

GHOSTS OF THE UNCONSCIOUS IN HENRY JAMES'S THE TURN OF THE SCREW

LES FANTOMES DE L'INCONSCIENT DANS LE TOUR D'ECROU PAR HENRY JAMES

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Abstract : *The paranormal has always been a fascination for many people; stories about haunted houses, spirits, possession cases and so on continue to nourish the imagination throughout different generations. Yet, when the paranormal is given a psychological interpretation, it comes to express meaningful aspects about human nature. This paper explores this relation between the paranormal and the psychological as studied by the prominent psychologists William James and Carl Gustav Jung through the analysis of one of the most controversial literary works of modern times: Henry James' horror novella entitled The Turn of the Screw (1898). This work has been considered by many critics as a psychological novel where the author merely explores the perturbed mental states of his characters; yet, the aim in this paper is to demonstrate that it is in fact a literary exploration of the concept of the "collective unconscious" as discussed by William James and C. G. Jung, and how it is manifested to the human mind. This paper sets out to explore the visionary character of the novel through highlighting its socio-historical circumstances, and focusing on the very ambivalent position of its author between two literary movements, namely, realism and modernism. The textual analysis of the novel is centered around paranormal manifestations, and the ground they offer for an interesting exploration of human consciousness, between the living and the dead. With this analysis, the ghost story genre is not just a scary story as it is supposed to be, but is used to express interesting aspects of human nature.*

Keywords: *Paranormal; Psychology; The Collective Unconscious; Visionary Art; Jung; Henry James*

Résumé : *Le paranormal a toujours été une fascination pour bon nombre de gens ; des histoires sur des maisons hantées, des esprits, des cas de possession et autre continuent de nourrir l'imaginaire à travers des générations. Cependant, quand le paranormal est liée à une possible explication psychologique, il peut en dire long sur quelque aspects cachés de la nature humaine. Cet article explore ce lien entre le paranormal et la psychologie à travers les travaux de psychologues proéminents : William James et Carl Gustav Jung, et cela dans l'analyse textuelle du roman de Henry James intitulé : Le Tour d'Ecrou (1898). Ce roman a été considéré par beaucoup de critiques comme un roman psychologique ou l'auteur ne fait qu'explorer l'état mental perturbé de ses caractères ; cependant, l'objectif de cet article est de démontrer que ce roman est en fait une analyse littéraire du concept de « l'inconscient collectif » comme décrit par W. James et C. Jung, et comment il se manifeste à l'esprit humain. Ce présent écrit procède par explorer le caractère visionnaire du roman tout en considèrent ses circonstances social et historique, ainsi que la position ambivalente de l'écrivain entre deux mouvements littéraire : le réalisme et le modernisme. L'analyse du texte se base sur les manifestations paranormales, et le champ de discours ouvert sur la conscience humaine, entre la vie et la mort. Cela donne au genre fantastique, ou genre-fantôme, un sens plus profond.*

Mots-clés : *Paranormal; Psychology; l'Inconscient Collectif; Art Visionnaire; Jung; Henry James*

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It is a truth generally acknowledged that an artist is the product of his time and the society he lives in; that he expresses in his work the concerns, the certitudes and doubts, as well as the tensions inherent in his social environment. Yet, it happens that this artist goes beyond these time and social boundaries to seek for the unknown, the unfathomable, and hence departs from the conventional artistic norms. This same artist faces misunderstanding, and even misrecognition from the social milieu where he lives, to see his art recognized much later, often posthumously, by future generations who seem to grasp the meaning that seemed weird to his own direct audience, and hence fully appreciate it. This kind of artist is called the visionary artist, in the words of the notable Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung, whose definition of visionary art seems to apply to the work of Henry James, especially his novella *The Turn of the Screw* in many aspects.

The Turn of The Screw was written in 1898 and is considered by critics as a masterpiece. As a modernist work, the novella is dipped deep in ambiguity, from beginning to end. The preface to the work does not seem to give much help, as Henry James presents it as “a piece of ingenuity pure and simple, of cold artistic calculation, an amusette to catch those not easily caught” (James, 1898: XXXII-XXXIII)². James is intent on presenting it as complex and ambiguous, but is not willing to hint at a possible solution. In his introduction to the novel in the Wordsworth Classic edition, Claire Seymour declares that the “reader reaches the end of the narrative frustrated and exhausted by the ethical battle within: the promised revelation is never supplied and the text retains its silence” (p. XI).

This paper aims to explore the “visionary aspects” of the novel through a close textual analysis, which would eventually shed some light on the ambiguity and set clear the controversy that this novel has cast among literary critics since its first publication. We will first see Jung’s definition of visionary art, and how it is closely linked to his concept of the collective unconscious; we then proceed to draw the portrait of Henry James as the visionary artist as presented by Jung, which explains his lack of notoriety in his own days. We then take a brief look at the socio-historical background of the novel, which explains James’ interest in the paranormal. We finally come to meet the ghosts which are at the heart of the narrative as well as of our textual analysis, as we investigate their veracity as well as their nature, as described by the author in the preface.

1. Visionary Art and the Collective Unconscious:

In order to get a full grasp of what visionary art is, we should better take a look at Jung’s interesting and thorough description of its main aspects and what it implies. In *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Jung argues that there are two modes of artistic creation: the psychological and the visionary. The psychological mode deals with “materials drawn from the human consciousness”, and leaves nothing for the psychologist but to expand “the realm of the understandable” (Jung, 1933: 159). Jung claims that many, if not the majority of literary works, belong to this class, dealing with love, family, crime, and so on. On the other hand, he describes visionary art as “a strange something that derives its existence from the hinterland of man’s mind” (Jung, 1933, P160). It makes us dive into a dark, chaotic world, which we do not recognize; Jung wonders: « Is it a vision of other worlds, or of the obscuration of the spirit, or of the beginning of things before the age of man, or of the unborn generations of the future? We cannot say that it is any or none of these ». (Jung, 1933 : 160)

² All references to this work are taken from the same source

It is interesting to note here that Jung is not willing to limit visionary art in time, which seems to oscillate between the past (before the age of man) and the future. The reason for this is that Jung considers visionary art to emanate from the dark recesses of the mind, from the unconscious, which envelops all the past, as well as all the future.

So, the main difference between the two creative modes is that psychological art deals with the everyday life of man, as it emanates from consciousness, whereas visionary art departs from the ordinary and the conventional, to deal with the strange and the obscure, for it originates from the unconscious of man. Here, Jung raises an important point as he explains that the images that appear in visionary art, and which confuse and appall us, emanate from what he calls “the collective unconscious”, as he explains: “We mean by collective unconscious, a certain psychic disposition shaped by the forces of heredity; from it consciousness has developed” (Jung, 1933:168). We, as human beings, share this psychic disposition, because we are all related in the unconscious realm of our minds; and this collective unconscious, being shaped by the forces of heredity, contains all our primitive past, full of intuition, instinct, sensibility.

These aspects of our inner being are expressed in dreams as well as in literature through images, myths, and so on. In the following quotation, Jung explains the importance of these expressions of the collective unconscious in the study of literature:

What is of particular importance for the study of literature in these manifestations of the collective unconscious is that they are compensatory to the conscious attitude. This is to say that they can bring a one-sided, abnormal, or dangerous state of consciousness into equilibrium in an apparently purposive way. (Jung, 1933 : 169)

So, Jung claims that the study of the expression of the collective unconscious in literature is important because it counter-balances the conscious outlook which is prone to be either “one-sided”, “abnormal”, and even “dangerous”, pushing us to think, to question our times, and hence progress. The equilibrium is essential to insure a healthy spiritual development, just like dreams are important for the psychological health of the individual, as they allow him to express himself freely, beyond moral, ethical, or social conventions, and give vent to possible repressed needs.

The literary expression of the collective unconscious gives the opportunity to explore individuals’ repressed needs, thoughts, and convictions which might be at odds with the general, conscious outlook of their age; in the following quotation, Jung explains this point as follows:

Whenever the collective unconscious becomes a living experience and is brought to bear upon the conscious outlook of an age, this event is a creative act which is of importance to everyone living in that age. A work of art is produced that contains what may truthfully be called a message to generations of men. (Jung,1933 : 169)

What we understand from Jung here is that a work of art that comes to express the collective unconscious, that repressed, hidden realm that counter-balances, we might venture to say, “the collective conscious”, is visionary; that it encompasses the past and the future, and hence foretells “changes in the conscious outlook” of the time when it is produced. As we shall see in the following point, we can easily identify Henry James with Jung’s portrait of the visionary artist.

2. Henry James, the Visionary Artist

Jung's presentation of visionary art allows us to understand the phenomenon of an artist who is rejected in his own times, and celebrated later by other generations. Hence the visionary artist is often misunderstood, and his work remains unrecognized; one of the main characteristics of his art is ambiguity, which emanates from an unconventional handling of the reality, and which raises confusion and much questioning.

Henry James (1843-1916) was considered in his time a minor writer who wrote uninteresting psychological novels, to become some years later, one of the greatest novelists in the English language. According to Leon Edel, it was with the new generations of readers who enjoyed Proust and Joyce that he gained fame and his work was rediscovered (Edel, 2002 : 270). The appearance of this new generation of readers, as Edel puts it, is a sign of the emergence of the new modern consciousness that found expression in the modernist works of the first part of the twentieth century, with authors such as Joseph Conrad, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf and others. These modernist authors gave more importance to the exploration of the inner being of their characters, rather than to the outer social concerns like the Realists did before them.

In fact, it is interesting to note that James' work is placed at the threshold between Realism and Modernism, and that he lived his mature life at the turn of the century, "the fin-de-siècle" period, where the general tendency was for the rejection of conventions and the embrace of experimentation. This explains why some critics place him along the moralists (realists) who sought through their fiction to impart moral messages and ethics of behavior; while others consider him an aesthete (modernist), along with Oscar Wilde, who proclaims the self-commitment of art in the famous motto "Art for Art's sake".

Indeed, there is some evidence that Henry James aligned himself more with the modernist aesthete rather than with the realist modernist, for example, he wrote a letter to another author, a certain Mrs Everard, where he dwells on the origins of artistic expression : "So we open the door to the Devil himself—who is nothing but the sense of beauty, of mystery, of relations, of appearances, of abysses of the whole— and of EXPRESSION! That's all he is [...]". (qt. in: Gooder, 2011: 3)

Indeed, these are the words of an authentic aesthete which might easily be printed in the *Yellow Book*³. The ambiguity of these words ushers a new form of expression in which the aim is to explore the world beyond the social and artistic boundaries set by the movement of Realism at that time, and prepares the ground for the movement of Modernism. The "beauty", the "mystery", the "abysses" are words which signal that James is expressing the collective unconscious, sensing the change which is about to happen in the general conscious outlook of people, which found its expression with the advent of Modernism. Gooder confirms this point by asserting that James wrote this letter on 26 January, 1900, at the "start of a new century" (Gooder, 2011:3).

Henry James thus corresponds to the typical portrait of the visionary artist who senses the change in the collective imagination which was taking place in his social milieu, and expresses it through literary works. Indeed, his works defied the social and artistic norms of his own times, and addressed future generations of readers who have fully lived and experienced the spirit of modernity.

³ A British periodical which was associated with Aestheticism and Decadence in the 1890 s.

3. Aspects of the Socio-historical background of *The Turn of the Screw*

In order to get a fuller appreciation of James' work, especially *The Turn of The Screw*, we should also take a brief look at some aspects of its socio-historical background that explain James' interest in the paranormal, and clarify his attitude towards it.

The turn of the century was marked with a growing interest in the spirits and the paranormal. This is best represented through the founding of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882 by the philosopher and Cambridge scholar Henry Sidgwick. The society was constituted by eminent Victorians from different social branches, such as the Prime Minister Arthur Balfour, the poet Alfred Tennyson, the novelist Lewis Carroll, the physicist Oliver Lodge and the chemist William Crookes. L. Anne Delago, in an interesting article entitled « Psychical Research and the Fantastic Science of Spirits », suggests that the interest of this time in the supernatural can be explained as a reaction to the horrors of a growing materialism (Delago, 2017: 239). She argues that the society's aim was to develop "a science of the spirit", through adopting a scientific and methodological approach in their study. The Society's areas of study covered hypnotism, dissociation, thought transference, mediumship, apparitions and haunted houses, and other paranormal or psychic phenomena.

The American branch of the Society for Psychical Research was founded by William James in 1884; he later expressed his interest in scientifically proving the existence of the spirits, of "the presence, in the midst of all the humbug, of really supernormal knowledge" (Qt. in: Banta, 1964 : 172). It is not surprising, then, to see Henry James develop this keen interest in the paranormal. He issues from a family who were all interested in the paranormal; yet, contrary to his brother, Henry James was aware of the scientific interest, but did not seem to agree with it, as it would strip, according to him, the paranormal from its "sacred terror" (Banta, 1964: 173). He chose then to explore it in his art.

H. James's susceptibility towards the paranormal pushed him to read extensively in the ghost story genre, and nourished his artistic creation, to make of him an unquestionable master. However, James' ghost stories are not the conventional simple ones; he hated those ghost tales which are about mystifications, because, according to him, they were not connected to the real, and did not account for people's responses. Therefore, James's stories are ghost stories which are linked to the real, and which record the impact of the supernatural element upon the persons.

Indeed, we can see that H. James gives much importance to the impact of the supernatural on individuals, as he considers that it is only through its recording that his stories can achieve "thickness". The following quotation is taken from James' preface to some of his other ghost stories, where he states clearly his intent: "We want it clear, goodness knows, but we also want it thick, and we get thickness in the human consciousness that entertains and records, that amplifies and interprets it"(James, 2001: 16). James articulates here the main interest of his artistic enterprise, which is "the human consciousness"; this is the "point d'appui" of the real from which he departs. This human consciousness entertains, records, amplifies and interprets, and we clearly see these processes of consciousness in his stories. Hence, David Lodge argued that Henry James was "supremely a novelist of consciousness" (Lodge, 2002: 202).

The general interest in the paranormal that characterized the period when James wrote was important then in shaping him as an artist and to draw his frame of interest. The work

of his brother, William James, was important as well, as we can trace its influence in his work. H. James chose then to explore the paranormal phenomenon in his art in his own way, as he saw its potential of expressing important hidden aspects of human nature.

4. The Governess and the Ghosts

Broadly speaking, the novel tackles the story of a young and inexperienced governess who takes in charge two orphan kids, exceptional children in their beauty as well as nature, in an old, big house in an isolated country side. Soon, she starts seeing apparitions of ghosts, supposedly the spirits of two persons who used to live and work in the house. The ambiguity lies in the fact that we are not sure of the veracity of the ghosts, and come to doubt the mental sanity of the governess, and no clue is given by the author to clear this ambiguity. This led to the controversy among literary critics about the possible interpretation of the work.

In “James’ Ghosts in The Turn of the Screw”, C.B. Ives argues that there are two readings of the novel: the Romantic reading which is based on the veracity of the ghosts, which are to be considered supernatural beings, and the Realist, psychological reading which considers the ghosts as projections of the mind only (Ives, 1963:183). Indeed, the controversy among critics over the novella seems to turn around these opposite arguments. Yet, instead of reading the novel along definite opposite lines, Realist or Romantic, we should attempt a closer textual analysis and accept its ambiguity as an aspect of its visionary nature. The attempt to solve the ambiguity is, I think, hardly advisable, and will not do credit to the modernist nature of the work in question; in other words, this ambiguity ushers the possibility of different readings, which are not necessarily in contradiction with each other.

In the beginning of the novel, the anonymous governess speaks of her “liability to impressions of the order so vividly exemplified” (p. 27)- exemplified in the apparition of ghosts. This liability, or we can say sensibility to the supernatural, is tackled by Carl Jung who was himself subject to this kind of paranormal happenings. Indeed, Jung brought to light the concept of “innate sensitivity”, which is more developed in some people, a minority in fact, than others (Richter, 2016: 57), and which points to “things that are unknown and hidden” (Jung, 1993: 166). These people, whose intuition is more developed than others, have access to what Jung calls the “night-side of life”, and we find among them the visionary artists, the seers, prophets, and leaders. Jung presents this ‘liability’ as a biological trait, closely linked to our primitive nature; in other words, he presents it as a sixth sense which can be defined in terms of “complex perception and heightened empathy”, and which allows them to “register subtle information and forebodings”(Richter, 2016 : 57).

So, when the governess speaks of this “liability to impressions”, we perceive an awareness on her part of a certain sensitivity towards the paranormal, which she seems to accept. Yet, we are forced to wonder throughout the narrative if it is a trick of the mind, as a result of isolation or boredom, or is it that hyper sensitivity that Jung ponders on; furthermore, what is confusing is that there are in the text arguments that support the former hypothesis, and there are others that support the latter.

In the beginning of the novel, the governess tells us about her impressions about the house, the kids and her position as a governess; she says that she is under the charm of the kids, and that they are extremely agreeable. She seems to fully enjoy her newly acquired

job and even delights in it; she then adds that she has some time for herself, an hour at the end of the day, when she strolls around alone, far from her work, and gives vent to her imagination. She says:

Much as I liked my companions, this hour was the thing in the day I liked most; and I liked it best of all when, as the light faded-or rather, I should say, the day lingered [...] I could take a turn into the grounds and enjoy [...] the beauty and dignity of the place[...]. One of the thoughts that, as I don't in the least shrink now from noting, used to be with me in these wanderings was that it would be as charming as a charming story suddenly to meet someone(p.18).

It is interesting to note here that the governess is given to meditation and enjoys lonely moments when she can roam freely in her imagination; furthermore, it is at this moment of expecting to see someone that she actually sees, or thinks she sees? for the first time the ghost of Mister Quint.

In an interesting article, Karen Halttunen links the governess' mental state to the theory of William James on the "hypnagogic" mental state: "a twilight state between wakefulness and sleep", in which, "suspended between waking and sleeping, we fall into a semi-dream consciousness", and can "imagine things that never happened, and later cannot distinguish the dreaming from waking reality" (Halttunen, 1988: 475). Indeed, the first apparition of Quint happens at this twilight hour of the day, as the governess clearly states it in this passage. the second apparition, that on the window, happened when "the day declined"(p .22) and "the afternoon light still lingered"(P23), always on the threshold between day and night, waking and sleeping. Following William James' Hypnagogic mental state, we might easily argue that the governess is just hallucinating; yet, the narrative prevents us from taking such conclusions for granted.

Indeed, Mrs Grose's reaction to the report of the Governess of these paranormal events is very important; indeed, the reader is led to rely on the reaction of such a character to forge his own reaction: a well respected lady who shows throughout the whole narrative mental sanity and trustworthiness. The Governess admires her, and seems to take comfort in the predisposition of Mrs Grose to believe her; the Governess says: "She herself had seen nothing, not the shadow of a shadow, and nobody in the house but the governess was in the governess' plight; yet she accepted without directly impugning my sanity the truth as I gave it to her [...]" (p. 28).

The house keeper has never seen anything close to the paranormal in the house, and knows that nobody in the house did. We should note here this insistence that Mrs Grose does not present any peculiar subjectivity to the paranormal, and can be taken as an objective, sane witness. And this seemingly reliable witness never doubted the governess' sanity. This calls us back as readers to revise our former doubting reaction to the governess' recounting of her paranormal encounters. Moreover, it is through Mrs Grose that names are given to the ghosts. The astonishing acute physical description of the governess of the Quint Mrs Grose used to know, the master's valet, is proof enough that the governess is not simply hallucinating. As for Miss Jessel, again the governess' description of her made the house keeper just confirm, never doubt, it was her ghost.

So, we can clearly see that the Governess belongs to that category of sensitive people described by Jung, who have this disposition, this acute sensibility, that allows them to see things not visible to everyone. We understand from the narrative that it is only the

Governess that saw the ghosts, apparitions which apply perfectly to the house keeper's remembrance of the deceased Quint and Jessel. Now that we are more or less sure about the presence of the ghosts, it's time to investigate their nature.

5. The Nature of the Ghosts

In the preface to the novella, Henry James mentions a certain category of ghosts which he classifies as the "new type" or "the mere modern 'psychical' case, washed clean of all queerness", and which "clearly promised little, for the more it was respectably certified the less it seemed of a nature to rouse the dear old sacred terror". Henry James here seems to be weary of the new modern ghosts which are but simple psychic projections of the mind, and hence do not at all produce the desired effect of a good ghost story, in which he is most interested. In the following quote from the preface, he presents the characteristics of this type of ghosts: "Recorded and attested 'ghosts' are, in other words, as little expressive, as little dramatic, above all as little continuous and conscious and responsive, as is consistent with their taking the trouble [...] to appear at all". (p. XXXIV)

We understand that the ghosts that James abhors are the psychic ghosts, characterized by passivity and inactivity, and which cannot make for a good ghost story, the kind of stories he claims the novella belongs to. Yet, this point has been at the center of debates among critics.

Indeed, there has been a controversy on this point, as some critics claim that James has created exactly this category of ghosts in his novel, and that we should simply discard this preface as unreliable and irresponsible. C.B. Ives elaborates on this point through an interesting textual illustration related to these apparitions:

In summary, the total actions of the ghost of Quint consisted in moving across the tower and turning, moving his eyes, turning and moving down the stairs; and shifting his position outside the dining room window. Miss Jessel offered only the single action of rising from the schoolroom chair. Otherwise the specters simply appeared and disappeared [...]. They were "as little expressive, as little dramatic, above all as little continuous and conscious and responsive, as is consistent with their taking the trouble ... to appear at all". They were, indeed, the very type of "recorded and attested 'ghost'" that the preface pretended to abjure. (Ives, 1963 :188)

This view of the ghosts seems to be well supported by the novel, and Ives very well describes the little activity of the ghosts. Yet, James says other things about the ghosts, and especially the ghosts of the novella, that highlight some aspects not seen by this category of critics:

Good ghosts, speaking by book, make poor subjects, and it was clear that from the first my hovering prowling blighting presences, my pair of abnormal agents, would have to depart all together from the rules. They would be agents in fact; there would be laid on them the dire duty of causing the situation to reek with the air of Evil.[...] This is to say, I recognize again, that Peter Quint and Miss Jessel are not 'ghosts' at all, as we now know the ghosts, but goblins, elves, imps, demons as loosely constructed as those of the old trials for witchcraft; if not, more pleasantly, fairies of the legendary order, wooing their victims forth to see them dance under the moon. (p. XXXIV)

We sense here on the part of James the need to depart from conventionality in his creation of his ghosts: he does not want them to be the good ghosts that make good stories, from old books, and which are obviously completely disconnected from the reality. Besides, he does not want them to be the psychic ghosts of the modern era, the mere projections of

the mind. In fact, he wants them to depart from the rules, to be new creatures, of the fairy or legendary order.

James' intention is clear then: he does not intend his ghosts to be mere inactive apparitions, as he makes it clear that their agency is not situated on the physical level, but on the psychological one: to cause "the situation to reek with the air of Evil", and to lure their victims towards that very evil; and indeed, this is what we see in the novel.

When the governess first saw Quint on the tower, she did not know he was a ghost, but kept wondering whether he was a visitor, or even someone from the house kept in confinement. However, when she re-entered the house after this first encounter, she could clearly sense that "darkness had quite closed in" (p. 20), bringing an air of evil in the atmosphere. Furthermore, the second apparition of Quint shows that he has come with an intention:

He remained but a few seconds- long enough to convince me he also saw and recognized; [...] Something, however, happened this time that had not happened before; his stare into my face, through the glass and across the room, was as deep and hard as then, but it quitted me for a moment during which I could still watch it, see it fix successively several other things. On the spot there came to me the added shock of a certitude that it was not for me he had come there. He had come for someone else. (p. 23)

We understand that Quint gives the impression that he is looking for someone else, and this adds another shock to the already terrified governess: that the ghost has an intention, that of finding someone. Moreover, she does not fail to see his evil nature, "he's a horror", prior to knowing who he was by Mrs Grose, who quite confirmed it: the time he spent at Bly is qualified by her as "evil time", when he manipulated and controlled Miss Jessel as well as the little Miles.

She then sees the ghost of Miss Jessel, on the other side of the lake, while she is watching Flora; she senses first a presence, before she gathers the courage to look and to face her. She describes her as "a figure of quite as unmistakable horror and evil: a woman in black, pale and dreadful- with such an air also, and such a face!" (p. 33). It is significant to note that the governess does not dwell only on the physical appearance of the apparitions, but is horrified at the evil they inspire, and the bad intentions they seem to have; she sees the ghost of Miss Jessel looking straight at Flora with "a determination-indescribable. With a kind of fury of intention" (p. 35).

With these two apparitions, we are far from the passive psychic projections that James abjures in his preface, and we are close to the "active agents" who are brooding over a bad intention, and make the place "reek with evil". Moreover, what makes the situation more complicated and dreadful, for the governess as well as for us as readers, is the fact that the ghosts are attracted to the children. This explains the reaction of the governess to offer herself as a sacrifice, a shield of protection, which she does until the end of the narrative.

Moreover, the governess' distress in her urge to fend off these demons which menace innocent children has been at the heart of a controversy: some critics say that she is the one corrupted by the evil demons. These critics put in evidence the fact that she reenacts the ghost scenes, when she puts herself straight at the window, and when she sits on the stairs just like Miss Jessel, and especially the fact that she starts to question the innocence of the kids. Yet, as we have seen previously, her realistic and accurate description of the ghosts and the confirmation of Mrs Grose do not present her as a mentally disturbed

person, as we know that she *does see* them. Moreover, even the kids play weird at the moments of the apparitions, intensifying the games, making more noise, suggesting that they are aware of them.

Indeed, the children do act weird throughout the narrative; there are scenes where we clearly see that they are somehow in touch with the paranormal happenings that disturb their governess, and which they accept without struggling. For instance, in one of her conversations with Miles at night, the governess tries to win him to her side, sensing that he is under the temptation of Quint, and also that he is on the verge of confessing that to her:

It made me, the sounds of the words, in which it seemed to me that I caught for the very first time a small faint quaver of consenting consciousness- it made me drop on my knees beside the bed and seize once more the chance of possessing him. "Dear little Miles, dear little Miles, if you knew how I want to help you! [...] I just want you to help me to save you!" But I knew in a moment after this that I had gone too far. The answer to my appeal was instantaneous, but it came in the form of an extraordinary blast and chill, a gust of frozen air, and a shake of the room as great as if, in the wild wind, the casement had crashed in. The boy gave a loud, high shriek, which, lost in the rest of the shock of sound, might have seemed, indistinctly, though I was so close to him, a note either of jubilation or of terror. I jumped to my feet again and was conscious of darkness. So for a moment we remained, while I stared about me and saw that the drawn curtains were unstirred and the window tight. "Why, the candle's out!" I then cried. "It was I who blew it, dear!" said Miles. (p. 69)

This scene is neglected by the "apparitionists" who consider the ghosts as mere psychic apparitions which reflect the disturbed mental state of the governess, and which are characterized by passivity. The governess here is fighting the demon that is trying to get hold of Miles, and when we sense that she is on the verge of winning him to her side, there are paranormal happenings that shake the room and blow the candles out in the form of a strong cold wind. We are aware of an invisible dark force that is watching, relentless, and unwilling to give up.

There is, moreover, a scene which is quite disturbing for readers, where the governess, Mrs Grose and Flora are together at the moment of the apparition of Miss Jessel. To her consternation, the house keeper declares that she does not see anything, while Flora, on, the other hand, adopts a weird attitude, an attitude of possession, showing "an expression of hard, still gravity, an expression absolutely new and unprecedented" (p. 120); the governess adds that at this moment, Flora is no more a little girl, but "an old, old woman". Henry James hence makes us believe the governess, and then makes us live with her such a dreadful scene where her sanity is put into question, in order to experience her distress, and to consider the dangerous evil of the ghosts, or demons, prowling over the children. Indeed, we discover with horror that the ghosts have the capacity to "seal" (a word coined by the governess in her narrative) the eyes of people and control who can see them.

The last scene of the novel is even more terrifying, as we see the governess again in a fight to win back Miles on her side, but in vain; in the presence of Quint, she tries to make him confess that he is haunting him, in order to free him from his grasp. She succeeds, as Miles cries out "Peter Quint- you devil!" (p. 93), yet this leads only to his death: "We were alone with the quiet day, and his little heart, dispossessed, had stopped" (p. 94). Miles' sudden death remains unexplained, as it closes the narrative, and we are left wondering how such a healthy young child comes to have such a sudden death? The last words of the narrative are significant, as they suggest that Miles cannot endure the "dispossession", and gives

proof to the veracity of the governess' narrative, and that it is not the product of an insane, disturbed mind. This kind of proof has been at the heart of her distress throughout the novel, to convince those around her, to herself, and to us readers, that she has been telling the truth.

Through these scenes, James gives us the "good old scare", and gives us a glimpse at the evil nature of the presences at Bly and their capacity to interfere when necessary to carry on their demonic plans. He clearly makes them active agents who do have a role in the narrative, which closes with the terrible death of a child, which symbolizes the death of innocence, and the victory of evil; this might reflect James' attitude towards the changes taking place in the society of the late nineteenth century- changes brought about by a growing industrialization, technological development and an increasing spiritual decay.

Such reading of the novel is neither realistic, as it does not consider the ghosts as simple psychic projections of the disturbed governess, and where the ghosts are inactive apparitions who have no direct import on the action of the narrative. It is not romantic either; although it does consider the ghosts as real. It is not romantic because what is at stake is the evil nature of the ghosts, and their determination to cause pain and suffering. Furthermore, these paranormal agents are not mere supernatural beings as the romantics claim, present only to create terror, but are windows to what Jung calls "the collective unconscious", as he explains:

Paranormal psychic phenomena have interested me all my life. Usually [...] they occur in acute psychological states (emotionality, depression, shock, etc.), or, more frequently, with individuals characterized by a peculiar or pathological personality structure, where the threshold to the collective unconscious is habitually lowered. People with a creative genius also belong to this type. (Qt. in: Richter, 2016 : 61)

Jung considered himself to have such a "peculiar or pathological personality structure", and hence to be highly sensitive to the paranormal, which is at the threshold of the collective unconscious. The governess thus, with her "liability to this kind of impressions", does see this invisible world; her ability to see the ghosts puts her at the threshold of this "collective unconscious".

Jung explains that this liability, or hyper sensitivity, is in fact biological, finding vent in the "pre-rational psyche" through which all "sentient beings" can connect (Richter, 2016, P63). We know that Quint and Jessel had bad reputations while living, and that they had a certain bad influence on the kids; these are facts given by a living witness, Mrs Grose. Even after death, their spirits, or their consciousness, has this same will at controlling the kids, and this is seen only by the governess. She tries to warn the living, Mrs Grose, who seems to react at the beginning, but loses "faith" in her at the lake scene when she sides with Flora; the governess desperately tries to protect the children, but cannot.

Martha Benta explains that Henry James was influenced by the research of his brother William James, and that the latter spoke about a certain "imprint of conscious action" which is "left behind upon the world even after death" (Benta, 1964, P182). It is this imprint we see in the narrative: the continual will on the part of Quint and Jessel at influencing the kids and stealing their innocence. In William James' theory, this "imprint", this influence from a living as well as a dead consciousness on another, is visible only to the "sensitive". The sensitive category of people, the ones naturally pre-disposed to see what is beyond the threshold of consciousness, to which Jung considered himself to belong. This is what makes of the ghosts active agents in the narrative.

Conclusion

This paper set out to investigate the visionary character of James' novel, *The Turn of The Screw*. It hopefully shed some light on the ambiguity that hovers around this novel since its first publication, as the intent was to reveal its source and the instances of its manifestation in the narrative. We have seen that the author occupied an ambivalent position between the realists and the modernists, as his literary output tended to stretch between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Critics debated whether to consider him a realist and hence a moralist, or a modernist, hence an aesthete. The misunderstanding he received from his contemporary readers and critics proves that he was an avant-garde modernist writer whose work is to be appreciated by another generation of readers who fully lived and experienced modernity. The facts that he lived at a transitional epoch, and was able to sense and express this change in the collective imagination of people at the turn of the century in his literary output places him in the category of "the visionary artist" as presented by C. G. Jung, whose work is fated to be appreciated only posthumously.

The novel belongs to the ghost story genre, reflecting the growing concern with the supernatural, which came, as we have seen, as a reaction to the growing materialism of rapidly developing Western society. Henry James developed his own interest in the paranormal which was, contrary to his brother's scientific outlook, artistic. Besides, we have seen that H. James was keen to focus on the impact the paranormal has on the consciousness of the individual, revealing thus hidden aspects of human nature. Indeed, the novel offers a deep dive into the consciousness of the governess.

The ambiguity of the novel emanates from two main points: the mental sanity of the governess and the veracity of the ghosts. We have demonstrated that the governess is far from being mad, but belongs to a certain category of hyper sensitive people, as described by Jung, who are able to see things invisible to the majority, being on the threshold of the unconscious. Indeed, the governess is able to see the ghosts of two deceased people that she has never seen before, and whose veracity is authenticated by a mentally sane and respectable character in the narrative, the house-keeper Mrs Grose. The governess is able to see, or to sense, the evil will of the ghosts to control and manipulate the children, Miles and Flora. In the psychological words of William James, this will is in fact an "imprint" of the consciousness of both Quint and Jessel who, while alive, it is suggested, manipulated and abused the innocence of the children. Moreover, through this "evil will" or "imprint", H. James makes of his ghosts active agents who are able to impact on the consciousness of people, instead of uninteresting, passive apparitions of the conventional ghost stories of his time.

William James' deep psychology does admit that Freudian psychology is useful in the interpretation of certain psychological dispositions; yet, Freudian psychology presents the human psyche only as a reservoir for repressed memories and unacknowledged desires, while William James' theory seems to tap into "a greater consciousness of cosmic disposition" anticipating Jung. This cosmic consciousness, or collective unconscious, became the main concern for Henry James, and the specters he creates in his stories are its manifestations. Here lies the visionary aspect of James' work, as he puts the reader at the threshold between the normal and the paranormal, yet within the realm of the real. This explains the confusion of the readers of his time, who couldn't know how to handle

the story: is it realistic or fantastic? Are the ghosts real or not? Is the governess mad or not?

Jung presents visionary art to be closely related to the collective unconscious, and presents the visionary artist to be a hyper sensitive individual who is on the threshold of that collective unconscious, and throughout his art, is able to picture this invisible world for us, to make us aware of its existence. This story was written at the end of the century, an era in Western thought characterized by materialism and individualism; as we said previously, people's interest in the paranormal was a reaction to this sense of shallowness and superficiality, a spiritual hollowness that inflicted the lives of modern man. As a visionary artist, Henry James did not present them with a mere ghost story, but "a strange something that derives its existence from the hinterland of man's mind", opening up horizons and placing them on the threshold of the unconscious, to deeply reflect and question, and dive into their own souls.

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