The Main Father-Daughter Relationship in Julia Kavanagh's *Rachel Gray* Between Reality and Fictionality

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Abstract

The present paper carries out a contrastive analysis between the paternal and filial images that form the main parent-child relationship depicted in Julia Kavanagh's Rachel Gray *in order to invalidate the assumption that Victorian realist writers sought to hold a mirror to reality even in the cases when their novels were founded on fact. This analysis will show that there is a significant divergence between the literary and socio-historical constructs of the family roles of mid-Victorian working classes, in spite of the fact that some of the elements used in the creation of fictional characters were borrowed from real-life experiences. Moreover, the article will indicate that the paternal figure it deals with deviates from its prototypical counterpart by approximating one of the most powerful stereotypes revolving around working-class Victorian men, namely the stereotype of the absent father.*

Key words: *mid-Victorian working classes, father-daughter relationship, devoted filial love, paternal indifference, socio-historical prototype*

The most important relationship depicted in *Rachel Gray* is that between the eponymous heroine and her father, Thomas Gray. In truth, it is difficult to say that there is a relationship between them, because the latter shows no interest in his abandoned child and refuses to accept her as his daughter. However, the novel heavily focuses on Rachel's deep, self-sacrificing desire to obtain her father's love. This desire is the only element that joins the two characters, besides their blood ties, and that testifies to the existence of a parent-child connection between them, though a unilateral one. The aforementioned longing of the protagonist also provides valuable insight into her image as a daughter, which departs from the socio-historical prototype of mid-Victorian working-class daughters on account of her

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inexplicable love and concern for her father and her religious piety. At the opposite extreme of familial emotional involvement is Thomas Gray's total indifference to Rachel, which, coupled with his paternal absenteeism, makes his fatherhood distinctive from the most common parental experiences of working-class men of the mid-nineteenth century. In other respects, being constructed in terms of absence, the paternal figure represented by Thomas Gray reinforces the stereotype of the absent father, although there is no close similarity between the fictional and stereotypical images. The novel's depiction of family roles through these characters will be consecutively examined in the present article in the order resulting from their involvement in the parent-child relationship between them.

Rachel Gray's image as a daughter has many features in common with the typical historical portrait of the mid-Victorian working-class girl. Like most mid-Victorian working-class girls, Rachel fulfils the class-specific expectations about the family responsibilities assigned to daughters. One of these responsibilities was to take care of younger siblings (Frost 2009: 17; Steinbach 2012: 143). An external objective analepsis reaching back more than twenty years offers revealing glimpses of the protagonist's childhood and provides a detailed account of how, at only five years old, Rachel acted as a mother to her baby sister, Jane. All the actions Rachel performed for Jane, such as washing, combing, dressing, working, carrying, singing, and playing (*RG*: 27) [1] are exhaustively enumerated, indicating that she was wholly responsible for looking after her sister, which is otherwise directly communicated through the narratorial statement that "the baby [...] was [...] confined to [Rachel's] care (*RG*: 26-27). Besides taking care of their younger siblings, working-class Victorian daughters were expected to do help with the housework (Burnett 1994: 226; Frost 2009: 17; Steinbach 2012: 143). Although it is not straightforwardly mentioned that Rachel carried out domestic chores during her childhood, this can be inferred from the presence of the verb 'to work' among the numerous verbs denoting her helping Jane listed above. In contrast to the lack of clear textual evidence regarding Rachel's household chores, the novel is quite explicit about the fact that she had to end her schooling and to begin working for pay in her early teens (*RG*: 46), thus sharing the experience of most nineteenth-century working-class girls, who met the requirements set for them (Andrew 2014: 23; Nelson 2007: 94; Frost 2009: 18; Shoemaker 2013: 132).

Regardless of the similarities between the fictional and socio-historical constructs of the mid-Victorian working-class girl concerning the fulfilment of filial responsibilities, the devoutness with which the former is

endowed marks a significant deviation from the latter. The external narrator reports that Rachel "was reared religiously, and hers was a deeply religious nature" (*RG*: 46). She is not described as a churchgoer, but her piety is manifested in regular prayer and particularly, in meditation. "Thought and Prayer" are designated as the protagonist's "two fair sisters" between which "she [goes] on through life" (*RG*: 50). Moreover, Rachel is called the only [...] real thinker" (*RG*: 51) in one of many passages characterized by maximal narratorial intrusiveness (Toolan 2001: 69), through which the external narrator intervenes at the level of the narrative text to talk directly to the reader in the first person plural and to ostensibly direct him/her towards a specific assessment of the novel's characters and events (Leech and Short 2007: 215). In that passage, as well as in another argumentative part of the text, the external narrator posits that a real thinker is not the person who has a keen and brilliant intellect and whose heart is cold, but the person who thinks with his/her heart (*RG*: 49-51). Thus, the ideological orientation of most characters of the novel, who, being secular, do not appreciate Rachel's devoutness and consider her "a fool" (*RG*: 45) because of her ignorance and weak intellect, is implicitly criticised for departing from the main ideology of the novel.

It is not only the protagonist's religious habits, but also her high moral integrity that stem from her piety and faith in God. Rachel is depicted as a righteous young woman, who fights against bad feelings and evil tendencies, trying not to compromise her moral principles even in the most difficult circumstances. The way Rachel reacts when her stepmother overwhelms her with bitter reproaches is a case in point. She does not show any signs of resistance or anger in such situations. Instead, she is calm, patient and submissive, speaking gently to her stepmother and often pleasantly smiling at her. Various textual examples can be provided in support of this portrayal of Rachel's amiable response to Mrs. Gray's oppressive behaviour, like: "Rachel held her peace" (*RG*: 63); "gently observed Rachel" (*RG*: 158); "Rachel looked up in her mother's face, and smiled so pleasantly" (*RG*: 110) etc. Rachel has a similar humble and peaceful attitude towards Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Gray's cousin who mercilessly tyrannizes her. However, Mrs. Brown is so cruel that, at one moment, Rachel's patience is nearly exhausted, and anger rises in her heart. But she is triumphant in this time of trial, as she succeeds in suppressing that anger and in forgiving her tormentor, remaining faithful to her strong moral principles (*RG*: 263-268).

As Rachel's reaction to Mrs. Gray's and Mrs. Brown's mistreatment of her suggests, her image as a character, including her image as a daughter, is mainly created based on the wide range of moral qualities attributed to pious people. She displays these qualities in her relationship with other characters of the novel as well. The conversations Rachel holds with Mary and Jane, her apprentices in dressmaking, and Richard Jones, Mary's father, disclose that she is patient, kind and honest with everyone with whom she interacts. Despite the fact that she speaks little, since she is very shy (*RG*: 16, 45, 46, 97) and her stepmother does not allow her to express her opinion, every time she says something, her tone of voice is gentle and pleasant, as the clauses framing her direct speech clearly show. Furthermore, Rachel's language is different from that of the other characters of the novel because her words reflect her high moral character, and also because her vocabulary is devoid of working-class colloquialism and vulgarism. There are apparently two reasons for this 'dialect suppression' (Leech and Short 2007: 137). Firstly, Rachel's more refined language is part and parcel of her description as a pious person in comparison to the secular people surrounding her. Secondly, the discrepancy of language between the protagonist and other characters can be explained in linguistic terms. Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short observe that "it could scarcely be allowed for a nineteenth-century heroine to speak dialect" because "non-standard language often implies remoteness from the author's own language, and hence from the central standards of judgment in a novel" (2007: 137). This reason seems to be perfectly valid regarding *Rachel Gray* since the main character's ideology is consistent with the dominating norm of the novel, and any kind of distance between the two is undesirable. Being the only character with the same world-view as that of the external narrator, Rachel acts as the sole agent through whom the leading ideology of the novel is spread to other characters by means of both words, as previously demonstrated, and actions, which also reveal her good intentions towards the others, her willingness to help them as much as she can and all her positive qualities deriving from her piety.

Described as a religiously devout and morally upright young woman, who does not speak the class-specific dialect, Rachel is not representative of the urban respectable poor of the late 1840s. Victorian working classes were generally secular (Parsons 1988: 76-77), and most characters of the novel are portrayed accordingly, typifying the respectable part of the mid-nineteenth-century working classes to which they belong. However, the protagonist is constructed differently, as she is not secular.

Consequently, her image departs from the socio-historical prototype of working-class Victorians and, more precisely, of mid-nineteenth-century dressmakers, as she is a dressmaker by profession. Referring to the extent to which the protagonist of *Rachel Gray* represents her social class, George Eliot declares that Rachel's "piety [does not give] the reader any true idea of piety as it exists in any possible dressmaker" (1856 qtd. in Fauset 2009: 92). On the other hand, she accepts that the novel is 'founded on fact', as indicated on its title-page and in its preface, and finds it praiseworthy for its "undertak[ing] to impress [the mid-Victorian middle-class reader] with the everyday sorrows of [his/her] commonplace fellow men" by "tell[ing] the trials of a dressmaker who *could* get work" (1856 qtd. in Fauset 2009: 91, original emphasis). The apparent contradiction of Eliot's assessment of the novel's authenticity is resolved by considering that she makes her evaluations based on different aspects defining Rachel's image. Hence, and according to the analysis carried out so far, the depiction of Rachel Gray incorporates elements that were common among respectable working classes of the late 1840s (the socio-economic problems besetting their lives, childhood conditions for girls) and elements that were atypical of these classes and seemingly uncharacteristic of any mid-nineteenth-century dressmaker (religious piety and all the qualities and traits stemming from it). Therefore, while the heroine of *Rachel Gray* is not created in one-to-one correspondence with the prototypical image of the respectable working classes of the mid-Victorian era, there is nonetheless a certain sense of realism in her representation as a member of her class.

A similar combination of typical and atypical elements is used to portray Rachel as a working-class daughter. Like most working-class Victorian girls (Burnett 1994: 227-228; Frost 2009: 16-17, 20), Rachel is a submissive and dutiful child who fulfils her responsibilities towards her parents. But at the same time, she is characterised by a filial devotion to her parents that could hardly describe any nineteenth-century working-class daughter. Rachel's devotion to her stepmother is displayed through her constant positive attitude and friendly behaviour, which remain unchanged even when Mrs. Gray is highly unfair and oppressive to her. Although the external narrator reveals that the protagonist loves her stepmother, it seems that Rachel's good conduct towards Mrs. Gray stems from her religious piety, which impels her to respect and love her parents regardless of how good or bad they are, rather than from great fondness. The plausibility of this assumption is supported, among other things, by the fact that Rachel accepts Mrs. Gray's mistreatment of her and does not

try to win her approval and affection. In contrast, the heroine's devotion to her father does not derive from her obedience to God's commandments or from any other source than from a deep, innate feeling, which kindles a burning desire in her heart for reciprocity on the part of her father:

> Was it not enough that she could not win the affection she most longed for? She was devoted to her step-mother; she had fondly loved her younger sister; but earlier born in her heart than these two loves, deeper, and more solemn, was the love Rachel felt for her father. That instinct of nature, which in him was silent, in her spoke strongly. That share of love which he denied her, she silently added to her own, and united both in one fervent offering. Harshness and indifference had no power to quench a feeling, to which love and kindness had not given birth. She loved because it was her destiny; because, as she once said herself [...]: "A daughter's heart clings to her father with boundless charity" (*RG*: 31-32).

This descriptive fragment outlines various features of Rachel's affection for her father. The external narrator explicitly states that the most intense longing of the main character is for her father to return her filial love, which, according to the second sentence of the excerpt, is superior in terms of depth and solemnity to her feelings towards other family members. The third sentence discloses that the affection Rachel feels for Thomas Gray arises from within, from a strong natural tendency, which her father does not have, thus indicating the unrequited nature of the protagonist's most powerful feeling. The last idea is also communicated in the following sentence, being reinforced through the partial syntactic parallelism of the third and fourth sentences. The rest of the excerpt highlights other two important aspects of Rachel's fondness for her father, namely that it is unconditional and unchangeable, as nothing and no one can prevent her from loving him.

The narratorial portrayal of Rachel's great love for her father examined above is in total consistency with the more detailed portrayal drawn from implicit qualifications. The protagonist's thoughts and actions are successively the dominant means through which her affection for her father is revealed during the two stages of their parent-child relationship. The first stage refers to the period when there is almost no connection between them, as Thomas Gray, who, abandoning his family, lives separately and shows no interest in his daughter. Accordingly, this is the time when Rachel's love for her father is presented through her thoughts more than through her words and actions. Having unlimited access to her

mind, the external narrator-focalizer divulges all her thoughts. She often contemplates Thomas Gray's indifference towards her, asking herself why he does not love her (*RG*: 24-25), comparing his coldness and lack of concern for her with the tender paternal affection and care Mr. Jones displays towards his daughter (*RG*: 68) and expressing her profound desire to win his affection (*RG*: 97-98). In all these cases, Rachel thinks of her father with intense pain conveyed through her inner cry: "Oh! my father, my father!", which is reiterated throughout the novel (*RG*: 24, 68, 97, 222). Her pain, however, is not accompanied by a feeling of despair. Instead, in spite of knowing very well that there is no place for her in Thomas Gray's heart, she secretly entertains the hope that someday she will be dear to him (*RG*: 97).

While during the first stage of their parent-child relationship the heroine's overwhelming love towards her father is mainly rendered through her thoughts, it is also disclosed in other ways. A clear demonstration of Rachel's attachment to her father is the fact that she often walks many miles only to pass by his house, until one day, when "the repeated sight of Richard Jones's devoted love for his child, inspire[s] her with involuntary hope" (*RG*: 97) and she decides to speak to her father. As Rachel finds "nothing but cold, hard, rooted indifference" (*RG*: 119) in his countenance and speech during their first conversation, she tries again after her stepmother's death. But this time, she implores her father to let her live with him, attempting to persuade him that he may need her help in the future:

> Father, […] may I come and live with you? […] pray let me. I know you do not care much for me. I dare say you are right, that I am not worth much; but still I might be useful to you. A burden I certainly should not be; and in sickness, in age, I think, I hope, father, you would like to have your daughter near you. I am now your only child, […] the only living thing of your blood, not one relative have I in this wide world; and you, father, you too are alone. Let me come to live with you. Pray let me (*RG*: 182-183)!

Through these words, Rachel externalizes her deep longing for a parent-child relationship with her father in speech for the first and only time. She does not tell Thomas Gray that she loves him, but the earnest and pleading manner with which she speaks to him and articulates her selfless desire to be useful to him serves as a good indicator of her strong affection and firm determination to convince her father to accept her. The latter two are even more noticeable when considering her unexpected talkativeness. Rachel's usual shyness and her preference for being silent or for speaking little contrast with the verbosity displayed in her second conversation with her

father and suggested through enumeration ("in sickness, in age"; "I think, I hope"), repetition ("pray let me" and "come to live with you" mentioned twice) and the use of phrases expressing similar ideas (for instance, "your only child" and "the only living thing of your blood" referring to the same person). Despite all her efforts, Thomas Gray is not moved by her emotional plea and declines any help from her. Nevertheless, Rachel does not give up and some hours later she goes to his house again to make a last attempt. But finding her father insensible and almost completely paralysed, she understands that "her dream [is] over – that never, never upon earth, should she win that long hoped-for treasure – her father's love" (*RG*: 212).

Thomas Gray's sudden change in health marks the end of the first stage of Rachel's relationship with him and the beginning of the second. During this period, the protagonist primarily shows her affection for her father through her actions. The shift in the ways in which Rachel's filial love is communicated is not ascribable to the fact that, having her father near her, she thinks less of him than before, as she often reflects on their relationship. Instead, it is ascribable to the fact that, refusing to send him to the workhouse and taking him to live with her, she has the opportunity to prove her love by caring for him without expecting anything in return. In spite of the difficulties encountered, for which the external narrator sympathises with her [2], Rachel does not miss such an opportunity and looks after her helpless parent with devotion and self-sacrifice, being tender and patient with him. Thus, she spends her grey life, also hinted at by her surname, selflessly taking care of her father and thinking about "the unfulfilled desire of her heart" (*RG*: 269). Although the paternal love of Thomas Gray is not granted to Rachel, her filial devotion is rewarded in his faint flicker of recognition of her, which is nothing else than "a travesty" (Forsyth 1999: 156) of what she longs for, but which slightly brightens her dull existence. While Rachel's poor and monotonous life seems to reflect "the grim realities of existence endured by many in mid-nineteenth-century London" (Fauset 2009: 96), her totally self-sacrificial behaviour towards her father and her inexplicable, genuine love for him are unrepresentative of mid-Victorian working-class daughters, despite their general obedience to their parents, and unlikely to characterise the daughterly experience of any nineteenth-century woman (Burnett 1994: 234-235; Frost 2009: 16, 20, 24; Shoemaker 2013: 133).

Whatever the means through which the protagonist's affection for her father is revealed during these two distinct stages of their relationship, they contribute to the construction of her image as a devoted, loving

daughter. Moreover, they emphasise Thomas Gray's role as object-actant and his non-involvement in the development of a parent-child relationship with his daughter, indirectly sketching his portrait as an absent, detached father. The novel also foregrounds these two defining features of Thomas Gray's paternity through other, more explicit, ways. The external narrator illuminates the past of this character through a far-reaching external analepsis by saying that, when Rachel was still a child, her father went to America, coldly abandoning his family, and that he returned to England after three years and settled in the same city as before his departure, without going back to his family or showing any interest in his wife or children. Consequently, for a great part of his life, Thomas Gray is described as a physically and psychologically remote father, who completely abdicates all his parental responsibilities, except the responsibility to support his family with the amount of money established by the law. Even during the periods of time when he is not literally absent – namely the years before abandonment and those after he sinks into unconsciousness and paralysis strikes him –, his father image is not presented in a favourable light on account of the psychological remoteness that characterises his entire paternal experience.

Since in the course of the last stage of his life, Thomas Gray is mentally absent as a result of uncontrollable factors, it is his blank indifference to Rachel expressed while in good physical and psychological health that contributes most to his depiction as a father. The novel pays great attention to this feature of Thomas Gray's fatherhood, analeptically disclosing that he has an emotionally distant and uncaring attitude and corresponding behaviour towards his daughter from her early childhood, when he still lived with his family:

> almost from her birth she had been to him as though she did not exist – as a being who, uncalled for and unwanted, had come athwart his life. Never had he, to her knowledge, taken her in his arms, or on his knee; never had he kissed or caressed her; never addressed to her one word of fondness, or even of common kindness. Neither, it is true, had he ill-used nor ill-treated her; he felt no unnatural aversion for his own flesh and blood, nothing beyond a deep and incurable indifference (*RG*: 25-26).

In the first sentence and the last part of the third sentence of the quotation above, the external narrator-focalizer views the character from within and reports his attitude and feelings towards Rachel. It is directly stated that her existence brought Thomas Gray no joy, and that, at the same time, he

did not feel dislike or repulsion for his own child, being instead totally indifferent to her. In the second sentence, the noun phrase *to her knowledge* indicates that the narrative perspective narrows and the external narrator-focalizer "looks over the shoulder" (Bal 2009: 163) of the protagonist to show how her father's cold indifference was displayed to her through his behaviour. Thus, the focus is placed on the actions Rachel expected from her father, as proof of his parental love – which she never actually received from him –, as communicated through the absolute negation, rendered linguistically by the use of the adverb 'never', of a wide range of verbs denoting actions that convey affection (take someone in one's arms, kiss, caress, etc.) and emphasised through the use of syntactic parallelism.

After his abandonment, Thomas Gray has the same aloof attitude towards his daughter, clearly exhibited during her visits to his place. Although Rachel does not look for a concrete manifestation of her father's love anymore, hoping nonetheless to find a "shadow of kindness, [or something] which might one day become affection" (*RG*: 119), she easily understands from his facial expression and words that he is utterly indifferent to her. The accuracy of Rachel's assessment of her father's attitude towards her is confirmed during their next conversation, when he firmly rejects her request to live with him and refuses to accept any help from her. The external narrator gives no explanation for Thomas Gray's behaviour and does not enter his consciousness to reveal the reasons determining his complete lack of interest in his daughter. Therefore, the only valuable clue in this respect is provided by the character's own words. He directly tells Rachel that he has abandoned them to be alone and that he does not need to be visited, as he is perfectly healthy. Qualified as a self-absorbed and self-reliant man, Thomas Gray illustrates the self-help ideology, "a myth that *Rachel Gray* undermines and refutes" (Kestner 1985: 187-188) through his paralysis, which is "a living metaphor of dependency and, in a sense, the antithesis of 'self-help', [and] the agency through which he is forced to accept his daughter's love" (Fauset 2009: 94).

Depicting Thomas Gray as an almost completely absent father, who is utterly indifferent to his child, the novel creates a paternal image that sustains the stereotype of the absent working-class father, but that does not faithfully reproduce the socio-historical paradigm of absent fatherhood, which was one of the usual types of fatherhood among the working-class Victorian men. The stereotype of the absent father was relatively justified in the case of many working-class fathers, as parental absenteeism was frequent among the nineteenth-century lower classes (Abrams 1999: 221).

However, absent fathers were not the majority, since actual fathering behaviour was highly varied and it could not be contained within any stereotypical or prototypical image (Thompson 1988: 128-133; Strange 2015: 2). The fact that there were several common patterns of fatherhood is a good reason for considering Thomas Gray's father figure as unrepresentative of the social class to which he belongs. Another reason is that his paternal experience deviates even from absent working-class fatherhood, the type of parenting with which it has some affinity. Although absent fathers of the nineteenth-century working classes daily spent long hours away from home, they were concerned, to a greater or a lesser extent, with their children (Booth 1889 in Fried and Elman 1968: 292; Frost 2009: 14; Thompson 1988: 132, 134). In contrast, Thomas Gray is totally indifferent to his daughter and refuses to have any relationship with her. Moreover, the physical remoteness of the fictional father is determined by his abandonment of his family, which marks a significant departure from the typical parental absence of mid-Victorian working-class men, but which is a feature shared in common with the few nineteenth-century working-class men who "absconded" and were literally absent from the lives of their children (Strange 2015: 20). Still, Thomas Gray's fathering behaviour is quite particular and seemingly unlikely to represent the parental experience of any mid-nineteenth-century working-class father.

Despite the improbability that the absent paternal figure of the novel reflects the fatherhood of working-class men living during the late 1840s, it has some factual foundation in the circumstances of the writer's own life. As argued by Michael Forsyth (1999: 140-152) the actual counterpart of Thomas Gray is Morgan Kavanagh, Julia Kavanagh's father. The most important elements borrowed in *Rachel Gray* from Morgan's fatherhood are the abandonment of his family and the lack of a close relationship with his daughter. The autobiographical dimension of the parent-child relationship between Rachel and Thomas Gray is further evidenced in the similarities between Rachel and Julia Kavanagh herself. The former, like the latter, is a plain, unmarried and pious young woman, who financially supports the parent with whom she lives and who resides "in a part of London that seems very close to the milieu in which [...] Kavanagh [lived during a certain period of her life]" (Forsyth 1999: 147). It seems that these aspects drawn from the author's life, as well as the aspects which qualifies the protagonist as representative of her social class and which probably are drawn from the real-life experience of a dressmaker with whom Julia Kavanagh appears to have been closely acquainted

(Fauset 2009: 92), confirm the writer's assertion in the preface to the novel that "nothing [is invented] in the character of Rachel Gray" (*RG*: v). Nevertheless, it is particularly this combination of working-class elements and personal features of the writer, who belonged to the middle classes of Victorian society, that being used at the construction of Rachel's image as a mid-nineteenth century working-class daughter determines its departure from the corresponding socio-historical prototype.

Incorporating two atypical images of mid-Victorian working-class family roles, the parent-child relationship between Rachel and Thomas Gray is not a conventional one. Besides the fact that father-daughter connections were less frequent among the nineteenth-century working classes than the connections between parents and children of the same gender and even than those between sons and their mothers (Burnett 1994: 234-235; Frost 1999: 16; Shoemaker 2013: 133), the relationship between the novel's protagonist and her father is unusual because of its sheer lack of reciprocity, which was hardly part of the parental and filial experience of mid-nineteenth-century working-class fathers and, respectively, daughters. On one side of this relationship, there is a pious daughter, who goes beyond class-specific expectations for girls and differs from mid-Victorian working-class girls by showing selfless devotion to her parents, especially to her father, whom she dearly loves and whose affection she aspires to win. On the other side stands a coldly indifferent father, who rejects his daughter's love and whose physical, psychological and emotional remoteness, in spite of reinforcing the absent father stereotype, surpasses the stereotypical and typical parental absenteeism of nineteenth-century working-class men.

As the above contrastive analysis shows, the two fictional characters under focus, despite being "vigorously sketched, and [having] a life-like reality about them" (Jewsbury 1856: 40), do not mimetically reproduce the typical images of mid-Victorian working-class fathers and daughters. Hence, Julia Kavanagh, like other realist writers of the nineteenth century, did not aim at replicating the socio-historical paradigms of parents and children and their relationships while creating her characters and the family connections between them.

Notes

[1] All future references are made to the 1856 edition of *Rachel Gray*, digitized by Forgotten Books and available at:
<http://www.forgottenbooks.com/readbook/Rachel_Gray_1000288134>,
therefore, henceforward only the abbreviated title (*RG*) and page numbers will be given.
[2] Narratorial sympathy with the protagonist is openly expressed through the exclamation "poor girl!", repeatedly employed with reference to her (*RG* 66, 93, 117, 130), and through the frequent use of the adjective 'poor' before her name (*RG* 16, 103, 185, 214, 263).

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