comes to his house to meet his daughter, and how much Morris becomes intimate with her, even if she does not talk about him. The presence of Morris becomes ominous all the more for his absence. Dr. Sloper senses Morris’s presence even in Catherine’s silence. The quieter Catherine becomes, the deeper the suspicion Dr. Sloper entertains: Morris is steadily approaching Dr. Sloper’s sphere. Silence is used frequently and effectively in James’s works to create an evil and powerful atmosphere which controls every character because of its silence. In *The Ambassadors*, Mrs. Newsome does not have a voice in the story: but she controls her ambassador Strether, her son Chadwick, her son’s lover Madame de Vionnet, her daughter Sarah, and her friend Waymarsh. Through her absence and silence, she makes her presence known to other characters. In *The Turn of the Screw*, every speech avoids the sexual aberration that Quint and Miss. Jessel symbolize, and the apparitions become all the more ominous for other characters. Similar to these stories, the silence about Morris wields a considerable influence over
Dr. Sloper.

Dr. Sloper decides to acquire the same knowledge as Morris possibly because he wants to be superior to Morris, but his trip to Europe seems to be motivated by his obsession with Morris as well. Dr. Sloper explains that he will visit Europe because the distance between New York and Europe would make Catherine give up Morris; however, Dr. Sloper enthusiastically goes around the historical sites and museums to acquire knowledge. He had despised Europe before he met Morris; hence, it is certain that Dr. Sloper is influenced by Morris. It is as if Dr. Sloper chased Morris to Europe. After this trip, Dr. Sloper becomes more obsessed with Morris. Although Dr. Sloper has come to acknowledge the beauty of European culture and be enthralled by its refinement, he strangely sticks to the idea that Morris is a fortune-hunter: Dr. Sloper does not admit that his judgement of Morris has been wrong. Seen from his imitation and rejection, Dr. Sloper seems to be torn between conflicting emotions: his admiration and aversion for Morris.

Driven by these conflicting feelings, Dr. Sloper loses his logical sense. As Richard Poirier argues, the scene in Alps is a turning point in Dr. Sloper’s characterization (171). He suddenly poses at a deserted cliff and begins to yell at Catherine; his voice gradually rises in pitch, and he shouts at Catherine that he is not a good man. Dr. Sloper had contrived to make Catherine believe in his authority; hence, Catherine cannot understand the situation. Catherine’s calmness throws Dr. Sloper’s disturbed mind into relief. Poirier also points out that Dr. Sloper is getting close to Aunt Lavinia, a melodramatic woman (171). Though his characteristics are intelligence and rationality, Dr. Sloper loses his reasoning power.
This collapse is caused by Catherine’s love for Morris: she never forgets Morris during her stay in Europe and is in correspondence with him. She does not see any beautiful scenery in Europe and intently thinks about Morris. Dr. Sloper feels Morris’s presence beyond Catherine unremittingly, and the presence becomes stronger in Dr. Sloper’s mind, which leads him to get angry at her in Alps. Thus driven by Morris to Europe, Dr. Sloper is still troubled by the young man’s presence. His distress gets worse in proportion to the intensity of Catherine’s love for Morris. As a result, Dr. Sloper loses his proper insight and logicality. From this point on, he exists under the delusion that someday Morris will return to his house. For Catherine, her love for Morris is so pure that it cannot be renewed after his betrayal; and she still loves her father even after realizing his cruelty. The readers know how much Catherine had cared for her persecutors; but, the persecutors do not realize her feelings; hence, he can ask an insensitive question to Catherine whether she can vow that she will not marry Morris after her father’s death. This inquiry suggests how much Dr. Sloper is obsessed with Morris.

III. Dr. Sloper’s Self-Censorship and the Influence on Morris

Dr. Sloper highly appreciates Morris not only for his personality but also for his physical charm. Catherine repeats that “[Morris] was so handsome. . . or rather, . . . beautiful” (16) and also states that “[Morris] was tall and slim, but he looked extremely strong” (16). Catherine compares Morris to a beautiful statue and consistently sees him as an object of art. Dr. Sloper agrees with Morris’s beauty: he says, “Physically. . . [Morris is]
uncommonly well set up. As an anatomist, it is really a pleasure to me to see such a beautiful structure” (35). Dr. Sloper adds the phrase “as an anatomist” to his compliment on Morris’s beauty and use his professional interest as a screen to hide his sexual attraction. Moreover, Dr. Sloper also confesses that “[he] likes Morris in the least as a friend, as a companion. He seems to me a charming fellow” (66). From this comment, we learn that Dr. Sloper refuses Morris as a son-in-law, but appreciates his charm personally. Seen from this different judgement, Dr. Sloper seems to be torn between his personal interest in Morris and a paternal duty to exclude him.

Dr. Sloper’s fear is related to his internalized ideology. Although he is fascinated with the beautiful young man, Dr. Sloper is also threatened with the loss of his authority. As stated above, if Morris scorned Dr. Sloper, it means that a young outsider denies the patriarchal society Dr. Sloper has worked for. Dr. Sloper seems to suppress his personal interest in Morris, which can be seen in his sense of guilt. Dr. Sloper witnesses Morris lean on Catherine at a party. Her face blushes for shame. The shame is not a sense of guilt; she cannot express her pleasure better. Catherine is upset by Morris’s courtship in public. Mrs. Almond also watches Morris bending over Catherine and points out that “he certainly has not the cut of a schoolmaster” (44). In this scene, Dr. Sloper strangely believes that Catherine is conscious of her father’s gaze and feels a sense of guilt; that is the reason for her blush. On the other hand, Catherine does not notice her father’s presence and thinks solely of Morris; hence, the sense of guilt that Dr. Sloper imagined Catherine entertains would be what Dr. Sloper feels if he were in Catherine’s place. Given his imaginary exchanging of places with
Catherine, it follows that Dr. Sloper himself faces Morris in the place of Catherine. It is possible to conclude from this exchange that Dr. Sloper feels a sense of guilt in this passage because he is aware of his personal interest in Morris.

The paternal warning eyes which Dr. Sloper feels are directed to him in the place of Catherine can be read as ideological. Dr. Sloper has been concerned about manliness and accordingly strived to gain wealth, become famous, and marry a lady whom many suitors have courted. Henry James was conscious of American masculinity. Deploring a feminized social position of male writers in America, James tried to achieve a success in this story. He thought that America had no “paraphernalia” that would develop great literature (Letters II:268). He made the same insistence in Hawthorne:

No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentleman, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great Universities nor public schools—no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class—no Epsom nor Ascot! (Hawthorne 43-44)

James enumerates deficiencies in America; however, James not only lamented over the lack but also regarded it as a chance. James told William Dean Howells that when he can write a novel which does not have readers feel its lack of “paraphernalia,” he can be an American Balzac (Letters II:
From this passage, we can feel James’s aspiration to create a new American novel. This letter was written almost at the same time when Washington Square began to be serialized in Cornhill Magazine and Harper’s New Monthly Magazine.

This aspiration for a new novel is related to his wish to improve the feminized position of male writers. In Hawthorne, James revealed an oppression he felt because of people’s views on male writers. He stated that they felt “a considerable discomfort in the United States not to be ‘in business’” (Hawthorne 30). When James was writing this story, he acutely felt that he was not an ideal man in America; hence, he could describe Dr. Sloper’s sense of inferiority closely. Dr. Sloper fears being judged as feminine. His fear shows that he internalizes the ideological gender roles in his society. Dr. Sloper insists that Catherine’s marriage with Morris is equal to the murder of her father. This exaggeration shows that Dr. Sloper identifies himself with Catherine and that he would lose the meaning of his existence if he accepted his interest in Morris. To accept Morris means to abandon the ideal of labor, of heterosexuality, and of masculinity.

Similar to Dr. Sloper, Morris is also obsessed with not Catherine but her father. Contrary to Dr. Sloper’s insistence, Morris was not a fortune hunter at first. Morris seriously considers whether he can live with Catherine by their own small income. He asks Catherine, “You must tell me . . . that if your father is dead against me, if he absolutely forbids our marriage, you will still be faithful” (49). Morris asks again, “You will cleave to me?” (49). Morris wants to live with Catherine at first if she does not inherit her father’s property. Morris loves Catherine because of her
tenderness, quietness, and her own style. After having spent time in Europe, he has changed into a Europeanized American and accordingly is isolated from people in New York. For lonely Morris, Catherine’s love is comforting and precious.

Yet, as Dr. Sloper obstinately excludes Morris from his wealth, Morris is gradually haunted by Dr. Sloper’s money, which represents Dr. Sloper himself. Dr. Sloper’s denial makes Morris a real fortune hunter. Following Dr. Sloper’s order, Catherine tells Morris that she will not have her father’s property. Then, Morris persuades Catherine to inherit Dr. Sloper’s property:

“I suppose it seems to you a kind of curse,” said Morris. “It must be very dismal. But don’t you think,” he went on presently, “that if you were to try to be very clever, and to set rightly about it, you might in the end conjure it away? Don’t you think,” he continued further, in a tone of sympathetic speculation, “that a really clever woman, in your place, might bring him round at last? Don’t you think—”

Here, suddenly, Morris was interrupted; these ingenious inquiries had not reached Catherine’s ears. (99)

Morris aims at Dr. Sloper’s property in this passage and artfully persuades Catherine. The goal obviously changes from winning Catherine’s love to obtaining Dr. Sloper’s money. Shocked at the possibility of being abandoned by her father, Catherine asks Morris to love her in place of her father. Holding her in his arms, Morris “looked up again, rather vaguely, with parted lips and lifted eyebrows” (99). In this passage, Morris finally wins Catherine’s heart; but, his love for Catherine has died. Instead, Morris
concentrates on defeating Dr. Sloper. This sense of rivalry is similar to Dr. Sloper's: Morris wants to beat Dr. Sloper by obtaining his property. This seems to be a struggle in a male society, but it is noticeable that his obsession with Dr. Sloper exceeds his interest in Catherine.

Similar to Dr. Sloper's case, Morris's interest in Dr. Sloper is inspired by Catherine. After being despised by Dr. Sloper, Morris wants Catherine to soothe his sorrow. However, when Morris says, "I should have liked you to say: 'If my father doesn't think well of you, what does it matter?'" (34), Catherine replies, "Ah, but I would matter" (34). Soon after this conversation, Morris repeats the same complaint to Aunt Lavinia. He can hear from Lavinia the words that he would like Catherine to say and is satisfied with the reply. It is because Catherine loves Dr. Sloper more than Morris that he began to focus on Dr. Sloper. One day Morris asks Catherine to meet outside of Dr. Sloper's house: "I would rather it were in the Square . . . You know how empty it is, often. No one will see us" (45). The "No one" seems to mean people in the Square; but, given that Morris chooses the Square as a place of refuge from Dr. Sloper, it is Dr. Sloper's eyes that Morris is conscious of. Unlike Morris, Catherine prefers her father's vigilant watching to the Square. In proportion to Catherine's belief in Dr. Sloper, Morris becomes obsessed with Dr. Sloper. Similar to Dr. Sloper, Morris faces Dr. Sloper through Catherine.

Morris suffers a bitter fate as well. After breaking up with Catherine, Morris loses his beauty and kindness. Catherine is aware of the difference between past and present Morris when he returns to her: she thinks, "It was the old voice; but it had not the old charm" (168); "It seemed to be he,
and yet not he” (168); “he had himself comfortable, and he had never been caught. But . . . she had no desire to catch him” (168); and “his eyes above [the beard looks] strange and hard. It was very different from his old—from his young—face. If she had first seen him this way she would not have liked him” (169). Catherine’s observation reveals that Morris is not a fortune hunter when she meets him, but he gradually becomes one. Similar to Dr. Sloper, who has continued to think about Morris till he dies in his seventies, Morris goes back to Dr. Sloper’s home in his fifties, still hoping that he could gain what Dr. Sloper has not given him.

Dr. Sloper and Morris have a strong attachment to each other; the attachment is a rivalry between men and an obsession at the same time. They gradually turn their eyes from Catherine to each other. This strong attachment suggests a germ of homoeroticism between the men. Their ambiguous obsession is a mixture of homosocial ambition and homoerotic desire.

IV. Contrast in the Marriages in “The Ghostly Rental,” *Daisy Miller*, and “Madame de Mauves”

As stated above, Dr. Sloper and Morris are deeply interested in each other, which suggests a subtle homoeroticism. This homoeroticism could be more clarified through the contrast to the father-daughter relationship in “The Ghostly Rental,” which was written four years prior to *Washington Square*. In “The Ghostly Rental,” there is a strict father named as Captain Diamond, and he objects to his daughter’s marriage to a man of doubtful antecedents. The daughter pretends to die and comes back to her father as a
ghost. Captain Diamond is so sad in losing his daughter that he leaves the house and tries to rent it out; however, because of the rumor about the ghost, he cannot find any tenants and is forced to live in poverty. The daughter’s ghost pities him and offers to rent the house; and she tells him to come to collect his rent every quarter. Captain Diamond accepts the offer because not only is he poor but also he loves his daughter. The visit is the only chance to see her. However, Captain Diamond may have been irritated by his daughter’s harsh treatment: although the daughter knows how much her father is suffering, she never tells him that she is alive. She also continues to collect the rent from the poor father. As a result, Captain Diamond appears to her as a ghost after he dies, and the daughter is not glad to see him but scared by him. In this story, the reason why Captain Diamond and his daughter quarreled with each other irretrievably is that he opposes her marriage with her lover. Since the man may be a fortune hunter, Diamond cannot accept him as a son-in-law. This is the same scenario as in *Washington Square*, but the father does not have any interest in the daughter’s fiancé, and the fiancée does not appear again in the story. In comparison with this relationship between the father and the fiancée in “The Ghostly Rental,” the close relationship between men is set as a central theme in *Washington Square*.

Other stories written in the same period also grapple with the problems of marriage and heterosexuality. In *Daisy Miller*, Winterbourne asks himself whether he can love women or not. *Daisy Miller* has the subtitle “A Study,” which means that Winterbourne studies Daisy Miller, who is the new woman from Schenectady, New York. Winterbourne was
born in America but lost its spirit while being brought up in Europe. For this reason, Winterbourne cannot tell whether Daisy is innocent or flirtatious and accordingly is disturbed by her behavior. His irritation seems to come from not his love for Daisy but his lack of ability to judge her. For example, when he sees Daisy sitting side by side with an Italian friend Giovanelli under an umbrella and understands that she is flirting with him, Winterbourne is strangely reassured because now he can classify Daisy as a coquette. After Daisy dies, Winterbourne meets Giovanelli for the first time and forms a bond with him through Daisy: the two men talk about Daisy’s memory. Now he can safely love Daisy since she is dead, and similar to later novels, he alleviates his sorrow in a male bond. This situation suggests a possibility that Winterbourne cannot understand Daisy not because he has lived in Europe for many years but because he cannot love women.

In the last scene, Winterbourne’s thoughts are ambiguously expressed. When he is asked by his aunt whether or not he confesses his love for Daisy, he answers as follows:

Winterbourne offered no answer to this question; but he presently said, “You were right in that remark that you made last summer. I was booked to make a mistake. I have lived too long in foreign parts.”

Nevertheless, he went back to live at Geneva, whence there continue to come the most contradictory accounts of his motives of sojourn: a report that he is “studying” hard—an intimation that he is much interested in a very clever foreign lady. (64)

The first paragraph of the passage tells us that Winterbourne is
disappointed at his misjudgment of Daisy: he blames himself for his failure to believe her innocence. However, the second paragraph tells us that Winterbourne begins a new “study” on a “foreign” lady. He used the word “foreign” twice: the first “foreign” means Europe, but the second is ambiguous. If he means “foreign” as American, it follows that he has become a completely Europeanized man; and “Nevertheless” makes sense because he seems to give up romance with American ladies, but actually he does not. Yet, given that he is in Geneva and the first use of “foreign” as European, it can be more valid to take the second “foreign” as European. The passage means that Winterbourne could not love an American lady; nevertheless, he tries to love a European lady. Then “Nevertheless” means that he recognizes not only that he cannot love Daisy but also that he cannot love women. Besides, seen from the fact that Winterbourne has failed to love Daisy, the last word “studying,” which is the same word as the subtitle indicating his false love for Daisy, suggests that Winterbourne would fail to love another lady as well. This story thus has a loop in which Winterbourne cannot fulfill his heterosexual love for women. He “studies” Daisy in vain, then “studies” another lady, but the attempt is doomed to fail, too. The last part quoted above does not describe Winterbourne’s feelings clearly; but, he seems to be driven by some fear and makes haste to turn to another lady. Winterbourne fears the possibility that he cannot love women.

As stated above, *Daisy Miller* and *Washington Square* grapple with marriage and heterosexuality and create complex situations. Similar to these two stories, “Madame de Mauves” describes an American girl who is troubled by an unhappy marriage; however, the main point of this story is
the rights and wrongs of adultery. An American girl, Euphemia Cleve
marries a European nobleman Richard de Mauves. Euphemia comes to
realize that her husband is wicked and immoral. One day Euphemia meets
an American gentleman Longmore, and he soon falls in love with her.
Knowing that she is unhappy, Longmore tries to save her from the wicked
husband. Yet, Longmore has a conservative way of thinking and cannot
court the married woman, although he is recommended to love her by
Euphemia’s husband and his sister. However, Longmore changes his
opinion after seeing happy lovers fondling each other in a rural area in
France. He learns that their love is illicit, but, their hearts seem to be
replete with joy. Longmore is tempted to think that passion is the most
important thing in the world. Although Longmore is rejected by Euphemia
in the end, and it follows that he worries about the immorality of adultery in
vain, the story asks us whether adultery in special cases can be allowed or
not; or, which is more important, natural affection or a legal bond.

In earlier stories, James used these same type of characters and the
same theme to deal with problems of marriage and heterosexuality.
“Madame de Mauve” casts doubt upon the lawful, but weak bond of
marriage. Yet, this story does not question heterosexuality itself. Later,
James wrote *Daisy Miller* to describe a man’s fear for his inability to love
women. It only suggests the possibility of non-heterosexuality, but James
begins to consider the ambiguity and divergence of sexuality in this story.
His insight into heterosexuality is expanded and deepened in *Washington
Square*. He considers how marriage is related to a subtle homoeroticism.
Similar to *Daisy Miller*, this story does not conspicuously reveal
homoeroticism as the later works do, but the obsession between the father and the fiancée is so strong that we cannot ignore the suggestion of the subtle homoeroticism. The theme of marriage and international relations in the earlier novels reaches completion in *The Portrait of a Lady*; as the following discussion will clarify, the marriage plot of the novel is disturbed by homoerotic feelings. *Washington Square*, which deals with a deep interest between same-sex characters, is an important turning point to *The Portrait of a Lady*.

V. Conclusion

*Washington Square* describes an unusual type of American girl, who is quiet, timid, dull and dependent. Yet, her emptiness seems to be designed by the author to make her a mirror of Dr. Sloper’s thoughts. Dr. Sloper is the archetype of a patriarchal father and believes that his thought is the only truth. Because of this personality, he thinks that Catherine always shares his view; and Dr. Sloper identifies himself with Catherine without knowing it. In proportion to Catherine’s affection for Morris, Dr. Sloper begins to be obsessed with Morris. Dr. Sloper recognizes charm in Morris, but he cannot accept him as a son-in-law because Morris is an outsider who would spoil the ideal American masculinity Dr. Sloper embodies. In accordance with Dr. Sloper’s exclusion, Morris becomes obsessed with him. Their rivalry seems to be a struggle in a male society, but it also reveals a strong attachment to each other. Through Catherine’s mediation, they have been obsessed with each other in life and have led miserable lives as a result. *Washington Square* ends with men’s intense feelings for each other, and therefore this
novel, among James's earlier novels, is a turning point into more detailed homoerotic stories.
4. Homoeroticism and Desire for Father Figures in *The Portrait of a Lady*

I. Introduction

Henry James’s *The Portrait of a Lady* depicts a woman’s life in the late nineteenth century when people’s view toward gender role was changing considerably. The heroine Isabel Archer comes to Europe with her aunt to find the way she can make the most of her spirit of independence. Isabel wants to find a new way to live, not as someone’s wife but as an independent woman. She was proposed to by an aristocrat, Lord Warburton; an American factory owner, Casper Goodwood; and a dilettante, Gilbert Osmond. Isabel chooses Osmond for her partner. He is introduced by her aunt’s friend Madame Merle. Although she and Osmond keep it secret, Madame Merle is the real mother of Osmond’s daughter Pansy. They plot together to obtain Isabel’s money to make a dowry for their daughter and establish a higher social status for themselves. Isabel thought that Osmond was different from other suitors since he is poor and obscure; hence, she regards him as the most attractive man, who can show her the new way for a woman to live. However, she realizes that Osmond is selfish, inconsiderate, and too conservative. Isabel also realizes that she has been deceived by Madame Merle. Isabel leaves Osmond to see Ralph in his deathbed. Ralph is Isabel’s cousin, who gave her a large portion of property he is supposed to inherit from his father. He understands Isabel’s spirit of independence better than any other characters. Encouraged by Ralph, and approached by Goodwood, Isabel finally realizes how she should live. The story ends with her going back to Rome; but, it is uncertain whether she returns to Rome for
Osmond or Pansy.

Isabel cannot find her own way to prove woman’s freedom; she only rejects marriage proposals from men who are the best partners from a conservative viewpoint; or, she only travels abroad. She briefly feels a sense of freedom when she chooses a man who is thought to be inferior in society. However, even after her marriage, she still doubts that she does not achieve freedom. In this way, Isabel is wondering what she should do in order to become an independent free woman.

What makes Isabel thus unstable is her internalized sense of convention: she is afraid of scandal and is partly attracted to the form and tradition which her cruel husband Gilbert Osmond cares for most. Critics have discussed this wavering of hers between freedom and convention for a long time, often arriving at a totally different conclusions about her freedom. Despite the conflicting interpretations, we can all may agree with Debra MacComb’s summary: “Isabel Archer’s choice of the ‘very straight path’ back to Rome and the detestable Gilbert Osmond dismays many modern readers” (129).

If we cannot detect any coherent meaning in this novel, we can look at the process in which meaning loses its centrality in the novel. Homoeroticism is the key to understanding the disruption of this novel. We tend to focus on heterosexuality because this is a story about Isabel’s marriage; but homoerotic feelings appear at important points when Isabel’s

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9 As Kristin Sanner argues, “Isabel’s eventual marriage to Gilbert Osmond . . . put[s] an end to her freedom” (152) while Sigi Jöttkandt insists that “Isabel’s decision to remain faithful to [the first] choice [of Osmond] retroactively confirms it as free” (84).
life changes drastically; and these homoerotic feelings destroy any coherent meaning in the novel. This essay will consider Ralph’s desire for his father and that of Isabel and Osmond for father figures, and argue how these desires for father figures generate homoerotic feelings and how they breaks the coherence of the novel as a heterosexual romance.

II. Ralph’s Desire for His Father

Any coherent meaning is lost when Isabel calls Ralph her brother in his death bed. Osmond would not like Isabel to visit Ralph because Osmond is jealous of Ralph. He decides to go back to England not to obstruct the marital life between Isabel and Osmond. Yet, learning that Ralph is dying, Isabel decides to disobey Osmond and follow Ralph to his house Gardencourt. By making this decision, Isabel briefly becomes a free woman again. During the interview, Ralph encourages Isabel to have a great hope in her life, saying that she has made a mistake by trying to help others; such an unselfish mistake cannot compromise her integrity; and she will be young again soon. Isabel is satisfied by these words and by sharing her plight with Ralph. She looks calm at this point of the novel. She no longer clings to the idea that she should prove her freedom; instead, she feels it. Although Ralph and Isabel had quarreled with each other about her marriage to Osmond, the emotional barrier between Ralph and Isabel is eliminated at this moment, and accordingly, their mutual affection may well crown Ralph’s death. If they reach at mutual affection, we can conclude that the theme of this novel is a freedom regained by true love.

However, when Ralph confesses his affection toward Isabel, he says
“you’ve also been loved. Ah but, Isabel—adored!” (479). By employing a passive case, he hides himself among the others who love Isabel; he also rephrases the personal and physical desire “love” with a word of worship, “adore.” This change from “love” to “adore” is not only Ralph’s choice but also the result of the author’s modification. James added this in revising the story for the New York edition. These words of love strangely lack signs of Ralph’s personal desire. We cannot help but feel an anticlimax in this confession when we regard the novel as a stereotypical heterosexual love romance. Isabel also keeps line with Ralph and refers to him as her brother. She accepts Ralph’s affection not as a sexual love but as a family love. It is at this moment that we are troubled by the incoherence of meaning.

Some critics have argued that Ralph’s indirect love for Isabel comes from the author’s love for Mary Temple: Ralph and James lack confidence in loving women because of their physical disability. Yet, there is another reason for Ralph keeping his distance from Isabel: that is, Ralph’s desire for his father. Ralph wants to see and help Isabel before he dies, but in the middle of this mission, he goes back to Gardencourt. He ardently hopes to die where his father was, not where Isabel is: the narrator says that Ralph “wanted to die at home; it was the only wish he had left—to extend himself in the large quiet room where he had last seen his father lie, and close his eyes upon the summer dawn” (415). Calmness, death, and unification with his father are comingled with each other in Ralph’s mind. Thus driven by the desire to unite with his father, Ralph goes back to his house.

Ralph’s strong attachment to his father characterizes him at the beginning of the novel. In chapter VII, Ralph reflects on his and his father’s
death as follows: “if they might die at the same time it would be all very well; but without the encouragement of his father’s society he should barely have patience to await his own turn” (63). Ralph does not show such a strong attachment toward other people. Isabel is an exception, but Ralph wants Isabel to live her own life, not together with him. Seen from the fact that he hopes to die with his father, we can assume that Ralph keeps his distance even from Isabel. The opening scene is also significant in considering the theme of the father. Ralph, Warburton, and Mr. Touchett have a tea ceremony; and while walking around and talking with Warburton, Ralph incessantly glances at his father. Ralph’s eyes are full of gentleness and affection. Similar to Isabel, Warburton cannot distract Ralph from his father. When Warburton makes fun of Mr. Touchett about his using a blanket for women, Ralph protests warmly against it and tries to maintain the old man’s health (20). Ralph also shows his honest feeling when he understands that Isabel loves his father: Ralph says “with a certain shy pleasure in his face” that “[he] think[s] [Isabel is] fond of [his father] and that “she appreciates him, which all the world hasn’t done. The quality’s too fine” (148). Thus when something related to his father occurs, Ralph throws off his humorous and insincere mask and unusually shows his serious and candid mind.

Ralph tells Isabel to live her life and the hope functions as an alternative to marriage. Mr. Touchett, in his death bed, asks Ralph to marry Isabel; however, instead of taking the advice, Ralph asks his father to give a part of his own inheritance to Isabel. The language of persuasion is full of eroticism: Ralph says “caressingly” (162) that his father should understand
what he wants now, “lean[s] over his father’s pillow and gently smoothed them” (163) and finally says humorously that “it’s scandalous, the way [he has] taken advantage of [his father]” (163). Ralph chooses a collaborative work with his father against the marriage to Isabel.

It is also noticeable in the current argument that Mr. Touchett regards marriage as “natural life” (159). He also recommends marriage to Warburton, who possibly represents a latent homosexual. He is known for his radical ideals, and Isabel, Mr. Touchett, and Ralph are worried about his split self. The split self seemingly means the disparity between his own aristocratic status and his concern for the lower classes; but, Mr. Touchett suggests that his self-disunion would be cured by marriage (22-23). According to Agnieszka M. Soltysik, the bachelor radicals reminded Victorian readers of homosexuals (250). In this context, Warburton’s self is split between a heterosexual mask and latent homosexuality, and this is the reason why Mr. Touchett thinks that marriage can be a “cure” for his radical tendency. Indeed, Warburton confesses his love for Isabel only when he knows she rejects it; he is always engaged to someone, but the engagements never develop into a marriage in the novel. As Mr. Touchett says, Warburton “want[s] to feel earnest” (72); but, he is not earnest toward women and marriage. Viewed in this light, it is significant that the same “cure” is recommended to Ralph. As Robert K. Martin points out, Ralph may be possibly homosexual (88). It is uncertain whether we can define him as homosexual, but there is one certain thing: instead of marrying, he chooses doing something with his father.

Ralph gives up Isabel twice: he does not propose to Isabel and leaves
her under Osmond’s control. Isabel expects Ralph not to love her, but his behavior in these important scenes is different from Goodwood’s. Goodwood courts Isabel passionately even when she rejects him. Ralph’s feelings for Isabel are also different from those for his father. Ralph’s interest in Isabel is similar to a scientist’s interest in the object of an experiment. He wants her to do something wonderful for his enjoyment; he said that he would not “kill the goose that supplies [him] with the material of my inimitable omelets” (133). According to Ralph, the goose is “the symbol of [his] insane illusion” and brings him “the thrill” (133). Isabel is compared to the goose in this passage; and she is to be agonized by the result of Ralph’s pursuing thrill. On the other hand, Ralph does not allow anything to do harm to his father. As stated above, the blanket is a good example. In addition, as we have considered, Ralph cannot live without his father, which cannot be seen in his love for Isabel. Ralph’s love for his father is strongest and unusual; and it breaks the plot of heterosexual romance.

Thus, Ralph is driven by the desire for his father; and as a result, his relation to Isabel becomes not romantic relationship but brotherhood. His feelings toward his father seem to be beyond a usual father-son relationship; and sometimes his behavior is homoerotic. This strong desire for his father at once moves the plot greatly in giving Isabel money and later in the scene of his death breaks the coherence of the novel as a heterosexual romance.

III. Isabel’s Desire for the Paternal

Isabel has lost her father before her aunt Mrs. Touchett comes to
find her in Albany. Isabel's father is far from ideal: he drinks too much, likes playing cards, incurs debt, and abandons education. However, he was careful to keep his daughters out of evil and danger. Isabel loves her father very much and continues to search for the paternal after his death. For example, she confesses her secret only to Mr. Touchett although her patron is Mrs. Touchett and she has a best friend Henrietta Stackpole. In addition, it is Osmond's fatherhood that attracts Isabel most among the three suitors. Isabel associates the beauty of the father-daughter relationship between Gilbert and Pansy with that of Italian evening landscapes and remembers the scene over and over. Before her marriage, she likes talking with Pansy about her father and being submerged in the memory of her love. Isabel's affection for Osmond is thus inseparably connected with his fatherhood.

Fatherhood functions as inspiring homoeroticism in Isabel. Take for example the famous scene in which Pansy stands between Osmond's knees and looks at Isabel: “[Osmond] ended by drawing [Pansy] out of her chair and making her stand between his knees, leaning against him while he passed his arm round her slimness. The child fixed her eyes on Isabel with a still, disinterested gaze which seemed void of intention, yet conscious of an attraction” (220-21). Pansy is sixteen years old. This scene is proper for a little child; but if a sixteen-year-old girl takes the same posture, readers would be embarrassed by its erotic connotations: Osmond draws Pansy closer to his breast with his arms around her waist. He appreciates her body from a sexual viewpoint. Pansy is his work of art: Osmond has sent her to a convent to make her a sexually disciplined lady. Pansy is made to remain in the interval between womanhood and girlhood in order to attract men by
her appearance of childlike obedience and her adult femininity. Osmond controls his daughter’s sexuality. Viewed in this light, Osmond’s gaze at her body is erotic. Pansy’s innocence is marred because her unnatural childishness reminds us of the fact that Gilbert controls his daughter’s sexuality. Thus the posture reveals the father’s desire for his daughter. Moreover, the scene quoted above brings up an issue because Pansy does not look at her father but at Isabel as if Pansy seduces Isabel to do the same thing. Pansy’s gaze seems to inspire love for Osmond in Isabel, but at the same time, seems to inspire homoerotic feeling toward Pansy in Isabel. It is certain that Isabel is attracted to the scene itself but we cannot know which role she wants to play, Osmond or Osmond’s daughter. Isabel’s love for Osmond is ambiguous because of homoerotic feelings for Pansy.

James is conscious of homoeroticism in the scene above. As William Veeder has already pointed out, James makes use of a similar scene in Villette written by Charlotte Brontë (262), but the original scene has no eroticism between father and daughter, and daughter and watcher: “It was a picture, in its way, to see [Paulina Mary], with her tiny stature and trim, neat shape, standing at [her father’s] knee” (18). Lucy Snowe watched affectionately the daughter and the father, and her eyes are attracted to the prettiness of the girl who is usually prissy, but seeing her father, she becomes her own age again. However, the sentence is very simple and reveals no emotion: she does not turn her eyes to the beholder; and Lucy does not desire the father nor the daughter. The homoeroticism in the Pansy-Isabel relationship is what James deliberately added.

Osmond consciously uses the father-daughter relationship to control
Isabel. Before marriage, he asks Isabel to go to see Pansy instead of asking her directly to love him. He says to Isabel, “Tell her she must love her poor father very much” (265). The message of love is delivered by Isabel to Pansy, but its effect is brought through Pansy to Isabel: Isabel is gradually attracted to Osmond. He also asks Isabel to cooperate with his plan to marry Pansy to Warburton by “embrac[ing] [Pansy] with even more than his usual munificence” (400). Isabel correctly reads Osmond’s intention and understands that “[it] was a partial expression . . . of what [Osmond] continued to expect of his wife” (401). Isabel and Osmond deepen their relationship through Pansy, and in the middle of the process, Isabel’s desire for the paternal is comingled with that for the daughter.

Originally they share the same view toward Pansy. Osmond tends to equate daughter and wife with art objects and expresses his fondness by tactile phrases: for example, Isabel is “smooth” like “handled ivory to the palm” (259). Similar to Osmond, Isabel expresses her love for Pansy as following: “[Isabel] put out her hand to Pansy with a pleasant sense that such a gesture committed her to nothing that would admit of a divergence of views” (220). Tired by a useless argument, Isabel touches Pansy; and the physical contact gives Isabel pleasure. Thus Isabel has a ground for developing Osmond’s love for Pansy and his physical phrases. While Isabel is charmed by Osmond’s fatherhood, she begins to imitate his behavior and makes homoerotic acts toward the daughter. When she visits Pansy, she repeats what Osmond has done to his daughter in the passage cited above: Isabel “[holds] her small companion, drawing the child’s sweet slimness closer and looking down at her almost in envy” (269). Isabel feels like
“talking of Gilbert Osmond to [the] innocent, diminutive creature who was so near him” (269). She is certainly attracted to Osmond who exists beyond Pansy, but at the same time, her hands and eyes catching Pansy are filled with romantic feelings for her.

Homoeroticism reaches a climax when Pansy and Isabel foster a bond of sisterhood under Osmond. As Ralph and Isabel do, Pansy and Isabel have siblinghood, which is supported by the desire for the father. Pansy regards Isabel not as her mother but as her sister, and the narrator also describes them as sisters: for example, when Isabel and Pansy see each other at the convent, they “held each other a moment in a silent embrace, like two sisters” (463). The word “sister” means not only siblings but also nuns. Isabel is put into an unseen jail by Osmond, and Pansy is sent to a prison-like convent by him, too. They are sisters who endure the hardship of the prison-convent. Given that sisterhood has been considered as a connotation of homosexuality, the scene in the convent is full of homoerotic atmosphere. Their embrace is described as the only balm in their life. Embracing Isabel, Pansy asks “You’ll come back?” and Isabel answers “Yes—I’ll come back” (463); this promise negates the possibility that Isabel comes back to Rome solely for Osmond. Instead, the words enable readers to consider that Isabel returns for Pansy.

Thus Isabel is attracted toward Osmond by his charm as a father, but in the process, Isabel’s homoerotic feelings toward Pansy appear. By controlling their sexuality, Osmond unintentionally encourages their sisterhood. Without Pansy, Isabel would not choose Osmond as her husband and cannot survive in her hard marital life. Isabel longs for the paternal
and becomes Osmond’s daughter herself; but, she also imitates Osmond’s desire to possess Pansy. Thus Isabel’s desire for the paternal generates homoeroticism in her, which breaks the coherence of the novel as a heterosexual romance. At the end, Isabel is persuaded by Goodwood to divorce herself from Osmond. Isabel seems to be tentatively attracted to Goodwood; but kissed by him and released from the attraction, she realizes that to divorce Osmond and live a passionate life with Goodwood is not the way she would like to choose. However, she does not declare that she will continue to live with Osmond. We also cannot find the reason why she goes back to Rome: but every incoherence in Isabel’s story generates from her homoerotic feelings inspired by Osmond’s fatherhood.

IV. Osmond’s Desire for the Paternal

Gilbert Osmond is brought up only by his mother in Italy, and his family name and ambition have been damaged by female members of his family. His younger sister Amy Osmond has been married to an Italian Count by her mother for monetary reasons. This plot by the mother causes banishment from their American community. Besides, Amy’s husband turns out to be a detestable man, and Amy has the same poor reputation as her husband because escaping from the hardship in her marital life, she had extramarital love affairs with several gentlemen. This scandal worsens the already poor reputation of the Osmonds. Gilbert has been possibly traumatized by these events and accordingly he covertly aspires to a position of paternal power. After marriage, Isabel learns that her husband has always craved elevation to the top ranks of society: his renunciation,
which Isabel regarded as beautiful, is mere pretention.

Gilbert Osmond has thus had a trauma caused by female family members and hoped for his own patriarchal family. His education of Pansy and his exclusive salon are good examples of his ambitions. It is also important to notice that he likes the great banker Mr. Touchett, the landlord Warburton, and the wealthy factory owner Goodwood. These three men have monetary power and masculinity in common and can be said to be ideal fathers for Osmond. This desire for the paternal seems to show his masculinity and homosocial tendency, but he also plays the role of a woman who wants to marry them: and accordingly his aspiration for the paternal assumes homoerotic aspects. Osmond’s lower socio-economic status and his lack of money mirrors the status of women in James’s time. Besides, because of his poor economic situation, he has to take advantage not of his son but of his daughter. A son can bring the Osmonds the dowry of his bride, but he cannot change the amount of property he owns and the rank of his family name through marriage alone. However, though a daughter cannot possess property, she can virtually achieve a larger fortune and higher rank than her family. This is the reason why Osmond does not lament over the situation in which he has lost his only heir and has not had other sons later. Though Madame Merle suggests that “others may come” (305), if other sons were born, Isabel’s property would be the only thing Osmond can attain, and the dowry for Pansy with which he could attain the merits of a wealthier family will be less.

Thus originally feminized by the lack of a fortune, Osmond has to take advantage of his daughter and has to chase a man in the place of his
daughter. Osmond hears that Warburton is about to leave Rome and is bitterly disappointed as if he were the bride. Reflecting Osmond’s stupefied consciousness, the narrative deliver only Warburton’s words. It is narrated through free indirect speech by which the author presents Osmond’s mind as echoing Warburton’s words. Osmond “was condemned to the sharp pain of loss without the relief of cursing. He had a great hope, and now, as he saw it vanish into smoke, he was obliged to sit and smile and twirl his thumbs. . . . [Osmond] treated [Warburton] on the whole to as vacant a countenance as so clever a man could very well wear” (398). This endurance reflects the sorrow of his daughter whose smile is “akin to a burst of tears” and “her voice perceptibly trembled” (400) when she knows Warburton is leaving her. Both expressions hide deep sorrow behind their public face. Though it is patriarchal that Osmond controls the sexuality of his female family members and that he tries to become the step-father of a man from a wealthier family, the plot feminizes him and generates a homoerotic atmosphere between him and the future-husband of his daughter. Indeed, after missing Warburton, Osmond’s heart seems to be broken as if he himself were falling love with the gentleman.

Even after Warburton leaves them, Osmond brings the subject of marriage to Warburton repeatedly until Isabel gets bored: Osmond even tells Isabel to visit Warburton in England together. Isabel thinks that “the

10 Osmond wants Warburton to marry Pansy, and Warburton is willing to do so for a while. However, he comes to realize that his motivation for marrying Pansy is that he could stay near Isabel. The motivation is immoral: hence, Warburton suddenly decides to leave Pansy, Osmond, and Isabel.
working of his morbid passion [to marry Pansy to Warburton] was extraordinary” (402). Osmond does not usually show such a strong desire for people, and his importunity is similar to the romantic impetus of a broken-hearted lover; it is uncontrollable and helpless. The title of this novel suggests that the portrait of a lady is made by every character’s interpretation, but the lady is interpreted by the way in which she reads Osmond’s personality; hence Osmond's personality is at the center of the novel. In the current discussion, it is important to notice that his personality is tinted with the desire for the paternal. It disturbs Isabel’s freedom, readers’ interpretation of her character, and the coherent meaning of the novel as a heterosexual romance.

As stated above, Isabel longs for the paternal, but she also desires the daughter. Similar to Isabel, Osmond desires the paternal and takes advantage of fatherhood to control his daughter and his wife. Thus playing the role of the ideal father, he also synchronizes himself with a daughter who should be loved and saved by a father. Warburton might have become a strong father who helped Osmond; he might have attained patriarchal power. Osmond plans to exploit the powerful father (Warburton) and his ambition can be regarded as masculine but his desire for paternal support feminizes himself. Furthermore, seen from the eroticism in the father-daughter relationship between Osmond and Pansy, his desire for the paternal can be seen as erotic.

V. Conclusion

*The Portrait of a Lady* has many unsolved riddles: what is the
relationship between Ralph and Isabel: is Isabel in love with Pansy; why she does not discard her husband? These riddles are solved by taking homoeroticism into account.

In the important turning points in which readers are troubled by Isabel’s strange behavior and choices, we can find the main characters’ desires for father figures. Ralph changes Isabel’s life by giving her an inheritance, and giving the property to her is a substitute for marriage—an important project with his father. He fears his father’s death and hopes to die with him at the same time. Although his dream does not come true, he instead tries to die on his father’s death bed under his father’s house’s roof as if he was embraced by his father. For this purpose, he leaves Isabel and goes back to Gardencourt. Ralph likes Isabel very much, but he chooses to regard her as a daughter of the same father and to love him together. This decision betrays readers’ expectations and spoils partly the heterosexual plot in the novel.

Isabel is also attracted by Osmond’s fatherhood, and at the same time, she seems to be charmed by his daughter. She wants to be Osmond’s daughter, who is loved by Osmond; and at the same time, she also wants to be Osmond, who loves and possesses his daughter. I have argued that Isabel’s last decision is described as relating to her love for Pansy. It is significant that Isabel decides to go back to Rome in Gardencourt, the place of Ralph’s desire for his father.

In Osmond’s case, he has been troubled by his mother and his sister and begins to desire for patriarchal power. He controls the sexuality of his daughter and his wife to achieve it, but thus behaving as a dominant master,
he has to run after a gentleman in the place of a bride. He is obsessed with marriage to Warburton and is driven into despair when Warburton leaves him. For Osmond, Warburton is a father who should have loved and helped him, and Osmond desires the father in the place of daughter. This double personality of Osmond causes Isabel to misunderstand him and makes her path obscure.

*The Portrait of a Lady* deals with the problem of how people in the late nineteenth century should think about marriage, which was changing considerably at the time. More precisely, the novel reveals that diversity of sexuality causes new uncertain views of marriage. Previous studies have considered this diversity of sexuality mainly from heterosexuality, but as discussed above, homoeroticism inspired by desires for father figures destructs the stereotypical marriage plot.
5. The Process of Lost Love: Romantic Friendship in *The Bostonians*

I. Introduction

Same-sex affection is only subtly described in *The Portrait of a Lady*; but *The Bostonians* deals with the subject more deeply. Olive Chancellor is a women’s liberationist in Boston. She meets a girl Verena Tarrant, who is a talented public speaker. Verena developed her talent under her parents’ education; however, Olive does not like the vulgarity she sees in Verena’s parents and decides to take charge of her. Thanks to Olive’s guidance, Verena favorably matures as an orator. Yet, one day she meets Basil Ransom, who is Olive’s cousin from the South, and is attracted to him. Basil does not like the way women including Olive exploit Verena for their campaign. Hence, contrary to the emancipation of women, he intends to make Verena a housewife. Though Olive attempts to keep Verena away from him, Basil finally succeeds in eloping with her.

Homosexuality between Olive and Verena has been widely discussed by both early and modern critics. David Van Leer refers to Olive Chancellor as “the first fully conceived lesbian protagonist in modern fiction” (93). Fred Kaplan argues that “the social, the ideological, and the sexual become inseparable” in the relationship between Olive and Verena, and he regards the theme of homosexuality as essential for understanding the novel (281). In earlier criticism, Judith Fetterley argues against the male critics regarding the description of Olive’s homosexuality as “morbid.” Subsequently, the ambiguity of the Olive—Verena relationship was also
comprehensively discussed.\textsuperscript{11}

It is apparent that homosexuality has been an important theme for several decades; however, previous studies exclusively focused on the conflict between heterosexuality and homosexuality and accordingly missed how customary female relationships tend to conceal any romantic feelings. By examining the link between the Olive—Verena relationship and other socially accepted female bonds, it is possible to understand how social mores concerning female bonds spoil Olive and Verena’s romantic relationship. James depicted the process in which a homosexual love could be effaced because of the society in which it occurred. For example, Olive and Verena’s love is blighted not only by an individual (Basil Ransom), but also by society as a whole. Moreover, although previous studies tend to regard her loyalty to Olive as reluctant or passive, it is evident that Verena also willingly loves Olive.

In the second section, we will examine how categorization affects same-sex bonds and how it is concerned with the process of Olive and Verena’s lost love, while the third section compares and contrasts Olive’s and Miss Birdseye’s deaths in order to reveal that the author regarded the process as a pivotal issue in the novel. Finally, in the fourth section, we will consider the possibility of how Henry James has a naturalistic concern for

\textsuperscript{11} Stevens points out that determining whether their relationship is mere friendship or lesbianism is unclear and that it depends on the readers (\textit{Henry James and Sexuality} 96). Elizabeth Allen claims that Verena is not willing to establish a romantic relationship with Olive (91). Nowadays, critics have begun to discuss the novel on the premise of Olive’s and Verena’s homosexuality. Kathleen McColley argues that speech acts foster the development of their romantic relationship, whereas Denis Flannery observes that sibling love influences their relationship.
Before beginning this discussion, let us consider the context in which Olive and Verena are situated. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, who has studied Victorian romantic friendships, states that female friendships were both sensual and platonic, and they coexisted with heterosexual marriage (55, 59). Moreover, there was no clear distinction between heterosexuality and what we currently refer to as homosexuality. Instead, there was some latitude between these two practices (Smith-Rosenberg 75-76). Romantic friendships in Victorian society existed in this state of latitude, and whether the feelings were closer to love or friendship depended on each case. For instance, some felt a strong sense of attachment, jealousy, and sexual desire, while others had simpler friendships. However, certainly there were romantic feelings in some relationships even though they were referred to as mere “friendships.” Similar to Smith-Rosenberg, Sharon Marcus explains that lesbianism in the Victorian era was not a sexual identity nor was it accused of being perverse. Rather, female homoeroticism was thought to represent traditional femininity (113). Marcus also observes that the Victorians accepted female homosexuality since it encouraged heterosexuality. Particularly, in genteel society, people could not tell young girls how women should love men. Hence, they cultivated affection in girls by making them care for dolls as their mothers did for the girls themselves, which, in turn, taught them to share such feelings with their female friends, and eventually men. Furthermore, female friendships helped hone the skills for being future wives and mothers, and for this reason, they referred to their female “lovers” by various names such as “mother,” “wife,” “idol,”
“sister,” and “friend” (Marcus 46-49). In fact, there were many couples that had a so-called mother-daughter relationship in boarding schools (Smith-Rosenberg 67).

As stated above, the female relationship was a model for heterosexual love even though it potentially concealed female homosexual love. Regardless of how deeply the women loved their friends as lovers, they were still called “friends” and the women were eventually forced to sacrifice their sacred relationship for heterosexual marriage. This situation was commonly observed in both Europe and America, and James utilized this American romantic relationship (also called the “Boston marriage” post-James’s work) as his subject and wrote *The Bostonians*.

II. Categorization of Same-sex Bond

Leer underscores the point that in the so-called Boston marriage, there were no conspicuous gaps between partners (99). However, unlike typical examples of such a marriage, Olive and Verena are substantially different in age, intelligence, and social rank. Accordingly, their relationship is categorized by other characters into various customary female relationships. For example, people regard them as a governess and a pupil, as a lady patron and a poor companion, or as a mother and a child. This categorization obscures the romantic aspects of their relationship, and the two women are troubled by this. However, those who formerly tolerate Olive and Verena’s same-sex attachment begin to persuade them to dissolve their bond. These series of interventions profoundly affects Olive and Verena’s consciousness and gradually pushes Verena toward heterosexuality.
As stated in the introduction of this chapter, female same-sex love was invisible because, in the case of women, the term “friendship” included a broad range of relationships from mere friends to lovers. The relationship between Olive and Verena is classified as a “friendship” by the people around them, and thus, Olive and Verena could not make others understand the importance of their feelings for one another. Verena’s mother Mrs. Tarrant assumes that Olive and Verena are mere friends and that a female friendship is a phase that is eventually replaced by marriage. For example, she regards “[Verena's] real lovely friendship with [Olive]” as “[occupying] agreeably such an interval as might occur before Verena should meet her sterner fate” (93). In this passage, Mrs. Tarrant recognizes their relationship as a friendship, and although she accepts it as “agreeabl[e],” she practically denies its importance by expressing it as a diversion or subordination to marriage. Basil thinks in a similar manner and silences Verena with his hatred of her loyalty to Olive. Verena claims that she cannot marry him since Olive would become emotionally wounded. He does not agree with Verena’s reasoning and regards “the sacred name of friendship” that she brings forth as “fanatical sophistry” (376). As a person living in the nineteenth century, Verena cannot help but express and recognize her relationship to Olive as a “friendship” even though the term has no power to protect their relationship. For Basil, the “friendship” is not a sufficient reason for refusing a marriage proposal, and he regards Verena’s defense of the sacred bond as childish and ridiculous. In this manner, Olive and Verena live in a society that never absolutely understands the sincerity and importance of their relationship.
To live with Verena in such a society, Olive is forced to negotiate with people around Verena and financially support her. As a result, Olive is categorized as a “patron”; people believe that money and hierarchical power deprive Verena of her freedom; and they attempt to negotiate with Olive as Verena’s patron. This negotiation implies that Verena does not voluntarily live with Olive, and she is injured by such an implication. For example, when Basil insinuates that Olive “defends” Verena against the world, Olive is deeply wounded and states, “Well, [Verena] at least is not mine!” . . . springing to her feet. [Olive] looked round her as if she were really pressed too hard, panting like a hunted creature” (266). In this passage, Olive is hurt by Basil’s viewpoint that she makes Verena do things unwillingly despite Olive’s claim that Verena can do everything of her own free will. Similar to Basil, Mrs. Burrage, who wants Verena to marry her son, persuades Olive to leave Verena alone in a tone “intimating that there was nothing in the world she couldn’t understand” (295). It is this tone that Olive feels like resisting the most. By airing her worldly knowledge, Mrs. Burrage regards Olive as Verena’s patron whereby she denies the fact that they are willing to be together. Olive thus encounters a barrier of categorization.

As well as being referred to as a “patron,” Olive is also categorized as a “governess” since she teaches Verena about history, music, literature, elocution, and manners as well as giving her an opportunity to read precious books that were previously unavailable to her. This “education” serves a purpose for the lovers: Olive plans to turn Verena into an ideal lady and share common interests in the future. Yet, other characters categorize
Olive as a “governess” and Verena as a “pupil” and they mock their relationship by pointing out that Olive treats Verena as if she were “a little girl of ten” (312). One of the novel’s women’s libbers Mrs. Farrinder calls the cohabitation and education between Olive and Verena “a kind of elderly, ridiculous doll-dressing” (157) and interestingly enough, her perspective is narrated through Olive’s consciousness: Olive is fully aware that they are thought to be unnatural. In addition to the role of governess, Olive is labelled as having a maternal role since she feeds, clothes, and houses Verena. It is for this role that Basil remembers Olive when he encounters an unknown nursing mother with her charge during his date with Verena in a park. The nursing mother looks at Basil with piercing eyes when he is driven to kiss Verena, and the gaze reminds him of Olive. In this instance, what prevents Basil from kissing Verena is not a lover’s jealousy but a mother’s anxiety.

This series of categorizations conceals the romantic aspects in the relationship between Olive and Verena. However, once these categorizations become invalid, they cannot live together. Let us examine the scene in which Basil attempts to persuade Verena to go out with him:

“[Olive’s] going out that way—it proves that she trusts me,” Verena said, with a candor which alarmed her as soon as she had spoken.

Her alarm was just, for Basil Ransom instantly caught up her words, with a great mocking amazement. “Trusts you? and why shouldn’t she trust you? Are you a little girl of ten and she your governess? . . . .” (312)
In this passage, Basil catches the word “trust” and suspects that there is a strange engagement between the two women, following which he mocks it by comparing them to a governess and a pupil. The words show that their close relationship cannot be defined except as a governess and a pupil even though they are not actually in a tutor-pupil relationship. Accordingly, it follows that Verena’s loyalty is too childish, and Olive is too indifferent to Verena’s independence. To counter this criticism and defend Olive, Verena must prove that she is not Olive’s pupil. However, the only way to prove this is to go out with Basil: that is, accept and enjoy heterosexual love. Once Verena spends a whole day alone with him as if they were lovers, she vaguely feels that heterosexuality is a “natural” way of living. Subsequently, Olive is disappointed with Verena’s betrayal and it spoils their relationship. Thus, the influence of people around them changes Olive’s and Verena’s views, and it eventually causes a rupture in their romantic bond.

After Basil fiercely blames Verena for bringing forth the “sacred name of friendship” to reject his courtship, Verena no longer explains that she does not want to injure Olive and thereby loses the only reason to reject him. Another situation indicates how both Verena and Olive are affected by society. For example, Mrs. Burrage convinces Olive that Verena will marry someone in the near future and that it is an unchangeable fact. The lady also mentions that if Verena marries her son, then she would allow Olive to meet Verena anytime. Influenced by these suggestions, Olive begins to consider whether it is best for Verena to marry Mr. Burrage. That is, Olive begins to accept the view that her same-sex relationship with Verena should be subordinated to a heterosexual marriage.
Olive and Verena are thus categorized into an existing female relationship, and as a result, they cannot clarify the romantic aspects of their relationship. Furthermore, when other characters begin to realize that a customary female relationship is not suitable for Olive’s and Verena’s ages, those characters directly and indirectly persuade the two women to break their bonds and gradually accept heterosexism.

III. Miss Birdseye’s and Olive’s Deaths in Marmion

In order to show that the process of lost love discussed above is a pivotal issue in this novel, let us compare and contrast Miss Birdseye’s and Olive’s deaths. These two characters have a common romantic view and cause: Miss Birdseye hopes for a conversion of the Southerner, while Olive wishes for the emancipation of women. Miss Birdseye always desires what exists beyond the “here” and “now” and this is why she participates in her cause. The narrator describes her excessive romanticism in the following manner:

Since the Civil War much of her occupation was gone; for before that her best hours had been spent in fancying that she was helping some Southern slave to escape. It would have been a nice question whether, in her heart of hearts, for the sake of this excitement, she did not sometimes wish the blacks back in bondage. (24)

Thus, Miss Birdseye’s participation in the emancipation movement is described as something that inspires her romanticism, which she attains through people living in a different world from her own. Olive also has the same intense romanticism in her cause. For example, she hates being rich
and wishes to escape from her luxurious position. She also spends her leisure time and a large amount of money on the emancipation of women, especially of the poorer sections of society: “[Olive] had long been preoccupied with the romance of the people. She had an immense desire to know intimately some very poor girl. This might seem one of the most accessible of pleasures” (31). As this passage depicts, Olive can pursue a romantic life through this particular cause. As the word “romance” reveals, she can experience a totally different life from her own, which brings her “pleasure.” In this regard, although Olive and Miss Birdseye differ in generation and interests, they share a strangely intense romantic view toward their respective causes.

In addition, due to their romanticism, Olive and Miss Birdseye simultaneously possess the spirit of the young and the old. For example, Basil is surprised at the fact that Olive looks like an elderly woman while she is younger than he. Olive thinks that Miss Birdseye “will never be old” and she is “the youngest spirit [Olive] knows” (18), even though the elderly lady would die in a year. Olive’s and Miss Birdseye’s ambiguous descriptions of age are related to their sexuality: “[Olive] was so essentially a celibate that Ransom found himself thinking of her as old, though when he came to look at her (as he said to himself) it was apparent that her years were fewer than his own” (15). Olive’s celibacy is related to her homosexuality, which Basil vaguely recognizes. He distinguishes “the old old maids” from “the new old maid” (325), and it is the latter that Olive belongs to and Basil fears for. Similar to Olive, Miss Birdseye establishes a strong bond with her “boyish” female doctor named Dr. Prance. Their relationship is seemingly
not as homoerotic as that of Olive’s and Verena’s, but the context implies the former’s romantic relationship.

Marcia Jacobson traces interrelations of female doctor novels and especially focuses on the resemblance between *The Bostonians* and *A Country Doctor* (1884) by Sarah Orne Jewett. James had been interested in Jewett’s lesbian relationship for a long time. For example, in his later essay titled, “Mr. and Mrs. James T. Fields” (1915), James shows his approval of the romantic friendship between Jewett and Mrs. Fields (*Literary Criticism* I: 169). In the same essay, he refers to Charlotte Brontë and seems to associate Jewett with Brontë in their homoeroticism since James specified Brontë’s romantic friendship with Ellen Nussey as the most significant key to understanding Brontë’s works (*Letters* II:275). Thus, this essay regarding the heterosexual marital couple (“Mr. and Mrs. James T. Fields”) is filled with homoerotic relationships, and one of the couples wrote a story about a female doctor, which James had read two years before publishing *The Bostonians*.

Viewed in this light, it is noteworthy that Dr. Prance, who loves solitude, lives with Miss Birdseye and solely cares for the health of the elder woman. Miss Birdseye even reluctantly accepts a new unfamiliar treatment that her companion recommends, since she knows that Dr. Prance sincerely wants her to sleep soundly and live as long as she can. Their relationship is not as passionately written as that of Olive’s and Verena’s, but it is certainly homoerotic. As stated above, Basil regards the mixture of the young with the old in Olive as originating in her homosexuality. Given that Miss Birdseye loves the female character (Dr. Prance), the mixture of the young
and the old in Miss Birdseye as well as Olive reveals her latent homosexuality.

Their homosexuality is also related to their romantic view of their respective causes. For example, Olive’s hope to escape from her own world by focusing her interests on poor girls makes her a “new old maid.” In other words, Olive’s life with a woman is a realization of both her cause and her homosexuality. Miss Birdseye has also attempted to change her present situation and accordingly, she has lived with Dr. Prance (who struggles to establish her identity as a female doctor in a male-driven society) instead of finding a husband. We cannot determine which is prior, their homosexuality or their romanticism, but it is possible at least to point out that there is a special bond between them.

Along with Olive and Miss Birdseye’s aforementioned commonalities, there is the scene in Marmion in which Miss Birdseye dies and Olive loses Verena. Miss Birdseye entertains the romantic hope that the Northern woman (Verena) could convert the Southern man (Basil) into a feminist. However, Miss Birdseye’s friends understand her so well that they do not reveal that Basil actually persuades Verena to give up her cause. As a result, Miss Birdseye dies both romantically and self-deceivingly, believing that her dream would come true: “[Miss Birdseye] only felt, now that she seemed really to be going, a desire to reconcile and harmonize. But she presently exhaled a low, soft sigh—a kind of confession that it was too mixed, that she gave it up” (383). Miss Birdseye almost realizes that the world is not what she imagines. Yet, she circumvents the awareness and chooses to see the world from her point of view. In other words, her romanticism is maintained
till the end of her life.

Olive also loses Verena and dies spiritually, but the meaning of her death is completely different from that of Miss Birdseye’s. When waiting for Verena, who has gone to Basil, Olive “lived over, in her miserable musings, her life for the last two years; she knew, again, how noble and beautiful her scheme had been, but how it had all rested on an illusion” (395). Olive realizes that “[the] reality was simply that Verena had been more to her than she ever was to Verena” (395). Unlike Miss Birdseye, Olive determines that “the reality” or “the truth” has existed beyond her idea of romanticism. Although the events and feelings in the past have not been entirely an illusion, Olive rewrites her memory and erases Verena’s affection for her. As Miss Birdseye states, people know “how [Olive and Verena] love to be together; it seems as if one couldn’t go out without the other” (348).

Meanwhile, Verena herself proves her affection toward Olive. For example, whenever she is dating gentlemen, Verena sees Olive beyond her male interlocutors: “[Verena] saw [Olive], in fact, as she must be at that moment, posted at the window of her room in Tenth Street, watching for some sign of her return, listening for her step on the staircase, her voice in the hall” (315). Besides, for Verena, making Olive happy has been the ultimate pleasure. For this purpose, she cancels her meeting with Basil and chooses to go back to Boston with Olive (281). These signs of Verena’s affection, however, are gradually screened by society and eventually replaced by misery. It is at this point that Olive loses what she should have had, and thereby begins to believe that her reality in the past was not actually reality, but simply a product of her romanticism. Unlike Miss
Birdseye, Olive has replaced her romanticism with bitterness. By presenting the two characters’ deaths simultaneously, James consciously throws Olive’s disparity into relief, and thus, he brings the scene to an emotional climax.

IV. Naturalistic Concern for Lesbianism

Olive loses Verena not at the ending of the novel, but in the dramatic scene at Marmion. The final part mainly serves as the author’s way of highlighting Olive’s deep sorrow. As stated above, Olive was waiting for Verena’s return from the date with Basil. On that day, Olive clearly understands that she cannot stop Verena’s falling in love with Basil. After an argument between Olive and Verena, Basil comes to see her again. Olive is completely aware that Verena and Basil love each other; however, Olive still decides to take Verena away from him and declares that she will fully succeed in hiding Verena from him. The following excerpt reveals Olive’s mixed feelings:

“You will not find out for yourself.” [Olive said.]

“You think not?” [Basil returned.]

“I am sure of it!” And her enjoyment of the situation becoming acute, there broke from her lips a shrill, unfamiliar, troubled sound, which performed the office of a laugh, a laugh of triumph, but which, at a distance, might have passed almost as well for a wail of despair. It rang in Ransom’s ears as he quickly turned away. (400)

Contrary to these triumphant words, Olive foresees her defeat, and her
“wail of despair” rings in Basil’s ears so loudly that it makes him suddenly leave. Nevertheless, Olive feels that she must take Verena away from him to spend as much time as possible with her or she self-deceivingly believes that she can do anything that she desires. Thus, after the Marmion scene, Olive repeatedly despairs the loss of Verena, and Basil becomes a mere recorder of her voice. Ultimately, he succeeds in eloping with Verena, but he thinks that he will not forget Olive’s sad expression: “The expression of her face was a thing to remain with him forever; it was impossible to imagine a more vivid presentment of blighted hope and wounded pride” (432). It is clear from this narrative that James emphasizes the importance of Olive’s sorrow.

Olive’s sorrow also proves that the process of lost love is a significant theme in this novel. For instance, when Basil tells Verena that her connection with the cause is “the most unreal, accidental, illusory thing in the world,” Verena realizes that it is true:

That description of herself as something different from what she was trying to be, the charge of want of reality, made her heart beat with pain: she was sure, at any rate, it was her real self that was there with him now, where she oughtn’t to be (326).

Verena is torn between her “real” self and what she is “trying to be” or “ought to be.” These words represent her yearning for the ideal personality and they prove that Verena desires the personality that she has created with Olive more than her “real” self. As the words “illusory” and “real” in the passage denote, the intervention of society (in this case, Basil’s courtship) makes Olive’s world both ideal and fictional. Consequently, the
more Verena cannot become Olive’s ideal partner, her yearning for the ideal self becomes stronger.

Verena’s desire for Olive is the intended crux of the story. In Chapter 11 in which Verena visits Olive for the first time, the narrator suddenly inserts Verena’s viewpoint (who has already experienced the entire events of the novel): “Verena wondered afterward why she had not been more afraid of her [Olive]—why, indeed, she [Verena] had not turned and saved herself by darting out of the room” (76). These are not words representing Verena’s dislike for Olive, but instead, they reveal Verena’s deep desire for Olive. Verena believes that there is no other way to escape Olive’s influence except by first eluding her before knowing her better. In other words, Verena thinks that once she gets to know Olive, she would inevitably love her and irretrievably complicate her own self. It is noteworthy that Verena continues to think about Olive even after she elopes with Basil. By inserting the future-Verena’s voice beforehand, the narrator provides readers with a clue to comprehending the novel’s theme as the process of their lost love.

Thus, James foresees that the relationship between Olive and Verena should end, and based on this assumption, he begins to describe how they establish their romantic relationship to show how it is ultimately blighted by society. As observed from this narrative structure, James views the blighted hope of the homosexuals from a naturalistic perspective. The kinship between *The Bostonians* and naturalism has been discussed to date, but critics have only focused on the descriptive mode and the themes of
heredity and environment. However, we should also consider how *The Bostonians* shares the narration with naturalism. As stated above, Olive and Verena’s relationship is effaced by society. Hence, James seems to have a concern for the social process in which homosexual love is blighted. Moreover, he utilizes the experimental method of naturalism by intimating the doomed denouement of the two women’s love at the beginning and depicting how it gradually is annihilated by society.

It is apparent that James had a strong interest in female romantic friendships. For example, when he was writing *The Bostonians*, he sat by his sister’s bed and witnessed a strange bond between his sister Alice and her friend Katherine Peabody Loring. James also noticed that Alice wanted to exclusively occupy Katherine and that Alice either became well when Katherine was staying with her, or she detained Katherine by pretending to be ill (Edel, *Middle Years* 128). Katherine was at Alice’s bedside when she died and, being her brother, James realized that no one could replace Katherine (Fred Kaplan 277). As the enduring relationship of Alice and Katherine proves, James saw only a delightful aspect of the female romantic relationship when writing *The Bostonians*. However, he dramatizes it from a naturalistic approach. He states in his notebook that

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12 For example, Lyall H. Powers argues that *The Bostonians* belongs to naturalism since it minutely depicts people and places. Powers also insists that Verena attains her spirituality, her lower-class personality, and her radicalism through her parents and her childhood environment: all of which are important factors in the story (58-63). Elaine Pigeon also regards *The Bostonians* as the turning point of James’s writings from aestheticism to naturalism. Pigeon detects that James was interested in sexuality and the main themes of naturalism and such interests added a so-called queer twist to them (62).
The Bostonians depicts “the situation of women, the decline of the sentiment of sex, the agitation on their behalf” (Complete Notebooks 20). These words, especially “the decline of the sentiment of sex” are too ambiguous to decide what they actually mean, but James had a tendency to use “sentiment” to represent affection. Therefore, James seems to mean that the main theme is the ambiguous feeling surrounding lesbianism and its decline based on a naturalistic viewpoint.

V. Conclusion

As stated above, Olive and Verena do not know how they can signify their relationship since it is so easily replaced by other terms. More specifically, their same-sex relationship is less important in society than marriage, and it is therefore invisible. However, this female relationship may have been helpful for them at least temporarily to be with one another, for they are eventually persuaded to break up after it did not work. In addition, Olive and Verena cannot define that they are lesbians and as a result, they are unable effectively to resist societal pressure; finally, common sense irretrievably changes their thoughts. Based on the fact that Olive rewrites her history according to the social viewpoint, James depicts this process as a major theme in the novel.

Unlike Miss Birdseye, who continues to believe in her ideal until her death, Olive loses her romanticism, especially after she believed that Verena no longer loved her. Following the scene in Marmion, James exclusively depicts Olive’s wounded mind and thereby leads readers to focus on the importance of the blighted love. Moreover, it is noteworthy that
James inserts Verena’s backward glance into the beginning. This narrative structure makes readers foresee that Verena will leave Olive, after which readers can follow how they broke up. In other words, James experimentally places Verena and Olive in a difficult circumstance and depicts how they will struggle through it. Viewed in this light, readers learn that James had a naturalistic concern for homosexuals and that he fully understood how society worked and what will become of those who deviate from social norms.

Finally, James admitted that the novel was too diffuse, as earliest reviewers stated. Despite his financial challenges when writing *The Bostonians* and the fact that the publisher would not pay for the extra length, he still believed that the novel required its full length since he was intensively concerned about the fate of homosexuals and how they must endure their lives.
6. A Negative Legacy and Homoeroticism in *The Princess Casamassima*

I. Introduction

Written at the same period as *The Bostonians*, *The Princess Casamassima* deals with the interrelation between a social problem and homoeroticism. The protagonist Hyacinth Robinson loses his mother Florentine Vivier when he is ten years old: Florentine had stabbed to death a nobleman, who is the putative father of Hyacinth, and has been serving a life sentence in prison. Hyacinth is raised by Florentine’s acquaintance Miss Pynsent, and the foster mother puts into his head the idea that his father is a nobleman. She also boasts about Hyacinth’s noble origin to her neighbors and carefully conceals the fact that his mother is in prison. However, having been informed about Florentine being close to death, Miss Pynsent must bring Hyacinth to see his real mother. About ten years after the visit to the prison, the grown-up Hyacinth understands that the woman in prison is his real mother. Since then he has been suffering from his ambiguous identity. Hyacinth gets involved in a revolutionary group and makes a pledge to the leader, Diedrich Hoffendahl, to assassinate a Duke, which puts Hyacinth’s own life in peril. Yet, Hyacinth has a long time to carry out the assassination. Meanwhile, he gets acquainted with the Princess Casamassima, who has a strong interest in the revolutionary movement, and with Captain Sholto, who comes to the revolutionary group to find some interesting people for the Princess’ amusement. In his relationship with the leisured classes, Hyacinth has begun to appreciate a European civilization based on hierarchical systems and has lost his interest in the revolution.
After this change occurs in Hyacinth, Hoffendahl delivers the order for the assassination. By the time he takes this order, Hyacinth thinks he has lost the Princess; hence, he tries to find consolation in his old friend Millicent Henning. Yet, Hyacinth goes to her only to find that the amorous gentleman Captain Sholto has preceded him. Hyacinth goes back to his shabby apartment and kills himself.

Hyacinth wavers between compassion for his father and his mother, love for the Princess and Millicent, and maintenance of civilization and subversive activities. Consequently, critics have considered Hyacinth’s suicide as the result of these conflicts,\(^\text{13}\) and few critics have focused on the protagonist’s mother.\(^\text{14}\) Florentine only appears in the beginning and at the end; however, her murder, her low birth, and her miserable death in prison evoke a sense of aversion to her in Hyacinth and inspire fear of heredity in his heart. In proportion to the aversion to Florentine, an admiration for his putative father develops in Hyacinth. He is attracted to paternal figures such as revolutionary leaders and a nobleman. Although Hyacinth loves women, he helplessly yearns for male rulers. Because of the negative feelings toward his mother and the subsequent adoration for his father, he

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\(^{13}\) Many scholars believe that Hyacinth cannot choose between destruction and maintenance of civilization, the lower classes and the upper classes, and his mother and his father, and that this divided sympathy is the reason for his suicide (Hadley 115; M. Jacobson 58; Trilling 76; Bowden 66).

\(^{14}\) Little attention has been given to the relationship between Hyacinth and his mother. Charles A. Anderson has looked closely at the Milbank scene, only to conclude that Hyacinth’s humble birth is but one of many reasons for his confusion. (129-37). Victoria Coulson claims that Hyacinth “is cut off from identification with any of his proliferation of real and surrogate parents” (65). This represents the opinion of many critics.
eventually commits suicide.\footnote{Critics have already considered Hyacinth’s homoerotic adoration for male characters. For example, Jacob Jacobson states that this novel employs a female character to mediate a bond between men and “to circumscribe queer desire between men, most notably in the erotic triangle Hyacinth—the Princess—Paul. Two other queer triangles clearly inhabit the text: Hyacinth—the Princess—Sholto and Hyacinth—Millicent—Sholto” (174). As Jacob Jacobson argues, the homoeroticism between Hyacinth and male rulers is an important theme in this novel. Stevens also discusses the homoeroticism between Hyacinth and Paul (\textit{Henry James and Sexuality} 104). However, there is room for discussion about how Hyacinth’s homoeroticism and social problems are related to each other.}

Without considering the interrelation between the social and personal problems, readers might find the ending anticlimactic. “James’s narrowing of his subject from the political and social to the personal,” Marcia Jacobson claims, “gives the last part of \textit{The Princess} a rather disjointed quality” (58). Yet, “the personal” subject underlies the story and is the central motivation behind Hyacinth’s behavior. His mother’s misery causes Hyacinth to identify himself with her, which inspires a homoerotic adoration for the paternal in Hyacinth. The parents’ circumstances represent a social problem itself: there is sexual, economic, and legal inequality between Hyacinth’s father and mother, that is, the exploiting and exploited classes. This social problem causes Hyacinth’s personal problems about his social and sexual identity.

This paper will focus on the relationship of Hyacinth to Florentine to argue that he identifies himself with his mother and desires for the paternal and conclude that his suicide derives from his hatred of his mother, especially of her criminality and of its heredity and from his homoerotic concern for male rulers.
II. Hyacinth’s Distaste for His Mother

We will begin by considering how Hyacinth loathes his blood tie with his mother. In the scene in which Hyacinth confides his origin to the Princess Casamassima and Millicent Henning, the narrator—who shares Hyacinth’s viewpoint in these passages—does not clearly describe what Hyacinth tells them. We only know that when Millicent listens to his story, “[her] face, with its parted lips and eyes clouded to gentleness, wore an expression Hyacinth had never seen there before” (476); that the story Hyacinth has “kept down so long” is “hideous” (476); and that disclosing the story, Hyacinth feels as if “a very foul liquid” with a “bad odour” (477) poured out of him. Though we do not at first know what these allusions mean, after rereading and considering them carefully, we finally come to understand that the confession is about Hyacinth’s mother. Yet, given the readers’ preliminary knowledge about her, this roundabout expression seems unnecessarily cautious. It is not to keep the reader in suspense; instead, the narrator effectively conveys through these evasive expressions how deep Hyacinth’s shame about his humble parentage is.

Hyacinth’s aversion to his kinship with his mother mainly originates from his assumption that he is of noble birth. As Pierre A. Walker has pointed out, it is “the deepest hope” for Hyacinth that someday Lord Frederick’s relatives would find and take responsibility for him (52).

16 Naturally, as a son, Hyacinth sometimes shows consideration for Florentine’s feelings, but even in those cases, his affection comes from his sense of duty and justice. This sense is closely related to his sense of masculinity.
Hyacinth even tries to defend his good name against Florentine’s lowliness. He needs to pluck up his courage to reveal his maternal origin, though his old friend Millicent does not understand his worry. Hyacinth “was struck with the fact that his base birth really made little impression on [Millicent]” (481). Unlike Hyacinth, Millicent takes it for granted that Hyacinth belongs to the lower class. The gap between Hyacinth’s seriousness and Millicent’s casualness throws into relief how automatically Hyacinth assumes that he is a nobleman.

Because of this assumption about his nobility, Hyacinth cannot accept his blood tie with his mother: in admitting Florentine as his mother, he feels as if he has committed suicide. The ranks of his parents are too different from each other to be simultaneously admitted. For Hyacinth, to admit his blood tie with a woman of the lower class means that he loses his identity as a nobleman. In fact, Hyacinth mentions that “[he is] breaking up” as he talks about his mother (479). This imagery of disintegration is expressed in another section through the use of suicide as metaphor: to admit his mother’s origin is to turn “the knife in the wound inflicted by such explicit reference [to his lowliness of station]” (182). In this metaphor, the collapse of his identity as a nobleman overlaps with the self-injurious behavior. Admitting his lowly position thus entails a considerable risk, one that would result in the loss of his identity.

III. Hyacinth’s Anxiety about Repeating His Mother’s Fate

As stated above, Hyacinth dislikes the lowliness of his maternal origin; nevertheless, he is helplessly reminded of it. The following passage
shows how his face betrays his secret:

Something in [Millicent’s] behavior at this period had even made Hyacinth wonder if there were not some mystical sign in his appearance, some final betrayal in the very expression of his face, of the predicament in which he had been placed by Diedrich Hoffendahl; he began to suspect anew the operation of that ‘beastly attendrissement’ he had detected of old in people who had the benefit of Miss Pynsent’s innuendoes. (342)

Romantic innuendoes are a characteristic of Miss Pynsent and the phrase “the benefit of Miss Pynsent’s innuendoes” means that Miss Pynsent has protected Hyacinth’s good name against his vulgar neighbors; in other words, she has boasted about Hyacinth’s paternal origin. Then it follows that in the latter part of the passage, Hyacinth thinks that people commiserate with him not over his father’s lowly origin, but rather over his father’s nobility. This explanation seems to be illogical, and the inconsistency is completed by his French-looking face. Hyacinth’s acquaintances often point out that he looks like a Frenchman (72, 167), and it seems reasonable to suppose that people could have guessed from the social rank of Hyacinth’s putative father and from Hyacinth’s face that a gentleman had flirted with a foreign prostitute only to later desert her and her illegitimate child. What Hyacinth would have “detected” in people is their sympathies for Florentine and Hyacinth, and people’s compassion would have reminded him of his mother. As seen in the first half of the passage, Millicent’s sympathy triggers an anxiety that his face might betray his secret again. Thus, because of his face, Hyacinth is forced to recognize
his blood tie with his mother.

This consciousness of his blood relationship with Florentine seems to be developed by his association with the upper classes. Looking “at himself in one of the long glasses” at the Princess Casamassima’s, he thinks that “Mademoiselle Vivier’s son, lacking all the social dimensions, was scarce a perceptible person at all” (262). Being an imperceptible person is a repeated expression meaning one belongs to the lower class; and, as stated above, his features have traces of his mother. Viewed in this light, through differences from the Princess’ life, Hyacinth seems to be acutely conscious of his low social standing and consequently is forced to remember that he is the son of Florentine. Alwyn Berland asserts that the Princess “is never more aristocratic than when she is acting the revolutionary” (144); and Hyacinth would also never be more plebeian than when he is associated with the aristocracy. In the relationship with the upper classes, especially with the Princess, Hyacinth is again forced to be aware of his maternal origin.

Hyacinth recognizes his kinship with his mother to the extent that he is afraid of repeating his mother’s fate: Hyacinth foresees that the Princess will leave him when she “bores herself in his society” (384). He admits his errors about this assumption later; nonetheless, he newly begins to suspect that she will someday desert him. The Princess Casamassima may be a femme fatale, but the sign of her fatal caprice does not appear in this work. She never loses her interest in the revolution and keeps her affection for Hyacinth long enough to try to save his life at the end of the story; it is because of his loss of interest in the revolutionary cause that the
Princess becomes estranged from him. As Allen detects, Hyacinth cannot see the Princess as she is (101). Seen from these perspectives, we may say that Hyacinth voluntarily assigns the role of *femme fatale* to the Princess and that of victim to himself. Behind this assignation, there seems to be his obsession with the idea that he as well as his mother is doomed to be jilted by the aristocracy. The Princess's attraction is based on her husband's fund and his high social status; it is to a masculine power that Hyacinth is attracted. Hyacinth often feels isolated from masculine characters such as Sholto, Paul and Hoffendahl, who own the same monetary or hierarchical power as the Princess. Being conscious of his inability to escape from a fate dictated by his mother's origin, Hyacinth is afraid that, like his mother, he would be discarded by those with masculine power.

IV. Hyacinth's Suicide and Identification with the Paternal

Among Florentine's characteristics, Hyacinth dreads her criminality the most. He thinks over his inherited criminality not only at the end but also at numerous previous points in the narrative. The following passage provides an example. He “wished to go through life in his own character”; nevertheless, he “was to cover up [his own character] as carefully as possible; he was to go through life in a mask, in a borrowed mantle; he was to be every day and every hour an actor” (79). Interpretations of this part

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17 Critics have discussed the distortions and limits of Hyacinth’s view. For example, Berland asserts that readers know what Hyacinth does not know about his situation (52). W. H. Tilley, who discusses in detail the relationship between the historical context and the work, states that it is Hyacinth’s idea and is “beyond the evidence” that “a great uprising is to break out” (53).
differ according to critics;\(^{18}\) in general, they tend to focus on the mask itself, yet most have not fully considered the being behind the mask. To understand what Hyacinth believes “his own character” to be, however, we should consider what lies behind the mask. At this point in the story, one of the most guarded secrets about his family is that his mother is a murderess. Yet, Hyacinth conceals his mother’s occupation and her nationality as well. I would like to discuss this more fully before concluding that “his own character” is related to Florentine’s criminality.

Let us consider Hyacinth’s line of thought from his assumption of a disguised self to his thoughts about the ideal woman. Immediately after the above quotation, the narrator says that Hyacinth wants to confide his plight to a woman who has a maternal love and “kissable cheek[s]” (80). In this ideal woman, we can catch a glimpse of Florentine. As a child, he is kissed by a woman in prison without knowing that the woman is his mother. The day is the first and last time that Hyacinth meets his mother and is the ultimate source of his distress. For these reasons, kissing has a particular significance for Hyacinth. In addition to her kissing, her criminality has haunted Hyacinth. For example, when he is listening to Miss Pynsent’s gossip about robbery, he suddenly recalls the woman in the prison. In his

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\(^{18}\) For example, Collin Meissner claims that the mask represents Hyacinth’s escapism (189). John Carlos Rowe states that the mask “can be the recognition only of his lack of a ‘self’ other than those roles whereby he attempts to legitimate himself in a world of that brands him ‘illegitimate’” (165). Philip Sicker explains that the mask is a role that “will express...[Hyacinth’s] instincts” and “integrate some private ideal of self with a social image” (66). Manfred Mackenzie argues that wearing a mask symbolizes a situation in which Hyacinth “has stood as if exposed to a theater of a myriad eyes” in his neighborhood (9).
recollection, Hyacinth especially mentions her kiss and her wretched figure in the jail. Thus, Florentine, the kiss, and criminality are inseparably related to one another in his mind. Viewed in this light, the current of Hyacinth’s association—from his agony of disguising himself to his ideal woman with his mother’s traits—suggests that he keeps Florentine and her criminality in view when he is meditating on his “mask” and “his own character.” Consequently, it seems reasonable to suppose that he believes that “his own character” would be closely related to Florentine’s criminality; and the inherited criminality would be what Hyacinth wants to cover behind his “mask.” At the moment of Miss Pynsent’s death, Hyacinth also conjectures that without his foster mother, “the vigorous efflorescence of an inherited disposition to crime” might have been “his natural portion” (330). In this way, Hyacinth is conscious of his inherited criminality.

Next, we will consider how worried Hyacinth is about the fear of repeating his mother’s crime. As stated above, the Princess is interested in Hyacinth’s revolutionary cause, and Paul guides her to the core of the cause. \(^{19}\) When Hyacinth imagines that the Princess commits a crime as a part of her revolutionary activities, “a dozen hideous images of [the Princess’] possible perversity and her possible punishment were again before him, as he had already seen them in sinister musings: they seemed to him worse than anything he had imagined for himself” (521). Given that Hyacinth visualizes not only the Princess’ crime but also her punishment, he would associate her “hideous images” with his mother’s. He also worries

\(^{19}\) Although actually neither Paul nor the Princess were accessible to the core members, Hyacinth believes that the Princess is deeply involved with their cause.
about her crime and punishment more “than anything he had imagined for himself.” In this worry, there seems to be something other than tender sentiment. The Princess is originally of lowly birth and “has no fixed social station” (M. Jacobson 52). However, seen from Hyacinth’s inevitably lower-class viewpoint, she is a symbol of refinement and wealth; accordingly, the identification of the Princess with his mother would cost him his emotional mainstay. The Princess can convince him that there is a supremacy in her that his mother’s crime can never influence. The need for an emotional mainstay and his perceptible discomposure in losing it reveal his plight in which he must but could not avoid exposing his inherited criminality.

It seems to be partly owing to this fear of his inherited criminality that Hyacinth commits suicide. Hyacinth believed that the Princess is tired of him, and the order from Hoffendahl has arrived: hence, Hyacinth goes to Millicent’s apparel shop to find consolation in her. In this passage, there is a famous scene in which Hyacinth sees Captain Sholto, who has preceded Hyacinth’s visit to Millicent, gaze up and down at Millicent’s person, which functions as a mannequin. Critics have viewed the erotic relationship between Sholto and Millicent as driving Hyacinth to despair (Miller 156-57; Trilling 77; Dupee 155); yet, Hyacinth at first does not care for the sexual

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At first we should doubt whether Hyacinth sees the Princess as an object of his heterosexual love. Most critics accept that the relationship between Hyacinth and the Princess is unusually innocent and is devoid of sexuality (Coulson 128-29; Trilling 75; Dupee 155). Berland suggests the possibility of Hyacinth being charmed with the civilization the Princess personifies (145), and I share his view. His feeling for the Princess seems to be more than love between a man and a woman; it would also include his love for art, refinement, and wealth.
aspects of the scene and expects in vain Captain Sholto to call Millicent’s attention to Hyacinth:

By the end of that minute [Hyacinth] was convinced Sholto saw him, and for an instant he thought him about to make Milly do as much. But Sholto only looked at him very hard a few seconds, not telling her he was there; to enjoy that satisfaction he would wait until the interloper had gone. Hyacinth gazed back at him for the same length of time—what these two pairs of eyes said to each other requires perhaps no definite mention—and then turned away. (532)

After witnessing Captain Sholto gaze at and ignore him, Hyacinth quietly leaves the place. From the following sentence, the narrator begins to describe how Hyacinth’s body is discovered; hence this exchange of eyes is presented as the direct cause for his suicide. Given his extremely passive behavior, he would be acutely aware that he is a person who can be trifled with by the upper classes. Shocked at the possibility that the Princess has deserted him, Hyacinth would also regard Sholto’s exclusive gaze as an aristocratic indifference to a lower-class man. At the same time, Sholto’s gaze reminds him of the strict order from Hoffendahl; hence, Hyacinth is forced to be reminded of his lowliness of position. He is only a pawn both in society and in the revolutionary group. Yet, he cannot carry out the assassination because it will prove his inherited criminality. By avoiding a crime, he seems to prove to himself, if not to others, that he can be a person different from his mother.

This scene of Hyacinth’s suicide also reveals his homoerotic adoration for the paternal. As stated above, Hyacinth feels a romantic feeling for the
Princess and Millicent. Yet, as Marcia Jacobson points out, Hyacinth also has as intense a passion for male rulers, especially Paul, as that for women (175). Hyacinth is traumatized by his mother’s criminality and conceives a deep adoration for his father’s high social status. As a result, Hyacinth is feminized by the negative legacy from his parents and desires the paternal figure from the maternal viewpoint.

Hyacinth’s adoration for male rulers is transposed into scenes of heterosexuality. Hyacinth witnesses Paul and the Princess coming home together at night. Paul lets her enter the house first and is paying for the carriage. There is another person near Hyacinth who secretly witnesses this intimacy between Paul and the Princess: the Princess’ husband. The husband becomes enraged by their secret meeting; in contrast to this fury, Hyacinth leaves the place without uttering a word. Yet, Hyacinth is also so shocked at the sight that he stops visiting Paul and the Princess from that day. In this event, it is ambiguous whether Hyacinth is jealous of Paul or the Princess. Given the contrast to the Princess’s husband’s fury, Hyacinth’s leaving him behind suggests a slight indifference to the Princess. The last scene in which Sholto interferes in Hyacinth’s association with Millicent is also ambiguous. When he learns that Millicent has a secret appointment with Sholto in an earlier chapter, Hyacinth is angry at Millicent: he thinks that she has cheated on him. However, in the last scene, although witnessing Sholto gazing at Millicent’s body, Hyacinth is indifferent to the fact that she flirts with Sholto. Instead, Hyacinth holds Sholto’s gaze for a while and leaves the place to commit suicide. His shock seems to be based on his romantic feelings for not Millicent but Sholto. Although he feels
isolated from the paternal in the last scene because of Sholto's indifference, and although he tries to find comfort in female society, Hyacinth helplessly follows orders from paternal figures. He leaves the place not to interfere in Sholto's love affair; and by holding Sholto's domineering glare, he decides to act out the order from Hoffendahl to assassinate a Duke. However, Hyacinth slightly modifies his mission: he decides to kill himself instead of a Duke and thereby identifies himself with the paternal. Hyacinth had hoped to join masculine rulers such as Paul, Sholto, Hoffendahl, and his father; hence, he kills himself as if he were a Duke.

V. Conclusion

Hyacinth has an aversion to his blood tie with Florentine, but, at the same time, he is aware how closely he is related to her. Against his wishes, his French appearance and his presence in the society of the leisured classes remind Hyacinth of his maternal origin. For this reason, Hyacinth is obsessed with the idea that he may suffer the same fate as his mother. For Hyacinth, the most horrible thing would be to repeat his mother's crime. He is ready to die and will not ask to be released from his vow; he is upset only when he is forced to think about crime and punishment. Hence, one of the reasons for Hyacinth to choose suicide is that he cannot reveal his heredity by repeating his mother's crime. By killing himself, he denies his mother's influence over him. At the same time, his suicide reveals that Hyacinth chooses to protect, serve, and unite with male rulers. His identification with his mother gives him a female lover's view; and from this viewpoint, Hyacinth adores virile men such as Paul, Sholto, Hoffendahl and his father.
The sexual exploitation and legal and economic inequality between Florentine and Hyacinth’s putative father have feminized Hyacinth, which is the cause of Hyacinth’s homoeroticism. James grappled with the problem that one’s sexuality is inevitably decided by his or her circumstance in this novel.
7. Physical Contact and Homosexuality in *The Spoils of Poynton*

I. Introduction

James continued to explore the same theme in *The Spoils of Poynton*: the interrelationship between society and homosexuality. Yet, one big change occurred in society, and accordingly James’s interest in the theme developed. *The Spoils of Poynton* is a story about “the spoils” Mrs. Gereth has collected all over the world. She has a talent for arranging works of art beautifully, and she has lived in order to take care of the collection in Poynton. Yet, Mrs. Gereth has lost the spoils due to a law that allows her husband to possess all of the property. Mr. Gereth has conveyed Poynton and the spoils to his only son Owen. His engagement to Mona Brigstock forces Mrs. Gereth to leave Poynton and live in a dower house at Ricks. Mrs. Gereth is dissatisfied with this harsh treatment and begins to resist Owen. She carries away almost all of the spoils to her new house and asks her young friend Fleda Vetch to help her protect the spoils. Mrs. Gereth plans to marry Fleda to Owen and live with them in Poynton. Owen also begins to be attracted to Fleda and, though he is engaged to Mona, courts Fleda passionately. Fleda secretly loves Owen as well; however, she cares for their morality and Mona’s feelings and virtually rejects Owen. Not knowing the fact, Mrs. Gereth has rashly sent the spoils back to Poynton to celebrate the marriage between Fleda and Owen. Owen gets married to Mona, whose requirement for marriage has been to have the spoils. After their marriage, Fleda receives a letter from Owen; he offers one of the spoils to her as a
token of his feelings. Fleda goes to Poynton to obtain the token only to find out that the house and the spoils have burnt down. Fleda traces her way back, deeply disappointed.

This story was written when people still remembered the Oscar Wilde trials clearly. Sedgwick states that homosexuality begins to be visible after this trial (Epistemology 201). In addition, Henry Havelock Ellis published a lesbian study, and Walter Pater insisted on the connection between aestheticism and same-sex love. Thus, people shared a collective interest in homosexuality when The Spoils of Poynton was published. James himself began to associate with homosexual men and have passionate correspondences with young men during this period. However, though homosexuality became visible and people entertained more and more concern for it, it was difficult for male writers to deal with same-sex love in their works because they knew the fate Wilde succumbed to after his scandal and punishment and were also familiar with the Cleveland Street

21 Owen’s “feelings” are ambiguous, and we cannot know exactly what they are. It could be his affection, gratitude, or atonement. If we accept Fleda’s view, we can regard it as his affection. Yet, it’s possible that Owen has deceived Fleda to regain the spoils; in this case, the feeling would be gratitude. Or, it is possible that Owen really loved Fleda once, but he reconsidered later that the marriage to Mona is the best option for him. In this case, the feeling would be atonement. There is little agreement over these feelings in previous studies, but it cannot be discussed here for lack of space.

22 In the late 1890s, James began to associate with younger men such as Howard Sturgis, the bisexual Morton Fullerton, Jocelyn Persse, and Hugh Walpole (Novick, “Introduction” 3-6; Gunter and Jobe 127-33; O'Toole 31). Among these men, the most important is a young sculptor, Hendrik Andersen. Edel focuses on James’s relationship with Andersen and states that the youth awakens eroticism in James (Treacherous Years 312-13). Rosella Mamoli Zorzi fully studies and edits their correspondence, which reveals their homoerotic relationship.
Scandal. On the other hand, though lesbian studies became public, lesbians were commonly thought to be a fiction; hence, male writers would disguise male homosexual relationships with female ones to ensure their safety (O’Toole 35). *The Spoils of Poynton* could be one of these disguised homosexual love romances. Fleda regards herself as a girl “paid in shillings” (40) by Mrs. Gereth, and Mrs. Gereth suggests to Fleda that they “put up at a hotel” and “amuse [themselves] a bit” (91). These lines remind us of the fact that Wilde boldly went to restaurants with gay men and male prostitutes and shared hotel rooms with them. Remembering the Wilde trials, readers at that time must have noticed the connotation of a homosexual relationship between Mrs. Gereth and Fleda.

However, few previous studies have discussed homosexuality in this novel, with the exception of Sean O’Toole, who states that Mrs. Gereth and Fleda are self-conscious lesbians and actively pursue an all-female community. Yet, observing physical contact in this novel will lead us to conclude that the relationship between two women is homosexual, but they are not aware of their own latent tendency; accordingly, they cannot consummate their desire. Jamesian characters, who live in high society, usually do not frankly say what they have in mind; hence, bodily movement

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23 The Cleveland Street Scandal occurred from 1889 to 1890. A man named Charles Hammond ran a homosexual male brothel at Cleveland Street, where aristocrats had sexual intercourse with telegraph boys. Due to the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, sexual intercourse between men became a crime; hence, the police arrested these telegraph boys. The aristocratic customers were not arrested, and the owner of the brothel fled from the country; but they suffered from the scandals and poor reputations.

24 Other previous studies focus on the heterosexual relationships between Fleda and Owen, or female characters and Owen.
plays an important role in conveying what they really desire. In this novel, the gap between words and physical contact help us fully understand the novel. Though their deep desires will turn out to be something horrible, the way Mrs. Gereth and Fleda love each other should be accepted as a product of nineteenth-century European culture and the author’s keen insight into financial and social positions. Their way of loving is what Stevens called “a Europeanized eroticization of hierarchy, subordination and domination” (*Henry James and Sexuality*) 69. Love takes numerous forms according to culture and individuals, and the relationship between Fleda and Mrs. Gereth harbors latent homosexual affection though Mrs. Gereth dominates Fleda. In this chapter, focusing on physical contact and faculties in *The Spoils of Poynton*, we will clarify how James skillfully describes the latent homosexual love between Fleda and Mrs. Gereth and their ignorance of the tendency.

II. Abundance of Physical Contact and Its Sensuality

In this section, let us look at the importance of physical contact and one of its functions in this novel. Once we turn our attention to descriptions of physical contact, we will notice that such descriptions amount to as many as fifty-one. Let us pick up only important examples: when Mrs. Gereth declares to Owen that Fleda is the proper person to take care of the spoils, Mrs. Gereth kisses Fleda as if it were a sanction. Kissing also plays an important role in reconciling the two women and they never end their quarrels without kissing and embracing each other. Their physical contact is limited to that occurring indoors. They kiss in a private sphere and
thereby promote solidarity with each other. Kissing functions as a ritual before going outside of the house and fighting against society. Apart from metaphorical touches, Fleda and Mrs. Gereth make physical contact twenty-three times; Fleda and Owen, eleven times. The number of times reveals just how often Fleda and Mrs. Gereth touch each other. To emphasize the physical contact, words and metaphors concerning hands are used frequently. We will briefly look at only some of them: consulting an attorney is expressed as “put[ting] the matter into legal hands” (109); Mrs. Gereth’s talent for arrangement, “your admirable, your infallible hand” (172); Fleda’s innocence, “You haven’t lifted a finger!” (126); to help Owen, “[Fleda] should effectively raise a hand to push his impediment out of the way” (108); Fleda’s future as a dressmaker, “her hand had sooner been imbrued with blood” (101). James added some physical contact and images of hands when he revised this novel from a version published in England; accordingly, it is not an exaggeration to say that James carefully and consciously reinforced the descriptions of physical contact between Fleda and Mrs. Gereth.

One of the characteristics of the physical contact in this novel is sensuality. O’Toole states that the aesthetes of the late nineteenth-century attached importance to a joint activity in which two same-sex people touch one work of art and appreciate it through each other’s senses (34). Similar to the aesthetes, Mrs. Gereth and Fleda touch a single work of art and feel a sense of unity through the act. The description of their touch is fairly erotic: “Now, do you know how I feel?” Mrs. Gereth asked when in the wondrous hall, three minutes after their arrival, her pretty associate [Fleda] dropped
on a seat with a soft gasp and a roll of dilated eyes” (emphases added, 13). Here, when Fleda touches a thing, she knows how Mrs. Gereth feels. This strange disappearance of physical borders between two people reminds us of sexual intercourse, and the suggestion is supported by phrases such as “a soft gasp” and “dilated eyes.” By this activity, Mrs. Gereth and Fleda understand the value of the things: “the two women embraced with tears over the tightening of their bond—tears which on the younger one’s part were the natural and usual sign of her submission to perfect beauty. . . . [It] quickened her [Mrs. Gereth’s] own tears” (13). Not only does Fleda know how Mrs. Gereth feels, but also Mrs. Gereth changes her views through the girl’s fresh eyes. More importantly, they are moved to embrace and shed tears; these extreme passions suggest the sensuality of their physical contact.

III. Coercion and Dominance in Physical Contact

However, touch is not necessarily linked to sensuality; instead, it is also deeply connected to coercion and dominance. These images of coercion and dominance have baffled critics’ understanding of the homosexual love between Fleda and Mrs. Gereth. Therefore, in this section, we will consider how physical contact contains coercion and dominance and at the same time how these touches reveal unconscious love between Fleda and Mrs. Gereth.

Bernard Ruth Yeazell acutely points out that “in James’s late fiction, the metaphoric imagination works with its most feverish intensity when faced with knowledge deeply desired and profoundly terrifying” (54), and in this novel, too, terrifying concepts expressed by horrible metaphors have the
most tremendous impact. For example, when Owen and Mona come to Poynton to make a preliminary inspection of the spoils before their marriage, Mrs. Gereth gets nervous, thinking that she is losing her treasures, and holds Fleda around her waist to make the girl help her. The girl senses something ominous through Mrs. Gereth’s arm and understands “that Mrs. Gereth, with an odd wild laugh, held her so hard as to hurt her” (20). This passage deals with a coercive touch: Mrs. Gereth becomes tenser and tenser, laughing oddly, and squeezes Fleda without knowing how acutely the girl feels pain.

Another example is found in the scene in which Fleda is afraid of Mrs. Gereth’s discovering a secret: “Pressed upon her, goodness knew, the crisis had been, but it now put forth big encircling arms—arms that squeezed till they hurt and she must cry out” (89). Here again, Mrs. Gereth’s metaphorical arms hurt Fleda, and her scream echoes in our ears. Mrs. Gereth’s dragging a secret out of Fleda is also metaphorically expressed as follows: “It [what Fleda said] put me [Mrs. Gereth] on the scent . . . I felt it [the secret] was in you, deep down, and that I must draw it out. Well, I have drawn it, and it’s a blessing” (86). Mrs. Gereth grotesquely but joyfully inserts her hand into Fleda’s heart. Fleda becomes aware of Mrs. Gereth’s intention by physical contact:

Mrs. Gereth slowly rose at this and, coming over the walk, took her young friend to her breast and kissed her. She then passed into one of Fleda’s an arm perversely and imperiously sociable. . . . Fleda smiled down at her companion, who, cloaked and perceptibly bowed, leaned on her heavily and gave her an odd unwonted sense of age
and cunning. (emphases added, 80)

The sinister effect of the weight inflicted by Mrs. Gereth on Fleda is doubled by the girl’s caricature of the lady as a wicked witch in a fairy tale.

Seen from these examples, Mrs. Gereth’s affection for Fleda is too dominating to be called love in its ordinary sense of the word. Yet, Fleda herself desires the coercive touches. Fleda originally has a tendency to associate love with domination, and she believes that to be dominated means to be loved. For example, trying to emphasize the intimacy between Mrs. Brigstock (Mona’s mother) and herself, Fleda says, “I’m not in the least afraid to be alone with you or your tearing me to pieces” (120) while she grasps Mrs. Brigstock’s hands and delicately kisses her. Fleda is thus willing to be at Mrs. Brigstock’s mercy and expects to be torn into pieces in return for her expression of love, such as kissing and grasping hands. Moreover, it is important to note that Fleda’s physical contact in this passage also functions as persuasion, a way of controlling others. For Fleda, controlling and loving, and being controlled and loved are intermingled with each other. Owing to this tendency, Mrs. Gereth’s coercive touch could bring her pleasure. In the following discussion, we shall examine this subject more closely, comparing and contrasting coercive touches among the characters.

First, let us consider that Fleda discriminates between Mrs.

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25 Mona’s mother is afraid that the engagement between Mona and Owen will be broken by Fleda’s intervention. Mrs. Brigstock suspects that Owen and Fleda are secret lovers. Fleda does not want to be regarded as a typical lower-class seducer who attempts to obtain wealth; hence, she desperately tries to clear up the misunderstanding.
Gereth’s coercive touches and those of Owen. Owen courts Fleda without
disengaging himself from Mona; and thereby he treats Fleda’s pure love as
an extramarital love affair. Fleda is disappointed by this insincerity on
Owen’s part and senses his touches as coercive: “He made her wait again,
and while she waited, under firm coercion, she had the extraordinary
impression that his simplicity was in eclipse” (69). Feeling Owen’s dominant
touches, Fleda is acutely aware that Owen’s morality, which she highly
values, is being spoiled. However, it is still doubtful whether Fleda really
hopes for his peaceful love instead of his coercion. Fleda continues to feel
that Owen’s touches are coercive until he asks her hand in marriage.
Receiving a direct proposition of marriage, Fleda is willing to hold out her
hands for the first time, and then, she feels comfortable and liberated. Owen
also reaffirms his determination to act in good faith before her: “He clasped
his hands before her as he might have clasped them at an altar. . . . He
assisted this effort, soothing her into a seat with a touch as anxious as if she
had been truly something sacred” (emphases added, 130). Although Owen
thus gets serious about their relationship, it is noteworthy that Fleda feels
something is wrong: “The strangest thing of all was the momentary sense of
desolation” (129). Her “desolation” does not last long as the word
“momentary” indicates; but, this is the significant moment when Fleda
realizes that a peaceful and normal love supported by law is not satisfying
for her. This moment is also important in that Fleda is about to deviate from
her internalized heterosexuality and to realize her own desire—desire, we

26 We can say that Fleda believes in, or is conscious of, love for Owen. This
will be further discussed in the fourth section.
can say, for Mrs. Gereth because Fleda is not disappointed at Mrs. Gereth’s coercive touches.

Next, we will consider a little more fully what meaning Mrs. Gereth’s coercive touches have. We have seen that Mrs. Gereth domineeringly touches Fleda to reveal her secret. It is certain that Mrs. Gereth is driven by the desire to control Fleda. Yet, Mrs. Gereth’s coercion is not merely an expression of this desire for control; it is also a kind of caress. For example, Mrs. Gereth “kissed her [Fleda], . . . on the spot, to make up for [the] roughness, and with an officious hand took off the hat which, on coming into the house, [Fleda] had not removed. [Mrs. Gereth] applied a friendly touch to the girl’s hair and gave a business-like pull to her jacket” (emphases added, 84). The “officious” hand to take off Fleda’s hat, stroke her hair, and smooth out her clothes—these are touches for a beloved, passive object such as a pet, or a doll. That is to say, Mrs. Gereth reveals her love for a passive creature and her desire to control it so as to come together and act as one.

The preference for the coercive touch can be seen in Fleda as well. In this novel, loss of sight is the key to deriving and heightening sexual pleasure in touching things. Such sexual pleasure leads to spiritual comfort. The following passage is a good example: “Blindfold, in the dark, with the brush of a finger, I could tell one from another. They’re living things to me; they know me, they return the touch of my hand” (20). It is noteworthy that the satisfactions drawn from this touch are not only sexual but also reassuring: Mrs. Gereth, who touched a thing, is recognized by the touched thing and feels comfortable. More importantly in the present discussion,
Fleda’s thoughts express the same sentiment: “By this time the very fingers of her glove, resting on the seat of the sofa, had thrilled at the touch of an old velvet brocade, a wondrous texture she could recognize, would have recognized among a thousand, without dropping her eyes on it” (47). Here, Fleda, too, feels the happiness of recognition: she can find her beloved object “among a thousand.” Moreover, in addition to not seeing—“without dropping her eyes on it,” partial loss of tactile sensibility because of “her glove” inspires a “thrill” in Fleda. This repression of physical functions is equal to a state in which people cannot move their bodies of their own will: in other words, a state of being controlled by others. Thus, a person who possessively touches someone or something is also situated in the touched and controlled: and the distinctions between the controlling and the controlled and the loving and the loved blur through physical contact.

To ascertain Fleda has this preference for dominance, let us look at another example. Believing that Owen is her only object of love, Fleda tries to serve him. However, her diction is strangely dark and domineering: “Their protected error . . . was like some dangerous, lovely, living thing that she had caught and could keep—keep vivid and helpless in the cage of her own passion and look at and talk to all day long” (emphases added, 74). Fleda is delighted at confining her love, likened to a small animal, within a cage. She shows a tendency to heighten her secret pleasure by depriving her beloved creature of movement. She also compares her love for Owen to a tied man, calling it “her little gagged and blinded desire” (82). The word “little” repeats the appalling image of Fleda toying lovingly with a creature that is forced to be still. Seen from these perspectives, Fleda’s preference for
coercive and dominant touches is not influenced by Mrs. Gereth, but derived from within.

The series of coercions by Mrs. Gereth, such as exposing Fleda’s secret and treating her like a doll, have been thought to be a sign of mere inequality and discord between the two women. It is certain that these acts are done in order to control Fleda. However, the girl, who shares the same preference, knows Mrs. Gereth’s behavior comes from her love. Thus, in light of Fleda’s coercive touches and her preferences as well as Mrs. Gereth’s, the hierarchical relationship between them turns out to be a romantic relationship.

IV. Latent Homosexuality

I have demonstrated in the above discussion that Fleda and Mrs. Gereth share with each other a preference for coercion and dominance as an expression of love. In this section, we will interrogate the extent to which their bond is deepened by coercive touches. Then, we will consider how the two women are ignorant of their own desires. Physical contact reveals the gap between their desire and love, on the one hand, and their conscious heterosexism, on the other.

At first, we will briefly look at how coercive touches help to increase their affection. Mrs. Gereth notices that Owen and Fleda secretly love each other. If Fleda married him, Mrs. Gereth would live with them as a caretaker of the spoils since unlike Mona, Fleda knows how much care the spoils require and how much she can trust Mrs. Gereth in this respect. However, Fleda attaches great importance to morality; hence, she cannot
usurp the position as Owen’s wife from his present fiancée Mona. Under this circumstance, when Mrs. Gereth learns that Fleda purposely rejects Owen and thereby Mrs. Gereth will lose the spoils, she is driven to despair:

“It would have been better for me if I had never known you,” she [Mrs. Gereth] pursued, “and certainly better if I hadn’t taken such an extraordinary fancy to you. But that too was inevitable: everything, I suppose, is inevitable. It was all my own doing—you didn’t run after me: I pounced on you and caught you up. . . .” (153)

As this passage makes clear, Mrs. Gereth laments not her losing the spoils but Fleda’s indifference to her. Here again, Fleda is likened to a small animal caught up and pounced on by Mrs. Gereth, but the feeling is exactly that of a betrayed lover to her faithless partner. This passage again shows coercive touches and a desire to control. However, Mrs. Gereth admits that the “inevitable” impetus has driven her to take “an extraordinary fancy” to Fleda. This loss of control and her profound sorrow show Mrs. Gereth’s love for Fleda. To this grief-stricken lady, Fleda repeatedly offers coercive and persuasive caresses until finally the doll, Mrs. Gereth, responds to her touch. Mrs. Gereth kissing Fleda as a token of atonement for her harsh words: “Forgive me,’ she [Mrs. Gereth] presently said. ‘Kiss me,’ she added. Fleda, on the threshold, kissed her. Then they both went out” (156). At this point, they should have hastened to search for Owen to let him know in time that Fleda changed her mind. Nevertheless, they attach a high value to kissing and reconciling as if they cannot go out without it. After reconciling, their bond gets increasingly stronger. Fleda vows not to leave Mrs. Gereth for life: “Well, I shall [die], thank God! Till then”—and with this, for the first
time, Mrs. Gereth put out her hand—‘don’t desert me.’ Fleda took her hand, clasping it for a renewal of engagements already taken. She said nothing, but her silence committed her as solemnly as the vow of a nun” (168). This sacred vow resembles the one exchanged between Fleda and Owen. This time Fleda plays Owen’s role, but unlike the former situation, here there is mutual satisfaction.

We should also remember the fact that Fleda’s gaze is most erotic when it is turned to Mrs. Gereth. The following is a good example:

a bench, formed as to legs and arms of iron representing knotted boughs, stood against the warmest wall of the house. The mistress of Ricks sank upon it and presented to her companion [Fleda] the handsome face she [Mrs. Gereth] had composed to hear everything. Strangely enough it was just this fine vessel of her attention that made the girl most nervous about what she must drop in. “Quite a ‘demand’, dear is it?” asked Mrs. Gereth, drawing in her cloak. (emphases added, 75)

In this novel, a thing often becomes a man, and a man a thing; and here, a bench is compared to a human body. Fleda gazes at Mrs. Gereth’s giving herself to the “human body,” and thinks that she is beautiful. Mrs. Gereth draws in her cloth in a manner that suggests she is embarrassed at Fleda’s gaze, which is also a highly sensual motion. This drawing in of cloth is repeated just after this scene and the narrator suggests that the reason for this motion is something other than coldness. The fact that Fleda gazes at Mrs. Gereth, thinking she is beautiful, is also repeated twice. Fleda regards Mrs. Gereth as the most beautiful “thing” of the spoils, which is repeated
twice, too. We have already seen that Fleda derives pleasure from domination over and touches of immobile things; hence, it is valid to think that regarding Mrs. Gereth as a thing is a manifestation of possessive sexual love.

However, even if they love each other as lovers, they never forget that their object of love should be a man. Mrs. Gereth willingly asks Fleda about how highly she thinks of Owen and the widow fondly talks about her own husband:

“I don’t know why you [Fleda] dress up so the fact that he’s [Owen’s] disgustingly weak.”

Fleda at last, before her companion’s, lowered her look.

“Because I love him. It’s because he’s weak that he needs me,” she added.

“That was why his father, whom he exactly resembles, needed me. And I didn’t fail his father,” said Mrs. Gereth. (155)

While Mrs. Gereth identifies Fleda with her and unconsciously strengthens their bond, the two women fully know that their role as a wife is expected in society. Though they love each other passionately, they never question whether they should really love men. Though Fleda exchanged a sacred vow with Mrs. Gereth, the young girl tries to fulfill Owen’s requirement by going to Poynton to accept one of the spoils. This internalized heterosexuality complicates Fleda’s situation and mars the satisfaction of her life with Mrs. Gereth. The conflagration of Poynton symbolizes the disaster that pursuing and performing heterosexism can cause to Fleda. However, unlike the author, who sees the two ladies from a panoramic view, Fleda is only
shocked stiff at the disastrous fire and does not understand what blights her hope.

They are thus too immersed in heterosexism to be conscious of their homosexual desires. Their words and their tears sometimes contradict each other, which shows that their desire is not what they are conscious of and that they do not know the difference between their conscious and unconscious desires and can only feel unnamable solitude and sadness. For example, after admitting her love for Owen, Fleda cries violently, clutching to Mrs. Gereth’s neck. This contradiction, that Fleda looks desperately sad after fulfilling her long-held hopes for love with Owen, is worthy of attention. Similar to Fleda, Mrs. Gereth sheds tears bitterly when she sends the spoils back to Poynton and celebrates the marriage between Fleda and Owen: “‘They’re yours, you goose!’ the wonderful woman concluded, holding up her handsome head and rubbing her white hands. But there were tears none the less in her deep eyes” (145). Rubbing hands is one of Mrs. Gereth’s habits, which she shows when she succeeds in her schemes; but as the phrase “none the less” reveals, her tears come not from a sense of success but from sadness. Mrs. Gereth also says “You must perfectly have known [the fact that Owen loves Fleda] at Ricks, and yet you practically denied it. That’s why I call you bad and false!” and the narrator goes on to say that “[it] was apparently also why [Mrs. Gereth] again most roughly kissed her” (140). This violent kissing shows that Mrs. Gereth wants to monopolize the girl, but she unconsciously felt she could not; then, she suffers from a strange sadness. Thus, though Mrs. Gereth celebrates Fleda’s relationship to Owen through words, the physical contact reveals that Mrs. Gereth loves
Fleda passionately. However, though both Fleda and Mrs. Gereth reveal their homosexuality through their physical contact, they are still conscious only of what they can put into words.

V. Conclusion

Henry James contributed his works to a magazine called *The Yellow Book*, which Oscar Wilde and Walter Pater were involved in; but James wrote in his letter to his brother William that he felt repulsion toward the people who created the magazine (*Letters III*: 482). James, who detests scandals, would have regarded Wilde’s scandals and his trials as abominable. Bell also insists that James has an antipathy toward the aesthetes of the late nineteenth century and fears being identified with them (“James, the Audience” 219-20). Richard Ellmann reveals that James indirectly criticized Pater’s *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* in *Roderick Hudson* (25-28). Edel states that though James shows a latent homosexuality, perhaps he did not have sexual intercourse with men as Wilde did (*Treacherous Years* 312-13). Taking these elements into consideration, it follows that what James abhorred in the aesthetes was that they publicly showed their homosexuality and caused scandals. James seems to regard homosexuality as something that should be hidden in one’s own heart or kept private.

James had written stories that deal with latent homosexuality; and he had associated with homosexual men and carried on ardent correspondences with young men. Therefore, he covertly had a strong interest in this kind of unspeakable desire. However, it is certain that he
could not fully admit to having this desire, because homosexuality was a crime and a cause for scandals, as well as something enticing, and, for this very reason, he loathed, or feared, homosexual behavior in public places on the part of other writers. Seen from this perspective, James would painfully have known the loneliness of homosexuals, loneliness that they cannot come out publicly and always fear that their secret desire might be detected. James would also have realized that some of these people could not define what their desire is because of their fear of homosexuality. In this case, they could not consummate their desire and were constantly troubled with an ambiguous feeling that something was wrong. James could address those who had these troubles through his works and could console himself by sublimating his distress into a work of art.

Thus the author realizes both his own homosexual tendency and homosexuals' suffering. On the other hand, though Fleda and Mrs. Gereth desire and love each other, they cannot recognize that their feelings are homosexual; they cannot feel even the fear of homosexuality. This is because they are too immersed in their social values, which attach importance to heterosexuality and marriage. In this respect, James and the two women are different in their respective situations. However, the novel conveys the possibility that heterosexuality might not give the two homosexual women any happiness by describing their unfortunate state caused by Owen and Mr. Gereth; and this story also suggests that the same-sex bond can open a new possibility for the two women. In addition, the novel reveals that the two women are never contented because they do not know what they really desire. Thus James expresses a possibility and a sadness of homosexuals
through the relationship between Fleda and Mrs. Gereth, and thereby addresses homosexuals, including himself.
8. A Melting Pot of Affections in *The Other House*

I. Introduction

James finally dealt with a lesbian character who knows her sexuality well in *The Other House*. This is a story of a woman’s passionate desire. The heroine Rose Armiger finds out that her friend Julia Bream is dying after childbirth. Julia fears that if her husband Anthony (Tony) remarries after her death, his new wife may be cruel to her daughter Effie. Hence, Julia asks Tony to pledge not to remarry while Effie is alive. Rose is too worried about Julia’s illness to consider anything; hence, although her fiancé comes back from China to propose to Rose, she breaks up with him. Four years later, Mrs. Beever, who lives next door to Tony, invites Rose to a birthday party for Effie. After arriving at Mrs. Beever’s house, Rose learns that her ex-fiancée Dennis has suddenly appeared at the house. Again, all characters gather at two houses. Rose soon realizes that Mrs. Beever’s protégée Jean plays the role of Effie’s mother and that Tony and Jean secretly love each other. Rose insists that Julia’s sacred vow should not be ignored: that is, no one must become Effie’s surrogate mother. Rose decides to kill Effie before Julia’s vow will be broken and sink the child in the river between the two houses. As a result, the vow (Tony cannot remarry while Effie is alive) is protected by this murder.

This is the only story among James’s novels that describes a murder. As Gerard M. Sweeney states, many critics have noted that this novel is “atypical of James” because it is classified as “a thriller, a murder mystery, a ‘whodunit’” (216). It also has many other characteristics atypical to James’s
style, but the most controversial point for the previous studies is the story’s ending: Rose is left unpunished for her murder of Effie.27

The effect of its strange, controversial ending is heightened by an absence of authority. Sweeney notes that Mrs. Beever appears in the opening as an authority; she would have accused Rose of her crime and restored social order in the ending. However, Mrs. Beever literally disappears from the novel (220).28 This ambiguity was not originally calculated by the author. As we will consider in the following discussion, Rose’s role in the story is ambiguous. However, in the original idea sketched in James’s notebooks in 1893, James clearly writes that Rose desires Tony, which is her motivation for killing Effie (Notebooks of Henry James 139). Furthermore, James refers to Rose as a “Bad Heroine” and Jean as a “Good Heroine” (Notebooks of Henry James 140). In James’s novels, there is usually a degree of ambiguity about good and evil, which is a very Jamesian characteristic.

Then why did James suddenly reduce his story to a “melodrama” (Murphy 90; McElderry 328; Isle 41)? We can find the answer to this question in his attempt to gain popularity and sales; in a letter to the editor

27 Edel states that this novel deals with “a crime which defies the tradition of murder stories by going unpunished” (Treacherous Years 167). Edel’s tone is sympathetic with James, but for the same reason as Edel cites, other critics have dismissed it as second-rate. As S. Gorley Putt notes, this novel has been neglected because nothing in the story is plausible, and if readers could take the ending of this story as possible, the novel would be very unpleasant (311).

28 Sweeney concludes that Effie’s murder represents the complicity of Victorian society. Oscar Cargill also argues that the characters’ collective complicity in the crime violates Victorian morality, and through this violation, James exposes the deceptive nature of Victorian morality (212). Thus, the ending has been subject to various interpretations.
of the *Illustrated London News*, Clement Shorter, James writes that he “should like to capture the public” of the magazine (*Letters IV*: 30). James also writes with great enthusiasm that “[he] shall endeavor to be thrilling, and my material is such that [he] think[s] [he] shall succeed” (*Letters IV*: 31). After a popular disaster with the premiere of *Guy Domville*, James decides to captivate readers’ attention. According to Amy Tucker’s article, the illustration accompanying the story serialized in the magazine reflects this decision: it shows a woman holding out her hands with a cup (which is probably poisoned), with a demon behind her whispering something into her ear (23). It is clear that while he was writing, he gradually changed his plan.

In a letter to Edmund Gosse, James confided that the problem is that *The Other House* was more difficult to deal with than he had expected, and that he had made little progress (*Letters IV*:33).

As a result, Brenda Murphy argues, Rose’s inner state and the dark shadow cast on Jean and Tony by Effie’s death causes “moral ambiguity,” and thereby the novel became a drama of “complex human psychology” (90-91). Jacques Barzun states that the plot of the novel is simple, but the characters are complicated: James gives both the good and the evil characters “charm and ferocity” and “brains and blindness” (516). With this background in mind, this paper will consider why the simple drama became a complex psychological novel and what effects its ambiguities, including the ending, achieved, and conclude that Rose’s escape from punishment functions to create a melting pot of various kinds of affection.

II. A Glimpse of “Startling” Scenes—Rose and Homoeroticism
Spying on others is a recurring theme in this novel. The first glimpse is taken by Jean when she comes to the Bounds on an errand for Mrs. Beever. Jean senses someone lurking in the room. Yet, she soon discovers that the stranger does not notice her; rather, it is Jean who secretly gazes at the stranger. This peeping causes a moment of sensual embarrassment in Jean. What she sees at that moment is Rose’s relaxed posture: “a young woman bent low over a table at which she seemed to have been writing. Her chair was pushed back, her face buried in her extended and supported arms, her whole person relaxed and abandoned” (13). Given the Victorian genteel tradition and publicness in the upper class houses, we can easily imagine that Jean would feel as if she were peeping into a woman’s boudoir. Besides, “[the woman’s] attitude denoted a state of mind that made the messenger from Eastmead [Jean] hesitate between quickly retreating on tiptoe or still more quickly letting her know that she was observed” (13). Jean has caught a glimpse of not only Rose’s outstretched body but also her hidden feelings. Later, Jean also spies on Tony while he sleeps in a fitful doze, and she feels a sense of guilt again. As soon as Tony opened his eyes, Jean “uttered a blushing ‘Oh!’ which deplored this effect of her propinquity and which brought Tony straight to his feet” (92). Jean’s cry shows that she is gazing too closely at the sleeping gentleman, and Tony’s abrupt movement reveals how he is embarrassed. Later, Jean is also spied on by Paul. Thus, spying on others is repeatedly described, and all of these scenes lead to the fatal glimpse in the ending: Dennis witnessing Rose going over the bridge with Effie, a glimpse that proves Rose’s guilt.

This recurring act of spying on others emphasizes the idea that
people can see only a part of what happens around them. Among James’s novels, *The Other House* most directly makes use of the limitation of viewpoints. For example, readers witness the two surprising happenings: Rose holding Effie in her arms for the first time in four years, and Dennis returning to propose to Rose. Thus, both of these events are known to readers. Yet, in chapter 26, we observe the same information being repeated between Jean and Paul: as soon as Jean leaves, Paul repeats these facts again to Mrs. Beever, not in the form of a summary, but in detail. We read about these happenings a total of three times. Viewed in this light, the repetition effectively draws attention to the characters’ differences in knowledge. As a result, the characters, who can only see part of the surrounding events, cannot know the full truth. As for Dennis’s proposal of marriage to Rose, Mrs. Beever says, “I only know what Paul tells me”: Paul says, “I only know what I had just now from Jean”; Tony says, “I was there when they met . . . and I saw for myself pretty well how it would go”; and Mrs. Beever adds to the ambiguity by replying, “I confess I didn’t. . . . It must have gone with a jump!” (emphasis mine 245). The same limitation of viewpoints delays their discovery of Effie’s death as well.

This limitation of viewpoints is used more subtly in another scene. Critics have assumed that Rose’s love for Tony is the reason for her murdering Effie. However, that Rose loves Tony is a fact seen from Dennis’s and Mrs. Beever’s viewpoints. The narrator explains an incident between Rose and Tony as follows:

\[
\ldots\text{he stood there, showed the traces of an insufficient forecast of two things: one of them the influence on all his pulses of the sight again,}\n\]
after such an interval, and in the high insolence of life and strength, of the woman he had lost and still loved; the other the instant effect on *Dennis’s* imagination of *his* finding *Rose* intimately engaged with *Tony,* who had been, however without fault, the occasion of her perversity [the reason for Rose’s indecisive behavior toward Dennis’s proposal of marriage]. (emphases mine 204)

By using the words italicized above, the narrator emphasizes that the intimacy between Rose and Tony and “the occasion of her perversity” in the past are not objective truths but only what Dennis imagines. Cargill cites as one of the defects of the novel its lack of any convincing explanation as to why the women in the story are so drawn to Tony: he is not very attractive, and women have no reason to fall helplessly in love with him (214). Cargill’s comment is very suggestive since we are originally not told that Rose and Julia love Tony so much.

Thus, characters are enclosed in an ambiguous setting and act according to their own fancies. The recurring act of spying symbolizes the characters’ tentative and uncertain vision. However, seen not from characters’ but readers’ viewpoints, spying on someone becomes a revelation. Through the characters’ acts of spying, readers are forced to feel that they have caught a glimpse of a secret. The most thrilling secret is Rose’s. When she is forced to make a decision about marriage, she discloses her agony only to readers: “she had the appearance of holding in with extraordinary force some passionate sob or cry, some smothered impulse of anguish” (66). Dennis turns his back to Rose at this moment, and when he turns around to her, this expression has already disappeared. Rose wears her social mask
again as soon as her fiancée looks at her. Readers are expected to be shocked at this scene, since engaged lovers are supposed to be on the most intimate of terms and Rose is a person who cannot be easily agitated. Unlike Dennis, Tony is acutely aware of Rose’s duality; he detects that there is something in her eyes “so deep, so exquisite” and “[it] represented something that no lapse could long quench” (154). Rose “could sometimes turn it away, but it was always somewhere; and now it covered him with a great cold luster,” and “[Tony] got up nervously, there would be nothing pleasant in any way of dealing with this one” (154). Rose’s secret is described as a problem that sociable Tony, who handles everything with his smile and pleasant words, cannot deal with.

As Tony comes to realize that Rose’s secret cannot be reconciled with normal social expectations, readers are secretly shown an expression of her homoerotic feelings. As Priscilla L. Walton has already noted, Rose insists that she and Julia each consider the other as the only thing she owns, with husbands and lovers counting for nothing (17). As stated above, critics assume that Rose uncontrollably desires Tony. However, when Tony suggests to Rose that they will begin a new relationship not as Julia’s friends but as mutual friends, Rose rejects this by saying that nothing has changed in her feelings, “save perhaps in the sense of its having become a little intensified. If I was here before as Julia’s friend, I’m here still more as Julia’s friend now” (155). In this scene, Tony and Rose uses the same words “Dear little Julia”; yet the narrator reveals that the feelings with which they utter her name are greatly different. Rose calls Julia’s name “with an expression which, unlike Tony’s, would have left on the mind of an ignorant
 auditor no doubt of its conveying a reference to the unforgotten dead” (155). Rose is the only person who remembers Julia after her death.

Rose’s motivation for murdering Effie is to honor Julia’s wishes. Jean is “the nicest girl [Mrs. Beever] knew” (7), but she unintentionally ignores Julia. For example, after Effie is found drowned, Jean cries that the child must have called her name. Jean thinks of herself as the girl’s stepmother, the horror that Rose had feared. Tony also recognizes Jean as the only person with the right to take care of the child, regretfully stating, “It was the only little minute in all the years that you had been forced to fail her. She was always more yours than mine” (307). As this comment reveals, Effie is seen to be Tony’s or Jean’s. If Rose lets them be, Julia would lose her position as Effie’s mother. Rose’s loyalty to Julia triggers a disaster, but it is certain that Rose is not the selfish murderer she appears to be. In explaining her motivation for her act, Rose says “my grounds are so deep—deep down” (145). She attempts to elaborate her feelings, but in the middle of this, her face grows pale and more serious. She declares, “I’ve an idea that has become a passion with me. . . . There’s a loyalty I must cherish—there’s a memory I must protect,” finally behaving “like the priestess of a threatened altar” (145). Thus, while Rose commits an unforgivable crime, the above passage shows that it comes from her almost religious adoration of Julia. Whether this story is judged as a brilliant and subtle novel or as popular sensational fiction for the mass market seems to depend on whether the reader takes Rose’s words at face value.

III. A Melting Pot of Various Kinds of Affection
It is noticeable that Rose is given a special perspective by the author. Cargill observes that for James, Rose is certainly his heroine and only Rose and James see the whole situation clearly (212). Rose’s thoughts in particular are very ambiguously conveyed and shared only by the author. They can be discerned only by readers able to perceive homoerotic feelings. Rose confesses that insight or imagination is only for the people who are scared and cornered. She continues by insisting that “[she] was awfully afraid to be one that [she’s] been keeping [herself] in” and that “[she] knew a hitch was coming” (86). This line of Rose’s refers to the possibility of her marriage to Dennis. For Rose, this marriage looms as a danger that would trap her as a heterosexual. Walter Isle claims that Rose’s poverty and rootlessness sets her apart from other characters; hence, they cannot see through her (55). Yet, Rose’s privileged insight is also deepened by her identity as a homosexual.

Rose feels an unnamable danger headed towards her and under this circumstance, she decides to rely on heterosexuality. Her choice may seem illogical, but it would be the best way for homosexuals who usually pretend to be heterosexual to protect themselves from the norm. In this case, Rose not only protects herself against any danger but also effectively uses heterosexuality to create her ideal situation. For example, Rose makes Tony believe that she loves him and thereby makes her real reason for the murder of Effie ambiguous. The real reason is to serve Julia by keeping her sacred vow intact. Rose can also escape from the punishment of murder by taking advantage of Tony’s sense of responsibility; Rose pretends to love him and Tony thinks that he has to protect the women who love him. Rose also
let Dennis believe that she loves Tony; and accordingly she does not need to expose her homosexuality. Rose also knows that Paul secretly loves her. Then, she seduces him to marry Jean so that Jean will not become Effie’s stepmother. Thus, Rose arranges matches between heterosexual couples to protect Julia’s vow. Rose also creates a situation in which she does not need to explain her homoerotic love for Julia.

Rose understands the system of heterosexuality well possibly because of her homosexuality: she can observe and make use of heterosexuality because she views it from outside. Another reason that Rose understands heterosexuality better than any other characters lies in her plight: her homosexuality may be exposed and punished in public at any time. Cornered by this circumstance, Rose is keenly aware of the working of heterosexuality. For example, Rose depends on a heterosexual relationship to position herself in society. When Julia’s imminent death is not revealed to the guests of the Bounds, Rose learns of Julia’s situation through Tony, who pretends to be calm and whose intentions cannot be perceived by others. Yet, Rose succeeds in learning the truth by catching an invisible thread of consciousness: she senses that “it was as if a new delicacy had operated” (79). Tony’s delicacy in not revealing Julia’s real situation comes from his affection for Julia: he continues to insist that Julia's approaching death is too horrible for him to believe. By not mentioning it, he tries to distract himself from the possibility of Julia’s death. Though Rose is Julia’s friend, Rose cannot ask Tony about her approaching death since she is not her family. Rose is worried about not only Julia’s condition but also her marriage. If Julia dies, Rose has to leave her house and marry Dennis, who
comes back her to propose to her and whom Rose has no reason to reject except her homosexuality. Learning the important news about Julia’s condition by following a subtle heterosexual consciousness, Rose can earn the time to think about the best way to escape marriage and continue to love Julia.

It is not only Rose who gains from a sexuality different from her own: other heterosexual characters cooperate with Rose to pursue their ideal. Walton is the only scholar who discusses the homoerotic relationship between Rose and Julia, and between Dennis and Tony. She concludes her interpretation as follows:

*The Other House*, which works to sensationalize the threatening nature of a sexually assertive and lesbianized woman, is superficially in accord with the containment paradigm and with the homophobic climate of the mid-1890s. However, the novel also unsettles that paradigm—which may explain its failure to excite fin de siècle audiences—for it restrains its femme fatale in a male circle that is fraught with homoerotic promise. (14)

As suggested by the phrase “unsettles that paradigm,” Walton views this novel as a conflict between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Given “the homophobic climate of the mid-1890s,” it is valid to detect this conflict in this novel. However, heterosexuality helps Rose in various ways, and we can find a cooperation between heterosexuality and homosexuality. For instance, heterosexuality sometimes gives her a way to express her feelings. As stated above, Dennis wants to clarify his relationship with Rose, but whenever he brings forth the topic of their marriage, Rose absent-mindedly ignores it.
She also continues to avoid being kissed or embraced. Rose justifies this by insisting that she is too worried about Julia to consider anything else. She wants to postpone the discussion of marriage until Julia's illness is over. After Rose and Dennis quarrel, Tony asks her what happened to her and Dennis; however, she cannot explain their situation clearly. Rose’s complaint about Dennis is expressed vaguely and inarticulately as “a small, confused cry” (81) and “another vague sound” (82), finally ending her explanation with “Oh, God! oh, God! oh, God!” (84). What Rose said about Julia's illness is true, but she cannot explain her homoerotic feelings and her unwillingness to marry Dennis clearly. However, Rose can express her love for Julia by appropriating the language of heterosexual affection. When Tony says, “To you I can say it, Rose—[Julia’s] inexpressibly dear to me,” Rose “showed him a face intensely receptive” and says, “It’s for your affection for her that I’ve really given you mine” (39). Rose sums up the conversation with the words “We shan’t have loved [Julia] so much only to lose her” (emphasis mine 40). Similarly, Rose sometimes encouraged Tony to confess his love for Julia as well. As the pronoun “we” shows, Tony and Rose feel “a comfortable intimacy” (40) that can be maintained through Julia and by their indifference to each other.29

The most symbolical intersection of heterosexuality and homosexuality is Effie. Isle points out that Effie is a symbol of Julia’s will

29 Tony is pleased by his belief that Rose loves him; and he loves Rose as a best friend. He flirted with Rose in the past; and even now, he sometimes wants to be intimate with her. Yet, he does not love her as passionately as he loves Jean and Julia. Rose also pretends to be attracted to him, but she does not.
While Muriel G. Shine regards the child as a “focal point for a fierce struggle” and a “poetic device” (78). As these previous studies reveal, Effie is described not as a real child but as a symbol. Effie presents a mixture of various sexualities. For instance, both Rose and Jean wish to possess Effie because she is a symbol of their lovers.

“It’s because of that that I want [Effie]!” [Jean said.]

“Because you adored [Tony]—and she’s his?” [Rose asked.]

Jean faltered, but she was launched. “Because I adore him—and she’s his.”

“I want her for another reason,” Rose declared. “I adored her poor mother—and she’s hers. That’s my ground, that’s my love, that’s my faith.” She caught Effie up again: she held her in two strong arms and dealt her a kiss that was a long consecration. (235)

For Rose, Effie is a reminder of Julia, and for Jean, Effie is a reminder of Tony. In this scene, two kinds of affection dominate Effie. Gradually, the bonds of affection between the others begin to converge on the child. After Rose kisses Effie’s arm and presses her cheek against Effie, Dennis imitates Rose’s gestures exactly: kissing Effie where Rose kissed her and pressing his cheek where Rose pressed her cheek, as if seeking the residue of Rose’s affection. Effie is the common focus of affection between Julia and Tony, Tony and Jean, Rose and Julia, and Rose and Dennis.

Not only heterosexual language and gestures but also maternal affection helps Rose navigate her crisis. As previously stated, Dennis’s proposal forces her to forget Julia’s problem, focus on their relationship, and decide whether to marry him. Dennis realizes that something is wrong with
their relationship, but is not convinced by Rose's reasons; hence, he desperately continues to ask for the real reason. Rose also repeats her answer, “Why, my dear child . . . Poor Julia’s between us—much between us” (63). Rose helplessly insists that Julia is the reason for their estrangement. The more important point in this scene is Rose’s calling Dennis “my dear child”; she uses maternal affection to maintain a distance from him. Whenever Rose evokes or plays a heterosexual role, she uses this maternal image, and the narrator cooperates with Rose’s strategy. Rose is described as spiritually and physically more mature than Dennis. The narrator emphasizes Rose’s maternal role by depicting her encompassing his body and his feelings. For example, when Dennis tries to propose to Rose with his news of his success in China, Rose “protected and even a little patronized him” (45). She congratulates him as follows:

“You’re not splendid, my dear old Dennis—you’re not dazzling, nor dangerous, nor even exactly distinguished. But you’ve a quiet little something that the tiresome time has made perfect, and that just here where you’ve come to me at last—makes me immensely proud of you.” (45)

Although Dennis repeats his wish to hear more passionate words, Rose persuades him that she has given enough approval to reassure him. As her words reveal, Rose’s affection is not heterosexual but familial. In order to avoid making a decision on marriage, Rose plays the role of a mother. Thus, Rose’s homoerotic love toward Julia mingles with a maternal affection for Dennis. As Rose murmurs that “Everything’s strange—and the truest things are the strangest,” the truest affections that characters feel are
strangely melted into one another.

IV. Stopping Time and Preserving Affection

Rose utilizes varied kinds of affection described above in order to protect Julia and her own love for her: she sometimes plays a maternal role for Dennis, Paul, and Tony; she also voices her love for Julia by appropriating the language of heterosexuality. We have already seen that Rose constantly fears being trapped by heterosexuality; nonetheless, she does not definitively refuse Dennis’s proposal of marriage. Rose wishes only to remain between heterosexuality and homosexuality. She repeats the words “wait” and “be patient” to her fiancée; she also tries to turn her eyes away from a letter which Dennis earnestly recommended she read—the letter that would lead to the topic of their marriage. In this scene, she seems to hope to stay where she is: she can safely yearn for Julia as much as she likes since Julia is dying and she is single. On the other hand she can keep the prospect of marriage in view, a prospect that will lead her to the “normal” life that she has not yet realized. Dennis scolds Rose for her indecisiveness, saying, “you’re not straight” (73). This comment carries a double meaning for modern readers. Even for Victorian readers, at least one meaning is clear: Rose wants to deviate from the path of marriage. It is noticeable that Dennis also points out that she is just buying time.

Not only Rose but also other characters have a twisted affection for their beloveds. Paul proposes to Jean because he loves Rose. Jean loves Effie and tries to live near Tony while serving as Effie’s permanent nanny because Jean loves him. Tony encourages Jean to marry Paul because Tony
loves Jean. Among these characters, Tony’s ideas of love are closest to Rose’s. He wishes to stop Jean’s growth in order to love her without any dangerous consequences. After four years have passed, Tony still remembers the moment when he first met her: “the act of slow, charmed apprehension had yet to melt into accepted knowledge” (168). In this passage, Tony feels as if he were in the past moment when he was awaking to find out that Jean has spied on him. By remaining in the past moment, he can cherish his hope that she will bring something wonderful to him; at the same time, if he remained in the past when he did not know Jean well, he can escape from a serious relationship with Jean and thereby will not need to betray Julia.

Tony views Jean as between adulthood and childhood. When he watches her duality, it is described as if time had stopped:

[Tony] was interested in not interrupting by a rash motion the process taking place in the figure [Jean] before him, the capricious rotation by which the woman peeped out of the child and the child peeped out of the woman. . . . There was no point at which it had begun and none at which it would end, and it was a thing to gaze at with an attraction refreshingly baffled. (168)

We do not know when Jean’s change begins and when it ends; hence, although she changes her figure endlessly, she always remains in the same period of time in Tony’s mind. Tony thinks that while watching her change miraculously, he can be “free to remain as he was” (168) and not have to choose between Julia and Jean. Tony confesses that it is possible that he likes Jean “comfortably” because “[his liking] would lead to exactly nothing” (168). As Walton acutely points out, Julia’s wish is not only to block Tony’s
remarriage but to protect Tony from it (20). Tony can safely love Jean if he remains single and thereby Julia’s vow is kept intact, because he does not feel any sense of guilt. Besides, if Jean marries Paul, Tony can virtually live with her because Paul and Tony live next door and the two families have often meals with each other. It is highly possible for Jean, who loves Effie, to visit Tony every day. Rose’s attempt to stop time by protecting Julia’s vow maintains such a non-normative affection between Tony and Jean, which is precious, but cannot be open to public.

The ambiguity in time and space in which various kinds of affection mingle with one another is maintained not only by the characters but also the author: James makes Mrs. Beever leave the scene. Mrs. Beever struggles to “straighten it out” (89) on every occasion, and this phrase reveals her ideological nature by including her recommendation of “straight” (heterosexual) relationships for the younger characters. However, she does not appear at the end, when she is supposed to execute her power most. Furthermore, the author conceals Rose’s crime by conflating heterosexuality and friendship. Paul cooperates with Tony and Dr. Ramage (Mrs. Beever’s doctor) to conceal Rose’s crime because Paul loves her. Tony agrees with the conspiracy because of his love for both Jean and Rose. Dennis keeps her crime secret because of his love for Rose, and Dr. Ramage does so because of his friendship with Mrs. Beever. Even Jean reluctantly agrees to let Rose leave the place because Jean loves Tony. Thus, Rose’s homoerotic feelings for Julia cause Effie’s murder, which is then concealed by the others because of their heterosexual affections and loyalties. The moral ambiguity at the end is thus brought into the novel to describe a melting pot of various affections.
Furthermore, by leaving Rose unpunished, the author seems to cooperate with Rose and Tony for the preservation of ambiguous affections.

In addition to creating ambiguity about characters’ affections and relationships, the author makes his characters repeat minute actions in order to heighten the impression of stopped time. For example, after being rejected by Rose, Dennis crosses over a bridge. This is a highly symbolical scene, since the bridge links the two houses for which the book is named and becomes the scene of the murder. Four years later, he crosses the bridge again as if there were no lapse of time, and the author minutely describes his return. The two houses represent new and old cultures respectively, and his coming and going between the new and old houses makes time seem ambiguous. Moreover, when he realizes that Rose is rejecting him, Dennis becomes upset and awkwardly looks for his hat upon leaving her. This gesture is repeated four years later and is again minutely described. Thus, the characters’ appearance as well as their actions are exactly the same as they were four years earlier, giving readers the sense that time in the novel has not passed.

Many critics have referred to the theatric style of the novel. Edel notes that James brings a theatrical method to this novel (*Treacherous Years* 165). Isle notes that the theatrical method is most apparently used when dealing with time in the novel: James does not write about characters’ pasts, but focuses on the present (41-42). It is not certain that the time of the novel can be referred to as a “present” or a “past,” but it can be said that time in the novel is portrayed as constant: and in the stopped time, the characters’ secret ambiguous affections can be preserved forever.
V. Conclusion

Rose is the first consciously homosexual character in James’s novels. She has a clear purpose to act as Julia’s advocate and to exploit the conventions of heterosexual love. She attracts Paul, Dennis, and Tony and has them work for her. The most apparent example of this is how she falsely announces her formal engagement with Dennis in order to take Effie from Jean, successfully defending Julia’s rightful position as Effie’s mother. Rose lets Tony believe that she loves him and thereby gains his cooperation. Rose is conscious of this heterosexuality because she observes it from the outside. In spite of his original plan sketched in his notebooks, James begins to emphasize Rose’s homoerotic desire while writing, and this transforms the novel from a simple melodrama (a battle between good and evil) into a more complex novel. This change in particular generates a suspension of time in the novel. Rose cannot decide whether she should marry before and after Julia dies. While Rose is aware of the danger of being constrained by Victorian norms, she cannot immediately forsake her “normal” life. Like Rose, Tony also cannot forget Julia. At the same time, however, he secretly loves Jean. He also wants to be free from any serious relationship. As a result, Rose and Tony create suspense through their relationships with other characters. As long as time is stopped, each bond of affection can be maintained: not only the characters but also the author seem to wish to keep all the bonds of affection intact. Here James has arrived at a new phase. He stops agonizing over his homosexual characters by introducing consciously homosexual character into his work. James does not make her
challenge the heterosexual norm; instead, he describes the interaction of homosexuality and heterosexual norms. James shows only the beauty of all kinds of affection, and while maintaining a distance from all of them, he sublimes the melting pot of affections into a work of art. Like the scenes cut by Rose’s and Tony’s viewpoints, art is the only way to preserve a given time and tentative affections forever.
9. Homosexuality and Class in *The Turn of the Screw*

I. Introduction

While James created an ideal world in *The Other House*, he faced a grim reality in *The Turn of the Screw*. The heroine is hired as a governess to educate the master’s nephew Miles and niece Flora at a country house named as Bly. She is told by the master not to bother him under any circumstances. The governess also hears that her predecessor Miss Jessel died last year. Feeling uncomfortable about this strange condition and Miss Jessel’s death, the governess learns worse news: Miles was dismissed from school. In addition, the governess starts to notice a stranger around the house, who turns out to be the late servant Peter Quint. The governess also sees Miss Jessel’s ghost and concludes that they come to see the children to corrupt them. One day Flora causes trouble and is taken away from the house; hence, the governess concentrates on saving Miles from Peter Quint’s influence. She tightly embraces the boy to stop him going to Quint; but when she realizes that Quint has lost his influence on Miles, she also realizes that the boy’s heart has stopped.

The existence of ghosts in this story has been the focus of discussion for a long time. These studies are based on the idea that the governess has a heterosexual desire for her master. However, we cannot completely understand several scenes when we see them only from the viewpoint of heterosexual. For example, we may be dismayed at the passage in which

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30 Three schools of opinion were present in earlier criticism: one argues that ghosts are the governess’ hallucinations, another insists that they are real, and the third school suggests compromising between these two positions.
Miles tells his secret to the boys he likes best and his telling the secret is a cause of his expulsion from school. The governess distresses herself more deeply with Miles’s expulsion and his secret relationship with Quint, which are intricately related, than with Flora’s bad behavior. These factors cannot be clarified by arguments that focus merely on heterosexuality.

Later, because of the development of queer criticism of James’s works and his biography, critics began to view *The Turn of the Screw* from the viewpoint of various types of sexuality. These recent studies can be divided into two groups, one of which is a deconstructive interpretation represented by Shoshana Felman’s study on sexuality in *The Turn of the Screw*.\(^{31}\) Another group of recent studies is historical: these authors discuss homosexuality from the historical context of the late nineteenth century, such as the Oscar Wilde trials and the Cleveland Street scandal. Theoretical interpretations such as Felman’s do not privilege any viewpoint, any authority, or any meaning, and accordingly they can grasp the variety and ambiguity of sexuality. However, there are problems, namely that these interpretations ignore the connotations that people in the nineteenth century shared in common, and these interpretations cannot deal with the plight into which the homosexual characters in James’s works had fallen.

On the other hand, the historical interpretations can grasp the agony the homosexual characters experienced. Yet, these historical studies have focused only on the relationship between Miles and Quint, and they have not argued how homosexuality influences and motivates other characters.

\(^{31}\) Felman discusses the structure of the novel itself, which endlessly dislocates the authority, representing the ambiguity of sexuality.
Hence, we need to consider how the Miles—Quint relationship is connected to that of the governess, Douglas, and the narrator.32

This chapter will consider the fact that the governess’ manuscript has an impact on both Douglas, 10 years after the event at Bly, and on the narrator, 40 years later in the Christmas season. As we all know, *The Turn of the Screw* is a story about the class system. However, we should remember that in this novel, the class system has to do with fear of homosexuality and the plight of homosexuals. In accordance with this fact, we will consider at first what factors relating to ghosts and past events at Bly cause dismay in the governess. Then, we will discuss the process through which the governess is alarmed at Miles’s erotic desire and tries to “cure” his homosexuality. Finally we will consider the relationship between the governess and Douglas, and Douglas and the narrator. These following discussions will clarify that the governess, for whom marriage presents the only way to be saved, threatens the homosexuals of the upper classes to “give up” their homosexuality. These discussions will also show that the male characters are troubled by mixed feelings: they understand the governess’ plight and simultaneously feel frustrated at the lack of sympathy for their sexuality.

II. The Governess’ Dismay

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32 The governess records her fight against the ghosts and hands her account over to a gentleman, Douglas, 10 years after her experience at Bly. Douglas decides to talk about this story in a Christmas holiday 40 years after the meeting with the governess. When Douglas dies, he hands the manuscript over to his friend, who narrates the frame story.
We will begin our discussion with the famous scene in which the governess sees Quint for the first time. The scene reveals that the governess, who has been brought up in a heterosexist paradigm, is shocked at the appearance of homosexuality. When she sees Quint, she regards him as unnatural. The man she thinks at first as the master is “not the person [she] had precipitately supposed” (164). The governess had hoped to meet a heterosexual man by chance; however, the man on the tower is different from the figure she was expecting. She realizes that only the man is unnatural and the environment around her is still natural. Then, she is aware of disorder in her perception. As Eric Haralson and other critics point out, the phrase “against nature,” used repeatedly in this novel referred, in the 1890s when this novel was written, to homosexuals (Haralson, “Ritual Sexorcism,” 136). The governess’ dismay at the man derives from his homosexuality.

Let us look at the disorder in the governess’ perception more closely. The discomfort caused by the man is gradually extended into the world around her. Whereas the man’s appearance is that of a plain, familiar male figure while his nature is unfamiliar, the world around her looks unchanged at first; however, it soon becomes unfamiliar as follows: “The rooks stopped cawing in the golden sky and the friendly hour lost for the unspeakable minute all its voice. But there was no other change in nature” (165). This change of the world around the governess mirrors the change in her perception: suddenly, she loses her sense of hearing, perspective, and time. The governess does not know how long the sighting lasts: although the tower is very tall and he stands beyond her eyesight’s reach, she can closely
see the man's face.

These disorders in the governess’ perception present a situation in which the heterosexuality that governs her world view is disturbed by Quint’s appearance, and which thereby results in her losing her cognitive power. Stuart Kellogg explains that when a myth that people have created in society crumbles because of sudden occurrences, the shock makes a person lose proper cognition of time, place, self, and things around them (10). This would appear to be the same situation that the governess faces when she meets Quint for the first time. Later, the governess goes back to the house and sees the housekeeper Mrs. Grose welcome her at the entrance hall. Mrs. Grose is a representative of home and ordinary life, which has been everything for the governess before. However, the welcome by Mrs. Grose at home is so strange and vivid that the governess can remember it in detail even ten years later. The reason the governess can remember this common scene of ordinary life in such detail lies in the fact that the homely scene looks new in the governess’ eyes. In other words, there is now a distance between the governess and the world to which she has belonged.

There is another reason for the governess’ recognition of the two worlds: Quint’s gaze. They have “[their] straight mutual stare” (165). To gaze at someone or something is to be attracted to the object. Stephen Kern has summarized previous studies of the gaze in art and literature. He states that gaze has been referred to as a privilege of men: gazing at objects of desire makes men sexual subjects and women, objects of their sexual desires (10). In the current discussion, we need to understand that only men was allowed to gaze at women in the Victorian era. Kern also introduces
Michel Foucault’s argument of “panoptic mechanism,” in which authorities who punish deviant people remain invisible while those deviant people are gazed on by the invisible authority (Kern 11; Foucault 204). We cannot ignore this function of the gaze in reproaching someone for his or her deviation from what is socially acceptable. As Ann Kaplan claims, the act of gazing gives the gazer a masculine gender role (215). The governess thus blames Quint for his deviation from the normative (masculine) standpoint. However, Quint returns his gaze to the governess, and the governess thereby realizes that Quint reproaches her for her own deviation just as she does for Quint’s. As a result, the governess feels that the world she belongs to has been relativized. Refusing the relativization of her world, the governess becomes infuriated with Quint. She reproaches him for his impudence and lower-class manners; in other words, she classifies him into a category from her own world using the terms “respectability” and “class system” and thus tries to secure her safety. Anger sometimes equals anxiety, and the governess’ anxiety is the reason why the governess begins to insist on the appropriateness of her behavior. The governess is directly or indirectly involved in Miles’s death; this is because she tries to maintain her view against what Quint represents.

There is indeed a necessity for the governess to reinforce her own view because her sexuality sways between heterosexuality and homosexuality. After the first meeting, the governess gradually feels an affinity with Quint; she says that “it was as if I had been looking at him for years and had known him always” (169). She is also driven to imitate Quint’s behavior, standing outside the window. The governess is sure that
“[Quint] knew me as well as I knew him” (195), and the border between the living and the dead is sometimes dissolved: in the governess’ imagination, Quint becomes human and the governess a ghost (196). The governess seems to find in herself the same tendency she finds in Quint. After the border between the governess and Quint is broken at the end of chapter 9, the governess cannot see Flora in her eyes at the beginning of the next chapter: “[she] remembers closing [her] eyes an instant, yielding, consciously, as before the excess of something beautiful that shone out of the blue of [Flora’s] own” (197). The passage can be read as the governess’ struggle to suppress her own homosexual gaze at Flora after realizing her inner desire and then strongly feeling Flora’s beauty.

The governess has a tendency to find pleasure in physical contact with women, especially Mrs. Grose. The governess relies on Mrs. Grose to settle the problems at Bly and often consults with her late at night. When talking with Mrs. Grose, the governess usually holds Mrs. Grose’s arm (159) and later her hands (223); this is the habit between the governess and Mrs. Grose in discussing problems at Bly. She sometimes not only touches Mrs. Grose’s hands but also seizes her around the waist: “[the governess] put out [her] hand to [Mrs. Grose] and she took it; [the governess] held [Mrs. Grose] hard a little, liking to feel her close. There was a kind of support in the shy heave of her surprise” (171). The facts that the governess wants to feel Mrs. Grose physically and that the governess is conscious of Mrs. Grose’s pulse in her bosom seem homoerotic. In another passage, the governess also “threw [herself] away into [Mrs. Grose’s] arms” (182) to talk about what hideous things had happened. The governess often touches Mrs. Grose, and this was
not usual during the Victorian period. There was usually a psychological distance between a governess and a housekeeper because the governess believed that she was superior to the servants, and the servants looked down on the governess, who labored as well as they did and whose salary was almost as much as their housekeeper’s (Pool 225). Viewed in this historical context, the relationship between the governess and Mrs. Grose is too close, both physically and psychologically. When the governess sees Mrs. Grose wiping her lips repeatedly and detaining her awkwardly, she believes that Mrs. Grose wants to kiss her and accordingly allows Mrs. Grose to do so. The governess’ thought that a woman wants to kiss her and her gaze at the woman’s lips reveal the governess’ homoerotic feelings. In addition, the governess makes much of a sweet memory in which Mrs. Grose swears she will save the governess if they cannot have any other help and, as a seal, kisses her tenderly.

Not only the governess but other inhabitants of Bly experience many homoerotic episodes. Quint and the master are no exception. They had met in London and, for Quint’s health, they move to Bly together. The master employs Quint as a valet, “his own man” (174). It is unusual for the upper-class to care for the health of an unknown lower-class man, hiring him as a valet. A valet serves his master both in his public and private life. A valet goes out and travels with his master, helps the master put on his clothes in the bedroom, and sometimes listens to his secrets. The reliability of the valet is very important, and a successful candidate for valet is often recommended by gentlemen in other houses, or promoted from the position of footman within the current workplace. Hence, there seems to be a
romantic reason for the master to take Quint to his country house as his own man. According to Mrs. Grose, “they were both [at Bly]” and then “the master went, and Quint was alone” (174). The governess wonders why Mrs. Grose says “alone” because there are many inhabitants at Bly. Through the governess’ dismay, we learn that the master and Quint have been thought to be “a couple” at Bly. Quint is allowed to wear the master’s clothes without any reproach. This is also a good example of how the intimacy of their relationship ignored the borders within the class system of the time. The governess has thus gradually realized that homosexuality has existed in the world for a long time. She herself cannot deny that she has homoerotic feelings, and accordingly needs to remove homosexuals from her own view.

III. The “Cure” for Miles’s Homosexuality

The governess’ fear of homosexuality is caused by the lowliness of her social standing. The miserable lives of governesses in the nineteenth century have already been widely discussed by critics such as Kathryn Hughes and Shizuko Kawamoto. As these previous studies show, many governesses had to endure a lot of distress: that is, loneliness in their workplace, fear of spinsterhood, economic uncertainty, and the ambiguity of their own class in society. If they wanted to escape from these anxieties, they needed to marry someone wealthy enough to maintain their lifestyles; however, this was often a false hope. The manuscript written by the governess is set during the same period as two other great governess novels, viz., *Vanity Fair* (1847) and *Jane Eyre* (1847). Each novel contains a story of a successful governess who marries a nobleman and escapes from her labor.
Seen from the episode in which the governess in *The Turn of the Screw* reads *Jane Eyre*, she as well as other governesses in those days yearns for marriage with a respectable gentleman. When Mrs. Grose jeers at the governess' infatuation with her master, the governess laughs with her in her silliness; however, this is a mere pretense that the governess wears to protect herself against the grim reality. Her wish to be appreciated and loved by her master haunts the whole manuscript. She believes that a respectable gentleman should be heterosexual because she strongly desires to be saved from her own severe circumstances by marriage. If she cannot marry a gentleman, she would be saved at least by the possibility of a marriage. For this reason, when she knows that some of the few gentlemen she meets in her circumstance are homosexual, her hope is dashed.

This fear the governess has of homosexuality among the upper classes worsens when she realizes that Miles, the master in the next generation, is homosexual. According to J. R. de S. Honey, homosexuality in public schools was beginning to be regarded as a problem from the 1890s, when the novel was written (192-93). Sharing the same historical context, Marcus Klein argues that Miles has knowledge of homosexuality. However, he does not act on it, and the governess is worried about the homosexual acts Miles would perform if he returns to school (610-11). Moreover, though Honey explains that school presidents were not concerned about homosexuality before the 1890s, Haralson, who has investigated John Addington Symonds's writings,\(^33\) discovers that there were homosexual acts

\(^{33}\)James had met and occasionally corresponded with Symonds. Though he did not often contact Symonds, James had a deep interest in Symonds'
in public schools in the 1840s, as per the setting of the manuscript (“Ritual Sexorcism,” 145). Savoy mentions that the governess would be frightened by the fact that homosexuality was gradually spreading among public school boys who would, in the future, be masters of their lands (“The Jamesian Turn,” 135).

Now let us consider more fully what impressions the governess gains from the homosexuals at Bly. Critics have cited the same episodes to discuss the homosexual relationship between Quint and Miles: for example, Miles has said “things” to “[t]hose [he] liked” (259) and been expelled from school, or, Quint and Miles have always been together, and Quint “was much too free” (177) with Miles. These are certainly significant scenes; however, we will look more closely at other scenes which reveal the governess’ psychology. For example, when Mrs. Grose asks the governess how she is sure that Miles is Quint’s target, the governess heatedly retorts, “I know, I know, I know! . . . And you know, my dear!” (176). Previous studies have regarded this line as proof of the unreliability of the governess. However, the governess may have been pointing out signs of sexual desire appearing on the man’s face. Hughes, a specialist on the lives of Victorian governesses, has followed in detail their experiences when they went to their workplaces as governesses for the first time. Although they were brought up in middle-class homes and educated to be respectable ladies, what welcomed them in their new circumstances were lustful gazes from other men in the household; they looked the governesses straight in the face as if judging the homosexual campaign. James dramatized him in his short story “The Author of ‘Beltraffio’” (Edel, Treacherous Years 123-26; F. Kaplan 301).
merits of street women, who were thought to be sexually deviant (125). The men’s erotic gaze foretold danger in the future (Hughes 125). Similar to working class men’s erotic gaze at governesses, the governess seems to detect sexual desire in Quint’s face.34 One cannot explain in words the ambiguity of human desire when we intensely sense it; hence, we can conclude that the governess feels Quint’s desire, but cannot prove that his face displays his sexual impulse and that his target should not be her. Looking at the possible lust on Quint’s face, the governess shows a strong aversive reaction and is grievously disturbed.

We should also not disregard the scene in which Miles looks up at the top of the tower on the turf at midnight. The narrative suggests that the governess imagines not an innocent meeting but the breaking of a sexual taboo by Quint and Miles. Although the governess has thought that the person on the turf should be Miss Jessel, the person turns out to be Miles. The reversed sex of the person upsets the governess. Yet, in addition to this reversal, the governess is disturbed by the fact that Miles stands on the same place as the governess has done when she has hoped to meet her master by chance. In other words, the governess is startled by the homosexual connotations in Miles’s action: he stands in the place of Miss Jessel, who has possibly had sexual relations with Quint. Miles also

34 We will not return to the former discussion about whether the ghosts are real, or whether they are the governess’ hallucination, because the text does not privilege one interpretation over the other. Yet it is certain that the ghosts are real for the governess, and that it is more important to think about what fancy she entertains and what meanings the ghosts suggest to the governess. Hence, this thesis sometimes discusses the ghosts as if they existed.
unconsciously repeats the governess’ own desire for her master. These situations arouse lascivious thoughts in the governess. She fancies Miles’s “lovely upward look with which, from the battlements above us, the hideous apparition of Quint had played” (212-13). The word “lovely” indicates that Miles is an object of affection and emphasizes Miles’s innocence; however, at the same time, his expression reveals his willingness to be loved by Quint. Here the governess fears for Miles as a subject of desire.

Benjamin Britten, who was not decorated in recognition of his brilliant works because of his homosexuality, composed an opera of *The Turn of the Screw*, in which he emphasized the mutual love between Quint and Miles (Clippinger 138, 141, 147). In addition, as Haralson explains clearly and concisely, the early criticism of *The Turn of the Screw*, including that of Virginia Woolf, detected a complicity between readers and the author in sexualizing the text (“Ritual Sexorcism,” 135). Ellis Hanson has developed this idea of complicity and pointed out that readers conspire with Quint and Jessel and thereby enjoy vicariously the pleasure of pedophilia with immunity from penal responsibility (372). Hanson goes on to say that it is vital to the textual device that the children themselves desire erotic pleasure (372). Neill Matheson follows the same line of argument and states that the text contains not only fear but also pleasure extracted from fear (723-24), and that the taboo of the erotic child is a part of the fear and the pleasure (719). When we see what these criticisms reveal from the governess’ viewpoint, pedophilia and the idea of a child as a subject of desire are the horrors sensed by the governess.

Thus the governess believes that Quint and Miles desire each other.
Her anxiety increases and, finally, she begins to see Miles as an invalid who needs to be cured. Furthermore, she believes that she will be able to cure Miles’s homosexuality through his own confession. The governess’ thought seems to be illogical; however, the historical context shows that confession has been closely related to homosexuality. The fact that Douglas, who is handed the manuscript by the governess, would be named after Alfred Douglas, Oscar Wilde’s lover (Haralson, “Ritual Sexorcism,” 91; Knowles 172), is an established notion in the queer reading of *The Turn of the Screw.* Wilde was forced to define the phrase “the love that dare not speak its name” in Douglas’s poem “Two Loves” (1894) in court (Holland 207; Kaneda 149). The phrase tells us two facts: first, that homosexuality could not be named in society at the time; second, homosexuality could exist only on condition that it could not be named. Viewed in this light, when the governess strangely sticks to the idea that the confession “cures” Miles’s homosexuality, she possibly tries to name homosexuality and extinguish it. The governess expresses this process of naming as follows: “to reach his mind, [she might] risk the stretch of a stiff arm across his character” (251). The “character” refers to Miles’s respectability in this context; however, his respectability covers his homosexuality. Hence, it follows that the governess thinks that Miles’s homosexuality is a mere shell called a “character” and that the “mind,” or an essence, exists independently from that character. The governess believes that if she could make Miles “name the love,” she could “return” Miles to heterosexuality. She reviews her fight against homosexuality in the same terms as the title: “I could only get on at all by taking ‘nature’ into my confidence and my account, by treating my
monstrous ordeal as a push in a direction unusual, of course, and unpleasant, but demanding after all, for a fair front, only another turn of the screw of ordinary human virtue” (emphasis mine, 250). Her confession about changing the unnatural into the natural by turning the screw of ordinary human virtue throws into relief the governess as a persecutor who screws “virtue” in “against nature,” pins it down, and maintains a “natural” appearance.

IV. The Blackmail Note

The person who gives the text the image of a screw of virtue fixing the unnatural on the natural seems not to be the governess. Instead, it is the narrator, or James, who phrases the governess’ cruelty in terms of the screw. The title phrase “turn of the screw” appears only in the above sentence except for the opening, and the person who obtains the manuscript last and possibly rewrites it is the narrator, or the author. It seems important for them to tell readers that what the governess has done to Miles is horrible and cruel to homosexuals. Yet, on the contrary, they do not add any reproachful comment to the manuscript: they could criticize the governess by adding a frame narrative at the end of the story, after Miles’s death; but they dare not do so. We need to consider how we can interpret these contradictory factors, and the opening frame narrative will be helpful in finding an answer. We also need to return to the discussion of the class system together with homosexuality to fully understand the whole structure of the story. As stated above, the governess is forced to deny homosexuality because of her unstable economic and hierarchical status.
The same problem that is caused by social status agonizes the leisure classes such as Douglas and the narrator. The following discussion will make clear the connection between the class system and homosexuality.

Among many pieces of information presented at the beginning of the story, the most important is the delicate situation between Douglas and the governess. Previous studies have accepted the visitors’ conjectures and believed that Douglas secretly loved the governess; however, from textual evidence, we learn that the governess has loved Douglas one-sidedly. Firstly, a promenade at twilight has been the governess’ dream, not Douglas’s. Secondly, she trusts him so much that she tells him about killing her charge, though this confession might lead her to be barred permanently from wealthy families (or a lot worse). On the other hand, Douglas is not willing to develop a romantic relationship with the governess. When the guests at the Christmas gathering fancy the love affair between Douglas and the governess, he calmly corrects the suggestion: he insists that he and the governess have been mutual friends. However, their relationship is not as simple as he insists. For example, it is notable that Douglas says, “[the governess] was in love. That is she had been” (147). This line is strange because we cannot tell whether one does not love someone. However, there is one possibility to guess what it means: if Douglas is aware that the governess’ interest has moved from her former master to Douglas, he can be sure about the meaning of the ambiguous topic. As James maintained a subtle distance from Constance Fenimore Woolson, and as John Marcher does to May Bartram, Douglas seems to be consciously in a relation of extreme delicacy with the governess.
Another important piece of information in the frame narrative is the relationship between Douglas and the narrator. Douglas intends to tell his secret story, especially to the narrator. Douglas repeatedly looks into the narrator’s eyes intently and sends a signal to him that the narrator should help Douglas disclose the story. They do not spend Christmas holidays alone with each other; instead, they exchange secret messages among other guests. This situation shows that their relationship should be hidden from public and that they enjoy their flirtations secretly. There is a scene that reveals the same plight and pleasure in the romantic relationship. Let us look at the scene in which the narrator guesses that the governess has fallen in love with someone: “[Douglas] continued to fix me. ‘You’ll easily judge,’ he repeated: ‘you will.’ / I fixed him too. ‘I see. [The governess] was in love.’ / He laughed for the first time” (147). Douglas looks into the narrator’s eyes intently and sends the message that the narrator should know how the governess feels if Douglas gazes passionately at the narrator. Douglas also repeats aloud that the narrator is sure to know it. Then the narrator returns Douglas’s gaze. What expression is in Douglas’s face the narrator does not reveal; however, there is the alternative answer in the line: “she was in love.” The series of exchanges between Douglas and the narrator suggests that they are on intimate terms and that they refer to their own relationship under the cover of that of the governess and her master. This seems to be the reason Douglas “laughed for the first time” after a long depression when the narrator correctly understands what Douglas means. These secret games provide a trivial enjoyment for them.

From these two pieces of information in the frame narrative a
situation emerges: When the governess realizes that Douglas is homosexual, she feels as if a barrier is set up between them. This situation reminds her of Miles and the former master and causes her to tell Douglas her experience around the death of a homosexual child, and the story functions as a type of blackmail. When she works at Bly, she is about twenty years old. When she tells Douglas of her experiences, she is thirty years old. There is little possibility for the governess to gain respectability through marriage to a wealthy man. In the manuscript, her obsession with children and ghosts begins to worsen in autumn when the upper-classes are supposed to return to their country houses. The governess seems to be aware that the master does not feel like visiting her or sending her letters even when he leaves London and has leisure time. In addition, when Miles asks the governess to let him go to school, she feels tears coming to her eyes and expresses herself as an “eternal governess” (215). This phrase means that she follows Miles wherever he goes; however, it simultaneously reveals the governess’ bitterness that she could not escape from her job and would remain a governess for life.

Viewed in this light, the fact that the governess tells her horrible story of the death of a homosexual child to homosexual Douglas suggests a blackmail-like situation: the governess threatens Douglas to live as a heterosexual man. The governess needs to deny others’ and her own homosexuality to survive in society because the only hopeful way for her to obtain economic security and a respectable life is marriage, or, in other words, heterosexuality. In this situation, she is forced to extinguish Miles’s homosexuality, which leads to his death, because she cannot fulfill her
dream of marrying her master and thereby recovering respectability possibly due to her master’s homosexuality and the discovery of the same tendency in Miles. Her story implies that if the upper-class homosexual gentleman did not give up his homosexuality, he would be in trouble; thus her narrative functions as blackmail.

Douglas seems to understand the governess’ intention fully. He says that “[the governess] was the most agreeable woman [he had] ever known in her position” (146-47). The upper-classes usually scorn governesses because of their lower social status and their ignorance. However, although he shares in common the upper-class view that the governess as a category is inferior to the upper ranks of society in intelligence and refinement, Douglas esteems the governess’ individual merits. Accordingly, unlike other gentlemen, he can sympathize with her milieu as well. Douglas learns from her narrative about her singleness, her lost love for the master, and her lowliness of position. Hence, Douglas comments on the manuscript written by the governess that it is dreadful “[for] general uncanny ugliness and horror and pain” (146). This inarticulate feeling seems to come from the compound feelings of anger and guilt. As stated above, Douglas has to keep his relationship with the narrator secret, and the narrator, who knows Douglas’s intention well, adds the phrase “another turn of the screw of ordinary human virtue” (250) to the original manuscript. Hence, Douglas and the narrator, who realize that it is hard to live as a homosexual, sympathize with Miles and reproach the governess for her oppressive behavior. At the same time, they understand that the groups they belong to (such as that of the leisured classes and the homosexual) are a cause both of
the governess’ plight and of Miles’s death. They are forced to feel guilty in this situation though this is not their fault; the situation they have fallen into would be the cause of something inexpressively grotesque, Douglas feels. Viewed in this light, the reason Douglas hands the story over to the narrator is that Douglas would like the narrator to understand his plight because the narrator is homosexual and wealthy, like Douglas.

Through this structure as stated above, Douglas and the narrator, or the author James, sympathize with Miles, who struggles out of the governess’ embrace (the epitome of the norms of the time) and holds out his arms toward Quint in the ending. Douglas, the narrator, and James, were distressed by the possibility of exposing their sexuality in public and being branded a criminal. Homosexuals in the late nineteenth century were also troubled by the diversity of sexual identity: some artists such as Oscar Wilde showed their homosexuality as a commodity and established their sexual identity in public while others could not help but feel antipathy to the publicity of homosexuality and blamed themselves for their homosexuality, from the perspective of their own severe attitudes toward public gay men. They not only commiserate with Miles but also enjoy his romantic relationship with Quint. On the other hand, Douglas and the narrator do not criticize the governess; instead, they accept her distress and reserve it by handing over the story. This reservation of the manuscript shows that Douglas and the narrator endure the hardship not only as victims but also as victimizers. They are helplessly and unintentionally involved in the misery of a middle-class woman. The reservation of the governess’ voice can be read as their determination to bear the burden of
being marginalized people, just like the governess.

V. Conclusion

The queer reading of *The Turn of the Screw* has considered the homosexual relationship between Miles and Quint. To develop this reading and grasp the whole structure of the novel, this thesis interrogates how the governess’ ambiguous sexuality, other homosexual relationships, and the class system are necessary to frame the episode that occurs between Miles and Quint. The governess needs to deny her homosexual tendencies due to her poverty and ambiguous social status. If she were aware of her homosexual tendencies, she could not marry a gentleman and escape her miserable life. Female homosexuality was thought to be a fiction in the Victorian era, and furthermore, the governess fears her unnamable desire. If homosexuality became more and more widespread among the upper-classes, the result would be the same: she would be unable to marry. In this situation, watching Miles and Quint desire each other, the governess tries to cure Miles’s homosexuality, and in the middle of this course of action, his heart stops. Miles’s death suggests that he cannot live without his homosexuality. The governess tells Douglas about nipping homosexuality in the bud and threatens him to become heterosexual. Douglas and the narrator realize the fact that though they are persecuted in society, they also agonize single women of the middle classes unintentionally. Douglas asks the narrator to help him endure the double hardship imposed on homosexuals by sharing this story. *The Turn of the Screw* deals with these multiple layers of difficulty faced by late nineteenth-century homosexuals.
10. Redemption of a Son in *The Ambassadors*

I. Introduction

The 20th century began, and James’s viewpoints about homoeroticism and homosexuality gradually shifted from social to personal. He groped for a position from which he could watch over younger men fondly without being heartbroken. This attempt can be understood well in *The Ambassadors*. This is a story about a man of early old age, Louis Lambert Strether. He has spent his life in obscurity for more than 50 years. He was not famous, wealthy, nor masculine and suffered from these negative aspects. However, he obtains the chance to settle this difficulty: his lover Mrs. Newsome asks him to bring her son Chadwick Newsome (Chad) back so that he could take over his late father’s job. The Newsomes run a factory, which supplies employment in their hometown. If Chad returned to them and managed the business, they will make a huge profit. If Strether succeeds in this mission, he will also gain a higher position in the company and be able to marry Mrs. Newsome. However, he fails to carry out the mission because he reaches the conclusion that Chad does not need to go back. Strether thinks that Chad changed into a refined gentleman in Europe while America becomes more and more vulgar in Strether’s eyes because of its commercialism. Strether also wants to cooperate in Chad’s illicit love affair with Madame de Vionnet since she improved Chad. Originally, Mrs. Newsome and Strether thought that some wicked woman had captured Chad, seduced him, and persuaded him not to leave Europe. Yet, Strether found their relationship virtuous. Finally, losing patience with
Strether, Mrs. Newsome sends other ambassadors to Europe to achieve her original goal. Because of his defending Madame de Vionnet against the Newsomes, Strether is dismissed by Mrs. Newsome. After that he happens to know that the relationship between Chad and Madame de Vionnet is not virtuous, but it is a usual case of adultery. Strether has thus lost everything in the end.

As stated above, Strether fails in his mission; hence, the title has the plural form of “ambassador.” However, this story deals mainly with the relationship between Strether and Chad. E. M. Forster states that when Strether exchanges places with Chad, the shape of “an hour-glass” is completed (137). Forster understands that the novel consists mainly of Strether, Chad, and Paris, which is the glitter at the center of the hour-glass (139). Forster understood a theme of the novel astutely: James focused on the relationship between Strether and Chad. In 1895, James made an entry in his notebook about an idea for the novel. He wondered “[what] is there in the idea of too late—of some friendship or passion or bond—some affection long desired and waited for, that is formed too late?” (Notebooks of Henry James 182-83). This entry shows that James wanted to write a story about a man who builds a precious bond too late. The next entry tells us that the bond is not heterosexual: James was thinking about a bachelor who loses his peaceful days by the appearance of his ex-wife (Notebooks of Henry James 183-84). Given this misogynistic idea, Strether’s precious bond seems to mean not the bond with female characters such as Madame de Vionnet and Maria Gostrey, but that with Chad. On October 31st in 1895, James made the second entry in his notebook and wrote an idea of the elder man
who amends his past error: “He has sacrificed some one [sic], some friend, some son, some younger brother, to his failure to feel,” but the elder man decides to save another young man this time in Europe (Notebooks of Henry James 227). The elder man’s compensation for his indifference toward a younger man has been the central subject of this novel from the start. James usually made a list of characters’ names so that he was able to pick out a proper name from it, and he conceived Chad’s name from as early as 1884 (Notebooks of Henry James 68). It seems that James had an image of a young man to write a novel about. These entries reveal how important the relationship between Strether and Chad is in this novel.

As it is homosexual Forster who confirms the importance of the relationship between Strether and Chad, there is a homoerotic atmosphere in their relationship. Strether adores Chad and finally gives up all the future profits for him. This shows the unusual intensity of Strether’s interest in Chad. However, previous studies have not fully discussed the relationship between Strether and Chad. 35 This paper will consider

35 Jonathan Freedman points out the similarities between this novel and The Picture of Dorian Gray, but only clarifies Walter Pater’s influence on these two novels. Haralson regards Strether’s relationship with Little Bilham (one of Chad’s friends) as the most important homoerotic bond “formed too late” and thinks that Strether’s homoerotic feelings for Chad are indicative of “autoeroticism” (Queer Modernity 127, 130). Haralson considers briefly the relationship between Strether and Chad, but “autoeroticism” focuses on Strether’s subjectivity. Paul Fisher claims that Miss Barrace’s admiration for Madame de Vionnet is a sign of lesbianism (252). Yet, he does not refer to the relationship between Strether and Chad. Kevin Ohi argues that the style of “belatedness” seen in Strether’s recognition is queer since it is similar to “closet”: at the moment when homosexuals come out as gay, they create their past identities (165). Thus critics have discussed the queerness of this novel, but there is room for discussion about the homoerotic relationship between Strether and Chad.
homoeroticism between Strether and Chad. Their relationship is narrated as Strether’s memory; although the narrator is a third person, each event is seen from Strether’s backward glance. The present Strether, who looks back on his experience, knows his own failure in his mission and Chad’s betrayal well, and accordingly the story could not be cheerful. Actually this story expresses Strether’s sorrow for his loss of Chad. However, Strether dares to exchange places with Chad in the end, saying “I only found you [Chad] out. It was you who found me in” (388), and to pay a penalty for Chad’s riotous living. Later, Strether also decides to go through his adventure in Paris again by remembering it in detail. Furthermore, although he lamented Chad’s cruelty at the time, the present Strether finds the whole adventure as a funny, thrilling story. Seen from these genial feelings, Strether seems to be satisfied with the dire result of his mission. The following discussion will consider that these ambivalent feelings of Strether’s come from his homoerotic affection for Chad.

II. A Strange Triangular Relationship

Strether, Chad, and Madame de Vionnet build a strange triangular relationship in which heterosexual and homosexual desires are mingled with each other. Firstly, let us consider heterosexual desire between Strether and Madame de Vionnet. Although Strether is not aware of his romantic feelings for Madame de Vionnet, the text suggests the possibility of their mutual affection. For example, realizing that Chad and Madame de Vionnet have sexual relations, Strether despises her as if he were jealous of Chad. Strether thinks that Madame de Vionnet is “vulgarly troubled” like “a
maid-servant” (441). The word “vulgar” obviously blames Madame de Vionnet for her illegitimate relationship, and the reproach betrays Strether’s disappointment. He believed in the “virtuous attachment” (149) between Chad and Madame de Vionnet and accordingly feels that he was cheated by her. Strether’s disappointment suggests that he regards Madame de Vionnet as a possible partner. When Madame de Vionnet confesses, “I’ve wanted you too” (443), Strether “declared . . . ‘Ah but you’ve had me!’ . . . with an emphasis that made an end” (443). His declaration can be read as either an empty compliment or a confession of his love. In any case, it is certain that they are his parting words and that he is heartbroken.

Maria Gostrey, who is Strether’s confidante, also tells us about Strether’s hidden desire. Having realized that Strether knows of the adultery, Madame de Vionnet searches for him. She wants him to understand her. However, she cannot find him and finally visits Maria’s house to ask for information about him. Maria cannot help her with information about Strether at the time; but, later, when Strether comes to Maria, she acts as an intermediary between Strether and Madame de Vionnet by saying, “She thinks you and she might at any rate have been friends” (453). Strether replies, “We might certainly. That’s just . . . why I’m going” (453). Maria asks him whether she should repeat those kind words to Madame de Vionnet, but, Strether tells Maria to say nothing. She pities Madame de Vionnet, then Strether, and lastly herself: “I’m sorry for us all!” (453). It is because Strether does not forgive Madame de Vionnet that Maria pities her, and it is because Strether cannot realize his own desire for
Madame de Vionnet, or has too grave a sense of propriety to love her that Maria pities him. Their one-way affection reminds her of her own unrequited love for Strether. Thus, although Strether is not aware of his affection for Madame de Vionnet, Maria’s sympathy reveals his hidden desire.

Originally if Strether successfully carries out his mission, he is to take a higher position in the large company in his hometown, to acquire wealth, to have a virtuous wife, and to live a comfortable life in his old age. These profits would give him the masculinity he desires. However, he gives up all of these things to help Madame de Vionnet. This self-sacrifice implies the possibility of Strether’s heterosexual love for Madame de Vionnet. Besides, Chad also had a romantic relationship with Madame de Vionnet, and it might seem that the two heterosexual relationships are related to each other. However, there is homoerotic desire between Strether and Chad, which sustains these heterosexual relationships. It is sure that Strether desires Madame de Vionnet, but he explains that he is helping her because she is the person who made Chad a refined gentleman. For Strether, Madame de Vionnet is a great artist, and Chad is her work. Strether’s admiration for the work makes him respect the artist:

It placed the young man so before them as the result of her interest and the product of her genius, acknowledged so her part in the phenomenon and made the phenomenon so rare, that more than ever yet he might have been on the very point of asking her for some more detailed account of the whole business than he had yet received from her. (313)
Strether admires Madame de Vionnet’s talent as an artist, which shows that his desire is rather directed to Chad than to Madame de Vionnet. Strether also insists, “It’s my business, that is, only so far as Chad’s own life is affected by [Madame de Vionnet’s influence]; and what has happened, don’t you see? is that Chad’s has been affected so beautifully” (377). Strether clarifies that his reason for helping Madame de Vionnet is his interest in Chad. Originally, Strether was moved by the words, “You’re not saving me [Madame de Vionnet], I take it, for your interest in myself, but for your interest in our friend [Chad]” (245), and decided to help her. Strether’s involvement with Madame de Vionnet is supported by his deeper affection for Chad.

Importantly, Strether’s feelings at the end of the story are closer to Madame de Vionnet’s than Chad’s, which reveals Strether’s position as Chad’s lover. Madame de Vionnet has improved Chad’s taste greatly, and only Strether can understand fully the significance of her contribution. However, Madame de Vionnet’s spell turns out to be an illusion. Having discovered that there were sexual relations between Chad and Madame de Vionnet, Strether is disappointed at the fact that “[Chad] was none the less only Chad” (440). These words suggest that although Strether believed that Madame de Vionnet improved Chad and that Strether’s mission was to support the change, Strether realized he was wrong. It comes home to him that however assiduously one devotes oneself to Chad, it will be useless. Strether feels keenly that Madame de Vionnet desperately tries not to be abandoned by the young Adonis; and Strether is overcome with a sense of futility, anticipating that her desperate efforts will have been wasted: “it
was like a chill in the air to him, it was almost appalling, that a creature so fine could be, by mysterious forces, a creature so exploited” (440). Here Strether experiences Madame de Vionnet’s pain vicariously. Similar to Madame de Vionnet, he sacrifices his personal interest to the relationship between Chad and Madame de Vionnet. In spite of these benefits, Chad lacks a sense of guilt. According to Strether,

[Chad] “put out” his excitement, or whatever other emotion the matter involved, as he put out his washing; than which no arrangement could make more for domestic order. It was quite for Strether himself in short to feel a personal analogy with the laundress bringing home the triumphs of the mangle. (386)

Strether compares himself to a woman who does housework for Chad, which shows that Strether’s love is a woman’s self-sacrificing love for her partner. His unrequited love for Chad is equal to Madame de Vionnet’s feelings. It is also worth noting that Strether compares himself to a girl when he realized there were sexual relations between Chad and Madame de Vionnet: “[Strether] almost blushed, in the dark, for the way he had dressed the possibility in vagueness, as a little girl might have dressed her doll” (425). Strether was ashamed by his lack of knowledge about the sexual act, but he does not see himself as a little boy. The metaphor of a little girl reveals the possibility that Strether adores Chad from the same standpoint as Madame de Vionnet. Chad also points out that Strether occupies the same position as Madame de Vionnet: “And you yourself are adding to [what Madame de Vionnet has done to me]” (393). Thus Strether is similar to Madame de Vionnet in loving Chad, and Strether’s desire for Madame de Vionnet is
closely related to his desire for Chad.

Strether is concerned about the relationship between Chad and Madame de Vionnet, and the reason for his mediation is not only his desire for Madame de Vionnet but also his desire for Chad. Strether sees Chad from the same viewpoint as Madame de Vionnet. Strether and Madame de Vionnet were deep in grief because of their unrequited love for Chad.

III. As a Father and a Son—Strether’s Double Role

Strether has another reason to come to Europe as well as the profits he will gain. He lost his son many years ago, and his son would be the same age as Chad if he were alive. Strether has regretted his indifference to his son:

[Strether] had again and again made out for himself that he might have kept his little boy, his little dull boy who had died at school of rapid diphtheria, if he had not in those years so insanely given himself to merely missing the mother. It was the soreness of his remorse that the child had in all likelihood not really been dull—had been dull, as he had been banished and neglected, mainly because the father had been unwittingly selfish. (79-80)

Strether believes that he might have been able to save his son if he, as a father, had been attentive. This regret leads him to attempt to save Chad. This time Strether decides not to neglect the son. Strether will become Chad’s step-father if he successfully brings him back to Mrs. Newsome. These situations clarify Strether’s role as Chad’s father.

However, Strether also plays a role of a son. He has lived a life
without pleasure in Woollett and accordingly did not know how to enjoy Europe. Hence, Chad plays a mentor’s role after Strether arrives in Paris. Chad teaches especially how to enjoy sexual pleasures to Strether. His ambassadorial mission is originally designed as a study of sexuality since he must discover the “wicked” woman who has detained Chad in Europe. It can be described as a mission to observe Chad’s sexual life.

One day, Strether realizes that he is following Chad’s course in the Latin Quarter without knowing it. Chad lived a Bohemian life with other artists there in the beginning of his career in Paris. Strether walks, imagining Chad’s life in the quarter with “rather ominous legend” (84). Strether remembers that “when Chad had written, five years ago, after a sojourn then already prolonged to six months, that he had decided to go in for economy and the real thing, Strether’s fancy had quite fondly accompanied him in this migration” (84). The artistic life is sexually divergent and what he cannot find in his ascetic life in Woollett. Strether follows Chad in his imagination and vicariously enjoys his dubious life, counting Chad’s ex-girlfriends: “Chad’s number one, number two, number three” (86). Strether wants to take into account “the very air” of the Latin Quarter to “feel what the early natural note [of Chad’s life] must have been” (84); viewed in this light, he, as a father, decides to understand his son. Yet, at the same time, Chad also, as a father, teaches “the real thing” to Strether by leading him to the quarter.

While Strether does not know how to behave in Europe and often
compares himself to a little child. Chad looks older than he is because of his grey hair and graceful manner. For Strether, the change in Chad is “a fascination” (128). Chad has a face “of a man to whom things had happened and were variously known” (128). Chad’s experience and acquired knowledge in Europe attract Strether so irresistibly that “he finally put his hand across the table and laid it on Chad's arm” (129) to make sure whether what Chad's change embodies can be sensed by the fingers. The miracle inspires a tactile desire in Strether. Finally, astonished by Chad’s sex appeal, Strether understands that Chad is “the young man marked out by women” (130). Strether’s fascination reveals that Chad is a role model for Strether in his association with women and at the same time an object of his homoerotic desire. Detecting “the hint of . . . something latent and beyond access, ominous and perhaps enviable” (132) in Chad, Strether blindly absorbs the dubious things Chad offers. Strether thinks that “whatever the young man showed him he was showing at least himself” (159). For Strether, taking lessons from Chad is knowing him better, and as his tactile desire shows, Strether’s affection is not only paternal but also homoerotic.

One of the offers Chad makes is a famous sculptor Gloriani. Chad leads Strether to a garden party which Gloriani holds. Strether finds

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36 In the theater, Strether is aware that “[he] had stuck there like a schoolboy wishing not to miss a minute of the show” (119). At Notre Dame, “[Strether] might have been a student under the charm of a museum—which was exactly what, in a foreign town, in the afternoon of life, he would have liked to be free to be” (232). When he realized the adultery, “he almost blushed, in the dark, for the way he had dressed the possibility in vagueness, as a little girl might have dressed her doll” (425). Abandoned by his friends, Strether compares Maria and himself to “the Babes in the Wood” (446). David McWhierter has also noticed the potential of Strether as a child (45-46).
Gloriani sexually attractive. Gloriani keeps his distance from women who attempt to catch him: little Bilham explains, “[Women] never give [Gloriani] up. Yet he keeps them down: no one knows how he manages” (163). There is an implication of homosexuality in this comment of Gloriani’s mysterious anti-heterosexuality. Moreover, Gloriani has held allure for Strether since their eyes met. Gloriani’s gaze is like “the long straight shaft” as well as “the aesthetic torch” (162) and what Strether “was to recall in especial, as the penetrating radiance” (162). The penetration implies imaginative sexual relations between Strether and Gloriani. Strether does not forget the thrill in looking in Gloriani’s eyes:

[Strether] wasn’t soon to forget them, was to think of them, all unconscious, unintending, preoccupied though they were, as the source of the deepest intellectual sounding to which he had ever been exposed. He was in fact quite to cherish his vision of it, to play with it in idle hours; only speaking of it to no one and quite aware he couldn’t have spoken without appearing to talk nonsense. (162)

Strether thinks that this is an aesthetic test; however, it has also a romantic implication since Strether knows that he is the only person who can understand the message Gloriani’s eyes delivered, keeps the experience secret, and sometimes remembers it fondly.

Gloriani’s scene is important to the novel because Strether delivers a famous speech just after the scene, and the speech—“Live all you can; it’s a mistake not to” (176)—is the central theme of this novel. James would write Gloriani’s character and his impression on Strether carefully to make this scene stand out. Homoerotic penetration and the fascination which Strether
feels toward Gloriani are important factors in this novel. More noticeably, Gloriani’s homoerotic appeal stimulates Strether to become like Chad. Gloriani and Chad have the power to control sexuality in common. They can sport with women without being fascinated by them. Strether wonders with admiration “[what] young man had ever paraded about that way... a maiden in her flower” (178). Chad’s attraction is erotic, dubious, and anti-heterosexual, which he teaches to Strether by showing Gloriani’s attractiveness.

Finally and most importantly, Chad teaches a homoerotic bond to Strether by employing little Bilham. When Chad appears for the first time in the novel, Strether is waiting for little Bilham; but, the person who appears instead of Bilham is Chad. Little Bilham is also sent to Chad’s house to entertain Strether. In addition, Bilham tells lies for Chad, introduces Strether to any one Chad thinks Strether had better meet, and shows how young aesthetic people live in Paris. Apparently, little Bilham plays the role of Chad’s double.

Before meeting Chad for the first time in Europe, Strether “linger[s] for five minutes on the opposite site of the street” (87) and watches a

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37 Tambling and Matthiessen have also discussed Gloriani’s sex appeal (Tambling 36; Matthiessen 37).

38 The control of sexuality is related to the control of pleasure in Paris. Strether has been “half ashamed of his impulse to plunge and more than half afraid of his impulse to wait” (81). He seems to fear losing his sense when he likes someone or something too much. Strether has the same ambivalent feelings for Paris: he recognized it as what he must not like and what would leave him in a state of rapture. On the other hand, Chad enjoys Paris without being obsessed by it: he says “I’ve never got stuck—so very hard; and, as against anything at any time really better, I don’t think I’ve ever been afraid. . . . Don’t you know how I like Paris itself?” (133). This is the point in which Strether respects Chad.
balcony of Chad’s house. As stated in chapter 2, a man waiting for another man who may appear at a window (a balcony in this case) reminds us of an episode in James’s own life: he was waiting for a man under a window in the heavy rain. Compared to this episode, the setting suggests Strether’s yearning for Chad. Actually, this scene is filled with homoerotic atmosphere. For example, while waiting for Chad, Strether is attracted to the appearance of the house: “High broad clear—he was expert enough to make out in a moment that it was admirably built—it fairly embarrassed our friend by the quality that, as he would have said, it ‘sprang’ on him” (emphases mine 88). It is as if this review were directed to a man who enchants Strether with a fine forehead and robust physique.

Before long a young man appears there. Similar to Gloriani’s case, Strether and the young man on the balcony gaze at each other. Strether is overwhelmed by the youth the man embodies, and enjoys the gaze: “He was young too then, the gentleman up there—he was very young; young enough apparently to be amused at an elderly watcher, to be curious even to see what the elderly watcher would do on finding himself watched” (emphases mine, 89). The repetition of “young” shows Strether’s adoration for the young man, and their mutual gaze suggests homoerotic curiosity. Then as soon as the young man turns out to be not Chad but little Bilham, Strether instantaneously feels an “uncontrollable . . . depraved curiosity” toward little Bilham because Strether believes that Bilham reveals Chad’s life, taste, and personality:

The balcony, the distinguished front, testified suddenly, for Strether’s fancy, to something up and up. . . . The young man looked
at him still, he looked at the young man; and the issue, by a rapid process, was that this knowledge of a perched privacy appeared to him the last of luxuries. (89-90)

The balcony, little Bilham’s gaze, and a sense of privacy excite Strether. As this scene suggests, Bilham is a guide to Chad’s private life: Bilham leads Strether to Chad’s innermost secret—the act which Chad has asked Bilham to do to make Strether divert from the straight pass in Woollett.

In the middle of the attempt to save Chad, Strether is aware of what he has desired secretly since his youth. Strether gives up the American ideal life of a masculine heterosexual man: instead, he accepts his effeminacy, the pleasure of male-male bond, and freedom. Although Strether begins this journey in order to help “his son”—the dead boy and Chad, he also becomes the son to be helped in the middle of the mission. Chad becomes a tutor and leads Strether to a sexually deviant world.

IV. Redemption of the Son

Strether gradually becomes obsessed with Chad, but unfortunately, Strether realizes that Chad’s relationship with Madame de Vionnet is not a virtuous attachment. Strether knows that Madame de Vionnet cheated on him to keep her relationship with Chad and that Chad betrayed Strether to return to Woollett without being reproached by Mrs. Newsome and being caught by Madame de Vionnet. Strether thus loses Chad in the end after giving everything to him. However, Strether wishes to finish his mission in the “right” way; hence, he virtually declines the marriage proposal from Maria. This section will consider why Strether rejects Maria’s proposal of
marriage and why he describes it as the way “to be right.” Finally, this section will clarify that his need “to be right” is closely related to his homoerotic love for Chad.

Strether’s “right” behavior does not represent his American morality. Let us look at his relationship with Mrs. Newsome. Strether understands Mrs. Newsome better through the journey; she does not understand Chad’s improvement and European culture. She is “a whole moral and intellectual being” (405) like “a large iceberg” (406), which cannot allow any components to depart from it and by which Strether has been “quite oppressed, haunted, tormented” (404). Although he does not make clear that his affection for Mrs. Newsome has waned, he is acutely aware of the oppression of the culture she embodies. On the other hand, he feels the sweetness of pleasure and freedom like other Europeans. Strether seems to have lost his American morality. He continues to betray Mrs. Newsome from the beginning of his journey by protecting different types of people such as Chad and Madame de Vionnet. Viewed in this light, it is illogical to think that Strether tries to do right by Mrs. Newsome.

When Maria asks why Strether is obsessive about being “right,” he declares, “That, you see, is my only logic. Not, out of the whole affair, to have got anything for myself” (346). This logic shows that he carried out his mission not for himself but for someone else. Yet, the person is not Madame de Vionnet. As stated above, Strether is disappointed at Madame de Vionnet’s having sexual relations with Chad and apparently takes revenge by not letting her know that he cares for her when she needs his support most. The only possible person to whom Strether contributes everything
including the final reward is Chad.

Strether attempts to accept Chad as he is since Strether came to Europe; he tries to understand that Chad did improve his manner in Paris, although other Americans regard his change not as improvement but as moral corruption. Strether also appreciates Chad’s growth properly by taking Chad’s advice and imitating him. Although Strether fears his own future without money, partner, and reputation, he seems to preserve the whole adventure as a pure contribution to Chad by giving up his personal interest. The final rejection virtually takes everything from Strether, and it follows that his contribution has been served solely for Chad. However, as stated above, “son” means not only Chad but also Strether. Then, it follows that the final rejection protects Strether as well.

Before we consider Strether’s rejection and his redemption, we will briefly look at the role Maria plays in the novel. It will help us understand Strether’s view on marriage. Maria is a recurrent type of character who understands strange tales by men who are possibly homosexual: she belongs to the group of May Bartram in “The Beast in the Jungle,” Alice Staverton in “The Jolly Corner,” and Lavinia in “Maud-Evelyn.”39 As well as these confidantes, Maria knows from the first what fatal knowledge Strether will have at the end of his mission, but does not tell the shocking truth to him. She listens to him, leads him to realize the truth by himself,

39 Lavinia and Marmaduke were engaged, and seemingly their relationship is heterosexual. Besides, Marmaduke marries Maud Evelyn. However, this is a story about a man who avoids a real marriage and chooses a fictional marriage since his wife has died before she met him: and Marmaduke does not have a real relationship with women. Hence, Lavinia, who listens to Marmaduke’s story, belongs to the May Bartram type.
and watches him for fear that he might be hurt by his experience. As her attentiveness shows, Maria loves Strether; and she also knows that he does not care for her.

Strether is also aware of her feelings. Yet, he reserves a conclusion about his relationship with Maria. For example, when Maria declares she will help Strether if he loses everything in the end, Strether does not articulate his thoughts. Maria insists, “there’s a service—possible for you to render—that I know, all the same, I shall think of” (200). Strether asks what service she will offer, but Maria reserves the answer until his “smash” (200) comes because she wants to be fair to both Mrs. Newsome and Strether. If Strether succeeds in his mission and marries Mrs. Newsome, he will be able to live more comfortably. Waiting for his smash, he can choose the best way for him. Surprisingly, Strether “ceased to press” it “for reasons of his own” (200). Unlike Maria, Strether avoids the topic for his own profit. Of course, Strether has the right to reject Maria if he does not like her, but he knows how he likes Maria’s support. Strether is satisfied the way that “[Maria] had decked him for others, and he saw at this period at least nothing she would ever ask for. She only wondered and questioned and listened, rendering him the homage of a wistful speculation” (198). Strether also realizes that only Maria understands him: “It’s a benefit that would make a poor show for many people; and I don’t know who else but you and I, frankly, could begin to see in it what I feel” (199). However, as Strether’s hesitation in the above passage shows, he intentionally hampers the development of his relationship with Maria at many other crucial points.

Originally, Strether’s reward can be referred to as instruments to
become a masculine heterosexual man: he will be a husband, a manager of the biggest industry in his hometown, and a celebrity. However, Strether has resisted these profits by an indirect way, by understanding Chad’s improvement. For Strether, Mrs. Newsome is not only a savior who helps him live as a winner in his hometown, but also a ruler whose values have troubled him. What Mrs. Newsome offered as a reward is virtually a message that he should not be poor, feminine, single, and obscure; he must not have pleasure. All of these negated characteristics are what Strether has desired most and the things to which Chad opens Strether’s eyes. Strether begins his mission, believing that marriage is an initiation into responsible manhood; yet, he realizes that he does not desire the marriage itself. Viewed in this light, Strether’s comment is enlightening: “It’s you who would make me wrong!” (347). The “you” means maternal women including Maria, who would change him into a masculine heterosexual man.

Strether’s liberation of himself is a precious lesson given by Chad, of which Strether is acutely aware when he spends alone in Chad’s room at night. Strether faces imaginative Chad and remembers his lessons in the scene: “[Strether] felt, strangely, as sad as if he had come for some wrong, and yet as excited as if he had come for some freedom. But the freedom was what was most in the place and the hour; it was the freedom that most brought him round again to the youth of his own that he had long ago missed” (384). Strether feels freedom and youth, which Chad teaches to him. Moreover, he rephrase it romantically: “That was what it became for him at this singular time, the youth he had long ago missed—a queer concrete presence, full of mystery, yet full of reality, which he could handle, taste,
smell, the deep breathing of which he could positively hear” (384). Chad embodies youth, and Strether touches it in his imagination: he “handle[s], taste[s], smell[s]” and “hear[s]” the deep breathing of “youth.” This description suggests the consummation of homoerotic desire between Chad and Strether. As Jeremy Tambling states, Chad’s room is what realism cannot present—what ideology cannot admit (36), the final visit to Chad’s room shows Strether’s awakening as sexually non-normative. Thus, as Chad’s pupil, Strether decides to listen to his own desire for the first time in his life; which is the only way to redeem the sons—Chad and Strether.

V. Conclusion

Strether loses his son twice: his son died because Strether did not adequately take care of the child. Strether also loses Chad, a future son-in-law, because Chad betrays Strether and returns to his hometown alone, leaving Strether as his surrogate. Strether repeatedly laments Chad’s indifference. However, Strether narrated his adventure in Paris rather fondly because Strether loves Chad and wants to protect the memory of his relationship with Chad. Although Strether has protected Chad by appreciating his growth in Paris, the father is also guided by the son. Chad introduces a dubious European world to Strether; and thanks to Chad’s lessons, Strether is liberated from what has oppressed him for a long time. Strether wants to preserve both Chad’s experience and his lessons; hence, he is willing to accept the disadvantageous position as Chad’s vicarious atonement. In Forster’s words, Strether protects the memory of his association with Chad in Paris and his yearning for the young man by
completing “an hour-glass.”
11. Homoerotic Romance in The Wings of the Dove

I. Introduction

Although The Ambassadors partly records the sadness of an unrequited love, The Wings of the Dove focuses more on protection of an object of love and sublimation of the love into a work of art. The heroine Milly Theale learns that she has an illness and decides to go to Europe with a chaperon Susan Stringham. During their trip, Milly realizes that her illness is something serious and goes to London to see a famous doctor. Susan comes up with the idea of a reunion with her old friend Mrs. Lowder in London. She as well as Susan has a favorite protégée, Kate; to give Kate a comfortable life, Mrs. Lowder tells her not to marry her poor lover Merton Densher and not to see her lazy father Lionel Croy and her married sister Marian Condrup, who attempt to obtain Mrs. Lowder’s money through Kate. Kate does not give up both her family and Merton and conceives a plot to obtain Milly’s inheritance through Densher since Milly loves him and will die soon. If Kate succeeds in this plot, she will not need to depend on Mrs. Lowder and will be able to marry her lover. Densher unwillingly pretends to love Milly to please Kate. Before long Milly discovers the plot, but she decides to give her money to Densher as Kate planned. Densher, who is gradually attracted to Milly’s noble spirit and is basically unwilling to deceive her, decides not to take the money. He asks Kate to marry him without the money, but Kate realizes that he cannot accept the money because he loves Milly. Finally, Kate and Densher break up with each other.

Regarding homoeroticism in The Wings of the Dove, critics have
mainly discussed the relationship between Kate Croy and Milly Theale. The most influential interpretation is Sedgwick’s. Although there are some scholars who argue with Sedgwick, basically their arguments are based on Sedgwick’s interpretation. These previous studies illuminate us regarding homoeroticism in *The Wings of the Dove*, but there is a point which we can develop. The homoerotic feelings discussed in the previous studies are confined to Milly and Kate's, and we have not sufficiently considered the relationship between Susan Stringham and Milly.

Graham exceptionally focused on Susan and Milly and noticed that Susan finds pleasure in the privilege of seeing Milly from a place where Susan herself cannot be seen (217). Graham argues that Susan does not directly counter heterosexism but secretly entertains the pleasure of surveillance (218). Other critics mentions the relationship between Milly and Susan only in passing: Sedgwick dismisses it as “obsolescent but legitimated proto-lesbian identity” (*Tendencies* 79), and Derrick explains

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40 Previously critics had tried to find an origin of homosexuality in heterosexuality; but, Sedgwick argues that homosexuality can be caused by another homosexual relationship. She focuses on Lionel Croy’s homosexuality and concludes that Kate as his daughter inherits his homosexual disgrace (*Tendencies* 77). Sedgwick also states that Lionel Croy’s homosexual disgrace spreads out from Kate to Milly and to the entire novel (*Tendencies* 86). Pigeon carried Sedgwick’s interpretation to a fuller discussion of the sexual relationship between Kate and Milly. Akira Hongo also basically agrees with Sedgwick’s interpretation.

41 Scott S. Derrick argues with Sedgwick, pointing out that she misses the complexity of the characters’ relationships in this novel. Derrick insists that we should grasp how “the divergent and the dominant” rely on each other for their identity (139-40). For example, Densher’s threatened masculinity is related to the sacrifice of Milly’s homoerotic love for Kate (Derrick 139-40). Similar to Derrick, Stevens focuses on Densher’s threatened masculinity in *Henry James and Sexuality* and discuss its relationship to homosexual panic, which is based on another theory by Sedgwick.
that though Milly and Susan appear as a couple in the beginning, their relationship lacks the sado-masochistic eroticism that the relationship between Kate and Milly has (146). However, we should not ignore the role Susan plays in this novel.

As these critics agree, Susan and Milly appear as a homoerotic couple; and if we discuss homosexuality in this novel, we should not exclude their relationship from the discussion. In addition, James seems to regard Susan’s role as important. He wrote a summary of the novel in his notebooks during 1894 to 1895. The entries are long and detailed, but Susan never appeared in them. Whether or not James came up with Susan at that period is ambiguous because he tended to conceal what he thinks is most important from readers. For example, the homoerotic relationship between Milly and Kate was not written in the notebooks. Kate was a girl who serves Densher faithfully, suppressing jealousy to support his friendship with Milly: she was not a wicked girl who gains power by controlling Milly and Densher’s sexuality. In another case, James also hid the homosexual implication in *The Turn of the Screw*. It is most likely that James would be aware what he was writing in this novel; however, he told his friends, especially those who detected homosexuality, that he thought of *The Turn of the Screw* as a pot-boiler. He also did not describe the relationship between Mrs. Gereth and Fleda Vetch in *The Spoils of Poynton* fully in his notebooks; but in the published volume, there are intense feelings between these two women. Thus, as James uses absence as a proof of presence in his stories, he would often hide what he is concerned with most. In *The Wings of the Dove*, James pretends that Susan suddenly pops up from somewhere, but when he
wrote the preface to the New York edition, he explained that Susan is a significant character: the only person that enlarges Milly’s adventure and noble spirit. For this reason, we need to consider more closely how the relationship between Susan and Milly is described.

There is another advantage in focusing on the relationship between Susan and Milly. As the above paragraph suggests, James seemed to hide some facts that might betray his own homoerotic feelings at first, and later to narrate it openly as his motivation for the novel. If we look at his mixed feelings, we will be able to solve another problem which has attracted critics for a long time. Unlike the case of *The Ambassadors*, James felt difficulty in writing *The Wings of the Dove*. McWhirter explains three reasons for the difficulty: firstly, viewpoints in *The Wings of the Dove* are not restricted to a single character, but shifted among all the characters (87). Secondly, this novel did not follow the law of “germ” (McWhirter 94). James usually pictured to himself a single character and developed a plot from him or her, wondering whether there is verisimilitude in the relationship between the character and his or her actions. However, in *The Wings of the Dove*, James decided to deal with a sick girl and her death; hence, the ending was settled beforehand and he had to fill the gap (McWhirter 94). The third reason for the difficulty in writing this novel is that James had to confront his own love for Milly for the first time in his long career (McWhirter 87).

Rome and a dying girl remind us of his first love Mary Temple. During the last summer James spent with Mary, he had a lot of problems: he blamed himself for not enlisting in the army of the North, for not working as a business man, and for not courting Mary as other suitors did.
All these problems are related to his sexuality. As McWhirter states, James seems to have faced his memory of love in his youth in *The Wings of the Dove*, and he must have grappled with other problems concerning his inability to love Milly. Therefore, *The Wings of the Dove* reveals to us the conclusion James finally made about his own sexuality. This paper will focus on the relationship between Milly and Susan to make clear that Susan attempts to preserve Milly's memory as a poem and that James settled his own ambiguous identity through Susan's love for Milly.

II. Romance and Realism in *The Wings of the Dove*

As stated above, McWhirter found that one of the reasons for the difficulty in writing *The Wings of the Dove* lies in viewpoints. The viewpoints in this novel are classified into two groups: England and the United States. The British characters such as Kate, Densher, Mrs. Lowder, and Lord Mark share a narrative mode. When events are seen from their viewpoints, the narrative mode is realism. On the other hand, the American characters generate a romance.

Before we consider realistic passages and romantic ones in the novel, we must first ascertain what we can refer to as realism and romance. The most famous discussion on the novel and romance is Richard Chase's. He regards romance as a story which “tends to prefer action to character” and in which “action will be freer . . . than in a novel, encountering, as it were, less resistance from reality” (Chase 13). The most important point is that

[the] romance can flourish without providing much intricacy of relation. The characters, probably rather two-dimensional types,
will not be complexly related to each other or to society or to the past. Human beings will on the whole be shown in ideal relation—that is, they will share emotions only after these have become abstract or symbolic. (Chase 13)

On the other hand, Chase defines realism as a narrative mode that renders reality closely and in comprehensive detail. It takes a group of people and sets them going about the business of life. We come to see these people in their real complexity of temperament and motive. They are in explicable relation to nature, to each other, to their social class, to their own past. Character is more important than action and plot. (12)

According to the above definition, the realist novel describes complex human relationships and emotions while romance focuses on incredible events and accordingly makes characters and feelings reductive and ideal. Jonathan Bate shares Chase's views. According to Bate, romance is “a tale of wild adventures in war and love” with “miraculous contingencies and impossible performances” (122). Romance often includes the resurrection of the dead, princesses, danger, and heroic rescues, and so on (Bate 122).

Bate also states that romance and realism have become popular alternately in literary history (126). When we turn to that literary history, the first thing we realize might be that William Shakespeare's late plays have been described as romance. The scholar who first applied this term to the late plays was Edward Dowden, and other scholars have followed him since then (McMullan 6). Charles Moseley explains that the reason why these plays have been described as romances is that they were influenced by
medieval romance literature (47, 49). Shakespeare’s romance plays are characterized by separation and reconciliation of a family, forgiveness, and regeneration. These factors can be seen in medieval romance literature. Medieval romance literature is a chivalric tale based on Arthurian legend such as Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Morte d’Arthur, and “The Wife of Bath’s Tale” in The Canterbury Tales. All of these stories deal with knights’ adventures. Their lives are threatened at the beginning, and they are forced to go on quests to save themselves. They fight against dangerous enemies, perform meritorious deeds, and come back to their countries. Their stories conclude with a happy ending: they get married to a fair lady, or their bravery is appreciated by their lords. Similar to Shakespeare’s romances, these medieval romances also describe forgiveness and regeneration.

The term “romance” has thus generally referred to stories with incredible happenings (adventure and danger), noble characters (princess and knight), and ideal emotions and relationships (true love, reconciliation, forgiveness, and royalty). Kenzaburo Ohashi argues that romance has been regarded as non-canonical while realism holds a high position within the canon (112). Hisayoshi Watanabe explains that American literature helped to improve the canonical position of romance (Ohashi 124). According to Elissa Greenwald, there are two important American writers who contributed to this process: Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry James (14). They broke the boundary between romance and realism, which elevated the status of romance in the canon (Greenwald 13). Greenwald states that

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42 The book edited by Ohashi is based on a symposium. Watanabe was one of the panelists, and his opinion cited above was also expressed in the symposium.
James's new romance subverts realism and that it can also grasp a reality viewed by someone (11-12). Greenwald concludes that the new romance is the only way for James to understand hidden human desires and that it became possible for James to describe not a physical reality but a psychological reality (105). James meditated over what he should offer as a genuine American novel: hence, he consciously combined realism with romance.

The novel begins with a description of a shabby house which Kate visits to talk to her father, and then the scene is followed by the sight of another humble house where Kate and her sister Marian have a conversation. These scenes are full of an oppressive atmosphere caused by poverty.

[Kate and Marian] were still in the presence of the crumbled table-cloth, the dispersed pinafores, the scraped dishes, the lingering odour of boiled food. Kate had asked with ceremony if she might put up a window a little, and Mrs. Condrip had replied without it that she might do as she liked. (47)

The crumbs and pinafores are left on the table after a meal, and the mistress has her visitor sit at the unclean table. Marian apparently does not have time to clean the room because of her children; and she cannot offer another room to receive a guest. Moreover, she has been used to this shabby life since she does not mind the unpleasant smell lingering in the room.

A poor financial status has deprived Marian of goodness, and she became an exploiter. She became not only “red and almost fat” but also “less and less like any Croys” (47), which suggests that Marian has lost her
family pride and has become merely an ugly old woman who haunts Kate and tries to gain whatever she can from Kate. Marian's husband's sisters give Marian a hint that she could depend on Kate. The sisters "came to see [Marian], in Kate's view, much too often and stayed too long, with the consequence of inroads upon the tea and bread-and-butter—matters as to which Kate, not unconcerned with the tradesmen's books, had feelings" (47-48). The sisters eat at Marian's expense without hesitation; hence, they advise Marian to live on Kate mainly for their profit. Marian and her children live in poverty, but their poverty is connected to poorer people; and each party in the multiple layers of poverty tries to exploit others. When Marian recommends Kate to be under the patronage of Aunt Maud, Kate is aware that Marian wants her to gain wealth from Aunt Maud for Marian and her sisters-in-law. Kate has been exploited originally by her father and sister, and then by her sister's husband's sisters. As Tambling points out, this chain of exploitation is described well in realistic novels by Dickens and Thackeray (140). Kate's poor life seems to be described using this method of realism.

These aspects of realism are thrown into relief by contrast to aspects of romance. As soon as Milly appears, the tone drastically changes from realism to romance. We find in Milly and Susan's journey much energy: "the vagueness, the openness, the eagerness without point and the interest without pause—all a part of the charm of [Milly's] oddity as at first presented—had become more striking in proportion as they triumphed over movement and change" (105). Milly moves around the world with Susan, and her movement is speeding up. Finally, only her eagerness and intensity
arise out of it. There is more freedom, lightness, and freshness in this passage. Milly enjoys moving forward and flying among European countries and incessantly shifts her interest. Milly is apparently set to be a hero in a romantic story since “she had been expected . . . to be restless—that was partly why she was ‘great’—or was a consequence, at any rate, if not a cause” (105). Great Milly’s journeys would be described as a knight’s quest. Not only the movements but also the metaphors intensify the impression of romance. After Milly and Susan were at a loss in finding that Milly may have a serious disease, Milly finds hope in Susan. This passage is narrated in terms of darkness and stars, which remind us of a dangerous voyage as a metaphor for life in a romance: “That was because in the morning darkness had so suddenly descended—a sufficient shade of night to bring out the power of a star. The dusk might be thick yet, but the sky had comparatively cleared; and Susan [Stringham]’s star from this time on continued to twinkle for her” (318). Milly finally realizes that she is going on an adventure as follows: “the beauty of the idea of great adventure, a big dim experiment or struggle in which she might more responsibly than ever before take a hand, had been offered her instead” (202).

These images of adventure, danger, and a knight who leaves his country to save his own life are the characteristics of romance and can be seen in Milly’s thoughts and actions. Similar to other travelers in romance, Milly comes to Europe to save her life. Milly also enjoys her journey not as a girl but as an armed soldier: “It was as if she had had to pluck off her breast, to throw away, some friendly ornament, a familiar flower, a little old jewel, that was part of her daily dress; and to take up and shoulder as a substitute
some queer defensive weapon, a musket, a spear, a battle-axe” (202). James seems to combine realism and romance on purpose, and the most conspicuous example of his manipulation can be seen in the way to deal with Milly’s disease. Her doctor, Sir Luke Strett never specifies her disease. After he put Milly’s life “into the scales” (193), he just gives her advice to live as much as she can as if he were a psychiatrist. The figurative description of Milly’s life on the scale and his obscure advice are highly romantic. This narrative control changes Milly’s disease into a metaphor for mental suffering in life. Stevens argues that Milly’s disease is a metaphor for sexuality since it is indirectly described (Henry James and Sexuality 40). Sedgwick also claims that the unnamed disease represents homosexuality and that the silence about her disease “generates a kind of pornography of illness” (Tendencies 89). Emily Schiller interprets Milly’s disease as an effective gap which other characters are free to fill (3). This thesis shares these interests in Milly’s disease; however, the reason for its ambiguity seems to lie in the romantic narrative. Milly always uses obscure but blissful words for her illness. Susan suspects that Milly’s adventurous spirit might come from her approaching death. Susan seems to guess correctly, but if the author described her disease and suffering in detail, her journeys would be regarded as her desperate clinging to life. In that case, the narrative of Milly’s life would become as oppressive as Kate’s realism. As Chase defines it, romance focuses on plot and deals with only two-dimensional characters; hence, a pathetic fear of disease on Milly’s part would not be suitable for romance. This contrast between romantic and realistic ways to deal with Milly’s disease reveals how carefully the
narrative of Milly is designed to become a lively adventure story.

Thus there are two different narrative modes in the novel: Kate’s realism and Milly’s romance. Schiller discusses the scene in Switzerland in which Milly sits at the edge of a cliff and looks down at the world beneath her; and Schiller concludes that Milly symbolizes Christ since she tries to sacrifice herself for humanity (6). In this scene Milly is depicted as a representative of humanity who is doomed to die. Like protagonists in romance, Milly is forced to face her own destiny and find an answer to human mortality.

III. Interrelationship between Romance and Realism

Greenwald claims that Kate turns to Milly’s romance for assistance in escaping from a Dickensian realism (110-11). However, the interrelationship between Milly’s romance and Kate’s realism seems to be more complex and dangerous. In this section, we will look at how romance and realism in this novel influence each other, and how threatening their relationship is.

The two worlds are intricately mingled with each other. Firstly, London becomes an intersection. For Milly, the society in London to which Kate leads her is a monster. Going to London, Milly feels as if she were guided by a “fairy godmother” to another world and had lost her way there (127). Milly also encounters the “real with which, in her new situation, she was to be beguiled” (141). Milly senses that “there were clearly more dangers roundabout Lancaster Gate than one suspected in New York or could dream of in Boston” (154). Actual danger in London society is thus set
up as danger which a hero in romance has to face. The danger in London is diplomacy and plot in a fashionable world. As well as Milly, Susan compares society in London to a maze: she says to Milly, “My dear child, we move in a labyrinth” (157). What Milly has to face is not a single person but a complex mechanism: “The worker in one connexion was the worked in another; it was as broad as it was long—with the wheels of the system, as might be seen, wonderfully oiled” (151). The representative of this mechanism is Kate.

Mixing with Kate, Milly understands her identity better. After becoming involved in London society, Milly considers herself from Kate’s viewpoint: “Milly actually began to borrow from the handsome girl a sort of view of her state” (148). As a result she can recognize characteristics of the American. In the National Gallery, Milly observes American tourists and realizes that she can guess correctly where her fellow countrymen are from (232). On the other hand, Kate gradually comes to know not only her identity but also Milly’s. Kate achieves success in Milly’s American community. Although Kate’s success is mentioned in passing, it is important to notice the scene: the thing Kate and Mrs. Lowder represent “had gone almost as fast as the boom, over the sea, of the last great native novel” (340). This passage shows how their realism is unique among American people. However, Kate discovers Milly’s merits more than Kate does her own. When Milly suddenly asks Kate and Densher to have lunch together at her hotel, they are surprised and charmed by Milly’s freedom since people in London at the time had many rules and procedures for having meals and going out. Fascinated by Milly’s free behavior, Kate gives her the following advice:
“You can do anything—you can do, I mean, lots that we can’t. You’re an outsider, independent and standing by yourself; you’re not hideously relative to tiers and tiers of others” (225). In this passage, Kate realizes what Milly can do better than she. We can also find the same phrase in Chase’s explanation about realism and romance: while Milly does not need to take others into account, Kate has to live in a close network of human relationships. While Milly’s freedom is described as an American characteristic, Kate’s calculation is a product of English culture. It is noteworthy that the difference in narrative mode is expressed in terms of nationality; but more importantly, realism calculates to exploit romance.

Milly tries to achieve the goal of her quest with the help of realism. Milly walks alone in a strange street in London. Walking in an unknown world is for Milly an adventure; and she wanders in Kate’s realistic world by romanticizing the streets. Milly believes that the adventure leads to “the real thing” (203). For her, the real thing means human life: like Marian’s indigent life, the ordinary people whom Milly has looked down from the top of the cliff attract her. She even wishes to die as a part of the people. After getting advice from Sir Luke Strett to enjoy the rest of her life, Milly goes to the National Gallery to enjoy the rest of her life. Milly finds there that her personal problems such as disease and death are obliterated among a crowd of people. At this moment, she desires earnestly to die in the museum (230). This passage shows how Milly tries to be a part of a universal humanity, which seems to be equal to the role of a knight who shows readers life and death through his feats. This feat of Milly’s can be achieved by the interrelation to realism in London.
While Milly uses realism to merge herself into poor ordinary people and die with them, Kate exploits romance in order to gain power in her world of realism. At first, Milly thinks that Kate is a comrade who can teach her how to fight in a dreadful society (222). Not only Milly but also Susan believes that Kate would be willing to help her friend. Susan sees Kate as “a figure in a picture stepping by magic out of its frame” and then the image slightly changed to “the worthiest maiden” who “waited upon [the princess, Milly] at the city gate” (146). Both metaphors refer to the same role of serving Milly as a helpful city girl. However, Kate does not help Milly achieve a sublime death; instead, Kate utilizes Milly’s romance to obtain wealth. When Densher says “[Milly] affects one, I should say, as a creature saved from a shipwreck. Such a creature may surely, in these days, on the doctrine of chances, go to sea again with confidence. She has had her wreck—she has met her adventure,” Kate replies, “do let her have still her adventure” (279). Kate understands that Milly’s active nature would bring profit to Kate.

The danger in their relationship is growing:

Certain aspects of the connexion of these young women show for us, such is the twilight that gathers about them, in the likeness of some dim scene in a Maeterlinck play; we have positively the image, in the delicate dusk, of the figures so associated and yet so opposed, so mutually watchful: that of the angular pale princess, ostrich-plumed, black-robed, hung about with amulets, reminders, relics, mainly seated, mainly still, and that of the upright restless slow-circling lady of her court who exchanges with her, across the black water
streaked with evening gleams, fitful questions and answers. (342)

This passage describes the relationship between Milly and Kate, but unlike the earlier metaphors, the two women in this passage are not harmonious friends. It grows dark, and there is a black water between them; and they glare at each other beyond the river. The princess grows pale, and the lady of her court is circling like a predator. The blackness in the sky and river and the name “Maeterlinck” suggest that death is described in this scene: the death of course means Milly’s death. This romantic scene seems to reveal that Milly’s romance is threatened by Kate’s realism. Thus the encounter of these two modes partly stimulates them to know themselves better, but it also makes clear the roles of romance and realism as the predated and the predating.

IV. Susan and Densher’s Cooperation in Subliming Milly into Art

Milly’s romantic nature seems to be emphasized by Susan. In this section, we will consider how Susan makes Milly a hero in a romance. Then we will look at Susan’s relationship to Densher. He cooperates with Susan to save Milly’s life.

Susan thinks that “it was life enough simply to feel [Milly’s] feelings” (105). This would be a feeling which a reader experiences when he or she reads a story: reading books enables us to know what a life is. Like us, Susan regards Milly as a person who is “to be read” (106). For Susan, Milly “worked . . . upon the sympathy, the curiosity, the fancy of her associates, and we shall really ourselves scarce otherwise come closer to her than by feeling their impression and sharing, if need be, their confusion” (106-107).
This passage shows that Milly is regarded as a protagonist in a book in whom other characters in *The Wings of the Dove* are interested as readers. Susan also thinks that “[when] Milly smiled it was a public event—when she didn’t it was a chapter of history” (108). This role allotted to Milly is linked to her desire to become a part of the people. Her wish is described as “impersonal” (201) like characters in fiction, who are destined to be universal and accessible to readers. Milly “literally felt, in this first flush, that her only company must be the human race at large, present all round her, but inspiring impersonal, and that her only field must be, then and there, the grey immensity of London” (201). In this passage, Milly feels a sense of unity with the people in general. As a result, Milly looks as if “exalted . . . into a vague golden air that left irritation below” (162). Becoming a part of ordinary people paradoxically makes Milly a hero.

The last passage cited above is followed by the narrator’s comment that Milly’s flight with her golden wings may be what Susan sees: “That was the great thing with Milly—it was her characteristic poetry, or at least it was Susan Shepherd’s” (162). By this comment, the narrator emphasizes that the poetic and romantic nature in Milly is enlarged within Susan’s mind. Susan adores Milly so much that Susan is afraid that she might spoil Milly’s integrity:

[Susan] was positively afraid of what she might do to her, and to avoid that, to avoid it with piety and passion, to do, rather, nothing at all, to leave her untouched because no touch one could apply, however light, however just, however earnest and anxious, would be half good enough, would be anything but an ugly smutch upon
Susan worships Milly for her romantic nature; and what Susan finds
romantic is Milly’s wealth, youth, intelligence, beauty, and freedom. Similar
to Kate, Susan thinks that Milly can create a miracle.

Susan’s passion for Milly seems to be a combination of homoerotic
love and professional passion. Susan is a local color writer in New England,
who reminds us of Sarah Orne Jewett. Jewett was in a Boston marriage
with her friend, and James liked their romantic friendship very much. On
meeting Milly, Susan realizes that Milly is “the romantic life itself” (100)
and whom Susan has desired for a long time. Susan feels that Milly lives a
court life like a princess and her living a fiction in the real world (the “real”
world for the characters of *The Wings of the Dove*) is the essence of her
beauty: “Yes, one has read; but this is beyond any book. That’s just the
beauty here; it’s why she’s the great and only princess” (393). Susan gives
up her profession the instant she meets Milly since Susan realized that
Milly is the real romantic thing. Susan decides to devote the rest of her life
to Milly’s romance, which enables the local color writer to become a real
composer of beauty. Thus homoerotic personal love and professional
ambition are comingled in Susan.

Susan understands that her relationship to Milly resembles an
island floating on the water and that the island is equal to text on a page:
“The sense was constant for [Susan] that their relation might have been
afloat, like some island of the south, in a great warm sea that represented,
for every conceivable chance, a margin, an outer sphere, of general emotion:
and the effect of the occurrence of anything in particular was to make the
sea submerge the island, the margin flood the text” (166). Once the water overflows, Susan takes Milly to another place: “The great wave now for a moment swept over. ‘I’ll go anywhere else in the world you like’” (166). These passages show that Milly and Susan’s journeys mean making a text, and the text would be a romance since it has metaphors of sea and voyage.

Susan believes that love is a vital necessity for Milly’s romance. Susan has realized that Milly loves Densher. This goes against Susan’s homoerotic love for Milly; however, Susan tries to support Milly’s love for Densher since Susan only dreams to give whatever Milly desires. In this circumstance, Susan has the same interest as Densher, and they cooperate with each other to gain what they want. At first, Densher wants to marry Kate and agrees with her to cheat Milly out of her inheritance. Yet, Densher gradually comes to love Milly, especially after she died. Susan is the only person with whom Densher can indulge in reminiscence of Milly. On the other hand, Densher is also the only person to help Susan to realize her dream. If Densher did not succeed in loving Milly, Susan could not help Milly live.

Densher is the only potential partner for Susan. He works as a journalist, but at the same time he does not deeply commit himself in the reality. Densher works at night and rests during the day; hence, he always enjoys his leisure time in novels. He belongs neither to the real business world, nor the fashionable world; he is not interested in middle-class views about human relationships and money; in society, Densher is an outsider. In addition, he works as a correspondent; hence, the distinction between leisure time and business hours is ambiguous: when Kate asks him to follow
Milly to Italy, he carries the plan off without hesitating or consulting his boss. Through this idiosyncrasy, Densher as well as Milly can generate a different atmosphere from Kate’s realism. When Densher appears in the novel, Kate’s oppressive narrative changes into a free, unrestrained one. Similar to Kate, Densher is poor; and he is obscurer than Kate since he does not belong to fashionable society. He cannot hope for a future which Kate regards as great. However, unlike Kate, Densher rather enjoys his poverty since it brings him freedom. These feelings of Densher’s are reflected in the narrator’s peaceful voice. Densher’s tone is closer to Milly and Susan’s than to Kate’s. Another important point in thinking about Densher’s role is his fertile imagination: “He was in short visibly absent-minded, irregularly clever, liable to drop what was near and to take up what was far” (58). This passage shows that Densher is different from Kate in thought. He does not think about complex human relationships as much as Kate.

We should notice that Densher’s life is also compared to a book, although it has not had a clear form yet: “His full parenthesis was closed, and he was once more but a sentence, of a sort, in the general text, the text that, from his momentary street-corner, showed as a great grey page of print that somehow managed to be crowded without being ‘fine.’ The grey, however, was more or less the blur of a point of view not yet quite seized again; and there would be colour enough to come out” (emphases mine, 249). Going back to London from America, Densher is not sure what would become of his life. This circumstance is expressed in the above passage. He has the potential to become either realism or romance.

Before he takes his form, he plays the role of an observer. He is
surprised at Kate’s wickedness and wonders at Milly’s freedom. Observing is equal to cutting a scene out of life, and it resembles writing a book. James compared observers to novelists in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*:

The house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million—a number of possible windows not to be reckoned, rather; every one of which has been pierced, or is still pierceable, in its vast front, by the need of the individual vision and by the pressure of the individual will. These apertures, of dissimilar shape and size, hang so, all together, over the human scene that we might have expected of them a greater human scene that we might have expected of them a greater sameness of report than we find. . . . But [the windows] have this mark of their own that at each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other. He and his neighbours are watching the same show, but one seeing more where the other sees less, one seeing black where the other sees white, one seeing big where the other sees small, one seeing coarse where the other sees fine. And so on, and so on. . . . The spreading field, the human scene, is the “choice of subject”; the pierced aperture, either broad or balconied or slit-like and low-browed, is the “literary form”; but they are, singly or together, as nothing without the posted presence of the watcher—without, in other words, the consciousness of the artist. (*Art of the Novel* 46)

James insists that the observer at a window is the most important thing in
writing fiction. The view from the window varies according to the observers posted there, which becomes the subject of a novel. Densher’s observation is thus equal to writing a book.

We have considered how Densher has the potential to become a co-author of Milly’s romance, and this nature of Densher’s is expressed in the following scene more clearly. At a dinner party, there are many British ladies and gentlemen who arrogantly make fun of the American. The scene contains minute descriptions of their cruel conversations. This is not usual in James’ works: he tends to express the contempt of European by accumulating their cold airs and indirect criticism. He sometimes writes as if the Europeans adore the American as a different type. Compared to these descriptions in other James’s novels, the above scene is closer to realism. At the dinner, Susan gradually begins to worry about Milly since Susan imagines that Milly is surrounded by monsters which would treat her with ferocity. Nobody can be aware of Susan’s fear, nor the strangeness and cruelty in the conversation; but Densher understands Susan’s fear at once and attempts to support her. This scene reveals how he is distant from Kate’s world of realism.

Densher’s fiction is necessary for Milly to live. Fiction is an imaginary world in which unreal people encounter unreal events. Although all fiction is related to the real world in some ways, it is essentially not real. In this respect, fiction resembles lies. By telling a lie, people attempt to change the real world into their ideal one. In The Wings of the Dove, this resemblance between fiction and lies is used effectively. Densher’s lie leads Milly to behave heroically: she gives her money to the couple who betrayed
her. The gift makes her short life a poem, in which she lives forever. Viewed in this light, Densher’s lie (a false story about his relationship to Kate) is vital to the completion of Milly’s romance. We should also notice that the fiction shows cooperation between Densher and Susan. After Lord Mark told Milly that Kate and Densher are secretly engaged to each other, and Milly shuts herself up, Susan comes to Densher’s room to ask him to save Milly’s life—life that means not only her throbbing heart but also the meaning of the time during which Milly lives. Susan asks him to tell a lie about his real relationship to Kate and to show Milly his affection by telling the lie, which is the only way to save Milly. Susan originally has been creating Milly’s romance and in this scene, tries to accomplish it by installing Densher’s fiction into Milly’s romance.

This arrangement changes Milly’s life greatly since she becomes a savior who gives poor people alms and lives with them. However, the change does not occur only in Milly’s text. Susan leads Densher from Kate’s physical world to Milly’s spiritual world: that is, he abandons his desire for Kate’s body and money and reminisces about Milly’s noble spirit. Then, Densher’s image of the room with white papers on its windows changes. Densher repeatedly gazes at little white papers stuck to a window in Italy; and later remembers them in England. As the narrator rephrases it as “a proof of his will” (387), the white papers become a symbol of his sexual desire since he has a sexual intercourse with Kate in the room. The room is bare and shabby; it is not for a comfortable domestic life but only for sex. At the same time, the room is the only thing that could prove his masculinity. He thus preserves his identity by remembering the room. It was always
linked to his sexual desire for Kate, or his sway over her; however, he begins to associate it with the days during which he yearns to see Milly and grants Susan’s entreaty.

Densher is thus incorporated by Susan into Milly’s romance, and Densher and Susan’s bond develops. Importantly, the bond is expressed as not straight. Densher continues to exchange letters with Susan after she goes back to America. Yet, he does not tell Kate: his “transatlantic commerce” is kept as “secret,” which is “the one connexion in which he wasn’t straight” (523). In the context, the phrase “not straight” means that he is not honest about his correspondence with Susan; however, this would also suggest that Susan’s homoerotic affection for Milly has influenced Densher. The secret relationship to Susan is described in terms of romance: Densher is the hero of an adventure story who faces danger at sea, and regards Susan as “a small emergent rock in the waste of waters, the bottomless grey expanse of straightness” (523). This passage has the same tone as Milly’s first appearance in the novel. As well as Milly, Densher’s life begins to be filled with romantic images.

Furthermore, the scene is also described in terms of homosexuality. The above passage reveals Densher’s frantic efforts: his identity is threatened by “the straightness” in the world and therein feels lonely. Let us consider the meaning of this passage more closely:

This [that he does not tell Kate about his correspondence with Susan] he described to himself as a mercy, for he liked his secret. It was as a secret that, in the same personal privacy, he described his transatlantic commerce, scarce even wincing while he recognized it
as the one connexion in which he wasn't straight. He had in fact for this connexion a vivid mental image—he saw it as a small emergent rock in the waste of waters, the bottomless grey expanse ofstraightness. (523)

He is conscious of his secret, of the non-straightness of his behavior, and of his liking for it. With the secret in his mind, he feels “a strange consciousness of exposure” (523). Clinging to the rock, which symbolizes Susan, Densher is exposed to the straight world, in which he has a secret he can disclose to nobody but Susan. The passage about Densher's sense of exposure is followed thus: “There was something deep within him that he had absolutely shown to no one—to [Kate] in particular not a bit more than he could help; but he was none the less haunted, under its shadow, with a dire apprehension of publicity” (523). Densher fears that his secret might also be exposed in public. Finally, the passage ends with the following sentence: “It was queer enough that on his emergent rock, clinging to it and to Susan Shepherd, he should figure himself as hidden from view” (523). The only screen that hides Densher and his precious secret from publicity is Susan. The sense of secrecy, the inconsistent sense of being exposed and covered, and the fear of disclosure are characteristic of queer literature in the era of Oscar Wilde. Densher is thus influenced and protected by Susan: and thereby reveals an identity similar to homosexuals'.

As a result, Densher begins to share the same viewpoint as Susan's. Milly is not a mere American girl any more, but a princess for him. Kate is also not an attractive girl for him. Kate's father Lionel and her sister Marian have disappeared since the beginning of the story, but they reenter
the scene in the ending. Yet, their images are not the same as before. Lionel has been afraid of something and has just escaped from it. In the beginning, he is awfully grand and graceful in manner; however, according to Marian, he sobs helplessly in his room. Marian, who tries to obtain whatever she can from her sister, “has shrieked for help” (500) since Lionel “comes upon her” [relies on and exploits her] (500). Marian’s and Lionel’s miserable lives are conveyed by Mrs. Lowder to Densher, and the distance caused by the indirect information seems to show how realism grows weak. It also shows how Densher has lost his interest in Kate’s world. Later, Densher visits Marian’s house to see Kate and is shocked at the extreme poverty there. The shocking sight of indigent life is not the romantic thing Milly was eager to see but the irrecoverable ugliness. Accordingly, Kate becomes less attractive for Densher. Let us look at the following passage to consider his dismay:

Her conditions were vaguely vivid to him from the moment of his coming in, and vivid partly by their difference, a difference sharp and suggestive, from those in which he had hitherto constantly seen her. He had seen her but in places comparatively great; in her aunt’s pompous house, under the high trees of Kensington and the storied ceilings of Venice. (503)

The enumeration of the grand places reveals that Densher hastily tries to find the reason why Kate had looked great, which betrays his shock at Kate’s ugliness. Densher also senses that the ugliness “is almost to the point of the sinister. [The horrible things] failed to accommodate or to compromise; they asserted their differences without tact and without taste” (504). Kate is also compared to a scullery maid, which suggests Kate’s
dignity has been compromised from Densher’s viewpoint. In *The Ambassadors*, Strether worships the European beauty that Madame de Vionnet embodies; however, when he has realized that she has had intercourse with Chad, he compares her to a maid-servant. The lower class girl is a sign of the beholder’s disillusion in James’s works.

Densher is thus disappointed with Kate, which is conveyed by describing the extreme ugliness of reality and a romantic view of Milly. In this way, Densher cooperates with Susan to romanticize Milly and is influenced by Susan’s homoeroticism. He is acutely aware of his secret love for Milly, and the love is imbued by Susan since a homosexual psychology can be seen in it.

V. James’s Final Judgment on the Problem of His Sexuality

Milly is romanticized by Susan, and the author cooperates with her. According to previous studies, romance needs an incredible event and a dangerous enemy. In the scene in which Lord Mark returns to Italy to break the fatal news to Milly, the romantic arrangement can be seen: the weather suddenly deteriorates, with which the author expressed that Milly’s life is threatened by the enemy. The bad weather lasts until Lord Mark leaves. As soon as he leaves and Sir Luke Strett appears instead, the weather suddenly becomes clear; and harmony is brought by Sir Luke Strett to Milly and Densher. The ominous atmosphere around Lord Mark is emphasized by his sudden disappearance. Densher sees Lord Mark through the window of a café; but, while Densher circles before the window, wondering whether he dares to talk to him, Lord Mark disappears as if he were a supernatural
being. All these descriptions are arranged by the author himself, and accordingly he and Susan seem to share a goal to accomplish Milly’s romance.

There is another instance which shows the author’s romanticization of Milly. When Milly looks at a picture of a dying princess in a house, she knows what destiny she would have. The awakening is described in romantic terms: “rounding her protective promontory, quitting the blue gulf of comparative ignorance and reaching her view of the troubled sea” (346). Susan does not know the picture, hence the author romanticizes Milly in this scene. He also refers to Milly’s experiences as “parenthesis” (174) and to the end of a single episode in her career as a closed parenthesis. The image of a text are thus given to Milly’s experiences. James as well as Susan gives a romantic quality to Milly.

When we consider the cooperation between the author and Susan, it would be interesting to notice how James and Susan love Milly. Susan devotes everything to Milly, and as stated above, Susan’s journeys with Milly are regarded as creating a romance in a real life. Their travelling is expressed as “poetry” (103) and “the Wagner overture” (105), and these terms show that Susan’s homoerotic love for Milly is not only personal desire but also artistic ambition; her passion for Milly is sublimated into work of art. This personal and professional passion reveals Susan’s mixed feelings. Susan’s gaze at Milly is “scientific” and “like a spy” (107), and Milly also feels the coldness in Susan’s eyes (207). Susan seems to keep a distance from her object of love by treating her as a princess, a fantastic heroine in a fictional world. Furthermore, Susan’s romanticization is self-interested in a
manner since Milly is sacrificed by the romance Susan allots. Milly thinks that the real is “my extremely private worries, my entirely domestic complications,” that is her illness; and Milly also insists that the real is not beautiful. When Lord Mark persuades her to believe that her illness is beautiful, Milly soon senses that Lord Mark is “cutting down, dressing up” (356) the reality. Milly does not talk about her disease partly because she is too proud to show her weakness; but she has kept it secret mainly because readers, or other characters in the novel including Lord Mark would like Milly to act romantically and heroically, not realistically. Lord Mark declares: “We’re all in love with you. I’ll put it that way, dropping any claim of my own, if you can bear it better. I speak as one of the lot. You weren’t born simply to torment us—you were born to make us happy. Therefore you must listen to us” (357). This claim shows that Milly is not only adored as a hero but also forced to serve others. Milly replies, “I mustn’t listen to you” since “It simply kills me” (357); and she finally realizes her destiny: “I give and give and give” (357). Viewed in this light, Susan’s affection seems to be limited: it is certain that she serves Milly, but her contribution is partly for achieving her own artistic success.

Susan to a degree reserves her love for Milly, which is related to James’s final judgment on the problem of his sexuality. Nicolas Buchele argues that James loved Densher through Milly and at the same time, through Densher, James gave up Milly (144). According to Buchele, when Minny Temple, the model of Milly Theale, died in 1870, James was pleased to think that Minny had entered the world of ideas, in which he can freely love her (144). This reassurance is the same as Densher’s, and we cannot
refer to the reaction as strong, masculine, heterosexual desire (Buchele 144). Buchele’s insight is enlightening. However, Densher is influenced by Susan, and we need to explore James’s view of sexuality through Susan’s relationship to Milly.

James’s unity with Susan enables him to love Milly, but at the same time, to treat her as gone. In the preface to the New York edition, James mentioned the flaws of this novel. He regretted that he failed to convince readers of the situation that puts pressure on Kate (Art of the Novel 325). The situation he refers to is the influence of Lionel Croy and Mrs. Lowder. In other words, he was afraid that he failed to imitate Dickensian realism closely. On the other hand, James seems to have had more confidence in dealing with Milly and Susan. James explains Susan’s role as a chorus, who mythologizes Milly’s experience (Art of the Novel 326). He also explains that this indirect way of dealing with Milly, that is, to see Milly from Susan’s viewpoint, leads to Milly being treated tenderly (Art of the Novel 334). Deciding to deal with his heroine thus, he accepts the distance between himself and Minny Temple. James gave up his love for Minny finally in this novel. Tambling states that Milly is also Constance Fenimore Woolson (146). James was agonized by her suicide, thinking that he might have helped her by loving her. If Milly is a symbol of women that James might have been able to love, it is likely that James completely gave up heterosexuality in The Wings of the Dove. He accepted his incapability to love women.

James’s unity with Susan also leads to the end of homoeroticism. Susan’s love for her younger friend, who does not have sufficient knowledge, reminds us of James’s love for younger artists. James had been troubled by
the problem of sex and love. He was attracted to Paul Zhukovsky, but frightened by his own affection. Although James continued to express his love for younger men, he did not intend to love them physically and thereby to commit himself deeply in a relationship as Wilde did. Later, he loved Andersen. James yearned for the young man, but did not dare to see him when he had a chance to do so. James seemed to be wondering whether he could build a deeper relationship with men and whether he could live without loving men. However, identifying himself with Susan, he was satisfied with his non-sexual love for young men. He concentrated on writing the beauty of the homoerotic relationship in *The Wings of the Dove*.

James Berkley mentions that romance is an entertainment: readers can escape from reality and vicariously experience adventure and thrill (1-2). Berkley also defines that romance often advocates an ideal such as a soul mate, or true love (1-2). These messages usually have a strong impact on readers, and hence, Berkley warns, it is important not to believe that the message is a universal truth (1-2). Conversely, we may say that James rather wanted to advocate a single truth, which is possible only in romance. Even if it is true only within a fictional world, James would like to believe that his, Densher’s and Susan’s heterosexual and homosexual love for “Milly” is the most beautiful thing in the world.

VI. Conclusion

As stated above, *The Wings of the Dove* consists of two different modes of narrative: romance and realism. These genres also represent the nationalities of America and Europe. These multiple viewpoints made the
writing of this novel difficult as McWhirter points out, but it was necessary to make Milly’s life a poem because the contrast between the two modes emphasizes Milly’s noble spirit. Milly represents romance and Kate, realism. They became aware of their national identities by associating with each other. However, they also fight against each other: realism threatened the life of romance. To accomplish Milly’s romance by defending against Kate’s realism, Susan asks Densher to cooperate with her. He has a nature compatible with romance. Persuaded by Susan, Densher completes a fiction—a lie about his relationship to Kate, and thereby he makes Milly a hero who serves the ordinary people: Milly gives her money to her poor friends. As McWhirter acutely detects, the subject of Milly’s death is settled beforehand: it heightens the effect of treating her as a hero in romance.

Susan plays an important role in conveying Milly’s romantic nature. Firstly, Milly’s romance is emphasized by Susan’s passionate adoration for Milly. Her homoerotic worship for Milly can also be seen in the change of Densher’s views. After he tells the lie Susan asked him to tell, Densher begins to have a sense of secrecy, a contradictory sense of being exposed and covered in public, and fear of the disclosure of his secret. He feels that only Susan can protect him. If Densher loves Milly, the love is heterosexual; but, his love is expressed in terms of homosexual affection. Hence, Susan’s love for Milly supports the text that sublimes Milly into work of art. Susan’s romanticization of Milly results from her homoerotic desire for Milly, but at the same time, she maintains a distance from her object of love and thereby achieves her professional success. Susan is a double of James. As McWhirter states, James faced his love for Milly for the first time in his
career and accordingly had to settle the problem of his sexuality. James had not been able to love women after Minny died. He knew that Woolson wanted to marry him, but he depended on her only as a substitute mother. Woolson committed suicide and James had been agonized by his sense of guilt. However, as Densher maintains a distance from Milly by worshipping her only after she dies, James ceased to blame himself for his inability to love women.

On the other hand, not loving women does not mean the awakening of his homosexuality. He had also been troubled by his ambivalence toward gay men. When a man attempted to love him spiritually and physically, James was upset and escaped from the man. However, James still could not stop yearning for men. These mixed feelings were settled in the novel. Susan loves Milly only by romanticizing her and catching her beauty in a novel, which reveals James's own decision to accept his non-sexual love for men. Romance is a style which can hold one's ideal in it. James knew that his love was empty and that he and his lovers suffered in reality. Yet, he decided to make his love into a work of art and was satisfied with capturing the beauty of his affection for men in his novel.
12. Conclusion

“The Romance of Certain Old Clothes” describes a woman's strong passion for her sister. Rosalind's obsession with Perdita makes her marry Perdita’s husband, become Perdita’s daughter’s step-mother, and imitate Perdita’s identity. Yet, Rosalind realizes that Perdita regarded her only as an enemy. The ending with Rosalind’s death presents her shock at Perdita’s antipathy. This short story discloses James’s homoerotic admiration for William, which would motivate James to write novels. In Washington Square, an intense feeling similar to Rosalind's can be seen in a father and a bridegroom. Dr. Sloper and Morris are too conscious of each other and lead miserable lives. Although Catherine, who is abandoned by both her father and her fiancée, becomes her own master, her persecutors cannot be liberated from their obsession with each other. In The Portrait of a Lady, a typical happy ending is often interrupted as well: Isabel seeks for her ideal partner, but her marriage does not work. This interruption is caused by homoerotic feelings for father figures. In these early works, James had a growing interest in homoerotic desires latent in heterosexual relationships.

In the subsequent phase, James cultivated a better understanding of how latent homosexual desires are thwarted in society. Seeing his sister Alice’s romantic friendship with her friend closely, James was attracted to the beauty and strangeness of their love. He described in The Bostonians how those female bonds break in society. The triangular relationship in this novel is the same as that in “The Romance of Certain Old Clothes”: a woman and a man fight for a younger woman. What hinders the same sex
love in this novel is customary female relationships. Olive and Verena are forced to break up by the conception of the ideal female bond. Unfortunately, their separation is socially inevitable since the conception of an ideal relationship enabled them to maintain their partnership. James understood well that a desire for a same-sex partner was invisible because of common practice and accordingly was thwarted in the end. This theme recurs in James's works until he wrote a conscious lesbian in *The Other House*. In *The Princess Casamassima*, Hyacinth becomes a latent homosexual due to his parents' negative legacy. Similar to Olive and Verena, Hyacinth is buffeted by a class-conscious society. The only blood relative was his mother, but she died miserably in prison. The horrible meeting with her in prison caused severe trauma in Hyacinth. As a reaction, he feels a longing for his father. Under this circumstance, Hyacinth regards himself as a double of his mother and has homoerotic feelings toward male authority figures. James developed his earlier concern for the relationship between homoeroticism and marriage into that of the influence of a conventional same-sex relationship, or a parental relationship, on same-sex desires. James observed the influences of society on homosexuality and homoeroticism from a wider viewpoint.

James continued to have an interest in same-sex love and society; but, in the next phase, the society changed drastically. As a result, his novels came to deal with more complex themes. During this period, he witnessed Wilde perform his homosexuality in public and serve a sentence. Wilde's fate influenced James since he gradually began to associate with men and accordingly might have been exposed himself in public. James also
suffered from his uncertain feelings for Constance. His subtle homoeroticism in his youth had developed into a complex sexuality, and he began to consider his sexual identity through his characters. In *The Spoils of Poynton*, James explored a unique form of love which can be understood only by the lovers themselves. Physical contacts was more intensely described than in any other previous story. This erotic description reveals that Fleda is troubled by the disparity between her intention to love Owen and unconscious sorrow over losing Mrs. Gereth. Although this theme resembles that of *The Bostonians*, passion and desire in *The Spoils of Poynton* became deeper. Finally, in *The Other House*, James described a conscious homosexual. James accumulated Rose’s impressions on other characters, but did not directly disclose her thoughts. By this method, he managed to deal with a conscious lesbian and to hide her same-sex love simultaneously. James was apparently aware of the danger of homosexuality at the time: homosexuals feared the possibility of being arrested as a criminal, and being stigmatized in public. People in the late nineteenth century began to obtain various information about homosexuality and regarded homosexuals as unrespectable. The careful writing method in *The Other House* reflects James's gradually awakening homosexual identity and anxiety over being exposed as a homosexual in public. In *The Turn of the Screw*, James worried about another danger which homosexual men might face: they unintentionally worsen single women's plights. In the Victorian era, the poor lives of single middle class women were a social problem, and the upper-class homosexual characters in *The Turn of the Screw* were sensible of their responsibility for the problem.
The homosexuals’ position was doubly painful because they were in a sexual minority and unintentionally involved in single women’s plights. It seems that this consciousness came from James’s sense of responsibility for Constance’s suicide.

The personal suffering and social issues were mingled with each other in the third phase, but he finally reached a state of enlightenment in the final phase: he established his sexual identity as a writer and a man. James was “too late” for both marriage and intimate relationships with younger men and finally was able to accept his sexual identity as it was: he could not love women and accordingly could not behave according to manly ideals of the time. At the same time, he could not have sexual relations with men nor live with them in life as a partner. *The Ambassadors* describes a man of early old age who loves one-sidedly a younger man and thereby is liberated from the norm. Although *The Ambassadors* records the man’s sorrow over the unrequited love, *The Wings of the Dove* is consistent in sublimating same-sex love to a work of art. Finally, James was able to keep a distance from objects of his love and to write about homosexuality and homoeroticism as things of beauty. At the same time, he forgave himself for not having intimate relationships with both women and men.
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