From Ghost Story to Love Story: A Comparison of the Portrayal of Queerness in Henry James' The Turn of the Screw and Mike Flanagan's The Haunting of Bly Manor

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A Comparison of the Portrayal of Queerness in Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* and Mike Flanagan's *The Haunting of Bly Manor*

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Introduction

YouTube, Netflix, Disneyplus, HBO Max, and Prime Video are streaming services that offer a wide range of content ready for consumption. In the era of twenty-first-century mass-communication technology, content is readily available to anyone with an internet connection. Streaming has become incredibly popular ever since these services became available when YouTube was founded in 2005. New words associated with these services have become part of mainstream vocabulary, such as "binge-watching," "binging a series," and "Netflix and Chill." The term binge-watch was even *Collins English Dictionary* word of the year in 2015. The availability and mass consumption of online media leaves space for exposure to new modes of intertextuality as works are adapted to fit these new media formats. Old TV shows are being reimagined, and works that have only been published in literary form are being adapted to fit the streaming services' format demands and target audience.

Recently, one director who has adapted several classic works of Gothic fiction both into a new medium and a different context, also creating new content in the process, is Mike Flanagan. Flanagan has been a filmmaker and director for many years and is well known for his horror work, notably the award-winning *Absentia* (2011). After directing numerous films in the genre, he developed several gothic-horror television series for Netflix. His first prominent series was *The Haunting of Hill House* (2018), an adaptation of Shirley Jackson's work of the same name. His next series was *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020), based on the novella *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) by Henry James. His most recent series is *The Fall of the House of Usher* (2023), based on Edgar Allan Poe's short story from 1839 and various other gothic works by the same author. Flanagan is known for addressing topics that are prominent and much-debated within the Western-contemporary society of the viewer, such as institutional racism, oppression of queerness, addiction to illegal drugs and prescription medicine, and widespread familial trauma.

Though all of Flanagan's adaptations of classic works of Gothic literature directly explore pressing socio-cultural problems and are thus worthy of close textual analysis, this thesis will specifically focus on *The Haunting of Bly Manor* and the novella on which it is based. Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* and the TV Series *The Haunting of Bly Manor,* directed by Mike Flanagan, portray a transfer from the unspeakable (queerness) to overtly portrayed queerness through the adaptation of characters, relationships, and the ending of the TV series; this transfer is used as a tool to normalize queerness and focuses on social acceptance of queer relationships.

When regarding adaptations like *The Haunting of Bly Manor,* the term itself and others related to adaptation, like appropriation and reimagination, need explaining. Adaptation can be regarded in several different ways. In *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies* (2017), Timothy Corrigan describes adaptation as: "Adaptation might refer to the omissions and additions made in representing, for instance, a particular historical event in a novel, or the adjustments necessary for an individual to move from one culture to another" (23). He also states that adaptation can be seen as an act of reception in which "the reading or viewing of that work is actively adapted as a specific form of enjoyment and understanding" (23). This is shown in the adaptation of *The Turn of the Screw* as it is actively adapted from a novella to an audio-visual content form to fit the specific audience demands of streaming services in contemporary times.

Adaptation and appropriation overlap in their definitions as they are both seen as "actively creating a new cultural and aesthetic product, one that stands alongside the texts that have provided inspiration, and, in the process, enriches rather than 'robs' them" (Sanders 53). However, adaptation and appropriation do differ in their definitions, "appropriations are transformative adaptations that remove parts of one form or text (or even the whole) from their original context and insert them in a different context that dramatically reshapes their

meaning" (Sanders 26). This shows that appropriations are a form of adaptation, yet they are their own method; hence, they have their own terminology. Like appropriations, reimaginations are also a form of adaptation. Authors or directors who reimagine specific works retell a story but often with a contemporary twist, exploration of different genres, settings, or cultural contexts (Aziz 1202). This is very common within contemporary media as a number of shows have gotten reboots, such as *The L Word* (2004), a famous TV series regarding queer women. It was rebooted into *The L Word – Generation Q* (2019) and portrays the same characters as the original but in different cultural contexts as the formerly well-known show and in different settings.

As a category of creative work, adaptations have often been viewed as second best, a perversion, in regard to the original work (Hutcheon 3). Adaptation is a complex concept and can often be confusing as the adaptation is both the final product and the process in which the product is made (Hutcheon 15). Due to the overlap in the definition of adaptation in regard to the process and the product, it is hard to define, purely theoretically, what an adaptation is. There are several ways a cultural production can be adapted. For instance, Hutcheon describes that an adaptation can be "seen as a formal entity or product, an adaptation is an announced and transposition of a particular work … this can involve a shift of medium or genre, or a change of frame and therefore context: telling the same story from a different point of view" (7). Adaptation can be seen as the process of creation, where a piece of work is reinterpreted and recreated or appropriated (Hutcheon 8). Also, adaptation can be understood as a process of reception. When an adaptation is seen as a process of reception, it is seen as a form of intertextuality, an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work. An adapted work is one that stands on its own; "an adaptation is a derivation but not derivative – a work that is second without being secondary" (Hutcheon 9).

Within the theory of adaptation, it is shown by multiple scholars, namely Linda Hutcheon, Julie Sanders, and Kamilla Elliot, that form and content are to be differentiated. In *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), Hutcheon explains that the form represents the expression of the content: how the idea behind the story is portrayed in the physical manifestation. An adaptation is a change in the expression of the content as it was originally intended or created. Then, within the expression of the content lay a multitude of aspects that can be transported from the idea; themes, characters, time, focalization, and emphasis are all examples of transportable concepts (Hutcheon 10).

In *Adaptation and Appropriations* (2015), Julie Sanders explains that adaptations and appropriations are very common on these new and popular media platforms and streaming services. However, they can vary in their explicitness of intertextual purposes (Sanders 3). Often, adaptations or appropriations will involve a director's personal vision. Due to the possibility of the director adding a personal vision, explicitness in intertextuality depends on the director's goal for the adaptation. Adaptations of works have been created for centuries; for example, *The Innocents* (1961), the original adaptation of James' *The Turn of the Screw*. This adaptation changed the medium of the work from a novella to a film. Through this change of medium, the novella became an audio-visual representation of the original novella. In *Theorizing Adaptation* (2020), Kamilla Elliot discusses that adaptations were noted even before 0 CE, "the Romans adapted Greek poetry, theater, and visual art and theorized their adaptations … even the ancient Greek playwrights can be seen as adapters. Audiences knew the myths already and went to the theatre to see how the stories were told" (Elliot 22). Thus, adaptations of works have been around for a long time and have continued to progress in their form to what they are today, in the new forms and formats that contemporary content demands.

The Turn of the Screw is a traditional gothic-horror novella that features a frame story, a mysterious manuscript, supposed hauntings at a secluded mansion, a young damsel in distress, a mysterious landlord, and a harrowing, apparently supernatural, climax. In *The Gothic* (2004), David Punter and Glennis Byron identify some of these features, like the Uncanny, The Monster, and Persecution, as persistent conventions in the genre (263-283). Flanagan retains the traditional gothic-horror aspects of this novella in his TV series. Not only does the series retain its overall Gothic atmosphere, many of the TV series' formal features are directly taken from the text of James' novella, such as the central characters Miles, Flora, Mrs. Grose, Peter Quint, and Miss Jessel, and the setting of the series: Bly Manor. Though James was not a horror writer in the way that his contemporary Bram Stoker was, *The Turn of the Screw* has become a prominent novella in the horror canon; it has inspired a multitude of adaptations, *The Haunting of Bly Manor* and *The Innocents* (1961) being the most generally well-known.

Both *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Haunting of Bly Manor* have been studied in the context of queer gothic studies, a field of scholarship that recognizes that "[g]othicism not only reflects antinormative queerness but also serves as a response to the systematized exclusion and violence that has plagued U.S. [and other] queer communities in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries" (Westengard, *Gothic Queer* 3). Westengard explains that "[t]hose with non-normative genders and sexualities have faced persistent and insidious trauma, and, as a result, [a] queer culture has developed that responds to this trauma with an aesthetic that uses Gothicism to acknowledge violent marginalization while challenging the structures that create it" (4). What is more, Andrew J. Owens explains, contemporary Gothic television has been capturing "a cultural zeitgeist, wrenching non-normative sexualities from the margins to the mainstream of Anglo-American culture" (33). As such, the gothic, as a genre, plays a significant role in the representation of queerness.

Though *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Haunting of Bly Manor* have been studied in the context of queer gothic studies, they are generally discussed in regard to the queer gothic individually. Examples of this are Makenzie Beckstead's *Examining Gothic Queerness in Henry James' The Turn of the Screw* (2023), which discusses queer gothic in only *The Turn of the Screw*, and Lotte de Boer's *Gothic Romance in The Haunting of Bly Manor: The Modern Transformation of the Victorian Gothic,* which does mention *The Turn of the* Screw but does not compare the two works in regard to queer gothic. Even in research that discusses both works in regard to queerness, there is no discussion of the specific transfer from the unspeakable to the overtly portrayed queerness.

Gothic fiction has explored many themes, including haunting, ancestral curses, terrorized, vulnerable women, and fragmented identities under repressive regimes. These themes fit within the general characteristics of the Gothic novel genre. In *The Literature of Terror* (2014), David Punter names "an emphasis on portraying the terrifying, a common insistence on archaic settings, a prominent use of the supernatural, the presence of highly stereotyped characters and the attempt to deploy and perfect techniques of literary suspense" as typical characteristics of the Gothic novel genre. He even specifically names the notion of the haunted castle and heroines preyed on by unspeakable terrors (Punter 1). Westengard adds that "many of these supernatural metaphors work with historically and spatially specific meanings regarding race, class, and sexuality" (8). Understandably, within the context of queer gothic studies, the focus lies on the oppression and marginalization of non-normative sexualities and related concerns about gender identities.

The Turn of the Screw encompasses all these themes. The theme of haunting, as well as the theme of the terrorized, vulnerable woman, are prevalent in both the original story and the adaptation, as Bly Manor seems indeed to be cursed. In *Queer Gothic Literature and Culture* (2019), Westengard discusses how, within gothic fiction, there is a pervasive relationship

between uncanny events, the fragmentation of identity under repressive regimes, and non-heteronormative genders and sexualities (259). Works that explore themes of non-heteronormativity are known as queer gothic. Examples of the exploration of themes of non-heteronormativity are works within this genre, such as Wilkie Collin's *The Woman in* White (1860) and *The Moonstone* (1868), where topics are addressed, such as the "surplus of women" or the Victorian worry of spinsterhood; and gender non-conformity such as the presence of bearded ladies (Thomas 143). The word "queer" has known many definitions and has indicated different meanings over time: "Initially queer denoted oddness or peculiarity, the term later developed as a derogatory epithet for homosexuals, but by the late twentieth century queer has been reclaimed by many in the LGBT community as a marker of politicized resistance to the original stigma of the term." It now also functions as an umbrella term to represent a range of nonnormative sexual practices and gender identities (Westengard, *Queer Gothic* 259). While James does not overtly address queerness concerning non-normative sexual practices, Flanagan does, showing that the queer gothic label is one well-fitted. James may not overtly address these topics but has been speculated to address them implicitly; as Haralson states in *Henry James and Queer Modernity* (2003), "the queer subtext in his writings that "a great many" would someday be able to comprehend" (208). Furthermore, in *Queer Impressions: Henry James's Art of Fiction (2005),* Elaine Pigeon also states, "James could now mask his queer affinity behind a shroud of wicked but pronounced heterosexuality, which he prudently managed to keep at arm's length" (77). These two scholars show that James is speculated to address queerness implicitly, through subtext, as Haralson states, or by masking it as something else, as Pigeon concludes. Hence why the novella also fits in the category of queer gothic. These speculations will be addressed further in Chapter One. The gothic genre is seen to be inherently queer, in the sense that means LGBTQ+, due to the fact that it focuses on the transgression of binaries, regardless of whether that is based on sexual

decorum or not. Queer gothic has a tendency to question mainstream versions of "reality"; it interrogates the values associated with this mainstream reality (Westengard, *Queer Gothic* 261).

When looking at both works, it is essential to acknowledge the different times in which they were created. When *The Turn of the Screw* was published in 1898, initially in Britain and later in the United States. The political climate, as well as the perception and societal opinion on queerness, differed much from the current state of affairs. In the late nineteenth century, The Labouchere Amendment was introduced in the United Kingdom. This amendment, established in 1885, made "gross" indecency between men a crime that was punishable by imprisonment of at least two years. Before this specific amendment, there were several others: The Buggery Act of 1533, which was not explicitly pointed at same-sex activity but for many different sexual "offenses" that were deemed punishable by death. However, same-sex convictions were the most common; the Offences Against The Person Act of 1828, which made the previous Buggery Act more specified towards same-sex sexual activity, still punishable by death; in 1861, the Offences Against the Person Act replaced the punishment for same-sex sexual activity from being sentenced to death by a sentence of life imprisonment or "for any term not less than ten years" (Human Dignity Trust). When *The Turn of the Screw* was published in 1898, homosexuality, or more accurately "sodomy" at the time, was not accepted. It was illegal and punished by law (Trumbach 5). While sodomy is the more accurate name for the reference to homosexuality during this historical period, it only refers to same-sex attraction or homosexuality between men. The term "sodomy" is discriminatory on the basis of sex. Due to traditional sex roles, the idea of women being able to engage in homosexuality was outside the scope of sodomy and general acknowledgment as the polarities of gender are what the subordination of women depended on (Koppelman 147). There is a long history of discrimination, repression, and hatred towards homosexual and

queer people, and it is interesting that when regarding the history of queerness that when Gothic fiction reached its apex in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Haggarty states that it was also the moment "when gender and sexuality were beginning to be codified for modern culture. In fact, gothic fiction offered a testing ground for many unauthorized genders and sexualities" (384). This means that in the era when The Turn of the Screw was published, queerness may not have been legal, but the concept was becoming more prominent within society.

There has been progress for LGBTQ+ rights since the Labouchere Act. In 1967, the United Kingdom decriminalized male homosexual acts (lesbian acts were never illegal); in 2001, the Netherlands was the first country to legalize gay marriage; and in 2003, the United States decriminalized consensual same-sex sexual activity. However, queerness is still a topic that is often considered controversial within mainstream Western culture. There is still a long way to go before the LGBTQ+ community can be sure of having the desired equal rights. Even though the United States decriminalized same-sex sexual activity, same-sex marriage did not become legal in all fifty states until 2015. Though this is a step forward in the LGBTQ+ rights movement, there are still sixty-four countries that criminalize homosexuality, and discrimination towards the people in this group is not limited to criminal prosecution (Human Dignity Trust). Even in countries where gay marriage is legalized, an LGBTQ+ person can face discrimination because of their identity, such as limited access to healthcare, bullying, and harassment. Therefore, Flanagan's choice to create an explicitly queer storyline in adapting James' novella was not just a gimmick to make the story in *The Haunting of Bly Manor* more appealing to today's television audience; it is, in fact, a political statement and expression of social critique that stems from key origins in the time the original was published. Flanagan chose, deliberately, to stray from James' highly ambiguous portrayal of the characters' identities and states of mind to highlight the way in which there is potential to

see the presence of a queer relationship in the novel, which strays from the heteronormative society's expectations. Therefore, Flanagan's choice is a very important one. It is a way to normalize queer people's presence in society. While there is an explicit emphasis on the queer relationship, it is still a typical Victorian ghost story. However, it adds a whole new dimension to the plot and characterization of the series. The haunting in the TV series is both literal and metaphorical/psychologically; I will address this more in-depth in chapters One and Two.

To explore the contrasts between plot structure, characterization, and themes in *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Haunting of Bly Manor,* this thesis will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter will focus on the implicit queer undertones in James' novella in comparison to the explicit portrayal of the queer characters in the TV show. This chapter will show the differences in the plotlines and characterization of the two works and where the queerness compares or contrasts in the two stories. The second chapter will present a character analysis of the protagonists of Flanagan's series; this will mainly focus on the character Jamie Taylor and the protagonist, Danielle Clayton, and how they are portrayed as queer characters and how queerness affects their character. Furthermore, this chapter will focus on the particulars of the transfer from the implicit to the explicit portrayal of queerness. The third chapter will present an analysis of the ending of the TV series; *The Haunting of Bly Manor* has an alternative ending to *The Turn of the Screw* and continues where the novel has ended. Within this chapter, I will also explore whether the *Bury Your Gays* trope is applicable to Flanagan's adaptation. This trope of *Bury Your Gays* was coined to describe how, in many TV shows, gay people often die as they are seen as expendable characters. The trope itself has been around since the late nineteenth century, but the term has emerged later (Hulan 1). There is no specific moment when the term became what it is; it arose within the LGBTQ+ community as media criticism grew and has no sole creditor (Cover and Milne 810). Since Flanagan adapted

James' story into an explicitly queer gothic work where a queer character dies, it is important to analyze whether that trope is applicable to the situation at hand in the Netflix series.

Chapter One:

Queerness in *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Haunting of Bly Manor*

When juxtaposed to Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw,* Flanagan's *The Haunting of Bly Manor* portrays a transfer from the unspeakable queerness in the source text to an overtly portrayed queerness through the adaptation and re-imagining of characters, relationships, and the addition of a new ending. In order to come to a full understanding of this process of transfer from the unspeakable to the overtly portrayed queerness through adaptation, it is important first to establish the explicit presence or implicit suggestion of queerness in both works and to establish what definition of queerness and what manners of representation are at play. Therefore, this chapter will focus on and explain the definition of queerness in the late nineteenth century in order to establish how queerness was regarded in this era. Having established the meaning of queerness in the late nineteenth century, this chapter will continue to address the speculations regarding queerness in James' works and the value of these speculations as this will explain the implicit queerness in Henry James' work. Furthermore this chapter will explain the definition of queerness in current times so this definition can be used to compare the implicitness in James' work to the explicit presence of in the TV series *The Haunting of Bly Manor*.

When discussing queerness in James' writing and speculation surrounding his own queerness, first, a distinction in the use of the word queer needs to be made. Queer has meant different things during different times. In English-speaking countries in the sixteenth century, queer originally referred to something strange or illegitimate. In the nineteenth century, the word queer was used to classify something as odd, and even in the early twentieth century, the

word queer was still used this way quite often (Barker 8). However, instead of just denoting oddity, the word queer also began to take on a different meaning in the late nineteenth century; namely, queer was used as a form of homophobic abuse. It became a derogatory term for people who partook in same-sex intercourse or who were sexually attracted to others of the same sex. Queer was also used as a general insult; by linking it to same-sex attraction, there was an implication that something or someone called queer was an immoral or corrupt person (Barker 9). Queer was mostly used as an insult toward "effeminate" or "camp" men (Barker 9). What this last use of queer does not denote, however, is that this only happened after the Oscar Wilde trials in 1895. Wilde was accused of "gross indecency," or in more colloquial terms, of engaging in "homosexual behavior." However, many people did not believe this to be true. As Alan Sinfield states in *The Wilde Century*: *Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Moment* (1994), Wilde was known to be "effeminate" and had dandy manners and interests. However, this did not directly incite the idea that he was a homosexual at that time. Sinfield then draws the conclusion that those features of Wilde's manner that would signal to people today that he was homosexual did not signify such an identity during the late nineteenth century. What is now a stereotype of the gay man as being feminine did not have the same connotations with homosexuality yet in the late nineteenth century.

Queer did not refer to homosexuality per se, but due to its meaning of odd, strange, and illegitimate, it became a way to villainize homosexuality. Queer was used, and still is used, as an insult, a slur. However, in the 1980s, the LGBTQ+ community began claiming the word, as has become common with slurs and those marginalized by the use of that slur. The word began to be claimed as a neutral word to describe the queer community or even as a positive form of self-identity (Barker 10). Queer has now become part of the mainstream vocabulary and is not just used to refer to gay men anymore. Queer is often used as an umbrella term for people of the LGBTQ+ community who are either not specifically labeled

or anyone who is not heterosexual or cisgender (Barker 11). Throughout this thesis, I will be using the current definition of queer that signifies the LGBTQ+ community and not the definition that was used during the time when James' *The Turn of the Screw,* which from here on will be referred to as *ToS,* was written. During the time when the novella was written, queer did not refer directly to homosexuality; it referred to oddness or strangeness. James' use of the word in the novella refers to these terms and not to the meaning of LGBTQ+ people that this thesis refers to. While these references to oddness or strangeness do fall somewhat in line with the perception of LGBTQ+ people during the time the novella was written, as they were perceived as non-normative, the use of the word queer did not directly signify homosexuality. Therefore, James' use of the word cannot be interpreted as referring to homosexuality.

As I stated in the introduction, it has been speculated that Henry James implicitly addresses queerness and might even have been queer himself. These speculations originate from several different places. Haralson states that he "does not want to make the essentialist claim that only a gay reader can access gay signification to suggest that an appreciable fund of circumstantial evidence has accrued from gay readers of Henry James" (18). An important detail of Haralson's statement here is the reference to gay readers accessing gay signification. When reviewing the speculations on James and whether they hold merit, it need not be forgotten that confirmation bias is a concept that comes into play. As Haralson states, just because someone is gay does not mean that they interpret something as queer because of it. The speculations about James' writing being implicitly queer originated from the gay readers of this work. As Haralson states, gay readers of James' work have gathered an appreciable fund of circumstantial evidence. Due to the circumstantial nature of the evidence (and taking into account the possible factor of confirmation bias), the origins of the speculations remain exactly that: circumstantial speculations. Therefore, while they hold some merit due to the

significant amount of circumstantial evidence found, these speculations remain indefinite due to their circumstantiality. It is significant here to point out the important role that readers play in the creation of meaning in texts. Sinfield has pointed out the significance of "shared subcultural experience" (*Queer Reading* 77) in determining textual meaning in the reading process. According to Sinfield, "there is no disinterested reading" (*Queer Reading* 4); readers of texts, whether reading for leisure or specifically to discover socio-political meanings, will always interpret the texts within the context of their own lived experience, sense of self, and communal and cultural contexts. It is not surprising, therefore, that the speculations concerning the queerness of James and some of his works were developed initially within a queer reading community.

Gertrude Stein, for example, shared an openly lesbian relationship from 1910 until 1946. Stein wrote a play called *QED,* in which she explores a lesbian love triangle. This play echoes themes found in James' *The Wings of the Dove* (1902). This suggests that writers like Stein wrote on similar themes as James' narratives, such as themes of sexuality and relationships, specifically and especially those outside of the heteronormative conventions (Haralson 19). Regarding sexuality and relationships, *The Wings of the Dove* has many readings of its representation of women and queer desire through the presence of a sort of love triangle between the characters, Kate, Densher, and Milly, where Kate and Densher are in a relationship. Still, Kate wants Densher to pursue Milly so he can inherit money from the American heiress. Furthermore, Rachel Haines also discusses in *Authoring 'the real thing': Influence, Impressibility, and The Wings of the Dove's Queer Style* (2023), that the character of Kate Croy represents the construction of gender and sexuality to the narrative containment of illicit erotic desire in the novel based on her father's name and his role in mediating her identity after her father's "homosexual disgrace" (118).

Furthermore, and supporting Sinfield's theory of "queer reading," queer authors claim to have seen their own lives, and same-sex desire, represented in James' work. Examples of these authors are Stephen Spender, who interpreted James' *The Pupil* (1891) as "a fantasy of homosexuality," and Christopher Isherwood, who concurred that James' "coy" was an obscure form of flirtation between the tutor and his pupil (Haralson 21). None of these speculations are definite or completely confirmed. However, they are associative evidence and are generally interpreted not as true but as speculations that are deserving of merit.

ToS, specifically, is a novella that brought the speculations regarding James' queer writing to a head. Haralson describes this as an underlying idea of "moral corruption," not specified but enough to place the suggestion of queerness (Haralson 82). This idea of the portrayal of moral corruption as an implication of queerness is one of the ways that I will use to highlight the implicit queerness in *ToS*. The suggestion of queerness in *ToS* rests mostly on two characters: Miles and the governess. The first reference to Miles' moral corruption occurs in Chapter Two of the novella. In this passage, the governess refers to something Mrs. Grose said earlier in the chapter. In the letter the governess received from Miles' school on why he is being expelled, it is stated that Miles is an "injury" to the others. In response to this news, Mrs. Grose is outraged. In the initial passage, the governess tells Mrs. Grose that she took this outrage as a declaration that she had never known him to be bad. To which Mrs. Grose responds, "Oh never known him- I don't pretend that" (James 18). She elaborates further that a boy who is never bad is "no boy for me" (James 18). The governess then continues, "'You like them with the spirit to be naughty?' Then, keeping pace with her answer, 'So do I!' I eagerly brought out. 'But not to the degree to contaminate—' 'To contaminate?' My big word left her at a loss. I explained it. 'To corrupt.'" (James 18). This passage is the first instance where Miles' being corrupted is implied. Later in the novella, this corruption is specified.

This specification of Miles having been corrupted takes place in two ways: through Miles' relationship with Peter Quint and through the explanation of why he got expelled.

When the governess sees Peter Quint for the second time, she realizes that he is not there for her: "He had come for someone else" (James 31). When she discusses Quint's appearance with Mrs. Grose, the governess finds out that Peter Quint died. She then concludes that Quint wanted to appear to the children,

> 'he was looking for little Miles.' A portentous clearness now possessed me. '*that's* whom he was looking for.' 'But how do you know?' 'I know, I know, I know!' my exaltation grew. 'and you know, my dear!' she didn't deny this, but I required, I felt, not even so much telling as that. She took it up again in a moment. 'What if *he* should see him?' 'Little Miles? That's what he wants!' (James 39).

Based on the governess' exclamation, Mrs. Grose then divulges about Quint and Miles' relationship: "'Oh, it wasn't him!' Mrs. Grose with emphasis declared. 'It was Quint's own fancy. To play with him, I mean – to spoil him.' She paused a moment, then she added: 'Quint was much too free"' (James 39). This passage is very telling about Peter Quint and Miles' relationship. Quint had taken a particular fancy to Miles and spoiled him. When Mrs. Grose later tells the governess that, "For a period of several months Quint and the boy had been perpetually together" and hints at "the incongruity, of so close an alliance" (James 53). Peter Quint is looking for Miles; Miles and Peter Quint's relationship is odd when regarding their social standing, Quint being a servant. The closeness between the two exceeded what was expected of those within their social standings. What is even more odd, Mrs. Grose explains further, is that Miles lied about spending time with Quint. He was covering and concealing the relationship between himself and Quint. The relationship between Miles and

Quint is not simply odd due to their social standings but also because it seems to be a secretive alliance. James leaves out exactly what the basis is for Miles and Quint's relationship, yet the strangeness of the situation is heavily highlighted and repeated. This relationship implies the moral corruption of Miles by Peter Quint, as Miles starts lying, concealing, and apparently acting out at school even after Quint is gone. While Mrs. Grose thinks this behavior is normal for boys, his getting expelled proves different. What the moral corruption is, is not specified, but there is enough to place the suggestion of queerness.[1]

What furthermore places the suggestion of queerness on Miles regarding his relationship with Peter Quint, is the fact that Quint appears in the novella as a ghost. Regarding hauntology from a specifically queer perspective,

> the queer spectator is forced to re-read the queer horror text's intricacies by way of an always-already-present historical conflation of monstrousness with queerness. This is often manifested in the narrative, formal structures, and style of queer horror tests, such as the returning spectral entity/entities (be it a dead individual in the form of a revenant/ghost/ zombie (Elliot Smith 91).

Peter Quint appearing as a ghost and looking for Miles, or so the governess suggests, is the return of the spectral entity. This shows the historical conflation of monstrousness with queerness.

Miles' corrupted behaviors continue even without Peter Quint. He is sent home from school for unspecified reasons; the only thing the letter from the school said was that he was an injury to others. Later in the novel, he explains why he was expelled: "'Well… I said

[1] The relationship between Miles and Peter Quint also obviously denotes a pedophilic undertone when regarding the unspecified signifying queerness as it would be a relationship between a child and an adult. This will not be discussed in this thesis as pedophilia in (queer) literature could be an entirely different topic on its own.

things.' 'Only that?' 'They thought it was enough!' 'To turn you out for?"' (James 125). Miles does not specify what he said, only that he ought not to have done it. When the governess asks to whom he said the things, he says he doesn't remember, "'Was it to everyone?' I asked. 'No, it was only to --" but he gave a sick little headshake. 'I don't remember their names.' 'Were they then so many?' 'No – only a few. Those I liked"' (James 126). Miles said things to his schoolmates. Things that are not explicitly mentioned but are deemed such injury that he was sent home. What he says is not specified and remains unknown, but there is enough information to place the suggestion of queerness. Specifically because he only told the boys he liked. He later even states that they must have told the same things to others, "They must have repeated them, to those *they* liked" (James 126). Therefore, the unspecified things Miles said to the boys he liked, which were later repeated to other boys and eventually to the headmasters, imply queerness.

Not only does Miles' character have an implication of queerness, but the governess' does so as well. The implications that the governess could be queer are less based on moral corruption and more so on her interactions with Mrs. Grose. The novella gives an insight into the governess' inner thoughts. The governess' thoughts reveal an affection for Mrs. Grose. The first instance in which this affection is revealed is in Chapter One of the novella: "It was part of what I already liked Mrs. Grose herself for, the pleasure I could see her feel in my admiration and wonder as I sat at supper with four tall candles and with my pupil" (James 13). There is something about Mrs. Grose that the governess immediately liked. This does not indicate an implication of queerness by itself. There is no reference to moral corruption or anything yet that could imply queerness. The next instance where the governess shows affection to Mrs. Grose occurs in Chapter Three of the novella: "She held me there a moment, then whisked up her apron again with her detached hand. 'Would you mind, Miss, if I used the freedom --' 'To kiss me? No!"' (James 22). However, just after this passage, the

governess' inner monologue says, "After we had embraced like sisters," so whilst the action they partake in is rather intimate, it is explicitly mentioned that it is non-romantic. However, as I explained before, this novel was written during a time when homosexuality and queerness were considered sinful and were prosecuted, hence why the denotation of queerness in the novel is not out of character. Another instance that adds to these implications happens in the novella's Chapter Five: "I held her hard a little, liking to feel her close to me" (James 33). All these instances are not explicit in presenting queerness, but that is exactly the point. These instances have implications of queerness, ones that could not be explicated during the time the novella was published. Mackenzie Beckstead also discusses the governess' and Mrs. Grose's relationship in *Examining Gothic Queerness in Henry James's The Turn of the Screw* (2023),

> perhaps readers might see the governess and Mrs. Grose as platonic confidants, but if these interactions had occurred between a male character and a female character, few would argue that their interactions were merely platonic. These intimate interactions are proof that this text deserves a queer theory reading (6).

Beckstead adds that the reason that the governess and Mrs. Grose's relationship may often have been overlooked when regarding queerness in *ToS* is because of homosociality, a platonic same-sex relationship. Namely, because homosocial relationships are more accepted between women than between men, as women have been encouraged and allowed to interact with each other in warmer and more intimate ways (7). Close female connections were and are more widely accepted, hence why the relationship between the governess and Mrs. Grose may, unrightfully so, not be regarded or analyzed through a queer lens. Their relationship is unequivocally intimate and, therefore, has implications of queerness.

For both Miles and the governess, there are multiple instances where queerness is implicitly present. This stands in direct contrast to the TV series where the queer storyline is

explicit. *HBM* tells the story of a young American woman, Danielle Clayton, also known as Dani, who has moved to the United Kingdom after her fiancée's death. She is a schoolteacher originally but takes the job of being an au pair for two young children, Miles and Flora. The TV series, like *ToS*, starts off with a gathering of people, where someone decides to tell a story. In the novella, it is Douglas who reads the story of the governess. In the TV series, it is the character Jamie is an older woman who tells the story of the au pair, Dani. In the very first episode of the TV series, "The Great Good Place," named after James' short story of the same name, published in 1900, two years after *ToS*, Dani meets several of the characters, including Miles, Flora; their uncle, Henry Wingrave; Mrs. Grose; Owen, the cook; and Jamie Taylor, the gardener. The second episode: "The Pupil," named after another short story by James, features the first intimate moment between Dani and Jamie. Dani has a panic attack, and Jamie encounters her as it happens and comforts her. Later in the episode, the second intimate moment between these two characters takes place; Jamie is in a rage over Miles destroying her rose garden and in parallel to earlier, Dani is the one who comforts Jamie. Dani's and Jamie's love story slowly progresses throughout the series. Initially, their love story is not explicit; there is an obvious connection between the two women, but whether that is friendship or romance is not clear yet. Also, Dani is still haunted by the ghost of her former male fiancée, which causes her to be startled at moments and close herself off to those around her. Episode Three: "The Two Faces, Part One," after James' eponymous short story of 1900, is the first episode where the connection and potential love story becomes explicit when Dani and Jamie have a moment together. Dani holds Jamie's hand and Jamie says, "Who the hell knew?" (00:52:40-00:53:02). This is the first moment where the sexual and romantic chemistry between the two women is explicitly discussed. When Jamie asks who the hell knew, she is referencing the fact that Dani holds her hand and, in that sense, is confirming that she has feelings for Jamie and is thus queer. Darren Elliot-Smith suggests that "these shows

work as Trojan Horse narratives of sorts, using the stylized format of gothic horror to convey queer love stories with sympathetic lesbian, bi, or queer protagonists and antagonists" (93). This is showcased by the slow unfolding of Dani and Jamie's love story, where initially the horror aspects of the show are foreground, but eventually, the love story between Dani and Jamie takes much of the focus.

In Episode Four: "The Way It Came," James' short story published in 1896, two years before *ToS*, the romance between Dani and Jamie is confirmed when they kiss. From this point on, Dani and Jamie's love only grows. After the whole debacle has taken place at Bly, where all the ghost stories have unfolded, and the ghosts' identities and backgrounds have been revealed, Dani eventually saves everyone by letting the ghost Viola, also known as the lady of the lake, inhabit her body. After this Jamie and Dani move to America together, where they remain happily in love for many years. They live in an apartment and open a flower shop, and Dani even proposes to Jamie, even though they cannot legally marry. Eventually, Jamie wakes up to find Dani gone; she has returned to Bly and taken her place in the lake. The story of Dani, Jamie, and the rest of Bly is then told by Jamie at Flora's wedding. The series ends with Jamie in her hotel room, leaving the door open, hoping that Dani's ghost joins her.

These two works are entirely different in their portrayal, or non-portrayal, of queerness. In the novella, the relationship between Miles and Peter Quint is incredibly consequential. The implicitness of queerness stems for a significant part from the relationship between Miles and Peter Quint. The moral corruption Miles faces because of Peter Quint and the non-specificity of the nature of their relationship is enough to suggest queerness. Even more so, the appearance of Quint as a ghost adds to this suggestion due to the historical conflation of monstrousness and queerness. In the TV series, their relationship is less

significant for the presence of queerness. While Miles is morally corrupted by Peter Quint, there is no implication of a queer relationship. Quint's ghost possesses Miles' body and commits acts of moral debauchery. When Miles is himself, he is shown to be a completely different person, a kind boy with secrets, but not cruel like he is often shown to be when Peter Quint inhabits his body. The other difference in the portrayal of Miles is the reason he got expelled from his school. In the novella, he is expelled for "saying things" to the boys he liked. These unspecified sayings were another implication of queerness; however, in the TV series, he is expelled from school for a series of his actions. He jumps out of a tree, tries to strangle his friend, and even kills a bird. In the end, it becomes clear that he did these things because of a letter Flora sent him, which included a drawing of her crying and asking him to come home. His misbehavior is a means to an end to get sent home to his sister. The case of Miles' expulsion in Flanagan's series has an entirely different set of circumstances than the case in James' novella and has no implications of queerness.

The governess' circumstances in the novella and the au pair's circumstances in the TV series seem more similar as the implicitness and explicitness are portrayed through the same character. Yet, the characters have vastly different character arcs and are part of various plotlines. With respect to James' governess, there were implications of queerness to be found in her relationship with Mrs. Grose and the developing intimacy between the two women. However, in the TV series, the explicit queer relationship is not between Mrs. Grose and the au pair but with a character that is not present in the novella, Jamie Taylor. Jamie is a character that is added to the series specifically to create the queer relationship between her and Dani. The second chapter will discuss the addition of Jamie further, as it will entail a character analysis for both Jamie and Dani to establish the finer details of why Jamie was added, as well as a psychological and metaphysical representation of haunting in the characters.

Chapter Two:

The Characters' Queerness Explained

The main contrast between James' novella and Flanagan's TV series is the explicit queer plot line and queer characterization that was added to the TV series. Jamie Taylor's character was added specifically to create an explicit queer relationship between Jamie and Dani in *The Haunting of Bly Manor*. The character Danielle Clayton is an adaptation of the governess in *The Turn of the Screw* but with a different backstory and character arc. In the novella, not much is known about the governess herself. However, the TV series goes in-depth into Dani's personal life. The TV series is not just a recollection of the governess' life and experiences at Bly. Structurally, the two works are very different. *ToS* is a first-person memoir embedded in a frame story. *HBM* is an audio-visual drama constructed of filmed scenes that are edited together. As such, the very nature of the medium of TV allows for a broader range of experiences and revelations in the past, present, and future. Another difference between the TV series and the novella is the focalization of other characters. In *ToS,* there is only focus on the party at the beginning of the novella, the frame story, and then the story is recounted entirely from the governess' perspective. In *HBM,* there is a focus on the rehearsal dinner at the beginning of the series, the frame story, and the au pair, as in the novella, but also on the personal lives of other characters. It focuses on the experiences and interrelations between Owen, Mrs. Grose, Jamie, Viola, Miles, and Flora's parents. The presence of the frame stories in both works will be discussed in the next chapter.

This chapter will entail a character analysis of both Jamie Taylor and Danielle Clayton. The analyses of these characters will discuss the explicit portrayal of their queerness as well as the societal importance of portrayal. The portrayal of the queerness of these characters is directly linked with the notion of haunting that is present in *ToS* and *HBM* and will, therefore, also be discussed within these analyses. The final element of these analyses

will be on the transference of the "unspeakable" queerness, from implicit to explicit, from the characters in *ToS* to the characters in *HBM.* This will show how the transfer from the unspeakable to the overt queer relationship was possible, how this transfer was made, and the effects queerness has on the characters of Dani and Jamie in particular.

Chapter One highlighted how, during the time when *ToS* was published, engaging in illegal sexual acts (of queer nature), sodomy was prosecuted and punished with criminal charges. The identity of being homosexual was not prosecuted, only the act of engaging in homosexual sexual activity. However, the 1890s were also a time when the identity of homosexuality and the sexual act started to merge into one; at the end of the nineteenth century, the first queer people started to develop a community label for their own attractions, namely Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, a German lawyer and writer who used the term "Urning" to refer to men who were attracted to men (National Geographic). The change from implicit to explicit portrayal of queer characters from *ToS* to the *HBM* shows the societal shift regarding queerness.

In *HBM,* there is an overt queer character that does not exist in the original novella, Jamie Taylor. She is a gardener and groundskeeper at Bly. She occupies a position that is only implicitly present in *ToS.* Peter Quint, by contrast, is explicitly present in ToS; he was a valet at the manor. One thing that is rather clear in *HBM* is that Jamie hates Peter Quint. This is portrayed in the flashbacks that persist throughout the series. The relationship between Jamie and Quint is one that is almost hostile. Jamie and Quint illustrate vast opposites in personality and behavior even though they are in similar circumstances. They are both people who work on the Bly grounds and who do a myriad of tasks for their employers. They also both end up dating the au pairs hired to care for the children. This portrays a transition from the late nineteenth-century setting of *ToS* to the contemporary times of *HBM.*

The two stories are set in different times when different conventions are in place with respect to interpersonal relations. “Dating” in *HBM* refers to a looser style of relation that is typical of contemporary Western culture. What is portrayed in the TV series in terms of interpersonal relations would not have been possible in the 1890s of Henry James, especially since *ToS* is set in a Victorian Britain that would not have accepted amorous encounters between people belonging to different classes of workers. As Jane Nardin explains, “[w]ithin the governess' tale some sort of love relationship between Quint, the valet at Bly, and Miss Jessel, the former governess, is repeatedly implied, and this relationship, too, would have been socially unworkable” (133), just as a romance between the governess and her employer.

The updating of the story’s setting makes possible the establishment of a key difference between James’ version and Flanagan’s version of the story.

Peter Quint was in a relationship with Rebecca Jessel, the au pair that took care of the children before Dani arrived; and Jamie dates Dani. They both come from tumultuous backgrounds. Peter Quint grew up with an abusive father and a mother who was in a mental institution. His mother tried to blackmail Quint into giving her and Quint’s father money (Episode 7: 00:09:12 – 00:09:17). Jamie has several siblings. Her parents had her older brother, then her father went to work in the mines, and her mother had a child with another man. Due to her mother’s affair, both Jamie and her mother are sexually harassed. Her mother then leaves her family behind. Jamie is left to take care of her younger brother. Jamie and her brother eventually split up when social services became involved. Jamie lands in prison, where she learns to become a gardener (Episode 6: 00:32:24 – 00:32:35). Both Jamie and Quint have difficult backgrounds. They are both rejected by those around them. However, while they experienced similar circumstances in their past, they are completely different, contrasting characters. Despite their similarities, Peter and Jamie behave completely differently. Peter is entirely consumed by bitterness and greed. He steals from his employers

for his own gain. He is abusive and manipulative to Rebecca Jessel and generally always acts out of selfishness. Jamie has a completely different personality. Despite her difficult and traumatic background, she is a kind, generous person and a loving partner to Dani, and she does not let her background lead her down a dark and selfish path.

Not only do Peter Quint and Jamie stand in direct contrast to each other in terms of their character, but their relationships with others are also defined by contrast. Rebecca and Peter are in an abusive relationship. Peter hurts Rebecca early on in their relationship. He physically harms her but also emotionally manipulates her. After Peter dies and becomes a ghost, he manipulates Rebecca into letting him possess her body. When Peter inhabits her body, he walks her to the lake and drowns her but leaves her body as she is choking. She is the one who must endure the final moments of suffering (Episode 7: 00:32:57 – 00:34:04). Jamie's and Dani's relationship stands in marked contrast to this. They support each other through difficult times. They are patient and loving with each other. When Viola takes Flora to the lake, and Dani follows them, Jamie drops everything to run after them to save the woman she loves. This contrast between these two relationships is significant. The heterosexual, normative relationship in the TV Series is a toxic relationship. The queer, non-normative, relationship in the TV series is a healthy relationship. By portraying Quint's and Jessel's heterosexual relationship as an abusive relationship and contrasting it with Jamie's and Dani's healthy queer relationship, there is a breakdown of the stereotype that normative heterosexual relationships are inherently positive. Through this contrast, the series illustrates that a heterosexual relationship is not automatically filled with love and compassion and that a queer relationship is not inherently always monstrously devious and thus wrong. As such, Flanagan's version of James' story challenges the heteronormative hegemony in American culture, which research into media coverage of same-sex marriage by Carol M. Liebler et al. supports: "Nearly every story considered heterosexual marriage as the norm against which all

other possible permutations were judged" and "[s]ame-sex marriage was consistently characterized as a threat to public order" (666-67). As Chapter One explained, queerness was, and in numerous places still is, considered non-normative and subversive of moral order. With the queer relationship in *HBM* being portrayed as a healthy, loving relationship and the heterosexual relationship being portrayed as an abusive relationship, the stereotype or belief system that queer relationships are wrong does not hold up.

As a queer character, Jamie's presence in the TV series presents no difficulties in regard to the original story's exploration of queerness in the late nineteenth century; she is a new character introduced into the story that allows Flanagan to develop a theme unrepresented in James' tale; therefore, she could be shaped and portrayed however the producer and director of the TV series desired.

The fact that Dani (James' governess) is turned into a queer character leads to a more complex situation within the plot. Dani is a character that is transposed from the original novella. To create a queer character arc for her, the original story had to be altered and expanded. A part of Dani's storyline that does not exist for the governess in *ToS* is that of her dead fiancée, Edmund. In fact, the governess does not experience any matter of sexual relations in the original story. At the beginning of the series, it is shown that Dani covers all mirrors in her vicinity. This continues throughout the series. Gradually, it unfolds that she covers all the mirrors because whenever she looks into a reflective surface, she sees a shadow

of someone behind her with large, lit-up circles for eyes.

("The Way It Came")

As the series progresses, it is revealed that the shadow is that of her former fiancée, and the lit-up circles are his glasses, reflecting the light of a truck; Edmund was killed by a truck, and its lights shone in his face just before he was hit. The accident happened as Edmund was stepping out of the car, just as Dani had told him she did not want to marry him (Episode 4: 00:28:36 – 00:28:56). In one of the flashbacks, Dani is shown trying on her wedding dress; while she tries on the dress, there is an intimate, suggestive moment between Dani and the seamstress. This interaction shows that her attraction to women is not just present when it comes to Jamie. She never tells Edmund that she cannot marry him because she is queer; all she says is, "I thought I could just stick it out, and eventually, I would feel how I was supposed to" (Episode 4: 00:27:47 – 00:28:12).

The plot of *HBM* is governed by the notion of haunting. Not only are there encounters with the ghosts that haunt the premises of Bly, those who have died there have been

condemned to spend their afterlives clustered to Bly; there is also the haunting figure of Edmund. Edmund's role is different, as he is not one of the ghosts condemned to stay at Bly. He follows Dani wherever she goes. While the ghosts at Bly are supernatural, Edmund is a psychological ghost. Edmund is a reflection of Dani's guilt. Whenever she looks at herself in a mirror or another reflective surface, she sees him. The reflection represents Edmund moments before his death. Edmund stepped out of the car because he was angry and hurt that she would not marry him. The guilt Edmund represents has two layers. The first layer of Dani's guilt is the representation of Edmund as her guilt over his death. While Dani does not explicitly state that she feels responsible for his death, Edmund's ghost haunting her is a symbolic indication that she does indeed feel that responsibility. Edmund exited the car because they were fighting about Dani not wanting to marry him. There is a causal relationship between their fight, her confession of not wanting to marry Edmund, Edmund getting out of the car, and Edmund getting hit by the truck and dying. Ultimately, Dani believes that his death is thus her fault. If she had not told him at that moment, he never would have left the car and, therefore, not been hit by the oncoming truck. However, rationally, it is not her fault. Edmund had the choice to get out of the car or stay in it. Furthermore, it was his own responsibility to check whether there was oncoming traffic when he left the car. Dani had no influence over that. Even though Dani is not at fault, the presentation of Edmund with the lit-up glasses, identical to how he looked just before he died, shows her guilt. The second layer of Dani's guilt stems from the repression of her sexuality. She does not want to marry Edmund because she is queer. Not only does she believe that she is the reason he got out of the car and got hit by the truck, but she also believes her sexuality is part of the reason, as her sexuality, being queer, is the reason she did not want to marry him and why the fight ensued.

Dani has repressed her sexuality her whole life. Edmund's haunting is symbolic of her repressed sexuality. Her ex-fiancée died because she spent her entire life hiding her sexuality, or so she believes, as is shown through the manifestation of her guilt in the appearance of Edmund's ghost whenever she looks at a reflective surface. When she comes to Bly, this struggle is still very fresh. Edmund died no less than a year ago. At Bly, she is still followed by Edmund. Whenever she sees him, she leaves the room for air and tries to calm herself down to prevent panic attacks. A significant moment where we see her being haunted severely affects her is in Episode One: "The Great Good Place." In this episode, Miles and Flora lock Dani in a closet, where she is faced by a mirror and Edmund's reflection in that mirror. This episode shows the irony of Dani facing the haunting of her repressed sexuality while inside a closet and the symbolism of this haunting. Throughout the series, Dani faces Edmund and her following panic attacks several times. The next major time she faces Edmund in a moment that reflects her sexuality is in Episode Three: "The Two Faces, Part One." This is just after she holds Jamie's hand, and Jamie says: "Who the hell knew?" (00:52:40-00:53:02). When Dani turns around after this interaction, she is faced with Edmund. This moment is symbolic of her repressed sexuality. This is the first moment when she indicates to Jamie that she is interested in her, and she is immediately faced with Edmund. It is a grand reminder of the guilt she feels regarding her sexuality and his death, in contrast to the openness she portrayed just moments before when she was not hiding from her attraction to Jamie and her sexuality. This series of events persists. The most prominent moment is in Episode Four: "The Way It Came." This episode is where Jamie and Dani kiss. Dani has told Jamie about Edmund, about how she did not want to marry him, and how he died. Jamie responds well to Dani telling her she is being haunted by her ex-boyfriend: "'So is he here now?' 'no' 'good, because you know, I'll sort him out for you if I have to, hey, dead boyfriend, give it up mate"' (4: 00:40:17 – 00:40:37). They kiss, but Jamie stops them to

check in with Dani: "'Are you sure?"' (00:41:26 – 00:41:35). Dani takes a moment; she looks around and sees that Edmund is not there at that moment and replies that she is sure. Then, as they continue their kiss, Edmund appears, and Dani pulls away in panic. Edmund appears to Dani outside of her reflection only in moments where she is open about her feelings for Jamie. When Edmund appears to Dani in her reflection, he is a representation of her guilt over his death. She cannot look at herself without seeing him and remembering that he died because, in her mind, he left the car because of her and died because of her. When Edmund appears to Dani in the moments where she is being open about her feelings toward Jamie, it represents her repressed sexuality. He is a reminder to her of the shame surrounding her sexuality. When she finally explores and embraces her sexuality, Edmund appears as a reminder of her shame. This is the explicitly expressed engagement with the trauma of having to repress your homosexuality in a heteronormative culture. This contrasts with *ToS*, as in the novella, this trauma nor the presence of homosexuality and the repression of it can be explicitly expressed. This is also shown through the ambiguity of the presence of the ghosts.

In *HBM,* the haunting is psychological and metaphysical. Dani is the only one who sees Edmund's ghost because of her guilt over his death. The other ghosts in *HBM,* those clustered around Bly, are visible to all other characters. This contrasts with the original novella. In *ToS*, the governess is the only one who is confirmed to see the ghosts. Whether the ghosts are real remains ambiguous in the novella; the reader never finds out, whereas, in the TV series, the ghosts are confirmed to be real. This ambiguity of the haunting in the novella can be linked to the ambiguity surrounding the story's concerns with non-normative sexualities. Miles' implications depend on the unspecified nature of his actions and relationship with Quint. This parallels the ambiguity of the ghosts.

In Episode Four, Dani also chooses to overcome her shame and repression surrounding her sexuality. She has saved Edmund's glasses, the ones he wore when he was hit

by the truck. She grabs them from her room as she is unable to sleep. She walks back outside to the bonfire and throws the glasses in the fire. This moment is the liberation that Dani has been looking for. Edmund's ghost disappears after she has thrown his glasses into the fire. By getting rid of Edmund's glasses, Dani overcomes the psychological obstacle she has faced regarding her sexuality. The act of throwing the glasses into the fire is an act of self-acceptance and letting go of the past. After this, her relationship with Jamie develops, unperturbed by Edmund's ghost.

Throughout the TV series, Dani is haunted by the repression of her sexuality. However, the TV series creates an important character arc for Dani. By having her overcome her struggles with Edmund, she is also overcoming her struggles with her sexuality. At the end of the series, she lets go of her guilt surrounding her sexuality and Edmund's death, which she saw as consequential to her sexuality. Dani's character is incredibly important as the portrayal of her character shows that by accepting herself, she is no longer haunted. Her acceptance of her own sexuality is a key point in the series and displays how acceptance of oneself is important and, ultimately, the key to happiness. This is where the TV series parallels James' story in *ToS*. The novella, too, can be understood as a story of the tragic consequences of repressing one's sexuality as Miles dies due to the governess wanting to protect him from Quint and the unspecified nature of their relationship, and the implications of queerness that follow this relationship.

The implicitness of queerness in *ToS* and the explicitness of queerness in *HBM* stand in direct contrast. As Chapter One indicated, there is an implicit indication that Miles is queer in *ToS.* Queerness was part of the unspeakable during the late nineteenth century. In "Uncanny Recognition: Queer Theory's Debt to the Gothic," Mair Rigby describes that the "unspeakable" within gothic society meant "'excessive' desire between men as something that undermines masculine identity and subjectivity…associated with madness, death, and

damnation" (53). As Chapter One explained, in the late nineteenth century, queerness was not socially accepted, and people who were speculated of queerness were prosecuted. Queerness was part of the unspeakable. Within the Gothic genre, the Gothic convention of secrecy plays a major part when regarding queerness. Specifically, as Bauer states in *Houses, Secrets, and the Closet: Locating Masculinities from the Gothic Novel to Henry James* (2016), "homosocial secrecy becomes a source of masculine paranoia and the compulsive 'need to read' oneself and others according to the rules of heteronormativity" (101). The gothic convention of secrecy is used to question gendered power relations and masculine self-definition (Bauer 101).

In *ToS,* Miles was implicitly queer. In *HBM,* Dani and Jamie are explicitly queer. To make queerness explicit in *HBM,* the unspeakableness of queerness in *ToS* needs to be made "not unspeakable" in *HBM*; the taboo needs to be removed from the original plot and specifically added to the adaptation. The unspeakable implicitness of queerness depends on Miles in *ToS.* To undo the unspeakableness*,* it cannot simply be removed from Miles' character, as that derails Miles' plot line and the rest of the story. Miles misbehaves in both works. In *ToS,* Miles' behavior, or more so, the lack of knowledge of his behavior, is a reference to the unspecified and unspeakableness of queerness. In *HBM,* the situation regarding Miles' expulsion is the contrary; Miles' misbehavior at school is thoroughly explained. Unlike the novella, his actions do not remain unspecified and, therefore, no longer reference to the unspeakable. The implicit queerness that surrounded Miles in *ToS* is no longer applicable as the unspecified actions that got Miles expelled from boarding school are specified in the adaptation and do not have any implications of queerness. Rather, they are specified in detail. The unspeakable that surrounds Miles in *ToS* is completely taken away. Miles misbehaves for two reasons in *HBM*: because Peter Quint possesses his body and behaves for him, and because he wants to go home to his sister from boarding school and is

specifically trying to get expelled and, therefore, behaves poorly. The lack of implicitness in Miles' character leaves an opening in the presence of queerness in *HBM*. This opening is bridged by transferring the implicit queerness that initially rested on Miles in the original novella to the explicit queerness in Jamie and Dani's characters in *HBM.* This transfer from the implicit queerness connected to Miles to the Explicit queerness of Jamie and Dani is a reflection of a societal shift. Miles could not be explicitly queer due to the consequences the author, James, could face for writing what was considered an immorality. The explicitness in Dani and Jamie's relationship shows that there is now a possibility to create queer characters without legal consequences (in most of the Western world). However, through the gothic trope of haunting, the TV series still highlights the difficulties the LGBTQ+ community faces, such as struggles with self-acceptance and how same-sex marriage is not yet legal everywhere, as shown through the fact that Jamie and Dani cannot legally marry in the United States.

The societal importance of the explicit queer relationship in the TV series will be discussed more in the next chapter, which will focus on the alternative ending in the TV series to the original novella and the concept of the *Bury Your Gays* trope in the context of both the original novella and Flanagan's adaptation.

Chapter Three :
The Alternative Ending and the Bury Your Gays Trope

Chapters One and Two explained the implicit presence of queerness in Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* and the explicit presence of queerness in Mike Flanagan's *The Haunting of Bly Manor*. There is a significant difference in the portrayals of the characters present in both works through their plotlines and character arcs. The transfer that happens from implicit to explicit queerness is embodied in the character Miles and the characters Dani and Jamie. This transfer from implicit to explicit queerness changes the trajectory of the entire TV series. By transferring the unspeakable queerness in James' story to the overtly portrayed queerness in the TV series, Dani and Jamie's love story is allowed to unfold explicitly on screen as a genuine and authentic human connection. What started out as a timid friendship between Dani and Jamie develops into a romantic relationship. The couple leaves Bly together. They move to the United States and build up a life there. They move in together, have a business together, and even wear rings to symbolize marriage (even though, during that time in the United States, their marriage was not legal). The couple also faces difficult times together as the consequences of Dani inviting Viola to inhabit her body start to show.

Therefore, this chapter will focus on the alternative ending in the TV series. It will focus on several topics within the alternative ending: Dani and Jamie's life in the United States, the frame story in *HBM* and its revelation in the ending in comparison to the novella, and the potential *Bury Your Gays* trope and whether it is present in the TV series.

In the novella, the unspeakable is inherently linked with the immoral in relation to human interrelations based on class, gender, and sexuality. As Nardin explains, "[p]erhaps James is suggesting that Victorian standards defining socially proper marriages are so narrow that the necessity of following them frequently frustrates the desire for love, with

unwholesome result" (132). The novella ends at Bly, just after Miles has confessed to telling "things" to the boys at his school. The governess sees Peter Quint again. She shares her perception of Quint's supposedly corruptive presence with Miles. To protect Miles from Peter Quint, the governess grasps him and hugs him close to her,

> But he had already jerked straight round, stared glared again, and seen but the quiet day. With the stroke of the loss I was so proud of, he uttered the cry of a creature hurled over an abyss, and the grasp with which I recovered him might have been that of catching him in his fall. I caught him, yes, I held him – it may be imagined with what passion – but at the end of a minute I began to feel what it truly was that I held. We were alone with the quiet day, and his little heart, dispossessed, had stopped (James 128).

This passage shows how Miles dies in the governess' arms. The unspeakable is literally the reason for his death, as this passage follows the one where the governess and Miles discuss his "saying things" to the boys at his school. The unspecified nature of the things Miles said, as well as the unresolved mystery about the children's relations with Quint and Jessel, as well as the unexplained relations between Quint and Jessel, are all implicitly queer; they transgress boundaries of gender, sexuality and class that constituted the normative ideas about human interrelations and specifically the heteronormative institution of marriage, which included the having and raising of children.

Miles' mysterious influence on the other boys at school could echo Quint's and Jessel's mysterious influence on Flora and Miles at Bly; but this remains unspecified by James. This complete failure to articulate the supposed immoral behavior of the servants and, consequently, Miles resides clearly with its unspeakable nature, which alludes to the accusations of immorality that accompanied the act of engaging in queer activities, which

were prosecuted during that time, as Chapter One explained with regard to the Oscar Wilde trials. Regarding this, Miles' death could also be seen as a device used by James to avoid these accusations being raised, as the implicitly queer character dies, and the moral problem is buried with the child. This topic of queer characters dying to avoid accusations of immorality will be discussed more during the progression of this chapter in relation to the *Bury Your Gays* trope. In contrast to the novella, and the passage from it previously mentioned, Miles does not die in Flanagan's adaptation. Instead, the TV series offers an alternative ending and continues the story by further developing the plot where the original novella ended. In the final episode of *HBM*, "The Beast in the Jungle," [2]The TV series shows that all the characters have left Bly. Owen has gone to Paris to start his own restaurant, Jamie and Dani have moved to the United States and have opened a flower shop, and Miles and Flora also travel to the United States with their uncle Henry.

Significantly, in addition to the words spoken, the actors in the TV drama bring their characters' emotions to life and make them apparent to the audience through expressions and body language. his visual quality of television plays a crucial role in allowing the unspeakable in James' story to be represented directly, as the actors show the audience what they are feeling without having to express this in words.

Dani and Jamie's life together in the United States seems happy for the most part, however, Dani is scared due to the unpredictability of the future as Dani has invited Viola into her body to end the spell over Bly, and Viola stays brimming in Dani's subconscious, "at some point, she's gonna take me" (Episode 9: 00: 18:20 – 00:18:35).

[2] James' *The Beast in the Jungle* (1903) has been noted for its homosexual subtext. While it is suggested to discuss the repression of sexuality, and therefore would be interesting to analyze as this thesis also covers that subject, the title of the novella mentioned in *HBM* is in reference to Viola. Viola is the beast in Dani who is fighting to get out, so the reference to the novella has to do with repression but not with repression of sexuality and is, therefore, outside of the scope of this thesis.

(“The Beast in the Jungle”)

In this fragment, Dani’s character is crying, showing just how affected she is by the fact that she feels Viola inside her, full of rage. She has only just allowed Viola to inhabit her body and is scared of the future because it creates uncertainty. The visual representation of this moment enhances the severity of the situation by showing how the character is affected and portraying the emotions to the audience. Dani’s character is filmed as she is crying and telling Jamie how she feels Viola’s rage inside her, focusing on Dani’s feelings by focusing the film angle on her. The moment when Viola will take over is unknown, and the danger is always looming. However, Dani and Jamie live happily together for many years. They move to Vermont and open a flower shop together.

(“The Beast in the Jungle”)

This fragment shows a moment just after the narrator says: “and that peace held for years” (Episode 9: 00:24:45 – 00:24:50). This moment portrays Dani and Jamie as any ordinary couple. They are in bed together, Jamie reading a book and Dani watching the TV, smiling. The frame of the shot also portrays this, the audience is an onlooker from outside the window. They are getting a glimpse of Dani and Jamie’s happy life together. It portrays how they are just like any other ordinary couple. The visual representation of this moment shows the normalcy of their relationship. They are at peace, living happily together. Dani even asks Jamie to marry her, though as a queer couple, they cannot legally get married.

(“The Beast in the Jungle”)

This fragment shows the moment just after Dani has asked Jamie to marry her. Jamie’s character is grinning from ear to ear, although she and Dani cannot legally marry. She is happy just to be with the woman she loves and to be able to express that love and this film angle shows that. This portrayal of Jamie shows the love in their relationship to the audience. How happy Jamie is with a ring that is only symbolic shows how much she values their relationship. This fragment where Jamie is so happy specifically focuses on that happiness in spite of the fact that it is based on a symbolic, not legal, union. This visual representation portrays Jamie’s emotions so clearly and honestly that there is no mistaking the goal for this

scene: the overt representation of a queer couple who, regardless of their inability to legally get married, rejoice at their togetherness and prospect of living a life together like any other couple, regardless of their orientation.

The portrayal of Dani and Jamie's happiness is key to expressing the differences in the two stories regarding queerness. While Dani states that she thinks Viola will, at some point, take her, it takes a long time before it happens. They are shown to be open and loving with each other. While first, they live day by day waiting for Viola to take over, the longer that does not happen, the more their happiness grows and that potentiality fades to the background. The audience sees a happy couple that survived a traumatic period and expected more difficult times to come but now enjoy life together, and through this portrayal, the audience starts to root for this couple to be happy. Therefore, when Viola does start to take over, it is a harsh contrast.

Dani starts to see Viola in her reflection, and she feels Viola start to take control of her body. When Dani wakes up one night, her hands about to choke Jamie, she makes the decision to leave: "She could not risk the most important thing, her most important person, not for one more day" (Episode 9: 00:36:31 – 00:36:41).

("The Beast in the Jungle")

This is the moment in which Dani wakes up from her dream and realizes she is about to strangle Jamie. The narrator tells the audience what Dani is feeling, namely that she cannot risk Jamie's life any longer; however, the visual representation shows the audience more, it shows Dani's moment of realization of what she is about to do. It shows the realization Dani has that she is about to hurt the person she loves most, and she cannot risk that. Even though she does not want to leave Jamie, her face shows the shock of her own, or more so Viola's, actions. This visual representation makes this realization more emotional than just the narration, as every emotion is visible on Dani's face.

Dani goes back to Bly and walks herself into the lake to Viola's vacated place. Dani decides to leave Jamie as a precaution for her safety. This contrast is devastating in comparison to what is shown not ten minutes before: the happiness of the couple. Dani's self-sacrifice, in contrast to the portrayal of the happy couple, portrays how the happiness of Dani and Jamie was beautiful and gives room for the expression of acceptance of queerness within the world of the story. Through this portrayal of Dani and Jamie's relationship as happy and Dani's sacrifice and death as sad, Flanagan represents queerness in a way that becomes acceptable to the audience. This representation of a queer couple together equating to happiness and the queer couple apart (not just in Dani's death but also through the loss of Dani's self as Viola starts to take over) equating unhappiness creates a representation in which explicit queerness is not only overtly present but also beautiful and acceptable.

Not only is this alternative ending necessary to show happiness in Dani and Jamie's relationship and the following portrayal of acceptance of queerness to the audience, but this alternative ending is also necessary as, due to the transfer of the unspeakable in Miles' character in the novella, leading to a tragic death, to the overtly portrayed, explicit representation of queerness in Jamie and Dani, their story cannot end in the same way the novella does. The unspecified implicitness of Miles' queerness in the novella leads to him

ending up in a situation where the governess feels the need to protect him from Quint, which ultimately leads to his death due to her strong embrace. The story ends there, though the frame story has made clear that the governess continued her career and, after Miles's death and still worked as a governess for the frame narrator Douglas' family.

In *HBM*, most of the characters move on to different places after Bly. Due to Dani letting Viola be part of her, all the ghosts that haunted Bly are freed, and the characters decide to leave Bly to start anew and leave their traumatic experiences behind them. Miles' death in the novella is ultimately caused by the unspecified nature of his queerness, as that is why the governess wants to protect him from Peter Quint, who she sees as the corruptor of Miles' morals and the instigator of his "bad behavior," leading to his tragic demise at the end of the novella. On the contrary, in the TV series, Miles does not die, and as such the plot cannot end at his death. The alternate plotline and character arcs in the TV series can be presented because of the transfer of unspeakable queerness to the overt presentation of queerness. Where oppression in James' story leads eventually to the literal silencing in death, overt representation in Flanagan's adaptation forces the screenwriters to not only represent queerness but to acknowledge queer lives, queer lived experiences and thus show queer character arcs.

On top of the in-story alternative ending, there is also an alternative ending in the frame story. Both *ToS* and *HBM* are frame stories; however, the novella does not return to the original frame story narrative. In other words, James' story is killed off with the death of Miles. In the TV series, the opposite is true. After Dani's story ends, the narrative returns to the present of the original frame, to the circumstances in which the story was told. The difference between the frame story of the novella and the TV series' frame story is significant as it reveals the relationship between the characters. Douglas' only relationship with the governess in *ToS* was that she was his sister's governess, who he liked very much. The

governess herself sent him the story, “she had been dead these twenty years. She sent me the pages in question before she died” (James 4). In *HBM* it is revealed that the storyteller is Jamie in the present, and she is at Flora’s wedding; after the story is finished, the bride tells Jamie, “My middle name is Flora” (Episode 9: 00:45:30 – 00:45:54). The final episode shows that this girl is the Flora from the story, and she does not remember her time at Bly and Flora is not her first name nor the one she goes by. The story being told by Jamie in *HBM* is a totally different perspective. Jamie was Dani’s direct love interest and knows the story from the immediate source as she was present when most of it happened.

Jamie tells the story differently from Douglas. This is best exemplified by the discussion Jamie and Flora have back in the frame narrative. Flora tells Jamie that the story is not a ghost story but a love story (Episode 9: 00:42:31 – 00:42:51). Jamie’s story recollects Dani and her struggles but also her and Jamie’s relationship unfolding. Jamie and Flora further discuss how loving someone is made scary by the thought of losing that person. The contrast between the two frame stories, *ToS,* which does not return back to the frame narrative, and *HBM,* which does return back to the frame narrative, is most prominently differentiated in the feelings portrayed in the frame stories.

Douglas’ story is a typical ghost story. It ends in death and ambiguity as to whether the ghosts are real or not. Jamie’s story reverts back to the present frame narrative, where she is shown to draw water in the bath and sink in the hope of getting to see a reflection of Dani. She also leaves the door ajar and has a chair facing the entryway in the hope that Dani’s ghost will reunite with her. The alternative ending and the reversion to the present frame story where Jamie is waiting for Dani is necessary to differentiate between ghost and love story. This alternative ending, where Jamie’s love for Dani is the overshadowing theme, highlights the transfer from the unspeakableness of queerness to the overtly portrayed queerness. Dani and Jamie’s love is portrayed as a tragedy, where one loses the other due to self-sacrifice. The

ending of the TV series specifically focuses on the happiness in Jamie and Dani's lives after Bly. It focuses on how their love was good and how Dani could not stand to harm Jamie, which is why she took her place in the lake: to protect the woman she loves. This alternative ending shows a happy, healthy, queer relationship, facing no penalties because they are queer. In contrast to the novella, where Miles dies because of the implicitness of queerness and the consequences of this implicitness. The alternative ending in *HBM* normalizes the societal presence of queer relationships by portraying this one as a loving, normal relationship.

The alternative ending in the TV series portrays a happy relationship until Dani decides to return to Bly, where she chooses to walk into the lake, which leads to her death. Dani's death, however, seems to be in line with a prominent trope within mainstream queer media: the *Bury Your Gays* trope. In "Bury Your Gays: History, Usage, and Context" (2017), Haley Hulan describes this trope:

> *Bury your gays* is a literary trope that has appeared in media across genres since the end of the nineteenth century. Works using the trope will feature a same-gender couple and with one of the lovers dying and the other realizing they were never actually gay, often running into the arms of a heterosexual partner. This trope was originally used as a way for gay authors to write about gay characters without coming under fire for breaking laws and social mandates against the "endorsement" of homosexuality. However, *Bury Your Gays* persists today in a time and social context in which it is no longer necessary to give gay characters and stories bad endings in order to be published (Hulan 17).

Examples of authors who originally used this trope are Oscar Wilde with *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) and Marijane Meaker (known under the pseudonym Vin Packer) with *Spring Fire* (1956). These authors used the *Bury Your Gays* trope as a tool to be able to write

about queer characters without having to face the societal and legal repercussions they would have had they not implemented the trope due to the climate surrounding queerness at the time in the Western world.

Hulan's mention of the phrase "were never actually gay" signifies a need for definitions regarding sexual orientations. Sexual behavior and sexual orientation are two different concepts. In *Who's Gay? Does it Matter?* (2006) Ritch Savin-Williams establishes an important difference, namely that sexual behavior is prone to "self- and other-deception, social conditions, and variable meanings" (43). This means that just because someone exhibits certain sexual behavior, that does not mean it is in line with their sexual orientation. There are several ways in which the "being gay" Hulan mentions can be regarded: same-sex attraction, same-sex behavior, and definition by an identity label (Savin-Williams 40). However, the concept of being gay by same-sex behavior excludes those who have not partaken in same-sex actions as well as "those who have same-sex attractions but only have opposite-sex relations" (Savins-Williams 40). Yet, it would include "heterosexuals engaging in same-sex behavior for reasons other than preferred sexual arousal" (Savin-Williams 40). Savin-Williams also states that "if homosexuality is defined by an identity label, those who experience same-sex arousal or engage in same-sex behavior but who do not identify as gay or lesbian are emitted" (40). Same-sex attraction seems the most accurate way to define "being gay." Savin-Williams also brings up the accurate point that "there is no consensus about what proportion of an individual's attraction must be directed toward same-sex others, or how strong the attractions must be, in order to count as homosexual" (40). However, this point neglects the mention of intersectionality within sexual attraction. In the scope of Hulan's point, this means that "being gay" then is defined by having same-sex attraction, and a character's realization that they "were never actually gay" would fall into the same-sex behavior category. That suggests that

a character that falls into the *Bury Your Gays* trope would never have had sexual attraction to someone of the same-sex, and only engaged in same-sex behavior.

The *Bury Your Gays* trope has continued to exist and be implemented throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and is prominent in many forms of content. A main example of this is from the TV series *The 100* (2014). In this TV series, there is a short relationship between the two characters, Clark and Lexa, known in the media by the name of their relationship "Clexa." Soon after the establishment of their relationship, Lexa dies. This is a notable example of the trope as it is a feature of a same-gender romantic couple, and one of the partners must either die or be destroyed by the end of the story (Hulan 17). *Bury Your Gays* is also called the *Dead Lesbian Syndrome* due to the disproportionate number of victims of this trope who are female. The general news site Vox charted all character deaths of the 2015-2016 television season and recorded a list of 212 lesbian and bisexual characters who died and 29 who got a happy ending. They also recorded that the number of queer women on television is much lower compared to any other category of character. However, queer women still occupy a death rate of ten percent; thus, out of all deaths, ten percent of those deaths were queer women, even though they are the lowest-represented category on television (Vox).

Initially, the *Bury Your* Gays trope was a tool for queer authors to be able to write queer narratives and characters without facing the consequences associated with writing these narratives. However, socially, the position of the LGBTQ+ community has changed, and queerness has generally become more accepted.

In contemporary times, there is a noted difference between queer authors and straight authors when regarding the development of queer characters in their writing. Queer authors tend to only instigate the death of a queer character when the death will serve the narrative and the greater context (Hulan 24). Straight creators tend to invoke the trope to symbolically punish queerness or to use the death of a queer character as a spectacle (Hulan 24). However,

though this tendency may be present in contemporary media, it is not exclusive. Straight authors could, of course, also create a gay character who dies with no ulterior motive of prejudice but simply because it is in line with their character arc. It is, however, common in contemporary media that straight creators often use the *Bury Your Gays* trope to "punish" queer characters for their queerness or to create a shock value for their audiences. This is seen in works such as *The Fox* (1967) by Mark Rydell or *Siberia* (2013) by Matthew Arnold (Hulan 24).

The question regarding the ending in *The Haunting of Bly Manor* then follows: is the *Bury Your Gays* trope or the *Dead Lesbian Syndrome* present in *The Haunting of Bly Manor*? This trope or syndrome has several very specific characteristics. These characteristics are the length of the relationships' story arc, the universe timing of the death, and the real-world time of the reveal. What characterizes the *Bury Your Gays* in the present media in which this trope is used is that within the narrative that it is written, the same-gender couples are generally "together" for a very short time. Then, when one of the characters dies, it is often very close to the confession to the other character of their feelings or close to a first kiss between them.

In *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, the relationship between Dani and Jamie initially seems to fit into the *Bury Your Gays* or *Dead Lesbian Syndrome* trope. Dani does die, ending their happy relationship. However, looking at the characteristics of the Bury Your Gays trope, there is a significant difference. The first one concerns the duration of their relationship. Dani and Jamie's chemistry and attraction to each other starts as early as episode three and continues for the other six episodes. The length of the story arc concerning Jamie's and Dani's relationship is longer than those represented within the *Bury Your Gays* trope generally are. In that sense, their representation does not conform to the trope in this regard. Their romance takes place over six episodes and develops greatly, whereas, within the *Bury Your Gays* trope, same-gender couples generally are only together for a very short real-time

amount of time to make their "togetherness" minimal (Hulan 24). Their relationship also does not conform to the characteristic of the *Bury Your Gays* trope in the in-universe timing. Within the *Bury Your Gays* trope, the characters are often together for a short time, and one of the characters often dies close to the confession of their feelings for the other character or close to a first kiss between them. Dani and Jamie's first kiss takes place in episode four, and while Edmund still haunts her, neither of them dies. Jamie and Dani's relationship is unperturbed by this characteristic of the *Bury Your Gays* trope. They live happily after their confession of their feelings and their kiss for a rather significant amount of time. Years passed until Dani eventually decided to go to the lake where she died. Their in-universe time together exceeds that of many relationships in the real-time world.

Regarding these characteristics, it is clear that the queer character death in *The Haunting of Bly Manor* is not a victim of the *Bury Your Gays trope* or of the *Dead Lesbian Syndrome.* Dani's death in *HBM* is purposeful. Her death is necessary to complete the plot line and character arcs in the series. Dani's death is the reason that the frame story reverting back to the present narrative at the end of the TV series makes a circular finale. By Dani dying, Jamie has the story to tell at Flora's rehearsal dinner. By Jamie telling the story at Flora's rehearsal dinner, it is revealed that the story is real, as Flora, Miles, and Owen are present at the rehearsal dinner and at the wedding. Dani's death was necessary to complete the story. However, her death was not just necessary to make this a complete story, it was also necessary to transcend this story from a ghost story to a love story. By making not only queerness explicit but also creating the tragic love story, the focus shifts from it just being a ghost story to a love story, differentiating it from the original novella by shifting the focus specifically to a queer relationship,

The Turn of the Screw is a typical ghost story. It fits in the English Victorian tradition of telling ghost stories on Christmas Eve around the fire (Ehnes 10). The frame story being in

this particular setting sets the story Douglas tells up in a particular way. Due to it being a ghost story told at Christmas in the traditional fashion, the believability of the presence of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel is more present. It is a ghost story, but at the time when the novella was published, the specific note that it is a story told on Christmas Eve would indicate that the ghosts in the stories are real and not figments of the governess' imagination, as is easily thought when not knowing the particulars of the tradition. This established *ToS* as a ghost story of the Victorian genre.

The focus of the novella is on the ghosts, in contrast to the Series. The TV series is about ghosts, but its main plot line is that of the love story. Therefore, the frame story in the TV series is different to the one in the novella. The novella's frame story being the typical setting for a Victorian-era ghost story to be told highlights the focus on the ghost story, whereas the absence of this typicality in *HBM* provides the exact opposite, a signifier that the focus is not on the ghost story but on the love story portrayed in the series. This focus on the love story in the TV series, in contrast to the focus on the ghost story in the novella, highlights Flanagan's intention, which was also shown through the portrayal of the couple in the alternative ending, societal acceptance of queerness.

Conclusion

Dani and Jamie's love story in Mike Flanagan's TV series *The Haunting of Bly Manor* is incredibly multifaceted. It encompasses themes of trauma, self-acceptance, identity struggle, grief, abuse, love, betrayal, and, unforgettably, ghosts. Through all these themes, the portrayal of relationships is highlighted; heterosexual relationships but also a queer relationship. This queer relationship being present is in stark contrast with the original work. Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* and the adaptive TV Series *The Haunting of Bly Manor,* directed by Mike Flanagan, portray a transfer from the unspeakable to the overtly portrayed queerness through the adaptation of characters, relationships, and the ending of the TV series; this transfer is used as a tool to normalize queerness and focuses on social acceptance.

Chapter One explained the implicit presence of queerness in Henry James'work and the speculations regarding James as a queer author. James wrote on similar (or sometimes the same) themes as several queer authors. Queer authors have also proclaimed to see themselves represented in James' writing. In the original novella *The Turn of the Screw*, this implicit presence of queerness was mainly represented through Miles' character due to the unspecified nature of his relationship with Peter Quint and the unspecified nature of why he got expelled from his school. The unspecified is a tool to signify the non-normative and queerness by not specifically addressing the situation, which places the suggestion of queerness on characters as the unspecified was linked to moral corruption. Oppositional to the conclusions about the novella's implicit presence of queerness, Flanagan's TV series portrays an explicit queer relationship. This queer relationship is portrayed to be between the characters Jamie and Dani and blossoms throughout the series.

Continuing from this constitution of the presence of implicit queerness in James' *Turn of the Screw* and overtly present queerness in *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, Chapter Two showed a character analysis of Jamie and Dani. Jamie is in direct contrast with Peter Quint,

both having come from traumatic and dark backgrounds but being completely different people. Peter is a rude, unkind person. Jamie is a kind, loving person. Furthermore, Jamie and Peter also contrast each other when regarding their behavior in relationships. Peter is an abusive partner to Rebecca Jessel. Jamie is a loving partner to Dani. This portrayal of a destructive relationship in comparison to a constructive relationship breaks down the stereotype of the normativity of the heterosexual relationship. This shows that a heterosexual relationship is not inherently healthy and loving, and a queer relationship is not inherently monstrous.

After Jamie's character analysis, Chapter Two showed Dani's character analysis. Dani's analysis focused on her psychological haunting. Throughout the TV series, Dani is haunted by the ghost of her dead ex-fiancée Edmund. The portrayal of Dani being haunted by Edmund is a representation of her repressed sexuality. Even though Dani's guilt is unwarranted as Edmund's death was rationally not her fault, she blames herself for his death and, ultimately, her sexuality as it was the instigation of the argument that made Edmund leave the car. As Dani progressively starts to accept her sexuality and no longer avoids her feelings throughout the series, she eventually overcomes her guilt, and Edmund's ghost disappears. This showed how her self-acceptance was portrayed as being the solution to her haunting, revealing the notion that self-acceptance and the acceptance of her queerness lead to her no longer being haunted and ultimately being happy. This paralleled James' original novella as the repression of sexuality for both Miles in the original and Dani in the adaptation had dire consequences.

This parallel also revealed to be specifically why the transfer from the unspeakable to the overt portrayal of queerness was made. Miles' implicit queerness depended upon the unspecified. As the character Miles in the TV series had a similar storyline to Miles in the novella except completely specified, the queerness could not be part of Miles' character in the

TV series. Therefore, it was transferred to the formerly nonexistent character Jamie and the adapted character of the governess, Dani, in Flanagan's adaptation.

The transfer from the unspeakable to the overtly portrayed queerness resulted in alternate plot lines and character arcs. Chapter Three discussed how this lead to an alternate ending of the TV series to the one in the novella. The final episode of *The Haunting of Bly Manor* showed this alternative ending. This consisted of several parts, focusing on the visual representation in the TV series, the use of the frame story, and the *Bury Your Gays* trope.

Chapter Three focuses on the visual portrayal of Dani and Jamie in this last episode. The visual analysis revealed that, through the use of visual representation, the shock and detriment was highlighted when the series shifted from Dani and Jamie as a happy couple to Dani losing herself to Viola's possession of her body and then going back to Bly, where she dies. The visual representation highlighted the deliberate contrast between happiness and sadness to portray how the queer relationship equated to happiness and the lack of it unhappiness. Conveying the message that queer relationships are acceptable.

The portrayal of the frame story reiterated this message. The return to the frame story in the TV series showed the effects of Dani's death and absence on Jamie. She tells her and Dani's story to the people at the rehearsal dinner. The return to the frame story is a signifier for the statement that Flora's character makes, that Dani and Jamie's story is not a ghost story, but a love story. The ending where Jamie waits for Dani shows how much she still loves her and hopes to be reunited with her, highlighting the love in the story and, specifically, the queer love story. Showing again how the queer relationship is accepted and normalized within the story.

Lastly, the third chapter discusses the *Bury Your Gays* trope. Concluding that *The Haunting of Bly Manor* does not fall victim to this trope. Dani and Jamie's in-universe time

together is very long. Dani's death is not related to a kiss or a confession of her feelings, and her death is conclusive to the plot of the TV series.

What all these different facets of the transfer from the unspeakable to the overt portrayal of queerness have in common is they denote a specific view on queerness and the presence of queer relationships. Every instance normalizes queer relationships. The contrast between Jamie's character and her relationship with Dani to Peter's character and his relationship with Rebecca highlights that queer relationships are not inherently monstrous and heterosexual relationships are not inherently compassionate and loving, breaking down the stereotype that heterosexual relationships are normative. Dani's struggle with her sexuality and her being haunted by Edmund's ghost portraying the journey of self-acceptance of her queerness, ultimately leading to happiness, showing that her embrace of her sexuality is positive. The visual analysis showing how the characters are portrayed as happy and living in normalcy in contrast with Dani's leaving as well as her death, where Jamie is unhappy, revealing that this queer couple is not just normal like any other couple, but also that them embracing their sexuality and living as a queer couple is what gives them happiness. The alternative ending in the TV series and its return back to the frame story to highlight the fact that it is a love story, focusing on the love between these two women, showing how their love is the soul of the story.

All these aspects of the transfer from the unspeakable to the overtly portrayed queer relationship show how the relationship between Dani and Jamie is a tool to denote positivity when regarding queerness. Through the adapted character arcs, plot lines, and ending of the original novella to the TV series, Flanagan normalizes queerness and focuses the series on the societal acceptance of queerness.

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