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Henry James' Turn of the Screw: Its legacy, cinematographic renditions, and impact on contemporary reader/viewer

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Zásady pro vypracování:

Práce se zabývá žánrem gotického románu a reflexí odkazu díla Henryho Jamese *The Turn of the Screw* v audiovizuální tvorbě. Teoretická část nejprve přiblíží zrod žánru gotického románu v Anglii v druhé polovině 18. století a jeho vyvrcholení v době viktoriánské, která je vnímána jako počátek rozpadu starého řádu světa. Detailně budou též popsány charakteristické rysy tohoto žánru, jako například dekadence a zmar, a témata, kterými se odlišuje od žánrů příbuzných. Následně se tato část bude zabývat důvody pro znovuoživení zájmu o gotický žánr, souvisejících se zrozením původně hudební subkultury gothic/goths v 80. letech minulého století, která s sebou nese již zmiňované pocity dekadence a zmaru. Diskutován bude především vliv kinematografie na vzrůstající popularitu žánru, a to zejména v souvislosti s adaptacemi Jamesovy novely, ať již se jedná o film *The Innocents* (1961), či seriál *The Haunting of Bly Manor* od společnosti Netflix (2020). Teoretická část poukáže na to, že ačkoli je seriál zasazen do blíže neurčených let minulého století, tak dle užitých kinematografických technik a kostýmů lze odvodit, že časové zařazení děje odpovídá začátku zmiňovaných 80. let. Praktická část se podrobněji zabývá srovnáním obsahu literární předlohy a již zmíněného seriálu od produkční společnosti Netflix. Dílčím cílem této části je provést rozbor obou děl a poukázat na shody a odlišnosti mezi seriálem a předlohou. Otázky, které si tato část práce klade za cíl zodpovědět, jsou mimo jiné: Jak a čím může literární dílo více než sto let staré oslovit současníky? Stojí za úspěchem vysoce sledovaného seriálu reflexe aktuálních společenských témat, která se v době vzniku románu ve viktoriánské Anglii nemohla otevřeně řešit, spíše než zájem o samotné dílo H. Jamese? Přínosem práce bude nejen retrospektivní zhodnocení odkazu díla Henryho Jamese, kdy bude prezentováno shrnutí současného posouzení díla odbornou veřejností, ale také reflexe přístupu k dané tématice v rámci současné kinematografie.

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JAMES, Henry. *The Turn of the Screw*. Genoa: Black Cat, 2004.

JOHN, Juliet. *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Literary Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

HARRIS, Robert. *Elements of the Gothic Novel* [online]. 2015 [cit. 2021-06-22], available on: <<http://www.virtualsalt.com/gothic.htm>>.

PITTOCK, Malcolm. *The Decadence of The Turn of the Screw*, Essays in Criticism, Volume 55, Issue 4, Oxford Academy, October 2005, Pages 332–351, [online], [cit. 2021-06-22], available on: <<https://doi.org/10.1093/escrit/cgi025>>.

RAILO, Eino. *Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism*. London: Routledge, 1927, Reprint: The Edinburgh Press 2003.

RAMSDELL, Kristin. *Romance Fiction. A Guide to the Genre*. Internet Archive, San Francisco, 1999, [online], [cit. 2021-04-15], available on: <https://archive.org/details/romancefictiongu00rams_0/page/356/mode/2up>.

Odkazy na filmy a recenzi:

CLAYTON Jack. *The Innocents*, 1961. YOUTUBE 2020, [online], [cit. 2021-04-15], dostupný z: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0P4yNjMUvA>>.

FLANAGAN, Mike. *The Haunting of Bly Manor*. NETFLIX 2020, [online], [cit. 2021-04-15], dostupný z: <<https://www.netflix.com/cz/title/81237854>>.

Review of both versions by Sheena Scott. *Before 'The Haunting Of Bly Manor' There Was The British Horror Film 'The Innocents'*. FORBES 2020. [online], [cit. 2021-04-15], available on: <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/sheenascott/2020/10/12/before-the-haunting-of-bly-manor--there-was-the-british-horror-film-the-innocents/?sh=577a77b12f22>>

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Anotace

Práce se zabývá žánrem gotického románu a reflexí odkazu díla Henryho Jamese *The Turn of the Screw*. Teoretická část nejprve přibližuje zrod žánru gotického románu v Anglii v druhé polovině 18. století a vrchol jeho rozvoje v době viktoriánské, která je vnímána jako počátek rozpadu starého řádu světa. Detailně též popisuje charakteristické rysy tohoto žánru, jako například dekadenci, a témata, kterými se odlišuje od žánrů příbuzných. Následně tato část uvádí důvody pro znovuoživení zájmu o gotický žánr, souvisejících se zrozením nové, původně hudební subkultury gothic/goths v 80. letech minulého století, která prožívala již zmiňované pocity dekadence. Diskutován je také vliv kinematografie na vzrůstající popularitu žánru, a to zejména v souvislosti s adaptací Jamesovy novely v podobě seriálu *The Haunting of Bly Manor* od společnosti Netflix (2020). Teoretická část poukazuje na to, že ačkoli je seriál zasazen do blíže neurčených let minulého století, tak dle užitých kinematografických technik a kostýmů lze odvodit, že časové zařazení děje odpovídá začátku zmiňovaných 80. let.

Praktická část se podrobněji zabývá srovnáním obsahu literární předlohy a již zmíněného seriálu od produkční společnosti Netflix¹. Dílčím cílem této části je provést rozbor obou děl a poukázat na shody a odlišnosti mezi seriálem a jeho předlohou. Otázky, které si tato část práce klade za cíl zodpovědět, jsou mimo jiné: Jak a čím může literární dílo více než sto let staré oslovit současné publikum? Stojí za úspěchem vysoce sledovaného seriálu reflexe aktuálních společenských témat, která se v době vzniku románu ve viktoriánské Anglii nemohla otevřeně řešit, spíše než zájem o samotné dílo H. Jamese? Přínosem práce bude nejen retrospektivní zhodnocení odkazu díla Henryho Jamese, kdy bude prezentováno shrnutí současného posouzení díla odbornou veřejností, ale také reflexe přístupu k tématice novely *The Turn of the Screw* v rámci současné kinematografie.

Klíčová slova

Devatenácté století, viktoriánská Anglie, Henry James, *Utažení Šroubu*, gotická novela, fantazie, nadpřirozeno, duchové, nevinnost, homosexualita, psychologie.

1 The Netflix is a streaming platform that requires a subscription and provides an extensive collection of movies, TV shows, and diverse entertainment options, accessible across multiple devices. More on: <https://www.netflix.com/>.

Abstract

The Bachelor thesis deals with the genre of the Gothic novel and reflects on the legacy of Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*. The theoretical part first describes the birth of the Gothic novel genre in England in the second half of the 18th century and its culmination in the Victorian period, which is perceived as the beginning of the disintegration of the old world order. The characteristics of this genre, such as decadence, and the topics it covers by which it differs from related genres are also described in detail. Subsequently, this section addresses the reasons for reviving interest in the Gothic genre, related to the birth of the original musical gothic/goths subculture in the 1980s, which experienced the already mentioned feelings of decadence. The influence of cinematography on the genre's growing popularity is discussed, especially in connection with the adaptation of James' novella, *The Turn of the Screw*, in the form of the TV series *The Haunting of Bly Manor* by Netflix (2020). The theoretical part points out that although the series is set in unspecified years of the last century, according to the used cinematic techniques and costumes, it can be deduced that the story's time placement corresponds to the beginning of the 1980s.

The practical part provides a more detailed comparison of the content between the original work and the already mentioned Netflix series. One of the goals of the practical part is to analyze both works and point out the similarities and differences between the series and the original story. The questions that this part of the work aims to address are, among others: How can a literary work more than a hundred years old engage the contemporary audience? Is the reflection of current social issues that could not be openly addressed at the novella's inception in Victorian England the reason for this highly watched series' success rather than an interest in the work of Henry James itself? The contribution of this work will not only be a retrospective assessment of the legacy of Henry James' work, presenting a summary of the current evaluation by the academic community, but also a reflection on the approach to the topic of the novella *The Turn of the Screw* in contemporary cinema.

Key words

Nineteenth century, Victorian England, Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, Gothic novel, fantasy, supernaturalism, ghosts, innocence, homosexuality, psychology.

Contents

Introduction.....	9
<i>Theoretical part</i>	11
1. The birth of the Gothic novel genre.....	11
1.1 The historical context.....	12
1.2 Definition, typical features and elements of the Gothic genre.....	16
1.3 Development of the Gothic genre.....	19
2. Henry James.....	22
2.1 Life.....	22
2.2 Work.....	24
3. Revival of interest in the Gothic genre.....	27
4. The influence of cinematography on the growing popularity of the Gothic genre.....	28
5. Adaptations of James' novella <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> in an audiovisual production.....	31
6. Summary of the assessment of the work by the professional public.....	32
6.1 Review of the novella <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> after its first release.....	33
6.2 Controversy of the interpretation of the work: main points.....	33
6.2.1. Apparitionists vs. Non-apparitionists – landmark in criticism.....	34
6.2.2 Synthesis of the previous two critical views.....	34
6.2.3 Transition to structuralism.....	35
6.3 The author's stance towards his work.....	35
6.4 The view of contemporary criticism of the novella.....	35
<i>Practical part</i>	38
7. New approach to the novella <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> in the series <i>The Haunting of Bly Manor</i>	38
7.1 Unofficial category “haunted house”.....	38
7.2 Current social issues in <i>The Haunting of Bly Manor</i> series.....	39
7.2.1 The topic of homosexuality.....	39
7.2.2 The topic of race.....	40
7.4 Awards/Ratings and recognition of <i>The Haunting of Bly Manor</i> series.....	41
7.4.1 Awards given by writers' and TV/film associations.....	41
7.4.2 Rating and viewership of the TV series.....	42
7.5 The series <i>The Haunting of Bly Manor</i> brings the reader back to the book <i>The Turn of the Screw</i>	43
7.6 Reading James' novella <i>The Turn of The Screw</i> in the present.....	43
8. Comparison of the novella <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> and the contemporary TV series <i>The Haunting of Bly Manor</i>	44
8.1 Theme.....	45
8.2 Timeline.....	45
8.3 Environment.....	46
8.4 Content and plot.....	46
8.5 Characters.....	47
8.6 Language and structure.....	52

Conclusion.....	53
Bibliography.....	55
List of appendixes.....	61
Appendixes.....	62

Introduction

This bachelor's thesis aims to assess the legacy of Henry James' novella, *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), which has regained popularity in recent years also due to a renewed fascination with the Gothic genre. During the Victorian era, when James' novella was published, the Gothic genre was at its peak. Presently, the genre's resurgence is largely attributed to the realm of cinematography, which brings it to life on the screen. This thesis aims to demonstrate that the resurgence of interest in Henry James' work, particularly in *The Turn of the Screw*, is not solely attributed to its gothic ambiance. Through subtle allusions, James shed light on significant social issues, particularly taboo subjects such as homosexuality, during his time. This study also aims to illustrate how these themes from James' novella can be revitalized and modernized through the medium of cinematography. A comparison of James' novella *The Turn of the Screw* and the TV series adaptation *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020) will demonstrate how contemporary cinematography specifically grasped these themes. Simultaneously, the thesis examines the influence of the widely viewed and popular series on the reading experience of Henry James' original novella.

The work is divided into two main sections: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part consists of six chapters. The initial chapter provides an overview of the origin, characteristics, and development of the Gothic novel genre in Great Britain during the late 18th and 19th centuries. For this part was used the work of Ch. L. Crow, *History of the Gothic: American Gothic*², which offers a comprehensive examination of the genre's evolution. To understand the historical context, Eliss Wasson's monograph, *Dějiny moderní Británie*³, proved to be a clear and informative resource. Regarding the dictionary entries this thesis works with J. A. Cuddon's *Dictionary of Literary Terms And Literary Theory*⁴. The genre and its typical elements were primarily explored using the extensive characterization provided by Robert Harris in his work, *Elements of the Gothic Novel*⁵. Chapter two delves into the life and works

2 Crow, Charles L. 2009. *History of the Gothic: American Gothic*. Cardiff: University Of Wales Press.

3 Wasson, Ellis Archer. 2010. *Dějiny moderní Británie: od roku 1714 po dnešek*. Praha: Grada.

4 Cuddon, John A. 2013. *Dictionary Of Literary Terms And Literary Theory*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

5 Harris, Robert. 2020. *Elements of the Gothic Novel*. *Virtual Salt*, November 16. Accessed February 4, 2022. <https://www.virtualsalt.com/elements-of-the-gothic-novel/>.

of Henry James, extracting information mainly from David Cook's extensive article, *Was Henry James a Victorian?*⁶ published on *The Victorian Web*, which offers detailed insights into James' life and works. Additionally, *The Library of America*⁷ database proved to be a valuable resource. Chapter three explores the resurgence of interest in the Gothic genre during the second half of the 20th century, along with the emergence of the Goth subculture. This subculture shares similar sentiments regarding societal decay and corruption that were prevalent among the Victorian generation in Great Britain a century ago (Laredo 2019). Unfortunately, there is limited amount of academic literature available on this subject. However, Simon Reynolds' monograph, which explores the connection between the goths subculture and the punk music scene, happens to be informative⁸. Chapter four then outlines how cinematography visualized and popularized the Victorian Gothic. In this section, multiple sources were used to inform. The New York Film Academy⁹ website served as a suitable resource for a retrospective examination of the history of horror films. Chapter five focuses on the adaptations of James' novella through contemporary audiovisual media, as detailed by film reviewer Mara Bachman¹⁰. The sixth chapter presents a summary of the professional public's assessment of the work. For this was primarily used E. J. Parkinson's dissertation, *The Turn of the Screw, A History of Its Critical Interpretations 1898 – 1979*¹¹, which offers a comprehensive overview of the critical reception of James' novella from its publication until the 1980s. H. C. Goddard's monograph, *A Pre-Freudian Reading of The Turn of the Screw*¹², was also referenced.

6 Cooke, David. 2017. Was Henry James a Victorian? *Victorian Web*, April 24. Accessed January 24, 2022.

<https://victorianweb.org/authors/jamesh/cooke.html>.

7 Henry James. In *The Library of America*, edited by Philip Horne. Accessed January 2, 2023.

<http://www.loa.org/multisearch.jsp?terms=Henry+James>.

8 Reynolds, Simon. 2005. *Rip It Up and Start Again: Postpunk 1978–1984*. London: Faber a Faber.

9 NYFA. 2022. The First Horror Movie & The History Of The Horror Genre. *New York Film Academy*, July

21. Accessed December 25, 2022. <https://www.nyfa.edu/student-resources/how-horror-movies-have-changed-since-their-beginning/>.

10 Bachman, Mara. 2020. Every Turn of the Screw Adaptation Ranked. *Screenrant*, November 14. Accessed

March 23, 2022. <https://screenrant.com/haunting-bly-manor-every-turn-screw-adaptation-ranked/>.

11 Parkinson, Edward J. 1991. *The Turn of the Screw, A History of Its Critical Interpretations 1898 – 1979*. Saint Louis University. Dissertation.

12 Goddard, Harold. 1957. A Pre-Freudian Reading of The Turn of the Screw. *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 12(1), pp.1-36. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3044415>.

The practical part of the thesis consists of three chapters that involve the comparison between the original work *The Turn of the Screw* and the contemporary Netflix gothic romance drama miniseries *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, as well as a more general assessment of Henry James' legacy. In chapter seven, reasons behind choosing this particular series for analysis are addressed. The focus then shifts towards exploring how the series' creator approaches the novella, delving into the interpretation of delicate social topics, particularly emphasizing discussions on homosexuality and race. The evaluation and reception of the series by professionals and viewers are explored using award and review websites. Such is presented along with an examination of its influence on the audience's perception of James' novella. The chapter also provides a summary of the current readership of the novella, along with insights from readers' websites regarding readers' reactions and responses. Chapter eight examines the differences and similarities between the two works from various perspectives, including a personal, subjective assessment of their content.

Theoretical part

1. The birth of the Gothic novel genre

At the time of its publication, Henry James' novella *The Turn of the Screw* coincided with the pinnacle of the Gothic prose, and its subgenre, the Gothic novel, in Great Britain. This chapter presents how this literary genre has been defined and it also lists its characteristics. It outlines the historical context of the time in which the genre developed and draws attention to aspects typical for the age that had some impact on literature. Furthermore, this chapter elucidates the evolution of the Gothic genre over time and, in particular, how James' novella *The Turn of the Screw* contributed to its development.

1.1 The historical context

The 19th century, known as the “Century of Steam”, was a time of significant changes in Europe and the United States. During this period, particularly towards its end, when Henry James wrote *The Turn of the Screw*, the Industrial Revolution continued to have a profound impact on society. The rapid industrial development, fueled by technological advances, led to unprecedented growth and prosperity in both regions.

In the United Kingdom, this period of significant change fell within the reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901), which is commonly referred to as the Victorian era. During this time, the United Kingdom saw significant economic, political, and cultural growth under the rule of Queen Victoria. Politically, the country was governed by the two main political parties, the conservative Tories and the liberal Whigs, both of which were primarily composed of aristocrats or peers¹³. This almost regular change of political parties at the head of the country guaranteed the country’s general stability¹⁴. In 1847 and 1868, when the coalition of Whigs and Peelists¹⁵ was in power, there was a time of liberalization in society called the period of liberalism¹⁶ (Morgan 2009, 411, 412).

The reason for the economic superiority of the UK was the fact that it was the cradle of the revolution in industry, the place where revolutionary technical inventions were created that started this revolution and facilitated human work and transport – the steam engine and railways¹⁷ (Wasson 2010, 122). Great Britain was also one of the first countries (as was the Netherlands) to create new social classes thanks to entrepreneurship in industry. The old

13 Peers were individuals who held higher titles of nobility, such as dukes, earls, and viscounts, and were granted the right to sit in the House of Lords. The term “peer” is often used to refer to members of the House of Lords more generally (Wasson, 2010, 395).

14 The Tories were known for upholding traditional values, such as respect for legitimate succession to the throne, religious orthodoxy, and royal authority. On the other hand, the Whigs supported religious emancipation and were critical of the royal power. Additionally, the Whigs condemned violence against lower classes of society (Wasson, 2010, 67, 150).

15 A faction of Robert Peel’s conservative party known as the Peelists (also known as the Liberal Conservatives) was occasionally supported by the Whigs, and in 1859 the Whigs, Peelists, and some of the Radicals, still outside Parliament, were even united in the Liberal Party (Strmiska 2005, 63).

16 Liberalism = belief in the value of social and political change in order to achieve progress (The Britannica Dictionary 2023).

17 The steam engine was the invention of James Watt (1784). Steam served as a drive for machines and means of transportation. In 1814, George Stephenson’s invented the locomotive. In 1825, regular railway transport was introduced in England (Wasson 2010, 122).

feudal nobility was replaced by entrepreneurs, wealthy townspeople (capitalists – factory owners). On the other side, there were the poor working-class people (the workers who worked for the capitalists and depended on them for life). Poverty and financial dependence was the negative side of the changes (Wasson 2010, 125). Moreover, new types of diseases also appeared, especially cholera (Zrůstová 2001).

In the political sphere, two significant changes were the reforms¹⁸ leading to the correction of the electoral system. One of the reforms extended the right to vote primarily to the industrial middle class, allowing manufacturers to be elected to the parliament. As a result, the aristocrats lost their previously practically inviolable decision-making position (Skřivan 2013, 104). The changes also concerned the area of religion. The formerly purely Protestant country loosened its rules, and non-Anglicans gained more freedom¹⁹.

An important aspect concerning the period was the population explosion. From the end of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th century, the number of inhabitants in Great Britain increased significantly²⁰. With the sudden increase in population, there was a significant surplus of labour in Great Britain. However, this surplus would have been of little use without industrialization. At the same time, modernization was taking place in agriculture, and the introduction of technology in this field was replacing the workforce. As a result, people could be relocated from the countryside to industrial cities, where their labor was needed. This way, Great Britain acquired an increasingly urban character from the 1850s. The change in the way of life had a significant impact on culture and especially on literature (Stříbrný 1987, 444), which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

During this time, Great Britain also achieved success in another area – building the world colonial empire. The country's colonies played a significant role in generating wealth and

18 The initial reform took place in 1832 before Queen Victoria's ascension to the throne. Known as the Reform Act, it brought significant changes to the electoral system in the UK. These changes included the introduction of voter registration and the representation of major cities in Parliament, albeit at the cost of rural communities. Subsequently, the Representation of the People Act 1867 further advanced electoral reform by granting voting rights to a portion of the working class in England and Wales (Skřivan 2013, 104).

19 Non-Anglicans are members of other than the Anglican Christian Protestant Church, mainly Irish Catholics. Catholic Emancipation was enacted in April 1829 (Wasson 2010, 152).

20 Pestilences and wars ceased; the birth rate rose. Specifically, Wasson states that the population rose by almost half in Britain in the first half of the 19th century (Wasson 2010, 145).

establishing its dominance over other nations (Wasson 2010, 176). However, this period also had its downsides. Great Britain's colonial policy, particularly in India, faced several challenges and failures, which led to frequent clashes and wars in the colonies. As a result, the country's image in the eyes of the rest of the world was no longer as flawless as before (Wasson 2010, 220).

Victorian society, however, presented itself as a model of a stable and prosperous capitalist society, but in reality, it was not without its flaws (Stříbrný 1987, 444). Although liberal economic policies were adopted, the social attitudes remained largely conservative and puritanical. One of the most contentious issues of the time was the position of women in society. In the Victorian era, women were restricted by archaic rules that were often hypocritical and upheld a double standard. Although Queen Victoria served as an exception to this rule, the general practice was that once a woman married, she relinquished almost all of her rights, regardless of her social status (Zrůstová 2000). With the emergence of new social classes, a growing number of middle-class women, including wives and daughters of businessmen, found themselves in a position where they did not have to work. However, they were not content with conforming to the traditional social patterns of the past. Instead, they began to demand more from life, taking an active interest in self-care, education, and reading (Morgan 2009, 430).

The changes in society during this time were also reflected in literature, giving rise to the Victorian novel, which tackled a variety of themes. These included the relationship between men and women, the struggle of individuals against societal prejudices, and stories of people from lower social classes striving to climb the ranks of society. The rise of urbanization led to a growing fascination with human psychology and motivation, particularly in how they related to society and its values (Zrůstová 2001). The Victorian novel also incorporated contemporary elements of the era, such as the railway. George P. Landow suggests that the introduction of the railway transformed the understanding of time and distance. Incorporating the train as a narrative device, writer Charles Dickens used the railway to interconnect stories and characters, as is evidenced in his novel *Bleak House* (1852). Thomas Hardy utilized the railway as a tool to relocate his characters to a different setting in his literary works, such as in

his novel *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874). Wilkie Collins also incorporated the railway in his novel *No Name* (1862) (Landow 2005). Charles Dickens portrayed the harsh reality of poverty-stricken children in his novels such as *Oliver Twist* (1837) (Chesterton 1913, 68). Written in 1843, Charles Dickens' short story *A Christmas Carol* was intended as a form of social commentary, serving as a protest against the exploitative treatment of workers by a growingly avaricious upper class. The novels of the Brönte sisters explore the relationships and destinies of women, exemplified by the progressive *Jane Eyre* (1848), which blends romantic, realistic, and gothic elements. George Eliot's novels, such as *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and *Middlemarch* (1872), often explored the lives of individuals on the margins of society or those living in small English towns (Wasson 2010, 170). In the novel *Vanity Fair* (1848), William M. Thackeray depicted the world of the early 19th century in a realistic, cynical, and satirical manner²¹ (Chesterton 1913, 52). In addition to *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray wrote *The History of Henry Esmond* (1852), which his contemporaries, such as the novelist Anthony Trollope, considered to be his greatest work. The novel expresses the Victorian values of duty and seriousness. Henry James, in contrast, had a remarkable ability to delve into the intricate nuances of human psychology and relationships. Through his short stories and novels from the 1870s and 1880s, he portrayed, as Cuddon charts, the inner worlds of women, their shattered dreams, and the pursuit of emotional equilibrium which appears in works including *The Portrait of a Lady*, 1881; *Daisy Miller*, 1878; and *Washington Square*, 1880 (2009, 279). At the turn of the century, James wrote the novella *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), which explores the internal struggle between reason and imagination while incorporating Gothic elements (Crow 2009, 30). To expand the context, the following chapter describes the characteristics of the Gothic genre and its typical features.

21 Through the fate of Becky, a girl from an orphanage with superior intelligence and abilities that will help her in social advancement, Thackeray shows how the greedy and self-indulgent English society of the time of the Napoleonic Wars functioned (Chesterton 1913, 52).

1.2 Definition, typical features and elements of the Gothic genre

In the 18th century, Gothic prose emerged as a literary genre characterized by a dark and mysterious setting, supernatural elements, and a strong atmosphere.

The Gothic novel is a distinct subgenre of Gothic prose, characterized by an engaging plot, psychologically rich characters, and a preference for emotions over rationality. Often set in mysterious, ancient castles or other haunted locations, these novels aim to evoke strong emotions and build tension by incorporating supernatural elements (Smith 2013, 2-4)²². This subgenre was particularly prevalent during the pre-romantic and Romantic periods, primarily in England, though it also appears in the literature of other countries. According to Cuddon (2013), the Gothic novel experienced significant popularity from the 1760s to the 1820s.

The Gothic novel had a significant impact on the realm of fiction, and its influence persists into the 21st century. In fact, he suggests, the Gothic novel played a pivotal role in shaping both the ghost story and horror genre, laying the foundation for what we recognize as contemporary horror (Cuddon, 308).

The Gothic novel is characterized by a blend of romantic and, to a lesser extent, realistic elements, giving rise to its reputation as the dark side of Romanticism. It contains a suspenseful story with rapidly alternating dramatic scenes, often-featuring horror, mystery, and supernatural phenomena such as ghosts, reanimated corpses, spells, and curses. The use of mysterious and gloomy settings, such as castles, houses, crypts, and dark forests, adds to the overall atmosphere. The main plot usually revolves around crime, revenge, and guilt, with naive love stories sometimes serving as a background. The narrative structure of the novel can either follow a classic chronological order or feature time inversions. The thematic components, including characters, plot, and setting, are carefully arranged to pique the reader's curiosity and maintain their attention (Táborská 1984, 62).

Harris (2020) argues that the narrative of the Gothic novel is often accompanied by a sense of decadence, which refers to the feeling of decline and decay that emerged in European culture

22 As Crow (2009) notes, the standard setting for Gothic literature is haunted houses, which has remained a prevalent feature in the genre to this day (Crow, 177).

during the late 19th century²³. Harris further elaborates on the typical elements of Gothic literature particularly as these are considered a major source of themes and elements in filmmaking. The major features Harris discusses are listed below:

Setting plays a significant role in the Gothic novel, as it presents the atmosphere of a crumbling world and impending ruin. The plot is typically centered around an old residence, such as a castle, chateau, or ruin, and its surroundings, which may appear abandoned or occupied by unknown entities. The use of secret passages, trap doors, and hidden rooms creates an atmosphere of uncertainty and suspense. Additionally, the setting may include dark, branching caverns that induce claustrophobia and contain terrifying creatures such as vampires, zombies, and werewolves. In some cases, characters may find themselves stranded on a deserted island, with no way back to civilization, or encounter prehistoric creatures like dinosaurs, adding to the overall sense of tension and entrapment.

The atmosphere of mystery and suspense permeates the work, creating a sense of impending danger and fear of the unknown. This feeling intensifies when characters catch only fleeting glimpses of something unidentifiable, leaving their imagination to run wild. The same goes for sounds that are difficult to pinpoint in terms of their source or origin. The plot often revolves around a mystery, such as an unknown origin, disappearance, or other unexplained events. People may mysteriously disappear, or corpses may appear without explanation, often with mutilations that defy explanation, giving rise to the question of whether a monster or some other unknown force is at work.

Having outlined the major features, Harris proceeds to outline several elements that help to create this atmosphere, including:

Prophecy is typically presented in a vague, partial, or confusing manner, such as a legend about a wandering ghost in a house or an indecipherable map that reveals the location of a treasure.

23 The sensation of decadence was not only reflected in literature and art but also permeated society, manifesting in distinctive lifestyles and fashion (Harris 2020).

Omens, harbingers, and visions contribute to the overall atmosphere by introducing unsettling occurrences, such as a character experiencing disturbing dreams or a phenomenon that foreshadows upcoming events.

Events beyond natural explanation – ghosts that walk, giants that roam, and even inanimate objects brought to life (such as armor or paintings).

The intense, sometimes exaggerated emotion of the narrative is often portrayed through the characters' crying, shortness of breath, and panic, reflecting their overwhelming sense of impending doom.

Women in need or threatened in some way often take center stage in the novel. They are portrayed as lonely, oppressed heroines without protectors.

Gothic vocabulary is crucial in maintaining the dark and eerie atmosphere evoked in the reader. Examples of these words are listed in appendix 2.

Hyperbolic Phrases²⁴ are commonly used in Gothic literature to intensify the reader's sense of dread, horror, anxiety, or tension, or to emphasize the importance of certain elements. Harris selected examples from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*:

increased dread, increased emphasis, deep grief, intense distaste, gigantic creature, inestimable benefit, bitterly feel, ardent curiosity, strange sight, unparalleled eloquence, dark gloom, astonishing degree, unparalleled misfortunes, burning ardor, intoxicating draught, strongly excited.

Harris concludes his overview of the features and techniques by listing **Metonymy of gloom and horror**, which is a technique that uses a visual shorthand to evoke a sense of dread or horror, often used in the film industry. For example, rain may be used to symbolize sadness or despair (Harris 2020). This detailed account of characteristic features summarized by Harris is

24 A hyperbolic phrase is an exaggerated statement or figure of speech that magnifies or intensifies something beyond its literal or realistic limits for dramatic effect or emphasis (Harris 2020).

essential to this work because it lists precisely the elements James uses in his novella (discussed in chapter 8).

1.3 Development of the Gothic genre

The novel as a genre of literature originated in Europe during the 18th century, evolving from medieval novels and short stories. It featured descriptive storytelling on an epic scale. However, by the end of the 18th century, it was not popular and was considered a low genre. This perception changed with the emergence of romanticism²⁵, a new literary movement that paved the way for the transition to realism at the beginning of the 19th century (Táborská 1984, 317). Romanticism was characterized by a desire to return to an idealized past, as a reaction to the classicism and rationalism of the Enlightenment. This often involved a revival of the Gothic spirit of the Middle Ages, which was referred to as Neo-Gothic. This movement gave rise to a new genre of literature: Gothic prose, including the subgenre of Gothic novels (Morrow & McGrath 1991, 12-16).

Many authors in continental Europe, Great Britain (especially in England), and the United States wrote in the spirit of the Gothic genre or were inspired by it, even though its era was relatively short. American writers initially heavily influenced by British authors, such as Mary Shelley and her *Frankenstein*, even adopted the gloomy English scenery. Later, the original genre in England was also enriched by the stimuli of the modified genre from the United States of America and vice versa. As a result, the Gothic novel can be divided into two sub-genres: English Gothic and American Gothic.

While the English Gothic novel is typically viewed as being narrowly defined by a set of conventions established by Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, and others, the American Gothic novel is a more flexible and loosely defined genre. American authors often blended Gothic elements with other types of period fiction, resulting in hybrid stories with a distinct flavor of

25 Romanticism, a profound philosophical and artistic movement, blossomed in the late 18th century, leaving a significant impact on diverse modes of expression, such as visual arts, architecture (in the form of historicism), and notably literature. Prior to Romanticism, the precursor known as pre-romanticism paved the way for this transformative era (Táborská 1984, 317).

their own (Crow 2009, 6, 16). English Gothic emerged during a specific time frame, beginning with the release of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764 and extending until the 1820s²⁶. American Gothic, unlike English Gothic, cannot be neatly confined to a specific time period. It emerged relatively later and lacks a clearly defined group of Gothic authors in comparison to their English counterparts (Goddu 1997, 37). Crow (2009) considers Charles Brockden Brown (1771–1810) to be the first American master of Gothic. His best novels (*Wieland*, 1798; *Arthur Mervyn*, 1799; *Edgar Huntly*, 1799) are considered the founding works of American Fiction and American Gothic. Brown experimented with techniques such as ambiguity and unreliable narrators, which would later be utilized by Henry James in his novella *The Turn of the Screw* (Crow 2009, 25). The further development of American Gothic was influenced by Washington Irving (1783–1859), the author of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1820). Irving established a set of conventions that were adopted by authors of ghost stories in both England and America. Irving's use of embedded narrators was further developed by Henry James in his novella *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) (Crow 2009, 30).

During the 19th century, Gothic prose reflected an increased interest in psychic phenomena, spiritualism, psychotherapy, and extreme psychology (Cuddon 2013, 303, 310). In America, the Gothic novel was enriched with these new elements, particularly by Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849), who is considered a forerunner of modern horror. Although Poe's works incorporate Gothic elements, his primary focus is on the mental life of the hero, exploring the inner struggle between reason and imagination, consciousness and unconsciousness. Among his most famous works with Gothic elements are *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), *The Pit and the Pendulum* (1842), and *The Raven* (1845) (Crow 2009, 37, 62).

It is now considered an established, undeniable fact that Henry James is another prominent figure in American Gothic literature, particularly towards the end of the 19th century. His works delve deep into the psychology of his characters from various social backgrounds. James' novella, *The Turn of the Screw*, is a fine example of a psychological Gothic novel, despite being considered a longer short story due to its length. Although the story features

26 According to Cuddon (2013), *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) by Horace Walpole can be considered the 1st Gothic Story in the British Isles (Cuddon, 308).

ghosts, it is often mistaken as a mere *ghost story*. (More about James' life and literary contributions will be discussed in the following chapter below) (Cuddon 2013, 303, 310).

During the 20th and 21st centuries, the Gothic genre continued to thrive, albeit with less vigor, originality and variety compared to the previous era, as noted by Crow (2009). Gothic authors of this period sought new settings for their stories in isolated rural areas and abandoned farms. Shirley Jackson (1916–1965) exemplifies this trend with her impressive “haunted house” novels such as *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959). Another notable figure is H. P. Lovecraft (1890–1937), a leading master of supernatural horror whose fictions were published in magazines *Weird Tales*. Furthermore, the 19th century figure of the vampire returned to the scene, most notably in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), which has been adapted into various films since the 1970s (Crow 2009, 136-140).

Today, Gothic continues to influence both prose and poetry and is a major source of themes and elements in filmmaking (Harris 2020). Contemporary authors, including Anne Rice, Joyce Carol Oates, and Stephen King, write within the Gothic tradition. A prime example of this trend is King's psychological horror *The Shining* (1977), which was adapted into a successful film by director Stanley Kubrick in 1980 (Crow 2009, 1, 178). Modern Gothic forms, including *novels noir*, find their representation in works like *Black Dahlia* (1987) by American crime writer James Ellroy, while *film noir* is exemplified by Quentin Tarantino's cult action film and dark comedy *Pulp Fiction* (1994). *Blade Runner* (1982), directed by Ridley Scott, extends the tradition of *film noir*, and the crime fiction film *Seven* (1999), directed by David Fincher, serves as another example. Additionally, the TV series *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991), directed by David Lynch, captures the essence of small-town Gothic (Crow 2009, 160-161).

2. Henry James

2.1 Life

Henry James (*15. 4. 1843 in New York – †28. 2. 1916 in London) was an American writer and critic. He is credited with founding of the American psychological novel and played a key role in establishing the realist school in fiction. Henry James was born into a family of intellectuals, including his father, the influential theologian Henry James, and his brother William, a renowned philosopher and psychologist. He grew up with three brothers and a sister, and the family's substantial inheritance allowed them to travel extensively. During his childhood, James had the opportunity to explore Europe, where he was educated by private tutors and also attended various European schools. He developed a love for French, English, and Russian literature during this time. Throughout his life, Henry James admired European culture and traditions. Despite starting a law degree at Harvard in 1864, James did not finish his studies. Instead, after the American Civil War, James embarked on a series of solo trips to Europe in 1869–70 and 1872–74, accompanied by his aunt Kate and sister Alice. From November 1875 to December 1876, he lived primarily in Paris, where he encountered a group of writers whom he called the *Sons of Balzac*. While James was introduced to this group, led by Gustave Flaubert, through his mentor Ivan S. Turgenev, he found that most of the French novelists were either unable or unwilling to read his works in English or introduce him to their families. In turn, James had a mixed opinion of some of their works, particularly those of Emile Zola, which he famously referred to as giving off the “smell of a sewer”. Nevertheless, Turgenev remained a cherished writing teacher and role model for James, and likely played a significant role in his decision to return to Paris.

In 1876, Henry James left Paris and eventually settled in London for several reasons, including the lower cost of living compared to Paris, as he wrote in letters to his sister. During his time in London, James met notable figures such as the art critic John Ruskin and the biologist Charles Darwin, and he also had the opportunity to socialize with established novelists of the earlier generation, including George Eliot, William M. Thackeray, and Charles Dickens. In

1884, James was joined in England by his invalid sister, Alice. Seeking a quieter lifestyle, James moved from bustling London to the town of Rye in East Sussex in 1897, where he purchased a home called “Lamb House”. When the First World War broke out, James felt compelled to help and began visiting wounded soldiers in hospitals. It was only in the last year of his life, shortly before his death in February 1916 from a stroke in London, that James accepted British citizenship, which was both a sign of loyalty to his adopted homeland and a protest against the United States’ delay in entering the war. James’ ashes were laid to rest in a cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the same burial ground where his family members are also interred (Cooke 2017).

James was known to be a very private individual when it came to his personal life. According to David Cooke (2017), Visiting Professor in English Literature at University College London, James likely realized early on that he was primarily attracted to men. However, he never publicly revealed his sexual orientation. In Paris in 1876, he developed a close friendship with a young Russian courtier named Paul Zhukovsky, who was part of Richard Wagner’s circle of associates. While the nature of their relationship is not entirely clear, it has been speculated that James and Zhukovsky may have been lovers. Despite their relationship, James ultimately ended his connection with Paul Zhukovsky and, in 1881, referred to him as “a matter not deserving of attention”. James started his career as an esthete but later became interested in social topics, such as the relationship between writers and society and its material conditions, which he noted down during his observations. He found inspiration in the surroundings of Rome, Florence, Venice, and Paris, which appear in some of his works, but it was mainly in England where he could have privacy, dine in good company, enjoy membership in the *Reform*, and briefly also the *Athenaeum* clubs; and observe and write about people from all walks of life. As a result, his novels and short stories feature not only artists, writers, and aristocrats but also merchants, poor clergy families, penniless widows, spiritualists, swindlers, traveling salesmen, and revolutionaries (Cooke 2017).

2.2 Work

Henry James was a prolific author, producing not only numerous novels and short stories, but also travelogues, biographies, autobiographies, reviews, articles, and plays, many of which appeared in magazines. In 1864, James anonymously printed his first short story, *A Tragedy of Error*, in *The Continental Monthly*. Subsequently, his other works were serialized primarily in *The Atlantic Monthly*, which also published his debut novel, *Watch and Ward*, in 1871. James' stories explore themes of politics and social status, as well as delve into the realms of personal freedom, feminism, morality, and cultural clashes. His characters are intricately developed, and while the author typically serves as the narrator, there are instances where the narrative perspective shifts to one or multiple characters or even includes what is known as an embedded narrator.

After leaving America and settling in Paris, James continued to produce a large number of short stories and novels. Among his notable works during this time were *Roderick Hudson* (1875), which tells the story of an American sculptor in Rome who confronts American and European culture; *The American* (1877), his first American realist novel that again portrays a clash of cultures; and *The Europeans* (1878), a novel that explores similar themes. He also wrote other novels, including *Confidence* (1879), *Washington Square* (1880), *The Pension Beaurepas* (1881), and the extended critical essay *Hawthorne* (1879). The clash of cultures is also evident in *Daisy Miller* (1879), a novella about a naive American woman who has an affair with an Italian and is shunned by her community as a result. Throughout the 1880s, James continued to produce novels and novellas, including *A Little Tour in France* (1884), *The Bostonians* (1886), *The Aspern Papers* (1888), *The Reverberator* (1888), *The Tragic Muse* (1890), *The Pupil* (1891), *Sir Dominick Ferrand* (1895), *The Coxon Fund* (1894), *The Death of a Lion* (1894), and *The Altar of the Dead* (1895).

Following his move to London and later to Rye in 1897, James remained highly productive. He authored a range of works, including several novels such as *What Maisie Knew* (1897), *In the Cage* (1898), *The Awkward Age* (1899), *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Beast in the Jungle* (1903), *The Golden Bowl* (1904), *Italian Hours* (1909), and *The Outcry* (1911).

Additionally, James delved into autobiographical writing, producing works like *A Small Boy and Others* (1913) or *The Middle Years* (1917) (McElhearn 2010). Notably, he also demonstrated a fascination for supernatural and spiritual themes and wrote several stories which were compiled in horror collections (e.g., in the Czech Republic published as *Strašidelné příběhy*, 2012)

James is known for his psychological short stories and novels, where he utilizes techniques such as internal monologue and point of view to enhance the reader's understanding of the characters' perceptions. Through his writing, he delves into the complexities of the human psyche and their moral struggles, exemplified in works such as *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Daisy Miller*. Additionally, James has the ability to create nuanced portraits of characters, such as Miss Catherine in the novel *Washington Square*, as she navigates her place in society and her relationship with her father. His mastery of the psychological novel has led to him being recognized as one of its founding writers. James often employs an unreliable narrator, creating an ambiguous and open-ended interpretation of the story's events. Additionally, he employs other interesting techniques to present the story, such as the use of a *ficelle* – a character whose role is to acquire information and relay it to the reader independently of the narrator. A prime example of a *ficelle* is the character of Maisie Farange in the novel *What Maisie Knew* (1897), a naive but insightful child who is exposed to the confidences of her parents, step-parents, and lovers. Through Maisie's eyes, the story unfolds (Cuddon 2009, 279²⁷).

The Turn of the Screw (1898) stands out from James' earlier works with its unique artistic approach, which is likely unparalleled on a global scale. It is also James' most analyzed piece and was one of his two best-selling works during his lifetime. Washington Irving referred to it as one of the most renowned English attempts at narrative ambiguity (Crow 2009, 73).

Henry James introduced a new style of literature with his use of allusive language, multiple perspectives, and an unreliable narrator in *The Turn of the Screw*. This unique approach was considered groundbreaking and is now recognized as a form of *modernism*. The novella's

27 There is a lot of character similarity here between little Maisie and the child characters Miles and Flora from the novella *The Turn of the Screw*, who are also intelligent and naive at the same time and came out of age early (see chapter 8).

popularity with contemporary readers also indicates a shift in literary tastes towards modernist techniques during that period. According to Nenadál (1994), the Victorian Puritans²⁸, who criticized *The Turn of the Screw*, were dismissive and embarrassed by the novel, as they were caught off guard by its controversial themes and taboo subjects such as hints of homosexuality and pedophilia. They failed to appreciate the novelty of the work and instead condemned it as immoral. James' novella is a psychologically intricate tale filled with skillful manipulations and the innocence of children, constantly preoccupying the governess' mind. This story blends elements of psychology and horror, resulting in a mysterious narrative with underlying subtexts, such as the subtle hints of homosexuality (Nenadál 1994, 130-131). The ending of the novella is enigmatic and ominous, and has been the subject of debate for over a century since its initial publication (Crow 2009, 51, 74-75).

The story is narrated from two perspectives. Douglas, the embedded narrator, reads the written account of a governess of two siblings, Miles and Flora, who had lost their parents. The other perspective is represented by the governess, who tells the story retrospectively, from the time she took the position of the tutor. Upon arriving at the family's home, the governess starts seeing the ghosts of the former residents, Peter Quint and Miss Jessel, and suspects their connection to the children. She tries to protect the children from the ghosts' influence. After Mrs Grose, the housekeeper, takes Flora to her uncle, the governess is left alone with Miles. The story concludes with Miles' death, which leaves the reader wondering whether it was caused by the governess' expulsion of Peter's ghost or by the governess herself, who may have imagined the ghosts and killed the boy (Bachman 2020).

As Nenadál (1994) noted, the story revolves around the subjects the Victorians chose to ignore or deny – the so-called “Victorian vices”, namely homosexuality and pedophilia. These topics were not uncommon during that era. Therefore, the events at Bly go beyond the mere question of the governess' presumed guilt or innocence. It also involves the unwillingness of the housekeeper Mrs Grose to speak about what she observed among the children and staff, as well as what she might have inferred. She only told the governess that “Peter Quint had

28 The Victorian Puritans believed in upholding strict moral standards. The ideology of purism originated as a religious movement in England, which aimed to promote religious purity (Cody 2009).

something with everyone”. Homosexuality could also explain why young Miles was expelled from school. Nenadál thinks that these deliberate omissions in the narrative aim to mislead or provoke the reader into forming their own conclusions about the clandestine activities between seemingly angelic children and malevolent spirits. The implied occurrences in the story are truly disturbing, stemming from the Victorian society’s repressive nature. With his novella, James disrupts the carefully constructed notion of childhood innocence prevalent in the Victorian world (Nenadál 1994, 131, 135). Through imaginative work with point of view and the use of an unreliable narrator, James’ realistic fiction was given new depth and interest. In doing so, he foreshadowed the modernist works of the twentieth century, adding new dimensions to his storytelling. The novella’s influence solidified James’ reputation as a master of narrative theory, further enhancing his standing in literary circles (Crow 2009, 30).

3. Revival of interest in the Gothic genre

The Gothic genre experienced a significant surge in popularity during the 1960s and enjoyed a revival in the 1990s, adopting a gothic or horror film style characterized by melancholy, darkness, and an air of enchantment. These atmospheric elements also find resonance in the *gothic* or *goths* subculture, which emerged from the punk music scene of the 1980s. This subculture embraces a “gloomy” lifestyle characterized by dark clothing, pale complexion, distinctive makeup, and a penchant for the mystical. Drawing inspiration from the Victorian era, late Gothic art, impressionism, and the Renaissance, as well as androgynous fashion blending elements from both men’s and women’s clothing, goth subculture incorporates elements of fetishism, BDSM, horror, cyberpunk, and burlesque. It finds its primary representation among British music groups such as *The Bauhaus*, *The Cure*, and *The Sisters of Mercy*. As the music scene absorbed new influences, the term “goth” became an inclusive label for various “dark” musical subgenres. The most typical ones are *post-punk*, *gothic rock*, *deathrock*, *dark wave*, *horrorpunk*, *psychobilly*, *gothabilly*, *neo/apocalyptic/martial folk*, *steampunk*, and others, including contemporary styles such as *ghostwave* or *witch house* (Reynolds 2005, 429).

Moreover, World Goth Day is an annual commemoration dedicated to the goth subculture. Its origins can be traced back to Britain, specifically to May 22, 2009, when BBC Radio 6 aired a special program focusing on diverse subcultures, prominently featuring the gothic scene (CZ Sanctuary).

In the Czech Republic, the Gothic scene has flourished since the early 1990s. Presently, notable representatives include bands such as *XIII. století*, *Bratrstvo Luny*, and the legendary *Hrdinové Nové Fronty* from the 90s. While the exact number of active adherents, estimated to be fewer than 500, may not be up-to-date, there has been a steady increase in recent years. This growth can be attributed to the efforts of event organizers, such as *Prague Gothic Treffen*, as well as the contributions of the gothic webzine *CZ Sanctuary* (CZ Sanctuary).

4. The influence of cinematography on the growing popularity of the Gothic genre

As previously mentioned, in the 20th and 21st centuries, the Gothic genre has predominantly thrived in the realm of cinematography. Through its effective use of visual elements and fleeting yet impactful effects, cinema has the power to evoke a heightened sense of fear and horror in viewers that often surpasses what can be experienced through reading a book (Crow 2009, 2).

The Victorian Gothic genre has served as a rich source of material for cinema, intertwining with the very origins of horror as a film genre. Cinematic origins of gothic can be traced back to the mid-1890s, coinciding with the emergence of early filmmakers such as George Méliès. In 1898, Méliès crafted what is widely recognized as the first-ever “horror” film, featuring cauldrons, animated skeletons, ghosts, shape-shifting bats, and depictions of the devil. This groundbreaking work marked the advent of supernatural elements in film and set the stage for subsequent developments in the genre. Over time, horror cinema evolved and adapted to meet the evolving expectations of audiences. It embarked on adaptations of classic literary tales, experiencing its renowned “golden age” during the 1920s and 1930s, widely regarded as the

genre's pinnacle. The 1940s and 1950s brought experimental endeavors that incorporated interactive elements within cinemas to intensify the audience's experience. The following decades witnessed the chilling mastery of Hitchcock, the rise of exorcisms and vampires in the 1970s and 1980s, and the enduring trend of paranormal and psychological horror that persists to the present day (NYFA 2015).

In the 20th century, the Gothic genre found significant representation in films centered around iconic characters like Frankenstein and Dracula. For instance, the film *Nosferatu* (1922), an adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, introduced the vampire to the silver screen. The movie adaptation of R. L. Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* titled *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) earned the prestigious Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role in 1932. Numerous other adaptations of literary works by authors of neo-Gothic or horror fiction followed suit, including Edgar Allan Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum* (1961) and the film *Suspiria* (1977), inspired by Thomas De Quincey's 1845 essay. However, there were also notable deviations from the mainstream by authors like Isak Dinesen (e.g., *Seven Gothic Tales*, 1934), Mervyn Peake (e.g., *Titus Groan*, 1946, and *Gormenghast*, 1950), William Faulkner (1897–1962), Daphne du Maurier (1907–1989), Flannery O'Connor (1925–1964), Diane Johnson (1934–), John Gardner (1933–1982), Joyce Carol Oates (1938–), among others (Cuddon 2013, 303-311).

During the 1970s and 1980s, a notable surge in occultism was observed, leaving a significant impact on the horror genre in cinema. This phenomenon can be attributed to two pivotal milestones: *The Exorcist* (1973) and *The Premonition* (1976), both delving into supernatural horror and drawing inspiration from literary sources. One prominent author who played a pivotal role in shaping this genre was Stephen King, whose novels served as the basis for acclaimed horror films such as *Carrie* (1976) and *The Shining* (1980).

Even in the 21st century, the world of cinematography continues to draw inspiration from the rich tapestry of Victorian Gothic. Filmmakers continually offer imaginative adaptations of gothic novels, particularly in the realm of TV films and series. These adaptations not only explore the theme of modern romantic vampires, as seen in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga

(2005) but also delve into Victorian hauntings, as showcased in works like *The Haunting* series. Notable examples include *The Haunting of Hill House* (2018), based on Shirley Jackson's novel of the same name, and *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020), which draws from Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*. These series have garnered immense popularity and captivated a wide viewership in today's entertainment landscape.

Additionally, there are contemporary original works that showcase extreme originality and artistry, falling into the gothic genre and successfully reviving it. Examples include *The Orphanage* (2007), a Spanish gothic horror film, *Cabin in the Woods* (2012), an American mystery and comedy horror film, and *The Babadook* (2014), an Australian film (NYFA 2015).

The contemporary phenomenon and a true "revelation" in the positive sense of the word is, according to McDonagh (2015)²⁹, Tim Burton (1958–). He is regarded as "an independent chapter of cinema of the late 20th and 21st centuries", particularly among melancholic filmmakers. Burton is considered the successor to American Gothic in film, and his works continue to captivate audiences today. While he has created loose adaptations of novels such as Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, he predominantly follows the path of his own ideas and themes, which seemingly stem from his unhappy childhood. Burton's films range from horror for both children and adults to his poignant black-and-white animated tale, *Frankenweenie* (1984), which revolves around a boy reviving his deceased dog using electricity. Another notable work is *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), a film about an unfinished artificial man. One of his more recent creations, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007), is an American-British horror musical comedy that tells the brutal story of a barber elegantly butchering his victims while his landlady disposes of the bodies in her cellar and uses their flesh in her pies. Despite its dark nature, the film is lightened by its genre and softened by the inclusion of a love story in its plot. Drawing inspiration from Burton's texts and imagery, the puppet-animated musical *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993), explores the intertwining of the living and the dead worlds. The story revolves around the Halloween creatures' attempts to prepare Christmas for children, despite their limited understanding of its

29 Libby McDonagh, English Teacher. *Teacher of the Year 2021-2022* in Mt. Diablo, California. Accessed: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/libby-mcdonagh-307687114/>.

essence. Another poignant and dark horror tale is the animated film *Corpse Bride* (2005), where the protagonist navigates between two contrasting realms. The world of the living appears dull and colorless, while the world of the dead is vibrant and lively. In *Dark Shadows* (2011), Burton ventures into the realms of horror, fantasy, and comedy, telling the story of a vampire and his hereditary curse within the confines of an ancient family mansion. Moving forward, Burton's most recent foray into the realm of fantasy is *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (2016), a film that draws inspiration from Ransom Riggs' novel. Throughout his films, Burton masterfully captures dark moods and sentiment, evoking a profound emotional impact on the viewers (McDonagh 2015).

5. Adaptations of James' novella *The Turn of the Screw* in an audiovisual production

Henry James' novella *The Turn of the Screw*, published in 1898, has not only captivated literary audiences but has also inspired numerous adaptations in the realms of opera and theatre. One of the notable early adaptations is Benjamin Britten's two-act opera, also titled *The Turn of the Screw*, which debuted in 1954. Subsequently, the novella has continued to enthrall audiences, with adaptations spanning almost eight decades across television and film.

According to reviewer Mara Bachman (2020), who works as a Horror Movie Features Writer for Valnet, Inc at ScreenRant, among the numerous adaptations that have emerged, only twelve of them stand out as direct adaptations that faithfully follow the original story while presenting it in distinctive and innovative ways. Notably, the 1961 film *The Innocents* is widely regarded as the most exceptional adaptation of *The Turn of the Screw*. On the other hand, the recent 2020 series *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, which is compared with the novella in this work, has also achieved notable popularity among viewers (Bachman 2020). (See appendix 3 for a list of movie adaptations.)

6. Summary of the assessment of the work by the professional public

As previously mentioned in chapter 2.2, Henry James is today considered by the professional public to be a master of narrative theory and a pioneer of a new style, modernism. James was able to bring new ideas to a literary work. He worked with the point of view and with an unreliable narrator. His work was gaining new depth. That is why all of James' work has been of interest to critics since the beginning. However, the novella *The Turn of the Screw* was difficult to interpret. Its message was and is complex. The novella caused heated critical discussions and controversies. The history of criticism of the novella was dealt with in detail by Edward J. Parkinson in his dissertation³⁰ which contains a summary and analysis of published critical articles from 1898 to the end of 1979. Parkinson states here, among other things, that the initial reactions of the professional public were primarily positive. Critics agreed that *The Turn of the Screw* exemplifies exceptional literary artistry. However, they disagreed on the interpretation of the work. The first reviews considered the novella a scary ghost story. Other critics – mainly those from the 1930s – believed that the supernatural elements were just products of the governess' imagination. In 1898, a long critical discussion began. From the beginning, it was dominated by polemics over whether the ghosts were hallucinations of the governess or reality (Parkinson 1991).³¹

30 Parkinson, Edward J., PhD. 1991. *The Turn of the Screw, A History of Its Critical Interpretations 1898 – 1979*. Saint Louis University. Dissertation.

31 Parkinson classifies this critical discussion into several periods: Early Criticism: 1898-1933
Apparitionists vs. Non-apparitionists: 1934-1948
Movement Toward Synthesis: 1949-1957
The Influence of Structuralism: 1958-1969
Culminations: 1970-1979.

6.1 Review of the novella *The Turn of the Screw* after its first release

The novella was first published in Collier's Weekly from January to April 1898³²(preview of the original text – see appendix 4) and was published in book form in October of the same year³³. With a few exceptions, the response to the novella was favorable (Parkinson 1991).

One sharper critique was printed in the American magazine *The Independent* in 1899 (along with another story *Covering End*), where the author of the article writes:

“(...) Mr. James's charm of style and his all but perfect literary art are in both; but “The Turn of the Screw” is the most hopelessly evil story that we have ever read in any literature, ancient or modern. How Mr. James; could, or how any man or woman could, choose to make such a study of infernal human debauchery, for it is nothing else, is unaccountable (...).“

and the author, while appreciating the genius of James, further adds:

“(...) The feeling after perusal of the horrible story is that one has been assisting in an outrage upon the holiest and sweetest fountain of human innocence, and helping to debauch at least by helplessly stand- ing by the pure and trusting nature of children.“
(*The Independent* 1899, 73).

6.2 Controversy of the interpretation of the work: main points

Since the creation of the novella, critics have not been able to agree on the answer to the question: Are the ghosts in the story real or just products of the teacher's imagination?

32 First page of the 12-part serialisation of *The Turn of the Screw* in Collier's Weekly (January 27 – April 16, 1898) – picture of this page – see appendix 4.

33 In October 1898 novella was collected in *The Two Magics* and published by *Macmillan* in New York City and *Heinemann* in London (Reed 2008, p. 102).

6.2.1. Apparitionists vs. Non-apparitionists – landmark in criticism

The dispute about the so-called apparitions/non-apparitions dominated the novella's criticism in the 1930s, when an American writer, Edmund Wilson, published his essay *The Ambiguity of Henry James* (1934) (Parkinson 1991). Wilson's essay marked a landmark in criticism of the work. Wilson argued in his essay that: "the ghosts are not real ghosts at all but merely the governess' hallucinations" (Parkinson, 1991).

Against the "apparition" theory also stood a critic Harold C. Goddard. In his essay *A Pre-Freudian Reading of The Turn of the Screw* (he wrote it around 1920, but it was published in 1957) – like E. Wilson – leaned towards the hallucination theory of the story: the governess is the only one who sees the ghosts; the housekeeper denies seeing them (Goddard 1957, 27-29).

In 1948, Robert B. Heilman's apparition argument was published. In it, Heilman dealt with the story's religious motives. He argued that *The Turn of the Screw* contains symbolism of the conflict between good and evil. The apparition of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel represents evil forces. According to Heilman, the beauty of children was "a symbol of the spiritual perfection of which man is capable". He explains the attempts of spirits to get into the children's bodies by saying that the malevolent forces will always seek dominion over the human soul (Edubirdie 2021).

6.2.2 Synthesis of the previous two critical views

In the 1950s the best critics of the time, John Lydenberg and Joseph J. Firebaugh, tried to combine both critical views (Heilman and Wilson) on the work. Although the very first previews of this kind appear already at the beginning of the last century. They are analytical essays by writers Oliver Elton (1907) or Virginia Woolf (1918)³⁴ (Parkinson 1991).

34 In her 1918 essay, Virginia Woolf shared her perspective on James' ghost stories. According to her, the way James blends the supernatural with the natural is so smooth that instead of evoking an excessive sense of fear, it tends to evoke feelings of mere disgust or disbelief, sometimes even bordering on ridicule. She put these narratives in contrast with Rudyard Kipling's *The Mark of the Beast* and *The Return of Imray*, asserting that while they possess enough strength to repulse readers with their horror, they are too forceful to evoke a sense of awe or marvel (Parkinson 1991).

6.2.3 Transition to structuralism

Then criticism gradually moves from synthesis towards structuralism. James' work is definitely considered ambiguous. Critics focus on explaining what causes the ambiguity (mainly the structure of the text) and how the ambiguity affects the reader. Structuralism in work criticism reaches its peak in the 1970s. During this period, proponents of subjective and impressionistic criticism entered the critical discourse. These individuals recognized the impact of literary works on their own selves and posited that it had a comparable influence on other readers. Muriel West concludes this critical period with her publication *A Stormy Night with The Turn of the Screw* (1964) (Parkinson 1991).

6.3 The author's stance towards his work

In the chapter *The Ghosts: Hallucinations Or Realities* Parkinson (1991) states that James clearly did not take sides in the central "apparition" controversy surrounding *The Turn of the Screw* (Parkinson 1991).

In his statements – particularly in the Prefaces – Parkinson finds abundant evidence that his intention was to create an intractable ambiguity (Parkinson 1991).

6.4 The view of contemporary criticism of the novella

The critical discussion of *The Turn of the Screw*, which began more than 100 years ago, continues to this day. Contemporary critics speak of the novella with great respect.

James Seaton³⁵, American writer, professor and literary critic, returns eighty years later (2014) to Edmund Wilson's critical essay *The Ambiguity of Henry James* (1934) and he leans towards a view that he believes James ultimately endorsed: ""(...) but is instead a story about

35 James Seaton in his book *Literary Criticism from Plato to Postmodernism* examines the impact of Edmund Wilson's essay *The Ambiguity of Henry James* on our understanding of the author's literary works. Accessed: Cambridge Literature blog. January 12, 2022 <http://www.cambridgeblog.org/2014/11/the-turn-of-the-screw-and-edmund-wilson/>.

“a neurotic case of sex repression” in which “the ghosts are not real ghosts but hallucinations of the governess.”” Seaton (2014) writes that Edmund Wilson was one of the critics who offered this Freudian interpretation of James’ story (that the governess is neurotic and all the supernatural is happening only in her head) (Seaton 2014).

Radoslav Nenadál, a translator of James’ work into Czech, wrote about the novella *The Turn of the Screw* (English translation of the original quote in Czech):

“We are dealing with a story that grows into a cautionary parable about the harms of violence and all obstacles placed in the way of a young person's free development... However, there is no need to particularly emphasize or argue about this homosexual subtext, just to take the children’s inclination to those ghosts of beautiful nights dreamt up, which the governess, on the other hand, finds so horrendous, as the desire to realize a child’s fantasy and, above all, the right to choose what I will be and what I feel I must be... James has made an extreme case. If a young person cannot continue to live the way he imagines and according to his intrinsic foundation, he perishes like a flower in the dark or in the dry.” (Databáze knih 2006).

Leon Edel, American/Canadian literary critic and biographer, the author of *The Life of Henry James* (1953), describes the transformation of James’ narrative methods that occurred in his work after 20 years of creative writing, including *The Turn of the Screw*:

“(…)in *The Spoils of Poynton* (1897), *What Maisie Knew* (1897), *The Turn of the Screw* and *In the Cage* (1898), and *The Awkward Age* (1899), James began to use the methods of alternating “picture” and dramatic scene, close adherence to a given angle of vision, a withholding of information from the reader, making available to him only that which the characters see. The subjects of this period are the developing consciousness and moral education of children – in reality James’ old international theme of innocence in a corrupting world, transferred to the English setting.”

Edel (2012) explains how Henry James influenced the development of the novel. He was a crucial figure in the transition between literary realism and modernism. James was more deeply interested in human behavior and the inner workings of the mind. Furthermore, to explore the psychology of his characters, he used modernist techniques, such as stream-of-consciousness (Edel 2012).

Brad Leithauser, a contemporary American writer and essayist, in *The New York Times Magazine*, in the article *Ever Scarier: On “The Turn of the Screw”* very highly evaluates the author’s language: “The language is extremely dense – late James in all his rococo rhetorical finery [...]”. Leithauser also questions whether the governess is mad and sees this ambiguity as the author's desire to make us all the jurors. In this regard, he summarizes two different historical critical perspectives as follows: “Fine, intelligent readers have confirmed the validity of the ghosts (Truman Capote); equally fine and intelligent readers have thunderously established the governess’s madness (Edmund Wilson).”

Leithauser (2012) also states: “*The Turn of the Screw* provides an unrivalled opportunity to read in a bifurcated fashion, to operate paragraph by paragraph on two levels. Logically, the effect of this ought to be expansive. James is trafficking in openness; readers can shift, at whim, from ghostly tale to character study.” (Leithauser 2012)³⁶.

Practical part

7. New approach to the novella *The Turn of the Screw* in the series *The Haunting of Bly Manor*

When it comes to adapting a literary work into a screenplay, there are essentially two approaches: direct adaptation and free adaptation. (Chapter 5 of this work specifically mentions the direct and free film adaptations of James’ novella, *The Turn of the Screw*.) A

36 Printed in magazine *The New Yorker*. October 20. Accessed March 10, 2020.
<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/ever-scarier-on-the-turn-of-the-screw>.

direct adaptation closely follows the source material, while a free adaptation grants screenwriters the freedom to innovate, explore alternative approaches, and incorporate contemporary social themes. Additionally, free adaptation allows for the emphasis on the environment alongside the characters. In the latest free adaptation of James' novella, *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, the house itself takes center stage, positioning the production within the “haunted house” genre.

7.1 Unofficial category “haunted house”

An unofficial and yet-to-be-defined category of “haunted house” films has emerged in cinema. The initial forays into this genre appeared in various countries, including Czechoslovakia, with the short student film *Strašidelný dům* directed by Ján Sebechlebský³⁷ in the late 1980s (Filmový přehled 2020). However, a significant breakthrough in this category came with the horror series, *The Haunting of Hill House*, which marked screenwriter and director Mike Flanagan's first venture into serialized storytelling. Romain (2020) about the TV series *The Haunting of Hill House* said: “(...) bent the rules of television, molding time and space and memory into something profound and picturesque.”

Drawing inspiration from Shirley Jackson's 1959 novel with the identical title, *The Haunting of Hill House*, the series captivated audiences with its haunting atmosphere, eerie sounds, and enigmatic ghosts. Within this category, we also find *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, Flanagan's second series situated in a “haunted house” setting, further demonstrating his expertise in crafting supernatural narratives (Romain 2020).

37 *The Haunted House*, originally titled *Strašidelný dům*, is a non-distributed student short film from Czechoslovakia. It was produced by Studio FAMU in 1988 and directed by Ján Sebechlebský, with a running time of 22 minutes (Filmový přehled 2020).

7.2 Current social issues in *The Haunting of Bly Manor* series

The current television series based on James' novella has gained significant popularity, primarily due to the creators' fresh approach to the novella. They departed from the previous film adaptations that strictly adhered to the plot and timeline. Instead, they have incorporated other short stories by James, seamlessly weaving them into the narrative. These additional stories offer insights into the characters' personalities and behaviors, in line with James' style. The series takes a non-linear approach, branching out into various storylines, making the story more dynamic, thrilling, and captivating. Addressing contemporary social issues openly, the creators delve into topics that are only subtly hinted at in the novella, particularly exploring themes of homosexuality while omitting the inclusion of pedophilia, which is alluded to in the book. Additionally, the series touches upon racial issues and delves into the manipulation of individuals' minds and psyches, both by living manipulators and supernatural entities like ghosts.

7.2.1 The topic of homosexuality

In the adaptation, the screenwriter consciously explores the subtle homosexual undertones present in James' work by portraying the two main characters as lesbians. One of them is the governess Dani, who is completely isolated in a new environment, is looking for a kindred spirit, and has a need for communication and contact. She finds friendship and later emotional comfort in a woman. That woman is gardener Jamie, who is someone Dani can lean on. Although their relationship remains private, the crucial aspect lies in the profound connection they share. Together, they face all the sorrows that come with working at Bly. The series explores the transformative power of love between two individuals, transcending gender. It portrays how such a relationship can liberate them from loneliness, fears, and insecurities, providing strength and a sense of security. Unlike the novella, this adaptation presents a poignant and compelling love story.

7.2.2 The topic of race

The creators of the series demonstrate a commitment to racial representation by casting a Black woman in the role of the housekeeper and an Indian male as the cook, among others. These casting choices, while not explicitly mentioned in the original text, contribute to a more inclusive portrayal. It is worth emphasizing that during the latter half of the 19th century, such racial diversity and positions of authority for non-white individuals were not commonly conceivable. The prevailing societal norms restricted non-white individuals to servant roles, with few exceptions, such as Queen Victoria's Indian companion, Abdul. Despite the abolition of slavery (in England in 1834 and in the USA in 1865), racial prejudice persisted, and individuals with dark skin were predominantly confined to menial occupations (Morgan 2009, 192). The black ghettos in London during that time also witnessed significant racial tensions and unrest (Livingstonová 2021, 55-56). Even today, society continues to grapple with racial³⁸ and gender biases. However, present-day London stands as a multicultural city that serves as an exemplar of harmonious coexistence within an ethnically diverse community (Sugarman 2017).

38 In June 2020, citizens of the United Kingdom joined the protests in solidarity with the United States following the tragic killing of George Floyd, an African American man. The demonstrations were ignited by Floyd's death in Minneapolis, where a white police officer pressed his knee against Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes. The crowd united their voices, chanting the well-known slogan "Black Lives Matter," which has been used for years in the United States. Taken from: <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/video-i-v-londyne-zalezi-na-cernoskych-zivotech-protest-skoncil-potyckou-108493> and: <https://news.sky.com/story/black-lives-matter-protests-new-rules-imposed-as-police-try-to-avoid-violence-12005747>

7.4 Awards/Ratings and recognition of *The Haunting of Bly Manor* series

7.4.1 Awards given by writers' and TV/film associations

The Haunting of Bly Manor series, along with its remarkable performances, received recognition and nominations for prestigious film and television awards in 2021. The esteemed association The Horror Writer's Association nominated the series for *The Bram Stoker Awards* in the *Superior Achievement in a Screenplay* category. In 2021, the series got three nominations for the *Critics Choice Super Awards*, including *Best Horror Series*. Victoria Pedretti and T'Nia Miller both received nominations for their outstanding performance in the *Best Actress in a Horror Series* category. Victoria Pedretti also earned a nomination for the *MTV Movie & TV Awards* in the *Most Frightened Performance* category, which she won for her portrayal of the frightened governess (see appendix 6). Furthermore, *The Haunting of Bly Manor* was nominated by the International Press Academy at *The Satellite Awards* in the *Best Television Series – Genre* category, ultimately emerging as the winner. The series was also nominated for the *Primetime Emmy Awards* in the category of *Outstanding Sound Editing for a Limited or Anthology Series*, specifically for the music editing in the second episode titled *The Two Faces*. The series also received a notable nomination at *The GLAAD Media Awards*³⁹ – recognition awards given for promoting equitable, precise, and inclusive portrayal of the LGBTQ community and its associated matters. (The ranking of these awards and nominations for the year 2021, compiled from en.wikipedia.com, can be found as appendix 5).

39 *The GLAAD Media Awards* recognize and celebrate media that demonstrate equitable, precise, and inclusive depictions of LGBTQ individuals and themes. Since its establishment in 1990, The GLAAD Media Awards have evolved into the preeminent LGBTQ awards ceremony worldwide, delivering impactful messages of acceptance to audiences across the globe. Taken from: <https://www.glaad.org/mediaawards/32>.

7.4.2 Rating and viewership of the TV series

Websites like Den of Geek⁴⁰, Digital Trends⁴¹, and Rottentomatoes⁴² provide such reviews and recommendations for *The Haunting of Bly Manor* series. Rottentomatoes utilizes the Tomatometer® system, which aggregates the opinions of numerous film and television critics. A notable endorsement on Tomatometer® comes from TV Review critic Zofia Wijaszka, whose text reads as follows:

“The Haunting of Bly Manor is, as Flora would say, perfectly splendid. It’s not a ghost story, but, unambiguously, a terrifying love story. Its also a tale about grief and mourning that we have for the loved ones that pass.” (Rottentomatoes 2021).

Viewers expressed positive feedback about the series on various platforms, including streaming services and websites dedicated to audience critique. Notably, The Futon Critic⁴³ website featured favorable evaluations from viewers. The Futon Critic is associated with the social network Twitter, where it gathers ratings through likes and comments. Although the age range of the viewers remains unknown as they typically do not disclose their age on these platforms, the wide diversity of the audience can be inferred from the varied photos shared on Twitter, social network.

The website Deadline monitored the exceptionally high viewership of the series during October 2020, particularly upon the premiere of its first episode: “The Haunting of Bly Manor topped the Nielsen streaming list for the week of October 12-18, with more than 1.8 billion minutes of viewing as Netflix owned all 10 spots on the chart.” (Hayes 2020)⁴⁴.

40 Den of Geek 2020 (reference in the literature list).

41 Digital Trends 2020.

42 Rottentomatoes 2020.

43 The Futon Critic 2020.

44 Hayes, Dade. 2020. The Haunting Of Bly Manor’ Tops All-Netflix Nielsen Streaming Chart. *Deadline*. March 20, 2023. <https://deadline.com/2020/11/the-haunting-of-bly-manor-tops-all-netflix-nielsen-streaming-chart-1234613737/>.

7.5 The series *The Haunting of Bly Manor* brings the reader back to the book *The Turn of the Screw*

According to comments on the ČBDB Booxy⁴⁵ server, a significant portion of viewers who watched *The Haunting of Bly Manor* series was unfamiliar with the original book. Intrigued by the series, they subsequently sought out and read the book to compare and contrast the two versions. Many were particularly interested in uncovering the taboo topics James intended to convey subtly in his novella. However, upon reaching the end, they expressed disappointment and confusion as the author only provided subtle hints instead of clear explanations. Unraveling James' nuanced writing proved challenging for some. Others interpreted the book purely as a psychological tale. Therefore, it can be observed that *The Haunting of Bly Manor* played a significant role in reconnecting numerous viewers with the works of James, stimulating renewed interest in his literature (ČBDB 2023).

For readers who struggle with comprehending James' original version, the serialized adaptation provides a more accessible medium. While preserving the core narrative, the series adapts it to the modern era. The substantial viewership and the diverse display of viewer photos on streaming platforms and social networks imply that the series has successfully captured the attention of multiple generations (see chapter 7.4).

7.6 Reading James' novella *The Turn of The Screw* in the present

Even after more than a century, James' original work, *The Turn of the Screw*, continues to captivate readers, with their readership and reactions being closely observed through various online platforms, including newspaper websites. One of these sites also rated *The Turn of the Screw* as one of the 16 best gothic novellas ever written. This evaluation was carried out by 1. The Guardian newspaper, 2. by the "1001 Books You Must Read Before You Die" list, 3. by the reading public (see appendix 8) (The Guardian 2014⁴⁶).

45 ČBDB Booxy (book database). 2023. *The Turn of the Screw* [online], [cit. 2023-03-20], taken from: < <https://www.cbdb.cz/kniha-4561-utazeni-sroubu-the-turn-of-the-screw> >.

46 Frost, Adam & Vasiliev, Zhenia. 2014. So which Gothic novels are the best? *The Guardian*. May 9. Accessed January 12, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/interactive/2014/may/09/reading-gothic-novel->

In the Czech Republic, a website called ČBDB Booxy allows readers to share their impressions and motivations for reading the book. According to their data, *The Turn of the Screw* has been read 110 times between May 2020 and January 2023. The accompanying graph also illustrates that the majority of readers completed the book within a month of starting it, highlighting their engagement (see appendix 7: Readership chart of *The Turn of the Screw*) (ČBDB 2023).

8. Comparison of the novella *The Turn of the Screw* and the contemporary TV series *The Haunting of Bly Manor*

A 21st-century TV series is not likely to strictly follow a template that is over 120 years old. It is not probable for many reasons. Since the publication of James' novella *The Turn of the Screw* in 1898, roughly five generations of readers have grown up. General lifestyle has gradually changed and continues to change, with it also reading and viewing tastes of people, and consequently also the way of presenting and interpreting literary works. The novella revealed taboo topics, but these topics were rather hinted at to the reader of the time but not spoken about openly. The contemporary viewer is at an advantage against this. The script for *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020) shows and sometimes names these hints, nuances, and puzzles that belong to the modernist writing style.

In the original literary work, the plot is continuous, with just one storyline. Although one of the characters (the housekeeper) goes back in time when the governess recounts the previous events, it is only in retrospect. The concept of the series is different. It is expanded with new themes, new characters, and new plots related to them. This chapter compares both adaptations from several points of view, from the theme to the linguistic composition of the text.

[pictures.](#)

8.1 Theme

The plot is the same in both the novella and the TV series: a young, inexperienced governess comes to the family mansion to raise two siblings – orphans. She is hired by their uncle, to whom the children are entrusted after the death of their parents; he does not seem interested in them. “Something is wrong” with the children. The governess soon realizes or believes that the children are communicating with ghosts and begins to see the ghosts herself, giving the story a touch of horror. The end of James’ story is mysterious and ambiguous, thanks to the unexplained death of the boy Miles. The supernatural is debatable in the book (as previously mentioned in chapter 6.2.1). The series, on the other hand, does not deny the presence of ghosts in the house; it even ingeniously involves them in the plot in such a way that it is impossible to recognize that they are inanimate, as it is in the case of Mrs. Grose. The series theme expands with a new dimension: the love story between two women and, at the same time, the sacrifice made for others and for love.

8.2 Timeline

The original story takes place in the second half of the 19th century in England, where progress in the form of the Industrial Revolution is at its peak but where the majority of society is very conservative and puritan. It appears that most film adaptations tend to preserve this period and the atmosphere of the time. The series sets the story’s beginning in the 80s of the last century and, unlike the original, continues on about 20 years further into the future thanks to its extended storyline. This time shift can be seen in the general progress and in the appearance of the characters (the way of dressing – trousers for women have long been a common thing). It is also evident in the thinking: there is no occupational prejudice (women do jobs that are considered male occupations and vice versa: one is a woman who is a gardener, one male character is a cook), there is no racial prejudice (the housekeeper, Mrs. Grose, is a Black woman and takes the highest authority in the house, which would have been regarded as an action that the author would have faced severe repercussions for during the Victorian era; also the cook Owen is Indian). This freedom is also reflected in the expression of the characters, in

their personal ambitions, in the topics of conversations the characters have, or generally in their opinions.

8.3 Environment

The environment of both works is the same – the Bly Manor – an old but well-preserved mansion in England with dark corners and secrets. Both versions of the story capture an ominous atmosphere of the place. In James' version, the governess describes the atmosphere subjectively through her internal monologue. The series shows the atmosphere through image and sound: overcast weather, rain, and fog prevail on the exterior; the play of light and shadow takes place in the interior. The silence is broken by the trembling of the curtains and the creaking wooden elements of the old house. Strange occurrences, such as a crack in the wall that constantly changes its place, the spontaneous opening of the dollhouse's door, muddy footprints appearing in the house once in a while, and ghosts popping up on the screen intensify the oppressive feeling. The setting in the series is expanded to include a garden, a chapel (a strange-to-depressing place where Mrs. Grose goes to contemplate), and a lake. In the series, the lake is the second main place of action after the house. The movement of some characters in the house and garden environment is limited; they cannot cross the border of the mansion. They hit an invisible wall. Other places that appear or are mentioned in the series are Miles' school, Owen's mother's home, undefined places in America, Jamie's flower shop, and the city of London – where uncle Henry's company is based.

8.4 Content and plot

The story begins in summer, which remains the same in both the novella and the TV series. The book ends with the death of the child hero, Miles. In the series, the governess dies, and both children, Flora and Miles, live to adulthood.

In the book, the story unfolds on about 112 pages. There are no significant plot twists except at the end of the story (the death of Miles). The creators of the series were able to turn a

relatively short literary work into nine episodes. However, the screenwriter incorporated five episodes into the series containing flashbacks of the characters and one episode devoted to James' short story *The Romance of Certain Old Clothes*. This episode is essential to the story, as its inanimate protagonist connects the past and the present of Bly Manor.

The Romance of Certain Old Clothes is a story of a ghost, a former resident of the manor, the terminally ill Viola, who was murdered centuries ago in the house by her sister, Perdita. After her sister's death, Perdita marries Viola's husband, Arthur, and becomes the stepmother to Viola's daughter, Isabel. Later, the family struggles with money, so Perdita decides to open a chest that belonged to her sister to sell her dress. However, Viola's ghost is hidden in the chest and murders Perdita. Arthur finds Perdita's body and throws the chest – the cause of the misfortune – into the lake. After that, he leaves the mansion in Bly with his daughter forever. Nevertheless, Viola's spirit remains as the “Lady in the Lake” in Bly and searches the mansion at night to find her daughter killing anyone who stands in her way. This story has a crucial connection to everything happening on the grounds of Bly.

The story takes place in several timelines – in the present, in a repeated retrospective view (in the memories of individual characters, and also deep in the past of the mansion), and in the future (in the premonitions, visions of the persons who act here as media – children, teacher). It can be initially challenging for the viewer to navigate, forcing him to carefully follow the events, gestures, hints, and ways of conversation between people.

8.5 Characters

The story does not have one main character – all of them play an essential role in the story. However, there are three pivotal characters: the governess and the siblings – Flora and Miles. That remains the same in both works. The difference is that in the novella, the governess is anonymous (the author never mentions her name) and is the unreliable narrator of the story, which is retold years later at a house party by one of its participants, Douglas, who inherited the manuscript of governess' story. In the series, the governess has a name: Dani, but she does

not narrate the story. Additionally, there are several new or modified characters in the series. Some of these characters are alive; others are dead (ghosts), but the viewer does not know about this fact until a certain time. One of the new characters is a gardener, Jamie, who also narrates the story in retrospect at Flora's wedding 20 years after the events that happened in Bly without revealing that she was a participant.

Flora and Miles. The siblings are orphans who inherited the Bly mansion after the death of their parents. They are used to a carefree life and being looked after by servants. They are sort of their own masters; they basically do what they want, and they do not respect the rules too much, which starts to change after the governess arrives. It is evident that they both came of age prematurely. Furthermore, there is mainly the fact that they are possessed by ghosts who control them and influence their originally guileless children's character with evil and depraved thoughts. The children then cover each other, resist surveillance, and protect their secrets so that they can meet the spirits. (The question is why children allow themselves to be influenced by spirits. A possible explanation: their uncle does not care about them, and they lack interest, family, love, understanding, and sharing experiences). So far, the original and the series match, but there is another ghost in the series, the "Lady of the Lake". She is dangerous to everyone who crosses her path. The children know her route and have mechanisms (a dollhouse) to know when the feared ghost is in the house and avoid her. Therefore, compared to the novella, they are not completely defenseless in the series. Moreover, while Miles dies in James' book and Flora is taken away by Mrs. Grose to her uncle, in the TV series, both children grow up, and 20 years later, they do not remember anything that happened at Bly.

Boy Miles. He is a very intelligent but wayward boy, who is, on the one hand, very sensitive, and on the other hand, we learn about his cruelty when he violently kills a bird at school – and because of this, he is expelled. Miles' precocious behavior is demonstrated by acting like he is the master of the house and speaking to the governess in the style of a worldly man. Additionally, in the series, he, under the control of Peter Quint's ghost, is behind the murder of Mrs. Grose when she is pushed into a well. (This happens moments before the governess, Dani, arrives at Bly and sees Miles and Mrs. Grose standing by the well. Dani, and the viewer, do not understand this connection until a specific time.

Girl Flora. Younger sister of Miles. She is friendly and adapts to the new governess' rules more quickly. Nevertheless, she, too, is erratic and does not always tell the truth to protect her brother and the living and non-living things in the house. In the series, Flora appears as a very empathetic girl. She knows how to deal with the "Lady in the Lake" and protects the governess Dani from her. In a dollhouse that is a replica of the mansion in Bly, where Flora never turns off the lights, the dolls represent the people in the house (living and non-living). That way, she can keep an eye on the living and protect them from the dead. She talks to the ghost of Rebecca Jessel (the former governess), who visits her at night.

Governess Dani. The governess is a helpful, self-sacrificing, if frightened, young woman from the countryside. She discovers paranormal things about the children in Bly. She finds that the kids communicate with the ghosts of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel, who have impure thoughts and are trying to control the children. The governess tries to prevent this. She wants to interrupt their communication. In James' version, Miles does not survive her efforts. The governess is to blame, and she is not spoken about anymore. The series, however, ends with the governess' death.

In the series, the viewers also learn about Dani's past before joining Bly. She is traumatized herself – her fiancé was hit by a truck after he got out of the car when she broke up with him. He died, and Dani blames herself for his death. Her mental health does not appear to be in good condition; she suffers from anxiety attacks and regularly sees her fiancé's face in the reflection. Once in Bly, she starts to see the ghosts of Miss Jessel and Peter Quint, which causes her to act seemingly paranoid, and others think that she has crazy behavior.

The sacrifices she makes to save the people she loves add depth to her character. She saves Flora by letting Viola's spirit permanently inhabit her body. This act also frees all previously imprisoned souls that died on the grounds of Bly over the centuries. Unfortunately, this sacrifice causes her death. After several years of living with her partner Jamie in America, she begins to see Viola's face in the reflection. She knows she could endanger her partner, so she returns to Bly and makes her second sacrifice: she takes Viola's place at the bottom of the lake.

Mrs. Grose (Hannah Grose). She is a housekeeper who temporarily takes care of the children until the new governess arrives. She is the woman who manages the entire family residence. In the novella, she is a country woman, under whose wings the children can hide. She is kind and strict but not very savvy about what is going on around the kids in Bly. In the series, on the contrary, she is a knowledgeable woman, spiritually grounded, who perceives any small changes in the mood of the inhabitants of Bly, any stirring of their minds. Mrs. Grose is very close with the governess. However, there are many questions about her. She only stays on the estate, never crossing the property line. When the cook offers her a trip outside Bly, she excuses herself, saying she has duties. She does not let anyone into her privacy. She does not talk about herself. The governess notices that she does not drink, eat, and probably does not sleep. Mrs. Grose often visits the garden chapel, where she spends much time.

In one of the episodes dedicated to her story, the audience learns that Grose is dead – a ghost. Her body lies in a well, where Peter Quint, reincarnated in Miles' body, pushed her. She herself has no idea that she is dead. With time, she loses touch with what is real and what is a memory. She realizes the cruel reality only when she sees her body at the bottom of the well, which closes her chapter, and her spirit disappears.

Henry Wingrave. The children's uncle, their only relative. He does not seem interested in them. He does not visit them and does not want to be contacted. In the novella, we can only guess why. In the TV series, he is an alcoholic haunted by remorse. He feels guilty about the death of his brother, the father of the children. He has terrifying hallucinations. The viewers learn later that Henry had a secret affair with his brother's wife, whom he loved, and that he was Flora's biological father in the series. He is a weakling who eventually overcomes himself and comes to Bly at the right time.

Miss Jessel (Rebecca Jessel). She is the ghost of the previous governess, who ended up at the bottom of the lake. Why this happened and what exactly happened is not clearly stated in the book. All that is clear is that this was preceded by a relationship with Mr. Wingrave's driver, Peter Quint, and that Rebecca was perhaps expecting a child with Quint. She then appears as a ghost in the house at his side. She is under his influence. In the series, she becomes a ghost

after Peter drowns her in the lake so they can be together forever. She tries to break away from Quint, knowing he is a bad influence. When the ghost of Quint plans to reincarnate Rebecca and himself into the children's bodies, Rebecca, working with a desperate but determined Dani, bravely prevents it. She knows that the children's souls would be lost. She is breaking free from his influence.

Peter Quint. The ghost of a man who was employed in previous years by Mr. Wingrave as the driver. He dazzled the former governess, Rebecca. He had an affair with her, manipulated her when they were both alive, and continued to manipulate her when they became ghosts. In the novella, his character is described as vicious. Quint's character is more colorful in the series, and we can also see a glimpse of his backstory that suggests that even he did not have an easy past. However, he only does what he benefits from. He takes advantage of Rebecca's love. After the "Lady in the Lake" kills Peter, causing him to become a ghost, he decides to drown Rebecca: he enters the lake in her body. Rebecca is scared and feels betrayed. Peter pushes her where she does not want to go: he says they will continue to be together and immortal when their spirits incarnate into both children.

Other characters appearing only in the series:

Gardener Jamie. A female character that does not appear in the book. However, she is one of the crucial characters in the series, and she is also the narrator. Jamie is the manor's gardener who stays away from people and spends her time caring about flowers instead. When Jamie opens up to Dani, the viewers learn about her difficult past, which unquestionably shaped her character. She is an independent, resilient but loving, and protective woman.

Cook Owen. An honest man who has affection for Mrs. Grose. However, he is quite shy. He gets along with children and keeps a good mood in the house if he is present (he lives in the city and only commutes to Bly). His lot in life is to take care of his sick mother, so he neglects his personal life.

Edmund. He is the ghost of Dani's fiancé, who died in a car accident. As a ghost, he appears to Dani as a symbol of guilt.

8.6 Language and structure

The vocabulary of the literary work itself is rich. Its language is understandably slightly outdated. There are expressions typical for the genre, such as hyperbolic phrases, for example, “sheer terror” or “uncanny ugliness”. However, the language is not so outdated that today’s readers cannot understand it. The problem is more in the complexity of the style. The governess’s narration seems quite wordy that it is not entirely easy to follow her thought processes, and the text sometimes sounds illogical, which can leave the reader confused. The author also uses very long sentences and whole passages. Long narrative passages alternate with conversational passages. These, in turn, are often only indicative, and it is up to the reader how he will interpret them. Nothing is firmly anchored; ambiguity prevails. At the end of the story, the reader can feel baffled and unsure of what actually happened in Bly, what was real and what was not.

Conclusion

The aim of this bachelor's thesis was to evaluate the legacy of Henry James' novella *The Turn of the Screw* in relation to the resurgence of interest in the Gothic genre, mainly through cinematography. The evaluation was conducted by analyzing the novella *The Turn of the Screw* and comparing it to the TV series adaptation *The Haunting of Bly Manor*. The findings demonstrated the interconnectedness and differences between the two works. Moreover, the thesis showed how cinematography enables the exploration of themes merely hinted at in James' novella, thereby bringing them to the forefront and depicting their relevance in contemporary society. Simultaneously, the thesis contributed to clarifying the interpretations of James' novella, which had been subject to varied perspectives among critics and readers, often classified as a mere ghost story or placed within alternative literary categories. As a result, the stated objective of this work was successfully accomplished.

The work was divided into a theoretical and a practical part. The theoretical part was comprised of six chapters providing a comprehensive overview of the Gothic genre and its prominent authors. The initial three chapters traced the genre's evolution from its inception to the contemporary era, delving into the life and literary contributions of Henry James. Subsequently, the fourth and fifth chapters centered specifically on the realm of cinematography, emphasizing its profound impact on the popularization of Victorian Gothic themes. Moreover, these chapters examined the adaptations of James' novella within the audiovisual medium, focusing on two notable ones: the acclaimed film *The Innocents* (1961) and the recent series *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020), which was later explored in the practical part of this work. The sixth chapter presented scholarly criticism of James' novella, highlighting its intriguing development since its publication. From the initial misunderstanding of the novella, the Apparitionists/Non-apparitionists controversy, to the structuralist approach and current criticism. In addition, the thesis draws attention to the fact that the much-discussed novella became the starting point for modern literary criticism and, at the same time, an essential work for the development of the modern psychological novel, to which James contributed through the profound psychology of his characters.

The practical part focused on comparing the novella and the TV series, *The Haunting Of Bly Manor*, in two chapters. In chapter seven, the questions about the series creators' approach to the novella and the series' popularity were answered. The TV series was set in recent times and openly interpreted hot social topics – mainly homosexuality. There was also attention, for example, to racial balance in the cast. The TV series is popular for its relevance, which is confirmed by the ratings and awards it received, which are included in this chapter. Also, for these reasons, this TV series was chosen for comparison with the novella. Finally, the chapter also draws attention to the series' positive effect on viewers in relation to reading James' novella today.

Chapter eight was the pivotal point of the research itself, where the comparison of the two works, the novella, and the TV series, was drawn. James' novella was compared from various points of view with regard to the series, and an important conclusion has been reached that the series popularized James' novella mainly through themes still relevant at the beginning of the 21st century. Taboo themes that James only hinted at in the novella, the TV series developed and added more. It mainly highlighted the still-discussed topic of a different sexual orientation and the prejudices associated with it by adding a same-sex love relationship to the original story – here of the two main adult heroines, and drew attention to the impact of isolation on the individual's mental health – here specifically on the person of the governess. The creators of the series kept James' gothic atmosphere and setting while adding a retro ambiance by placing the story in the 80s of the 20th century. To the period without electronic conveniences, when communication still took place on a direct, personal level. To the period when the interest in Gothic is reviving and when society is still bound by certain prejudices, e.g., those against the already mentioned homosexuality. The main research question, whether the reason for the series' popularity is a reflection of current social issues that could not be openly addressed at the time of the novella's inception rather than an interest in the work of Henry James itself, was therefore answered in the affirmative. The series then pushes all viewers to think about how modern society approaches topics such as homosexuality or xenophobia today. The contribution of the work is also a more detailed insight into the era of Victorian England and a broadening view of the Gothic genre as such.

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List of appendixes

Appendix 1: Henry James, photo

Appendix 2: Examples of Gothic vocabulary

Appendix 3: List of movie adaptations of the novella *The Turn of the Screw* by Mara Bachman

Appendix 4: First page of the 12-part serialisation of *The Turn of the Screw* in Collier's Weekly, photo

Appendix 5: The List of Film and TV Critics Awards and Nominations Ranking for 2021, picture

Appendix 6: Victoria Pedretti as a frightened governess, photo

Appendix 7: Which Gothic novels are the best?, picture

Appendix 8: Readership chart of *The Turn of the Screw* (Czech Republic), picture

Appendixes

Appendix 1) Henry James photo, taken from:

<https://www.cambridgeblog.org/2014/11/the-turn-of-the-screw-and-edmund-wilson/>.



Appendix 2) Examples of Gothic vocabulary:

mystery – devilish, spell, ghosts, goblins, magic, magician, miracle, necromancer, omen, ominous, sorcerer, specter, peculiar, amulet, vision;

fear, terror or sorrow – afflicted, anguish, agony, anxiety, apprehension, concern, despair, disheartening, dismay, dread, frightened, grief, hopeless, dire, horror, mournful, melancholic, wretched, mournfully, panic, sadly, shriek, sorrow, pity, tears, terrible, unhappy, pitiful;

surprise – alarm, shocking, stare, amazed, astonishment;

haste – anxious, breathless, flight, frantic, impetuous, impatient, hasty, sudden;

anger – enraged, furious, fury, rage, grudge, temper;

size – huge, gigantic, giant, big, tremendous;

darkness – dark, gloomy, shadowed, black, night (words chosen by Harris from *The Castle of Otranto*).

Appendix 3) List of movie adaptations of the novella *The Turn of the Screw* by Mara Bachman

1. *The Innocents* (1961) is a psychological horror film from 1961, directed and produced by Jack Clayton, with Deborah Kerr as the lead. This adaptation has long been widely considered the best adaptation of *The Turn Of The Screw*. It takes place at a time when the story was written, following the story almost word for word.

2. *The Nightcomers* (1971) American horror film directed by Michael Winner, with Marlon Brando as Peter Quint, is an overly sexually-oriented rendition of the original story. The film is considered the scariest and most disturbing of all the adaptations.

3. *The Innocents* (1974), an American film by director Dan Curtis, with Lynn Redgrave in the lead, filmed for ABC Television, deserves credit for the disturbing portrayal of Miles and Flora. Children are one of the scariest features in this adaptation.

4. *Otra Vuelta de Tuerca* (1985) is a Spanish adaptation of the story. Instead of a governess, a man is hired to take care of Miles and Flora.

5. *The Turn of the Screw* (1992), a British film by director Rusty Lemorande, where the fear lies in what might happen to the governess at the hands of the children.

6. *The Turn of the Screw* (1999), an American-British co-production TV film directed by Ben Bolt, in the role of the master is Colin Firth, and in the role of governess is Jodhi May. This period adaptation is thoughtfully using every piece of the original story. It could be considered one of the closest adaptations to the original story, but it is not one of the best to watch due to its pace.

7. *Presence of Mind* (1999), another film based on James' short story, a Spanish-American dramatic film from 1999, directed by Antoni Aloy. It is an impressive

adaptation that emphasizes the nuances of *The Turn Of The Screw*, but unlike the original, it is almost remade scene after scene.

8. *In a Dark Place* (2006) is a British-Luxembourg version of the horror story directed by Donato Rotunno with Leelee Sobieski (American actress famous for her role as Joan in the television film *Joan of Arc*, 1999) in the lead. This adaptation is an indistinct conception of the nuances of the ghosts of the original story.

9. *The Turn of the Screw* (2009) is a British television film based on the scary story of the same name, produced by BBC One, directed by Tim Fywell. At first, the film sticks to the original, and it begins to move away from it over time. The movie received mixed reviews, but it is the most acclaimed story made for a television adaptation.


10. *Through the Shadow* (2015) is a mysterious Brazilian thriller directed by Walter Lima Jr. Reviews of the film were mixed due to moments when the horror disappointed and the mysterious elements unexpectedly fell into place.

11. *The Turning* (2020) is an American horror film, a modern adaptation of a haunting story directed by Floria Sigismondi, written by Carey W. Hayes and Chad Hayes. This adaptation features the devious Miles (played by Finn Wolfhard, known from *Stranger Things*) and the extremely bizarre Flora.

12. *The Haunting of Bly Manor* is a series by Netflix (2020) written by Mike Flanagan. The series is one of the unique retellings of a horror classic. It is based on James' story, but Flanagan also uses several other ghost characters and their individual stories to add density to the main story. Following Flanagan's success with *The Haunting Of Hill House* (2018), this is another addition to the anthological series *The Haunting* (Bachman 2020).

Appendix 4) First page of the 12-part serialisation of *The Turn of the Screw* in Collier's Weekly (January 27 – April 16, 1898), taken from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Turn_of_the_Screw.

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THE TURN OF THE SCREW
BY HENRY JAMES

PART FIRST

THE story had held us, round the fire, sufficiently breathless, but except the obvious remark that it was grewsome, as, on Christmas eve in an old house, a strange tale should essentially be, I remember no comment uttered till somebody happened to remark that it was the only case he had met in which such a visitation had fallen on a child. The case, I may mention, was that of an apparition in just such an old house as had gathered us for the occasion—an appearance, of a dreadful kind, to a little boy sleeping in the room with his mother and waking her up in the terror to dissipate his dread and soothe him to sleep again, but to encounter also, herself, before she had succeeded in doing so, the same sight that had shaken him. It was this observation that drew from Douglas—not immediately, but later in the evening—a reply that had the interesting consequence to which I call attention. Some one else told a story not particularly effective, which I saw he was not following. This I took for a sign that he had himself something to produce and that we should only have to wait. We waited in fact till two nights later; but that same evening, before we scattered, he brought out what was in his mind.

"I quite agree—in regard to Griffin's ghost, or whatever it was—that its appearing first to the little boy, at so tender an age, adds a particular touch. But it's not the first occurrence of its charming kind that I know to have involved a child. If the child gives the effect another turn of the screw, what do you say to two children—?"

"We say, of course," somebody exclaimed, "that they give two turns! Also that we want to hear about them."

I can see Douglas there before the fire, to which he had got up to present his back, looking down at his interlocutor with his hands in his pockets. "Nobody but me, till now, has ever heard. It's quite too horrible." This, naturally, was declared by several voices to give the thing the utmost price, and our friend, with quiet art, prepared his triumph by turning his eyes over the rest of us and going on: "It's beyond everything. Nothing at all that I know touches it."

"For sheer terror?" I remember asking.

He seemed to say it was not so simple as that; to be really at a loss how to qualify it. He passed his hand over his eyes, made a little wincing grimace. "For dreadful—dreadfulness!"

"Oh, how delicious!" cried one of the women. He took no notice of her; he looked at me, but as if, instead of me, he saw what he spoke of. "For general uncanny ugliness and horror and pain."

"Well then," I said, "just sit right down and begin."

He turned round to the fire, gave a kick to a log, watched it an instant. Then as he faced us again: "I can't begin. I shall have to send to town." There was a unanimous groan at this, and much reproach; after which, in his preoccupied way, he explained. "The story's written. It's in a locked drawer—it has not been out for years. I could write to my man and inclose the key; he could send down the packet as he finds it." It was to me in particular that he appeared to pronounce this—appeared almost to appeal for aid not to hesitate. He had broken a thickness of ice, the formation of many a winter; had had his reasons for a long silence. The others resented postponement, but it was

just his scruples that charmed me. I adjured him to write by the first post and to agree with us for an early hearing; then I asked him if the experience in question had been his own. To this his answer was prompt. "Oh, thank God, no!"

"And is the record yours? You took the thing down?"

"Nothing but the impression. I took that *here*"—he tapped his heart. "I've never lost it."

"Then your manuscript—?"

"In old, faded ink, and in the most beautiful hand." He hung fire again. "A woman's. She has been dead these twenty years. She sent me the pages in question before she died." They were all listening now, and of course there was somebody to be arch, or at any rate to draw the inference. But if he put the inference by without a smile it was also without irritation. "She was a most charming person, but she was ten years older than I. She was my sister's governess," he quietly said. "She was the most agreeable woman I've ever known in her position; she would have been worthy of any whatever. It was long ago, and this episode was long before. I was at Trinity, and I found her at home on my coming down the second summer. I was much there that year—it was a beautiful one; and we had, in her off-hours, some strolls and talks in the garden—talks in which she struck me as awfully clever and nice. Oh yes; don't grin; I liked her extremely and am glad to this day to think she liked me too. If she hadn't she wouldn't have told me. She had never told any one. It wasn't simply that she said so, but that I knew she hadn't; I was sure, I could see. You'll easily judge why when you hear."

"Because the thing had been such a scare?"

He continued to fix me. "You'll easily judge," he repeated; "you will."

I fixed him too. "I see. She was in love."

He laughed for the first time. "You are acute. Yes, she was in love. That is she had been. That came out—she couldn't tell her story without its coming out. I saw it, and she saw I saw it; but neither of us spoke of it. I remember the time and the place—the corner of the lawn, the shade of the great beeches and the long, hot summer afternoon. It wasn't a scene for a shudder; but oh—!" He quitted the fire and dropped back into his chair.

"You'll receive the packet Thursday morning?" I inquired.

"Probably not till the second post."

"Well then; after dinner—?"

"You'll all meet me here?" He looked us round again.

"Isn't everybody going?" It was almost the tone of hope.

"Everybody will stay!"

"I will—and I will!" cried the ladies whose departure had been fixed. Mrs. Griffin, however, expressed the need for a little more light. "Who was it she was in love with?"

"The story will tell," I took upon myself to reply.

"Oh, I can't wait for the story?"

"The story *won't* tell," said Douglas; "not in any literal, vulgar way."

"More's the pity then. That's the only way I ever understand."

"Won't you tell, Douglas?" somebody else inquired.

He sprang to his feet again. "Yes—to-morrow. Now I must go to bed. Good-night." And, quickly, catching up a candlestick, he left us slightly bewildered. From our end of the great brown hall we heard his step on the stair; whereupon Mrs. Griffin spoke. "Well, if I don't know who she was in love with, I know who *he* was."

"She was ten years older," said her husband.

Appendix 5) The List of Film and TV Critics Awards and Nominations Ranking for

2021, compiled at en.wikipedia.com., taken from:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Haunting_of_Bly_Manor.

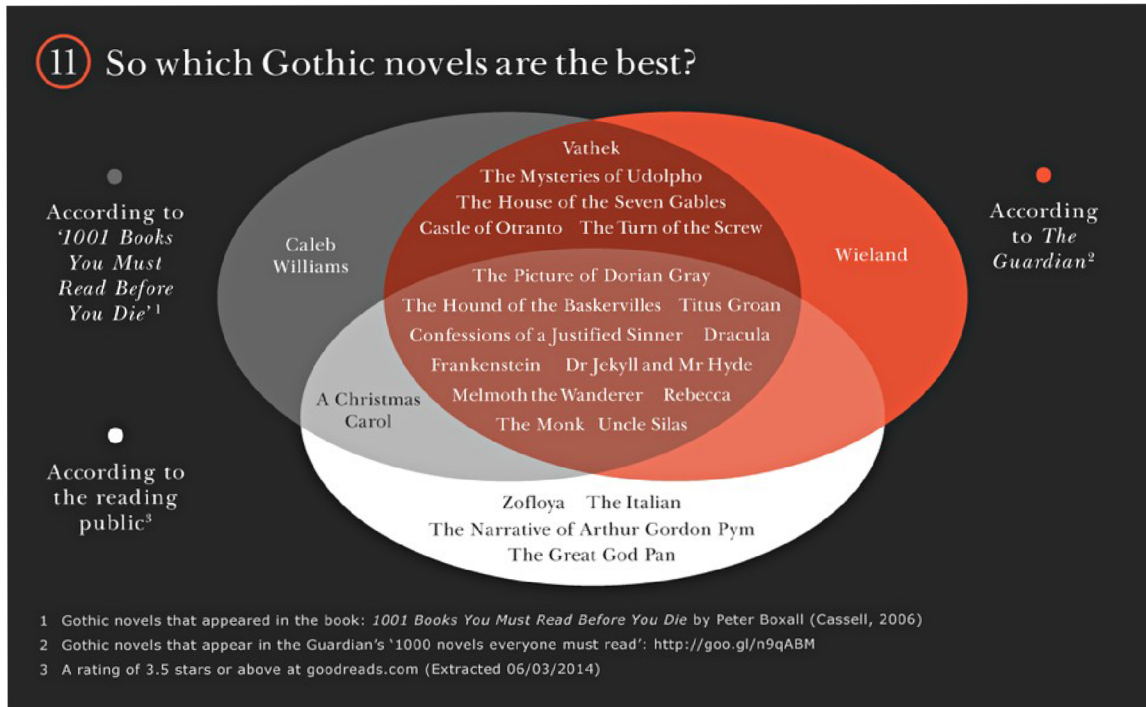
Year	Award	Category	Recipient	Result
2021	<u>Bram Stoker Awards</u>	<u>Superior Achievement in a Screenplay</u>	Angela LaManna (for "The Altar of the Dead")	Nominated
		<u>Best Horror Series</u>	<i>The Haunting of Bly Manor</i>	Nominated
			<u>T'Nia Miller</u>	Nominated
	<u>Critics' Choice Super Awards</u>	<u>Best Actress in a Horror Series</u>	<u>Victoria Pedretti</u>	Nominated
	<u>GLAAD Media Awards</u>	<u>Outstanding Limited or Anthology Series</u>	<i>The Haunting of Bly Manor</i>	Nominated
	<u>MTV Movie & TV Awards</u>	<u>Most Frightened Performance</u>	Victoria Pedretti	Won
	<u>Primetime Emmy Awards</u>	<u>Outstanding Sound Editing for a Limited or Anthology Series</u>	"The Two Faces (Part Two)"	Nominated
	<u>Satellite Awards</u>	<u>Best Television Series – Genre</u>	<i>The Haunting of Bly Manor</i>	Won
	<u>Saturn Awards</u>	<u>Best Television Presentation (under 10 Episodes)</u>	<i>The Haunting of Bly Manor</i>	Nominated

Appendix 6) Victoria Pedretti as a frightened governess. Photo taken from:

<https://www.shondaland.com/inspire/a34313662/frighteningly-good-talent-of-victoria-pedretti/>.



Appendix 7) Which Gothic novels are the best? According to The Guardian (2014), taken from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/interactive/2014/may/09/reading-gothic-novel-pictures>.



Appendix 8) Readership chart of *The Turn of the Screw* 5/2020-1/2023 (Czech Republic), taken from: <https://www.cbdb.cz/kniha-4561-utazeni-sroubu-the-turn-of-the-screw>.

