Apparitions or no apparitions, that is (not) the question : Another *Turn of the Screw*

ผีหรือไม่ ..... ใช่สำคัญ : อีกหนึ่งการอ่าน *The Turn of the Screw*

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บทคัดย่อ

นักอ่านที่คุ้นเคยกับลีลาการเขียนของ เฮนรี่ เจมส์ เป็นอย่างดี ต่างยอมรับว่างานของเขามักมีกลลวงซ่อนเนื้อหาวิพากษ์วิจารณ์สังคมไว้อย่างแนบเนียน *The Turn of the Screw* เป็นนวนิยายเรื่องหนึ่งที่ผู้แต่งนำเอาขนบการเขียนแบบกอธิค (Gothic tradition) มาสร้างกลลวงให้ผู้อ่านมากมายหลงคิดไปว่านิยายเรื่องนี้เป็นแค่เรื่องภูตผีปีศาจที่นิยมกันมากช่วงศตวรรษที่ ๑๙ ของอังกฤษ แต่นักอ่านที่ศึกษานิยายเรื่องนี้อย่างละเอียดลึกซึ้งจะพบว่า เฮนรี่ เจมส์ เขียนเรื่องนี้ขึ้นมาเพื่อวิจารณ์สังคมวิคตอเรียนที่สนับสนุนระบบชายเป็นใหญ่ และการวิพากษ์วิจารณ์ของเขาทำได้อย่างครอบคลุมเกือบทุกประเด็น ไม่ว่าจะเป็นเรื่องความไม่เท่าเทียมกันทางเพศหรือชนชั้นที่สร้างแรงกดดันให้กับสตรีและชนชั้นล่างเป็นอย่างมาก หรือความประมาทของชนชั้นสูงในอังกฤษที่มักปัดความรับผิดชอบในการดูแลลูกหลานของตนเองให้อยู่ในมือของครูรับจ้างที่ไม่ได้รู้จักมักคุ้นมาก่อน รวมไปถึงการโจมตีนวนิยายแนวประโลมโลกที่กำลังเฟื่องฟูในยุคนั้นว่าเป็นการผลิตออกมาอมเมาสังคม ทำให้ผู้คนขาดทักษะการใช้ชีวิตและการแก้ปัญหาอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ ดังที่ผู้เขียนถ่ายทอดออกมาให้เห็นเด่นชัดผ่านครูรับจ้างที่เดินทางไปสอนหนังสือและดูแลลูกหลานของตระกูลมั่งมีที่คฤหาสน์ไบล์ (Bly) ความด้อยประสบการณ์ของครูรับจ้าง นิสัยเพ้อฝันที่ฟูมฟักมาจากการอ่านนวนิยายประโลม

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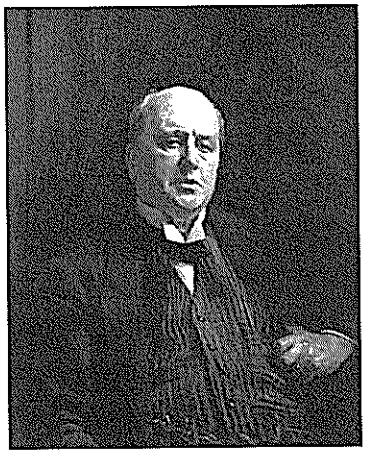
โลกของเธอ รวมทั้งการเพิกเฉยของผู้ปกครองตามกฎหมายล้วนนำทุกคนไปสู่โศกนาฏกรรมที่น่าสะเทือนใจอย่างไม่มีใครคาดคิดมาก่อนเลย

Abstract

The readers well accustomed to Jamesian style unanimously agree that most of Henry James's works are deceptive in the sense that his seemingly simple plots often hide some serious messages aiming to criticize the Victorian society of England. *The Turn of the Screw* use of the gothic tradition to set up a trap to mislead the 'unwary reader' to think that the novel is only 'a simple pure ghost tale' which was popular in England during, that time. But the careful readers can notice that James's real motivation is to criticize the Victorian capitalist society which encouraged the patriarchal system. With such a clear purpose in mind, he then moves to highlight the matter of gender bias, social inequities, and careless aristocrats who abandoned their responsibilities for the rearing of children in the hands of unknown governesses or servants. The corrupt influence of the romances is also included in the novel. To James, these romances tend to lead people to wild imagination and deprive them of coping skills needed in solving any problems. This is vividly portrayed in the life and work of his governess who makes a long journey to take care of a wealthy family's children at Bly. The governess's inexperience, her fantasy imagination which was partly nurtured and heightened by her reading romances, and the negligence of the legal guardian of the children, are all contributed to the unexpected tragedies there...



"Portrait of Henry James." oil painting by John Singer Sargent (1913)

People who have read *The Turn of the Screw* all unanimously agree that the novel is one of Henry James's most deceptive stories. It is deceptive in the sense that its seemingly simple plot often misleads many readers to think that it is a traditional ghost story in which the spirits of the dead come back to haunt the living at a country house in Essex. A long-time heated debate on the existence of the ghosts seems to find no single definite conclusion yet. At worse, the skillful ambiguity which pervades the narrative plunges the readers, including critics and scholars, into a labyrinth of complicated puzzles. Since its first publication in 1898, the novel has obtained various interpretations, engendering a variety of insights. Those preferring to tackle the story with the supernatural reading believe in the existence of ghosts, and unfailingly recognize the governess as a savior who strives to protect the innocent from the evils of the world. Those who reject the notions of this group quickly move to read the story from a psychological stance, maintaining that her predecessors' ghosts, Peter Quint and Miss Jessel, exist only in the governess's mind as a result of her neurotic hallucination. Reading the story in this way, they believe that the governess is the madwoman who unconsciously harms and alienates her young charges, Miles and Flora. But the third camp which has recently emerged attempts to reconcile those two opposing camps, repudiating the reading traditions that force readers to answer the uncomfortable 'either-or' question about the story. According to this

camp, both ways of reading, with apparitions or no apparitions, are possible.[1] However, the interpretation of this camp fails to give any satisfaction because most readers, in general, dislike being under obscurity after arriving at the end of any work. If the apparitions are basically significant at the core of the text, then why does the third camp accept both ways of reading? Does Henry James have no intention other than to write a 'pure and simple' ghost story or a gothic romance[2] only to entertain readers? Is it possible to assume that James employs the gothic tradition for a marketing purpose while simultaneously 'disguising' some serious messages in the popular literary genre of the period? Are those hidden messages so unspeakable and threatening that they are left inarticulate? It is undeniable that both obscurity and ambiguity in the story make these questions difficult for the readers to resolve.

Although spiritualism and ghost stories were popular in the last quarter of the nineteenth-century England, it is inappropriate to assume that a great modern realist author like Henry James would jump to take up such a genre in his writing without any serious purposes. Those well accustomed to Jamesian style concur that James is an author who is clever at deceiving his audience and likes to call his work "a trap for the unwary."[3] It seems that in writing, James immensely enjoys playing a

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[1] See details of this critical history in Peter G. Beidler, "A Critical History of *The Turn of the Screw*" in Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, ed. Peter G. Beidler (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1995), 134–136.

[2] A gothic romance is a work of prose fiction that thrived in nineteenth-century England. It is a type of work that develops from a gothic story whose scenes and incidents are more or less removed from the common life and surrounded by mysteries. Like a gothic story, it involves the supernatural, horrors, and strange and adventurous atmosphere. This kind of novel is usually set against gloomy backgrounds of medieval ruins and old haunted castles. But it is quite different from the general gothic novel in the way that it is also filled with romantic love.

[3] Leon Edel, "Prefatory Note" in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Turn of the Screw and Other Tales*, ed. Jane P. Thompkin (Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1970), 60.

hide-and-seek game with the reader. In *The Turn of the Screw*, he really succeeds in making the innocent both within and outside the novel get stunned with the events that take place at Bly. However, his real purpose for creating this high-quality work was not publicly exposed until he realized that many readers had ironically gone on the wrong tracks of reading. This realization prompted him to guide his readers back on the way by means of adding a preface in the New York edition (1908). In that preface, he stated that the novel "is a piece of ingenuity, pure and simple, of cold artistic calculation, an *amusette* to catch those not easily caught (the "fun" of the capture of the merely witless being ever but small), the jaded, the disillusioned, the fastidious."[4] The paradoxical sense and tone resulting from the juxtaposition of opposing words in this passage stir up certain skepticism among readers. This passage evidently reveals the author's desire to deliver a seeming ghost tale to challenge and capture the sophisticated readers' intellect rather than merely to entertain the average ones. A careful reading of his preface assures us that *The Turn of the Screw* is much more than just a pure and simple ghost story as its author set off to deceive us.

Another evidence to sustain the idea that *The Turn of the Screw* was not borne of the author's design to produce a kind of unchallenging amusement manifests itself in the narrative prologue. Here James begins his tricks by having Douglas and the assembled guests at the country house collaborate to set up the scary and spooky atmospheres of the ghost-story telling on a Christmas Eve in the prologue of the novel. In so doing, the author cunningly misleads his readers to think that they are going to read or hear a horror story and this false conviction is hammered deep down into their minds when Douglas displays his desire to recount a more 'dreadful'

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[4] Henry James, "The Preface to Henry James's 1908 Edition of *The Turn of the Screw*" in Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1995), 120.

experience of the governess at Bly, a manor house in Essex. Nonetheless, these tricks cannot escape the keen eyes of the wary readers. The fact that Douglas's audience consists of sophisticated and cynical rather than naïve and sentimental adults really invokes certain doubts among readers about James's work. The cynical views and the sexual inferences that Douglas's audience enjoys making during their listening also well indicate that the story we are going to hear from Douglas is not at all a simple ghost tale. Therefore, we must be more careful while reading and striving to crack the codes of the narrative.

To gain full insight into the story, the reader must seek the right key to unlock its obscurity and ambiguity. It is unequivocal that a matter of gender and class resonates within the memoir of the governess. These two aspects are indeed so closely intertwined in the story that it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. A change in one aspect is likely to affect the other in the hierarchical structures. What James really wants to do in The *Turn of the Screw* is to depict the gender-biased and class-structured Victorian society and to scrutinize how its rigid ideologies exert stress and strain on people as individuals and on the society as a whole.

According to the Victorian social order, women were not so positively elevated as men. They were required to stay in their objectified status to support men's position as subject. Placed in a passive object position, they were helplessly prevented from subjectivity and any desire indicating that role. In order to achieve the status of ideal womanhood, they had to strive to possess and maintain all of the following qualities: virtuous, chaste, and asexual. If they could accomplish all these feminine virtues, they would be accredited as a good model of mother figure—the only respectable position they could acquire in that period of time. By contrast, a failure to complete any virtue above would instantaneously plunge them into either of the two indecent positions left for alternatives: a whore or a

lunatic.[5] The social expectation to have women remain pure and asexual immediately shut down their chances to express their love and sexual desire to the men to whom they were attracted to. In fact, sexuality was a social taboo during the height of the Victorian era. As Michel Foucault has pointed out:

> *But the twilight soon fell on tuis bright lay [the seventeenth century], followed by the monotonous night of the Victorian bourgeosie. Sexuality was carefully confined ; it moved into the home....On the subject of sex, silence became the rule....A single locus of sexuality was acknowledged in social space as well as at the heart of the household, but it was a utilitarian and fertile one: the parents' bedroom....The brothel and the mental hospital would be those places of tolerance....Everywhere else, modern Puritanism imposed its triple edict of taboos, nonexistence, and silence.*[6]

With such an expectation, sexuality became an unspeakable issue that could not be brought to talk openly in public like Douglas's audience does in the prologue. However, sexual repression was more strongly expected to be seen in women than men. Besides coming to prevent the natural development of the female body, this repression really caused stress and strain which psychologists have believed to lead women to encounter neurotic hallucination and hysteria in the end. Nevertheless, the crucial problems that Henry James was meant to depict in *The Turn of the Screw* move farther beyond the gender matter to include the issue of social class too.

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[5] Priscilla L. Walter, " 'What then on earth was I?' : Femininity Subjectivity and *The Turn of the Screw*" in The Turn of the Screw, Ed. Peter G. Beidler (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1995), 257.

[6] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality : An introduction, Vol. 1* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1978), 3-5.

As a matter of fact, women were indeed treated as another class in Victorian England or, to speak more specifically, they belonged to a lower class in the power structure of the patriarchal society. The coming of capitalism in the early nineteenth century did not wipe out the patriarchal system at all. In contrast, it came to reinforce the patriarchal structure that preceded it and developed alongside it. Even worse, it certainly provided men with another means of control over women's power in the labor markets. Heidi Hartmann, an American socialist feminist, is right to argue that within the material-base capitalist societies, men are likely to maintain this control by

> *excluding women from access to some essential productive resources (in capitalist societies, for example, jobs that pay living wages) and by restricting women's sexuality....Controlling women's access to resources and their sexuality, in turn, allows men to control women's labor power, both for the purpose of serving men in many personal and sexual ways and for the purpose of rearing children.*[7]

With such a concept in mind, a majority of men "might want their women at home to personally service them,"[8] but some, especially the capitalist aristocrats, might "accept the practice of having women, but not their own, to go out to work as cheap labor,"[9] not tantamount to the jobs held by men. This sexual division of labor is indeed a means that men employed to secure their superiority to women.

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[7] Heidi Hartman, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union" in *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, 2nd Ed.,, ed. Wendy Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski (Boston: The McGraw-Hill Co., Ltd., 2005), 358.

[8] Heidi Hartman, 360

[9] Ibid.

It is true that women's roles were rigidly restricted by the Victorian codes of conduct, making them have limited options in nearly all aspects of life. Since "domesticity was trumpeted as a female domain,"[10] Victorian women were inclined to immerse themselves in "a delusion that their domestic service could provide them with great virtues and moral superiority."[11] As this kind of service was becoming the most acclaimed feminine job in Victorian England, governesses and housekeepers undoubtedly became two prominent feminine positions that Victorian women could grab in the patriarchal society at that time. Therefore, it is not surprising at all to see these two feminine positions flourish in the Victorian romances. The traditional plot of this romance is mostly about an achievement of a governess or a housekeeper in her upward mobility through marriage in the end to the master. This romantic plot appeared again and again in this kind of literary work until it became a cliché that enchanted many women at that time. However, this romantic plot was hard to be actualized in real life as long as the society still demanded that its members stay within their stations and the upward mobility for women through marriage or a good job outside the domestic domain were almost denied. The double standard that Victorian women had encountered as a result of the limitations and imperfections of female life certainly caused the great oppressions to them. This is a most striking aspect that James well realized and picked up to highlight in his novel, *The Turn of the Screw.*

The Turn of the Screw is a domestic novel that James created to restore his reputation after he was booed and assaulted with tomatoes on the opening night of his play, *Guy Domville.*[12] He made an effort to produce this novel as a masterpiece

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[10] Lynn Abrams, "Ideals of Womanhood in Victorian Britain" in http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/lj/victorian_ britainlj/idealwomen_01.shtml?site=history_society_welfare.

[11] Ibid.

[12] See Leon Edel's account of the night in *Complete Plays of Henry James,* Ed. Leon Edel (New York: Oxford Press, 1990), pp. 465-485.

that vividly depicts the life and the oppressions of people of different ages, sexes, and classes during the height of the Victorian age. Actually, it is a story of a country parson's youngest daughter who makes a long journey to seek her first employment in London due to the financial problems of her impoverished family. Born and bred in a very strict religious environment, she is helplessly naïve and inexperienced to the world outside. Her enjoyment of reading Victorian romances such as Anne Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, makes her become a young romantic-minded girl who often escapes to live in an imaginary world. That is why she is easily seduced and exploited by a sophisticated gentleman on Harley Street. As Douglas tells his audience, the young lady is enchanted by her future master's gentlemanly manner right at her first interview. At that time, she sees her future employer as "handsome and bold and pleasant, offhand and gay and kind."[13] Though educated, she possesses a disposition to judge people and things from appearance, and this disposition of hers inevitably allows her easily to fall into the trap of the master:

> *He struck her, inevitably, as gallant and splendid, but what took her most of all...was that he put the whole thing to her as a favour, an obligation he should gratefully incur. She figured him as rich, but as fearfully extravagant-saw him all in a glow of high fashion, of good looks, of expensive habits, of charming ways with women" (25)*

With so many romances in her head, the governess cannot resist creating a Cinderella's typical dream pattern in her naïve mind. The way that the gentleman pleads for her

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[13] Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw* (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995), 25. All further references to this work will be parenthetically cited in the text.

help and squeezes her hand makes her finally succumb to his seduction. Douglas's narrating here is not exaggerated, for it is obvious that she is so attracted to the gentleman that she becomes powerless to reject a job to take care of his orphaned niece and nephew and the estate of Bly despite her awareness of its harshness and labor exploitation. However, it is not easy for her imaginary love to 'grow and bloom' on the land where class consciousness is taken seriously. The polarity of the rich master and the poor governess certainly thwarts the realization of her love. In fact, a chance to fulfill her romantic dream has already crumbled since her master stated the main condition of employment to her, "she should never trouble him – but never, never; neither appeal nor complain nor write about anything; only meet all the questions herself....take the whole thing over and let him alone" (27). With this condition, both Douglas's audience and the reader really perceive that her master not only rids himself of his children, but also of the governess. This is a signal that a cautious capitalist aristocrat quickly exhibits to prevent all kinds of transgressions which he is afraid to take place. Doubtlessly, his condition already puts her in the position of a desperate Cinderella because from then on, she has to carry intense responsibility on her shoulders without any good confidante to turn to and will no longer see her beloved master again. It is therefore appropriate to call her version of Cinderella a "frustrated, truncated, unfinished"[14] story.

Instead of viewing the incident realistically, she continues to delude herself and misinterprets that his condition merely demonstrates his immeasurable trusts in her abilities to deal with the children and any problems that will happen at Bly. In fact, he has never been captivated by her capability at all. What really exists in his mind all the time is a desire to be disburdened at the expense of her sacrifice,

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[14] Bruce Robbins, "'They don't much count, do they?': The Unfinished History of *The Turn of the Screw*" in *The Turn of the Screw*, Ed. Peter G. Beidler (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995), 285.

"When, for a moment, disburdened, delighted, he held her hand, thanking her for the sacrifice, she already felt rewarded" (27). Despite her awareness that the prospect of her position is "slightly grim" with "a vision of serious duties, little company, of really great loneliness" (27), she is tempted to accept the oppressive duties he exploitatively proffers. In spite of fears and anxieties, she sets off her journey to Bly with a desire to carry out the tasks there for her beloved employer and with a secret wish to get his approval and love back as a reward. A desire to possess him may arise after he held one of her hands and thanked her for the sacrifices. The romances about governesses who eventually succeed in getting married with the masters may drive her to come to work at Bly with a rosy dream. Although she intends to look after his children with great care, her good intention ironically turns foul when she accidentally alienates the little girl Flora and takes the life of the young boy Miles while endeavoring to ward off all evils which she believes to come to take possession of them. Nonetheless, it is not right to throw all the blames for the tragic events at Bly on the governess alone as many psychoanalysts have done. A close scrutiny of the text reveals that there are at least three main factors which contribute to the tragedies there. One is the romantic imagination of the governess; the others are the negligence of the uncle in London and the rigid Victorian moralities that unfairly treated women. These factors are so closely connected with each other that we cannot look at them separately.

Like those Victorian women in general, Henry James's governess lives her life under the restraints of Victorian moralities. As a woman, she is considered to belong to the lower class within the patriarchal capitalist structure. With this position, she undoubtedly wishes to make shift in her social status, and the only means to fulfill her upward mobility is enthusiastically pursuing the right person above her in terms of materialistic wealth and social ranks to marry with. But it does not mean that marriage between people between classes is easy to take place in a class-

conscious society in which she lives. Because of these unpleasant situations, she turns to seek pleasure in the romances and allows her reading activity to nurture her romantic dreams. Therefore, it is not uncommon to conclude that an imaginative power of James's governess derives partly from and heightened by her reading experience.

Throughout her life time at Bly, the governess hardly stops exercising her imagination although it has never brought anything good to her or people around her. It may offer her some transient delights and excitements but it surely brings certain dangers to her and those people nearby. This is because it really takes her away from the reality and makes her unable to efficiently and practically cope with any problems. Her imagination is at work again when her coach gets into the splendid area of the country house. The grandeur of the estate when compared with her father's scant vicarage, together with the exhilarating faces at the open windows and the curtsy she obtains from the housekeeper, unavoidably runs to intensify her romantic emotions. She deludes herself to think that she is the mistress who comes back to manage the Bly household. In transcending her class, she unthinkingly takes away Mrs. Grose's position by moving Flora's bed out of the housekeeper's room to her own. Working here, she is actually doing much more than teaching lessons to the little girl, and later to the little boy, Miles, too. In her duty to care for and protect the children, she is also functioning as their guardian. Being Flora's governess allows her to assume the role of surrogate mother that Mrs. Grose had previously performed since the death of the previous governess, Miss Jessel. Although she is unable to contact her distant master, in performing the role of mistress of Bly and Flora's surrogate mother, she cannot resist assuming the role of the master's wife at the same time. The place and the events she experiences upon arrival fill her with such a great sense of elation and exaltation that she overlooks certain deadly omens which come directly to greet her. The carrion-eater crows

flying in circle over Bly do not forebode well for the visit. The cries of the black crows and a child which reach her ears probably foreshadow that her life there will be stricken with mysteries, pains, dangers, and death. Her overexcitement with the place and class transcendence, nonetheless, makes her quickly forget those awful signs. She indeed allows the fantasy imagination to lead her away from the unpleasant reality.

We see her imagination again during the time that Flora shows her the places. At this moment, she feels as if she drifted into a wonderland with the little angel Flora as her conductress:

> *...as my little conductress, with her hair of gold and her frock of blue, danced before me round corners and pattered down passages, I had a view of a castle of romance inhabited by a rosy sprite, such a place as would somehow, for diversion of the young idea, take all colour out of story books and fairy-tales. Wasn't it just a story book over which I had fallen a-doze and a-dream? (31)*

But just a few seconds later, all these fairy-tale images are switched into the unpleasant ones. She sees herself again in "a big ugly antique but convenient house, embodying a few features of a building still older, half-displaced and half-utilised in which I had the fancy of our being almost as lost as a handful of passengers in a great drifting ship. Well, I was strangely at the helm" (Ibid.). Even though her fantasy picture of the place changes from a positive to a negative one, she still views herself as a 'captain' who struggles at best to save all the lives on a ship of Bly. In such an imagination, she seems to declare that her responsibility is not only the care of the children, but also the force behind the events that are going to occur in that place.

This powerful imagination of the governess, who is now under difficult situations, inevitably evokes some skepticism about her credibility as a narrator in the reader's mind – a doubt which is really heightened when she insists that she witnesses the ghosts there.

Although there is more than one narrator in *The Turn of the Screw*, most of the narrating is put in the hand of the governess, forcing the reader to unavoidably identify with her perspectives and hopes from time to time. Therefore, it is not surprising if the reader is sometimes sympathetic with her. However, some readers are still disturbed by certain questions whenever they pick up the novel to read. One is what motivates her to sit down and write a story about her weird experience at Bly and another is to whom she intends to address her story or whom she has in her mind's eye while composing her narrative. Clear answers for these questions may help us to decipher the codes of her messages and gain a clear vision of what really happens at Bly. It is thus essential to look back into her life there and carefully trace the development of her manuscript. The time scale below explicitly illustrates the development of her narrative from its origin to its present transcript as book form:

At times of events at Bly, the governess was 20 and Douglas was 10.	10 years passed	20-year old Douglas met the governess now 30.	20 years passed	Douglas received a manuscript from the governess before she died.	20 years passed	Douglas read out her story to his audience at a country house.	??? years passed	Douglas was dead. The manuscript was with the un-named narrator who transcribed it into book form.

This time scale is adjusted from David Appleyard's time scale.[15]

[15] The author thinks that David Appleyard's time-scale is useful in helping to detect the development of the the governess's narrative. The author therefore brings it to present here with some information adjustment for the discussion. The original version of the time scale is at http://www.davidappleyard.com/scribbles/hjames/ htm.

As clearly displayed in the above time scale, *The Turn of the Screw* is the governess's own narrative. Thus, the primary narrator of the story is undoubtedly the governess herself. She is the one who sat down to write about her unmentionable experience after her responsibility there closed itself down at the death of Miles, the ten-year-old boy under her charge. Since the manuscript was ten years old when she met Douglas, it is unlikely to assume that she envisioned him as her audience while composing this narrative. This assumption is out of question at once when the reader discovers that her manuscript did not reach Douglas's hand until the next twenty years. Having shared a relationship together one summer, she confided on her deathbed to him her story, her secret. Being attracted to her, like the way she was attracted to her absent employer, he helped keep her story quiet deep in his heart for another twenty years before bringing it out to share with the predominantly male and apparently bachelor circle during the Christmas time. Her story was therefore kept secret for approximately forty years. But the final transcript which we are reading is supposed to be the version that the unnamed narrator who is secretly in love with Douglas transcribed the original manuscript into book form. Although the gender of this narrator is undefined, it will help facilitate the analysis of the novel if we take it for granted that this unnamed narrator is a female and also experiences an unrequited love like the governess. With this presumption in mind, we are able to perceive her motive for transcribing the governess's memoir. It cannot be denied that Douglas's request on his deathbed and her touch with the governess's love story inspired this unnamed narrator to transcribe it into book form. Although the story in the prologue and the governess's narrative move around the theme of

unreciprocated love, it is mistaken to deduce a simple analogous presupposition in the case of the governess. Even though the governess also underwent a kind of unrequited love, it is a too simplistic to conclude that the governess's motive for writing her story arose only from this unfulfilled love.

Undoubtedly, the targeted audience whom the governess always had in mind while composing her narrative was the absent master on Harley Street. She loved him but could not find an outlet for her emotions. That is why she could not escape the ghosts of her desire. Linda S. Kauffman interestingly argues that the governess wrote this tale in order to show her employer that her greatest love was dedicated only to him despite his too foolishness to recognize her merit :

> Her entire literary effort stems from unrequited love for her employer...Her discourse is borne of absence....Only those who have been rejected or abandoned turned to writing as a form of dialogue with the beloved who is absent or unattainable Writing, then, is an inherently fictive endeavor, an effort to sustain a passion for someone who either no longer cares or who never cares or who never did.[16]

But Kauffman's argument is too simplistic and moves to close down those inherent textual ambiguities that James intends. It is irrefutable that the governess clearly disclosed her infatuation with this gentleman in her attempt to address her story to him despite her awareness that he would never get a chance to read it or, to make it more specifically, he had never felt like to get that chance at all. With his indiffer-

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[16] Linda S. Kauffman, "The Author of Our Woe: Virtue Recorded in *The Turn of the Screw*" in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (September 1981), 176-77.

ence, her love and her complex experience there had helplessly fallen into silence for years. The death of Miles had also brought her a great confusion about her intent crusade to save the children from being 'corrupted.' That tragic incident could not assure her if she had done the right or the wrong things at Bly. Surely, as a strict Puritan-raised young woman, she could not stand the loss of morality and respectability as a good governess. That was a reason why she determined to write this delusive story as a way to make sure that her virtues were recorded. But the silence that moved around her still considerably disturbed her wavering mind. That was why she brought her story out to talk with Douglas hoping that she would gain a clear satisfying answer to her troublesome actions at Bly. Indeed, she only wanted Douglas to speak something that would help relieve her agitated mind, which meant that Douglas's answer would confirm that she did not do anything wrong in her career.

Although some critics claim that the narratives of the unnamed narrator and the governess basically stem from the same motivations of unrequited love, the case of the governess is much more sophisticated because her love is tainted with class distinctions. Unlike the unnamed narrator, she was indeed born and bred in the strict patriarchal Victorian society in which women were expected to obey the strict principles of feminine conduct, enforced to control them by men. In order to gain social respectability, she must remain righteous, pure, and asexual. But the way that the Victorian society expected women to behave seemed to move to the opposite way that its romances presented to them. That was why sometimes their repression was in conflict with their natural desires like what happens to James's governess in *The Turn of the Screw*. It is not wrong to conclude that like many Victorian women, James's governess was simultaneously a product and a victim of the Victorian society.

As the position of a governess was not clearly defined in a Victorian home, she was likely to suffer from what Carrissa Cluesman calls "status incongruity."[17] This problem usually occurred when the governess started to realize that she belonged neither to the employer's class nor to the servants' class. Due to the fact that "she was not a relative, a mistress, a guest, and a family servant, nobody knew exactly how to treat her."[18] But the sufferings that Henry James's governess encounters seem both similar to and different from what Cluesman has described. They are quite similar in the sense that she too stands between the divide – with the master highly above and the servants far below her. This station makes her unable to find a real equal companion in the house to consult with. The lack of an equal counselor when confronting with serious problems plunges her into intense loneliness and isolation and may eventually lead her to a kind of neurotic hallucination. But at the same time, her case is a bit different because the absent employer in London has given her the supreme authority to run the Bly household herself. The trust and the authority that she obtains from him vigorously and ironically move to reinforce her pride in the mission which she blindly regards as her inestimable sacrifices for "the person to whose pressure I had yielded" (37).

However, throughout her lifetime there, she feels so isolated that she thinks she will do anything to eradicate this feeling. The isolation, the lack of a good consultant in the face of difficult situations, and the dull monotonous life there, all consign her to great depression and drive her to find some excitement to compensate these tediousness and tensions. Nonetheless, she cannot find any better thing other than the excitement of creating various desires, including the sexual one, to replace these stress and strain. After she decides that the way to do so is to be

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[17] Clarissa Cluesman, "A Historical View of the Victorian Governess" at http://www.umd.umish.edu/casl/hum/eng/classes/434/charweb/cluesman1.htm.

[18] Ibid.

loved and recognized by someone, she takes pains to seek her master's approval and admiration through her performance in spite of his admitted lack of interest in the children. In response to his condition that forbids her from contacting with him, she ceaselessly pursues his presence and recognition. Unfortunately, her long shelter within the fences of her father's parsonage and her susceptibility to romantic emotions render her vulnerable to the sexual danger that appears in the form of a young handsome gentleman whom she meets in London. After her sexual interest is awakened by the master, she lacks the power to stop her infatuation with him. As a desire to attain a requited love is unlikely to come to fruition and her performance under the roof of Bly remains invisible, she then becomes more and more frustrated. It is not mistaken to assert that the plain, dull, boring life at Bly and her determination to adopt a heroic stance to save the children from the corrupting influences function as significant forces which impel her to run wild to fulfill her desires but end up in a horrifying hallucinatory experience that keeps haunting her again and again.

The first dreadful incident that the governess experiences at Bly occurs a few days after she has received the headmaster's letter informing Miles's expulsion from school. Worried so much about the excessive responsibility on her shoulder, she then takes an evening stroll along the path of the estate of Bly for some relaxation. As her reveries about the absent employer are actively at work, she is unable to withstand having a fancy of the master's presence and approval. Though her first sighting of an intruder takes shape at this moment, she does not even have an idea of seeing a ghost. The appearance of the horrible stranger at most only stirs up her speculation that there are some mysteries at Bly like what she has read in those romances. But her simultaneous desires to see and to be seen at this moment vividly reveal her double wishes to perform as both subject and object. First she imagines herself as the gazer to see her master appear 'at the turn of the path,' but then a formidable stranger suddenly emerges to assume his place:

> it would be as charming as a charming story suddenly to meet some one. Some one would appear there at the turn of a path and would stand before me and smile and approve. I didn't ask more than that – I only asked that he should *know*; and the only way to be sure he knew would be to see it, and the kind light of it, in his handsome face (37).

It can be noticed here that her desire is released to the extent that she cannot keeps herself from constructing a representation of the master. However, the representation that appears into her vision does not look like the beloved gentleman about whom she is dreaming at all. Instead, it turns out to be a dreadful figure she has never known or met before but later keeps haunting her most of the time. Although many critics interpret this scene in diverse ways, it must be more valid to argue that the transformation of the representation from her young handsome master into a horrible stranger comes about because her conscious and unconscious minds counteract the untamed passions which she unconsciously lets out. But what makes her feel most uncomfortable at this moment is the gaze that he delivers straight to her as she is passionately daydreaming about being desired by another young gentleman with whom she is in love. Turning her into an object, his constant gaze can be accordingly interpreted as the regulating eyes of society to suppress and thrust her sexual impulses back into the unconscious mind. Even though Douglas makes an effort to establish her love as pure and beautiful, his audience receives a different impression, moving to regard her affection in terms of sexual desire.

With her provincial background and the Victorian conventions that bar women from subjectivity and any desire indicating it, the governess may feel prohibited in expressing any attraction openly to anyone, or even to herself. Being aware that she has violated some social conventions of sexual propriety, she is ashamed of and

frightened by this suppressing gaze. A hard stare that she returns to the stranger after she has composed herself unambiguously discloses her desire to reject the position and the kind of conduct that are forcefully imposed on her by society. Looking at her situations this way, we can sense that her natural desires are in conflict with the repression of Victorian social ideals.

The position of the figure atop the tower also signifies the master's distance from her in terms of social rank. Being bred under the strict Victorian moralities that insist on respectability and propriety, she has certainly developed a notion of class-consciousness in her simple mind and it is obviously exhibited in her disapproval of the infamous relationship between the previous governess and the valet, Peter Quint– the information she later extracts from Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper there. The governess regards the male servant's action as an ambition to transcend his social class, an act that she cannot accept. That is why at one time while seeing him climbing up the stairs she appropriated the servant's harsh male gaze to send him back down to the place where he belonged. The concept of upstairs and downstairs that the author makes use in this novel well symbolizes the social hierarchy because the higher and lower on the staircase can be connected to the class or moral position of people in society. This picture is produced as a result of the governess's agitated mind that takes place after the hidden knowledge of Bly is unfolded to her by the housekeeper. In fact, the governess's love for the master is a sort of inverted parallel story to the forbidden love between Quint and Miss Jessel, but it seems that the governess is unable to see this parallel in her desire at all.

As Bruce Robbins clearly points out, Miss Jessel, like the present governess, "has allowed her erotic desire to stray across class lines."[19] The only difference in

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[19] Bruce Robbins, " 'They don't much count, do they?' : The Unfinished History of *The Turn of the Screw*," 288.

their love affairs lies in the objects of their affection. While Miss Jessel's affectionate object is a servant below her on the social scale, the governess's is someone above her. Instead of learning something of her yearnings from the love experience of the previous governess, she does not at least perceive any dreadful effects that may result from her own desire. By contrast, she immediately turns to judge their class and sexual transgressions as evil. It seems to her that the events that Quint and Miss Jessel appear to her as ghosts are less horrifying than the social violation both of them committed while they were alive. To her, Miss Jessel stands for a woman fallen as a result of an affair she had with a servant. That is why the governess makes an effort not to assume Miss Jessel's place. Her distaste for the previous governess is clearly demonstrated at the scene that she runs back to Bly after Miles has challenged her by confirming to write a letter to his uncle. He wants his uncle's presence to address his school problem for him. With her fear of the master's derision at her failure, she determines to give up the whole things she dreams to achieve. She thus runs back home and sinks down to cry at the bottom of the staircase, the exact spot that she used to see Miss Jessel sit crying in the darkness of a night. With that recognition, she immediately straightens up "with a revulsion" (84). This reaction of hers best reveals her effort to distance herself from the one whom she considers to be "the most horrible of women" (85). Although she feels disgusted with their affair, she cannot use her mind's eyes to see how her infatuation with the master shares the same nature with theirs. She too wants to escape from the limited space that society has given to her. That is why we keep seeing her show a desire to be seen, recognized, and accepted by her master from time to time.

Actually, the governess's sightings of the supposed apparitions are frequently set into active motion after Miles is dismissed from school and comes back to stay under her guardianship. The task that she faces now presents itself as a great challenge. Getting no helping hands from her master, she herself has to find a way

to solve the mystery of Miles's dismissal. Without any dependable counselor to turn to, except Mrs. Grose, who the governess often considers to have the slow wit and who at all times encourages her to see Miles as a nice, innocent boy, the governess finds it difficult to see why an innocent-looking boy like Miles is reported "an injury to others" (32). His expulsion without an explicit reason given easily convinces her that the boy surely committed some wicked deeds which harmed other boys so seriously that the school felt it "impossible to keep him" (32) any longer, a notion that dissatisfies Mrs. Grose. At this point, her view of the problem is not a delusion yet, but it, in fact, shows her attempts to sort it out and deal with it effectively. Her declaration to ward off all evils for the children immensely satisfies the housekeeper. Once the governess's ultimate desire to save the children, especially the little gentleman, is set up, she begins to consider it to be like opening a space for a female to perform a heroic role. Certainly, her youth and inexperience indicate that the responsibility of caring for two children and being in charge of the entire estate of Bly is too much for her. Instead of looking for help, she responds to her experience there by taking on more responsibility. What misguided acts she moves to do are to bury the headmaster's letter and keep Miles at home; to become the one who rather sees the ghosts and tries to screen the children from any exposure to those apparitions; to save them from the ghosts' corrupt influences. All of these decisions are self-conscious. She is not compelled to make them without an ability to think of any other way to deal with the problems. On the contrary, she views these challenges as exceptional opportunities to please the absent master and deludes herself to think that the master will appreciate her sacrifices.

The idea of seeing a ghost has never come up into her mind until she believes to witness the same male stranger again outside the dinning-room window, and Mrs. Grose identifies him as the deceased servant, Peter Quint, right after the governess finishes her detailed description of the man. Though detailed, the

housekeeper picks out only two data to identify him: he wears no hat and dresses in someone's coat. These data remind her of Quint, who always went out without a hat and used to steal the master's waistcoat to wear while he was alive. The governess's ability to describe the man whom she sees at the window in full details is incredible because the conditions under which she has her sight of the man do not guarantee a clear view at all. When she sees him at the window, it is nearly at dusk and the window panes are blurred to some extent by moisture after a heavy rain. It might be someone else, but she takes all of those images from the typical evil characters from the romances she has read and some personalities match some of Quint's character or temperament. However, Mrs. Grose's identification may move to spark the governess's notion of inventing certain difficult circumstances to create a space for her to perform the heroic role of the children's protector, or it may move to ensure the governess that there are some real mysteries at the place. As James does not provide any clear evidence for his readers to pinpoint this phenomenon exactly as real or imaginary, it is the readers' duty to piece the data from the governess's narrative by themselves to find out what really happens to the governess there. The only thing that the readers can notice is the governess's efforts to construct an efficient theory to sort out those mysteries of the place and the people there. Nonetheless, her attempts seem to worsen the situations at Bly until they turn out to become destructive to both the children and herself. The theory that comes up in her mind at her second sighting of the intruder really reveals another step of her development in terms of perspective and personality. At this time, she shifts the man's gaze immediately to a sign of looking for 'her' little gentleman right away when she knows that Miles and Flora like to sit sipping tea there during lunch break. The action that the governess runs out to stand awfully pale and watch back into the dining room at the exact spot where the stranger stood earlier actually foreshadows that she, not any other person, later becomes the real fiend that keeps

harming the children. The more she tries to keep the children under her protection and have them remain pure and innocent, the more alienated the children feel towards her.

It is obvious that her desire to see the children under her charge as perfectly nice and beautiful actually stems from her worship of their uncle to whom she has submitted her will and with whom she is erotically obsessed. Unable to express her feelings directly to her beloved master, or even to contact with him, she hence transfers her agitation and anxiety over him to the children, especially to the little gentleman, whom she regards as the substitute of her absent master. As her desire for the absent master is not easy to actualize, her frustration is much more heightened up to the degree that may lead her to encounter with more hallucinations. As shown in the story, her mental deterioration is later crystallized by her weird conversations and interactions with others. Her radical change in both thoughts and actions certainly causes bewilderment and trepidation to both the children and Mrs. Grose. Many readers are prone to concur that this sexual preoccupation which they believe to later plunge her into hysteria really undermines her credibility to take care of the children. But this argument seems to turn unsound instantaneously when we go back to read the story for the second or third time because, if she is really hysterical, why can she still hold a career as governess later in her life. As depicted in the novel, she may undergo a certain kind of hallucination, but it may not reach the level that we can say that she becomes a madwoman. Most of the time we can notice that her performance there is borne of her good intention to save the children from the corrupt influence of those apparitions despite the fact that her intention is partly tainted with self-esteem or self-fulfillment.

Actually, her grave mistakes initially arise from an overestimation of her own ability to address all the problems herself as well as her persistence in proving her ability to the absent master. With her limited self-knowledge, she turns to devastate

rather than help alleviate the situations. A serious problem would never have happened if the governess had followed Mrs. Grose's early advice to inform Miles's dismissal to his uncle. Unable to stand the loss of a flight of heroism and afraid to be derided by her employer, the governess moves on to handle it by herself. Since her experience is largely learned from books rather than from real life, she has a high tendency to make wrong decisions and cause irreversible effects to her tasks. The alienation of Flora and the death of Miles are two conspicuous examples of damages that she unconsciously causes to their innocent lives. Her insistence on showing the romantic heroism at the expense of the children is the thing that should not be allowed to happen.

In fact, their uncle in London is actually the legitimate guardian of the orphans, but he neglects all responsibilities, delegating all duties in the hands of an inexperienced young governess. Although he is physically absent from his country house, he cannot deny the responsibility for the tragedy at Bly. Everyone there desires his presence and help, but under this urgent need, he ironically forsakes his priceless property and abandons his duties, perpetually leaving his children with the servants who are ready to corrupt them at any time. Miles, for example, had spent months together with Quint until they both developed an improper intimacy, a kind of relationship that relentlessly bothered the housekeeper. But the aloof nature of the master made her hesitate to inform her anxieties to him. The corrupt influence that Quint exerted on the boy might be a cause of Miles's expulsion. Although Quint's influence are not clearly cited in the story, the fact that he was much "[t]oo free with everyone" (50) and even to Miles while he was alive really casts a doubt to the reader as well as to the governess if the relationship between Miles and Quint might have something to do with (homo)sexuality. Miles's unwilling confession at the end that he said things to those he liked and "they must have repeated them. To those they liked" (115) is inclined to sustain the conception

that Quint might either have some sexual intercourse with the boy or let the boy to see or to know about his sexual affair with Miss Jessel. The boy then might bring such unmentionable subject to talk with his favorite friends at school and this act might reach the ears of the school authorities. Accordingly, the absent uncle cannot deny that his negligence partly triggers the tragedies at Bly.

Mrs. Grose's reluctance to report her anxieties to the children's uncle is different from the governess's. As for the housekeeper, she is always aware of her station which provides her with no full authority to deal with the matter. Moreover, her incapability of writing and reading makes her become absolutely helpless. But the reader can notice that she often sees a need of the master's help when anybody at Bly encounters with serious problems. She used to advise the governess to write a letter to ask for the master's presence when she realized that the situations there turned severe, but the governess prolonged or, even worse, refused to follow her suggestion. One thing that the governess keeps firm in mind is her ambitious desire to save the children because that is the way to prove her capacity to the eyes of the absent master, and this may make her believe that marriage might not be out of question if she can succeed in fully pleasing this bachelor by keeping a promise not to bother him. However, she moves to address the problems in the direction that makes her aspiration to save Miles and Flora become defeated.

The governess's mistake really shows up when she makes incorrect hypotheses about the children's behavior. We often see her collect data and try to interpret them as a way to search for some self-justification for all the things she thinks or she believes. But most of the time her suppositions expose "their delusive nature through discrepancies between her data and her hypotheses"[20] Her self-justifying proof, as McElroy brilliantly discusses, arises from her "disconcerting tendency to see

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[20] John Harmon McElroy, "The Mysteries at Bly" in *Arizona Quarterly*, 1981 Autumn: 37(3), 229.

absence as presence and presence as absence"[21] In other words, her subjective theory can find its validation "in everything, regardless of appearances (or nonappearances)"[22] This faulty theory of hers can be seen even in her volatile views of the children under her charge. She is fickle in the sense that she keeps switching her mind back and forth between being sure of their pure innocence and becoming suspicious of their every action and word, convincing that they plan to deceive her. Her misinterpretation is evidently exposed in a night when she witnesses Miles standing out in the lawn while Flora looks at him from a window to call her attention to his presence there. The interpretation that the governess has for this childish act of audacity is different from what Miles explicates to her later. Viewing these bold acts of the children, especially Miles's act of looking up as if he saw someone on the tower, makes the governess believe that the children have secret collusion with the ghosts. But Miles's explanation of his motive at the time set it out clear that he only wants to prove to her his ability to be a bad boy. It is just a game a naughty boy arranges with his sister to point out her powerlessness to absolutely control his life. In so doing, Miles acts like an adult, trying to wrestle with the governess in a battle for power. His evil conduct is displayed again in the scene that the governess goes to Miles's room to plead with him to help her practically resolve his school problem one night later. At this time, she kneels beside his bed and embraces him and kisses him. Miles cannot understand her passionate intensity, He shrieks at a loud gust of wind and blows out a candle with frights, leaving the governess and him in darkness. The ambiguity of the text allows these displays of affection to appear both harmless and improper. It is harmless if we regard her action here as her overabundant concern for the child, but it will be inappropriate if we consider her behavior a passion of a lover trying to possess this little gentleman as a surrogate bachelor she yearns to get married with.

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[21] John Harmon McElroy, 228.

[22] John Harmon McElroy, 228.

The governess's lack of understanding of the children's problems is also clearly shown in a discussion initiated by Miles when they are walking to church on a morning. Mile's frankness gives us an insight into the children's feelings, desires, and predicaments. He starts the talk with a blunt question, "when in the world am I going back to school?" (80). His question implies that the governess has also kept the matter of his permanent expulsion even from him for a long time. He therefore still innocently asserts his wish to go back to school. He makes it clear that he only wants "to see more of a life" (82) and cease to lead "a life that is so unnatural for a boy" (84), that is, to stay "with the lady always" (p. 81). He wants to grow up among his "own sort" (82) and have some attention and care from his uncle. Unfortunately, the governess mistakenly takes his wishes not only as his challenge to her governing power but also as a defeat in all she hopes to achieve. That makes her feel panic and want to give up the whole things. A preoccupation with her own desires completely blinds her from the children's desperation for their uncle's love and care. Unlike the previous governess and Peter Quint, she fails at gaining affection from the children. The way that she attempts to reverse the role to perform the male subjective action has really alienated Miles and Flora from her. The lack of a female model at the time she comes to work at Bly cannot make her envision the proper role she should assume. She cannot perceive that a female is still a female no matter what roles she tries to play. It cannot alter her gender anyway. The housekeeper, the children, and even the readers can sense the frightening change in the governess's weird manners and actions. Mrs. Grose watches her with doubts and fears while the children try to stay away from her tight control. Instead of gaining an insight into their reactions, she misinterprets Mrs. Grose's case as distrust with her and the children's case as their secret communion with the ghosts to cheat her, the interpretations that do not yield any benefits to anybody.

The governess's reliability is completely nullified when Flora, with the help of Miles's seductive music, sneaks away from her vigilance to play at the lake. Seeing her there, the governess walks directly to ask the little girl forcefully where Miss Jessel is. Carelessly letting slip the name of the previous governess whom Flora knows very well is deceased, she really panics the little girl. Her next shriek and her effort to direct the housekeeper's eyes to what she thinks to be the apparition of Miss Jessel may be the act that she makes it out to gain some self-justifying proof. But her act here merely wreaks havoc on the situation because it makes Flora's face turn pale and white with fear and fright. Instead of the triumphant confirmation, she only obtains a burst of high disapproval, "a deep groan of negation, repulsion, [and] compassion" (99) from the housekeeper. After a flat denial, "I don't know what you mean. I see nobody, I see nothing. I never have. I think you're cruel. I don't like you" (99); the little girl stares at the governess with terror, "she hugged Mrs. Grose more closely and buried in her skirts the dreadful little face. In this position she launched an almost furious wail. 'Take me away, take me away-oh take me away from her!' " (100). Again the governess misinterprets the child's wail as a fear of the ghost.

Since James does not provide detailed information to assure his readers what really happens in this scene, this part of the text also remains ambiguous. Its ambiguity sometimes makes the readers feel hard to pinpoint the innocence of Flora. One question that bothers the readers most of the time is if Flora is innocently clean from the governess's accusation, then how can we explain the child's ability to take the boat so far out in the pond? To the governess's subjective hypothesis, the girl may gain some strength from the spirit and the only way for the governess to justify her accusation lies only in the insistence on seeing the female ghost, Miss Jessel, across the lake. That is why she tries to point at the apparition for Mrs. Grose and asks Flora for a confirmation. Her acts only makes Mrs. Grose cast doubts on her visions and fears and tend to believe that the governess may indeed be losing her

mind. Seeing an urgent need to protect Flora, Mrs. Grose hurriedly takes her away from the governess and the place on the next day. The governess is delighted to have the housekeeper take Flora to her uncle in London, hoping that she will help explain and defend for her against what has happened at Bly. However, she insists on holding Miles with her partly because she does not want to lose her little gentleman, who now represents the master's double for her and partly because she wants to prove to the master her ability to protect his nephew and her refusal to abandon her duties. Ironically, her enthusiasm to save him turns to devastate the mentality of the boy too, causing him to die of shock in her arms.

The governess's doubt about her action has never come out until the final scene when she tries to force Miles to confess to his wrongdoing at school. The 'unwary reader' may be misled by another trap of the author if she/he believes that the ghost really exists because Miles really sees and identifies it as Quint. A careful reading reveals that Miles does not witness any apparition at all. The fright occurs because of the pressure that the governess imposes on him. The validity of this inference is confirmed when Miles asks, "Is *she* here?" (116) rather than "Is *he* here?" at the governess's shriek to the appearance of her ghostly visitant. Then she presses him hard to her embrace, preventing him from turning his face to the window. If the boy has really formed any connection with the spirit of Quint, he should have asked if *he* is there. Goddard has interestingly explained this point that:

> ...his "Is she here?" is the best proof that the idea of a spiritual presence has been suggested not at all by past experiences of a similar sort but precisely by something he has overheard from Flora, or about her, plus what he gets at the moment from the governess.[23]

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[23] Harold C. Goddard, "A Pre-Freudian Reading of *The Turn of the Screw*" in *Twentieth-Century Interpretations of The Turn of the Screw and Other Tales*, ed. Jane P. Thompkin (Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1970), 80.

Mrs. Grose's manner and reluctance to give an answer, when asked by the governess not to allow the boy to meet Flora and be influenced by his sister, help explain this mystery. Mrs. Grose's reaction informs us that the boy had already sneaked to see his sister during her delirium and formed in his mind a connection between his sister's illness, her dread of the current governess, and Miss Jessel. That is why he envisions the female ghost in his mind when the governess screams. His later conversion of the pronoun 'she' to 'he' results from the governess's attempts to convey to the boy the very name that she resolves not to be the first to speak it out. Her effort succeeds in making the boy finally utter the name of Quint, and this utterance seems to help justify her belief in the corrupt influence of the ghosts on the children there. Even now, however, he does not witness the image of the spirit. He asks where Quint is, crying and lurking helplessly about the room in a futile endeavor to see the apparition. Although the governess is not certain about the cause of Miles's death, whether it is her or the ghost who kills him, she has no courage to find out the answer because she cannot acknowledge her shuddering action. Charles Hoffmann seems to make a confusing conclusion when he said that "The governess has triumphed: Miles is saved, Peter Quint has lost. But the experience – the fright, the horror, the recognition of Evil – is too much for Miles."[24] If it is a real triumph for the governess, then why does she stop short and question her own action? Although some readers may insist on calling it her victory, how can they explain her triumph at the cost of one innocent child? As apparently displayed in the end, she makes an effort to conceal her guilty conscience by continuing to delude others as well as herself that the horror is exorcized, and the child himself is dispossessed.

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[24] Charles Hoffmann, *The Short Novels of Henry James* (New York: Book Associates, 1957), 90.

By all evidence, her hallucination ultimately destroys two little children–one is driven out of her senses with fright, another dies of shock. Thus, it is clear that with her overabundant concerns for the children and her violent suspicions of them, the governess, in fact, unconsciously becomes the fiend, not a guardian angel as many readers have thought or even as the governess has made great attempts to insist throughout the novel. With the help from the housekeeper–through her calm manner, skepticism, and checking–the governess's true mental conditions are revealed. Throughout the book, though the governess cannot see her own hallucinations, she perceives its reflection in the faces of the housekeeper and the children. A close scrutiny of her case yields a vivid picture that all the problems existing in the governess's life primarily emanate from external factors like social expectations and principles that highly expect respectability and propriety from its members but treat women unfairly when compared with the way they treat male subjects. Thus, social forces rather than internal forces in a female subject are a major source of her stress and strain. If she has any mental illness as the psychoanalytical camp prefers to believe, it cannot be denied that the social tensions which she encounters are ultimately subject her to a hysterical fit. With this possibility, it is likely that the apparitions she often claims to witness are only the products of her visual delusion. Miles and Flora are too young and the housekeeper is illiterate and ignorant; they can see and feel her peculiarity but they cannot understand and name it.

A careful analysis of the text reveals that in writing the novel, the author's main concern lies not in the question whether the apparitions really exist but in how Victorian ideologies instigate its people to vigorously search for respectability and propriety for their own sake rather than live their lives practically and rightly. These ideologies have come to cause stress and strain to its members, especially women and people of the low classes. Looking at the story in this way, we can conclude that Henry James produced this high-quality piece of work to criticize his own society,

the one that was strongly gender-biased and class-structured. The coming of capitalism depressingly devastated the oppressive conditions of those people, making them become more invisible like ghosts. Creating his governess to represent Victorian women and Bly to become a microcosm of Victorian society, James succeeded in mirroring the imperfections of Victorian society. The limited space as well as the social inequities that society provided for women and people of lower classes undoubtedly forced them to struggle to survive and to pursue a means to gain upward mobility. The flourishing romances which most women turned to read at that time could not provide any coping skills or creative benefits in their lives. On the contrary, this kind of romantic works only moved to nurture a person's imaginations and delusion like what the author has discloses in the case of his governess. Another point that the author wanted to attack was the neglectful habits of the rich people who always abandoned their responsibility for their own children in the hands of the governess or the servants whom they were not known or familiar with at all. The tragedies that happens to the children at Bly are really a valuable lesson that the author wants the readers to pay much attention to and try to help prevent them. With this clear evidence, it can be concluded that *The Turn of the Screw* is not a 'pure and simple' ghost tale as many readers have been deceived to think at all.

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