T.C.

ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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MASTER'S THESIS

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APPROVAL PAGE

DECLARATION

I hereby declare with respect that the study "From Text To Screen: Analyzing Anxieties And Corruption In Film Adaptations Of Henry James's The Turn Of The Screw", which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the Project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the References. (25/12/2023)

Gözde ALTINTAŞ

FOREWORD

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December, 2023 Gözde ALTINTAŞ

FROM TEXT TO SCREEN: ANALYZING ANXIETIES AND CORRUPTION IN FILM ADAPTATIONS OF HENRY JAMES'S *THE TURN OF THE SCREW*

ABSTRACT

In this study, film adaptations of Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) will be examined in terms of cultural anxieties and domestic violence that lead to the inevitable corruption embedded in James's original novella. The significance of corruption, as a central motif in James's novella, reflects the deeper psychological and societal issues of the era, offering a lens to explore the complex interplay between individual psyche and societal norms. *The Turn of the Screw* will be utilized as a base for exploring the relevant themes. To demonstrate these themes, *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) and "The Turn of the Screw" (2009) will be analyzed to find out how they reflect on the themes of cultural anxieties and domestic violence that lead to the inevitable corruption, which is embedded in James' original novella. Adaptation theory will be analyzed under three categories throughout the adaptations: themes transferring to film, fidelity, and how they adapt to the context and time in which they are produced. In addition, adaptations will be analyzed to show their power to reflect and question their times while showcasing the lasting significance of a canonical work.

Keywords: Henry James, adaptation studies, fidelity, ambiguity, cultural issues, gaps

METİNDEN EKRANA: HENRY JAMES'İN THE TURN OF THE SCREW FİLM UYARLAMALARINDAKİ KAYGILARI VE YOLSUZLUĞU İNCELEMEK

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada Henry James'in *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) adlı eserinin film uyarlamaları, James'in orijinal kısa romanında yer alan kaçınılmaz yozlaşmaya yol açan kültürel kaygılar ve aile içi şiddet açısından incelenecektir. James'in romanında merkezi bir motif olarak yolsuzluğun önemi, dönemin daha derin psikolojik ve toplumsal sorunlarının bir yansımasıdır ve bireysel akıl ile toplumsal normlar arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi keşfetmeye yönelik bir mercek sunar. *The Turn of the Screw,* ilgili temaları keşfetmek için bir temel olarak kullanılacaktır. Bu temaları göstermek için *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) ve "The Turn of the Screw" (2009) James'in orijinal romanında yer alan kaçınılmaz yolsuzluğa yol açan kültürel kaygılar ve aile içi şiddet temaları üzerine nasıl düşündüklerini bulmak için analiz edilecektir. Adaptasyon teorisi, uyarlamalar boyunca üç kategori altında analiz edilecektir: filme aktarılan temalar, sadakat ve üretildikleri bağlama ve zamana nasıl uyum sağladıkları. Buna ek olarak, kanonik bir çalışmanın kalıcı önemini sergilerken kendi zamanlarını yansıtma ve sorgulama güçlerini göstermek için uyarlamalar analiz edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Henry James, uyarlama çalışmaları, aslına uygunluk, belirsizlik, kültürel kaygılar, boşluklar

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I. INTRODUCTION

Movies, as a distinct yet complementary art form to literature, can breathe new life into the narratives first crafted in books. Although distinct in artistic expression compared to books, movies have aligned themselves with literature due to their shared goal of effectively conveying stories. This connection makes people want to appreciate both types of art at different times. This study argues and illustrates the significance of adaptation studies in literature and the necessity of adaptation and film analysis from a literary perspective based on Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* (2007). Since its publication, the novella has become one of the most admired works of gothic literature. This intriguing narrative is infused with a sense of mystery and ambiguity, with themes revolving around terror, innocence, corruption, and the inherent complexities of the human mind. In this narrative, a young governess finds herself caught in suspicion while trying to ensure the safety of two presumably innocent children, only to discover that supernatural forces may have invaded their lives. It is impossible to minimize *The Turn of the Screw*'s cultural and literary significance, given that it is set in a typical Victorian rural estate. James demonstrates an artistic skill as he effortlessly molds the narrative, resulting in a literary work that is truly avant-garde. On this point, Griggs states:

> James' tale does not adapt a particular text, but its content is mediated by stories that have gone before, and it functions as an historical marker of turn-of-the-century anxieties related to matters of sexuality and the moral ambiguities of Victorian society… Though public interest in spiritualism was waning by the 1890s, James uses its notion that the living can communicate with the dead to explore taboo matters of transgressive sexuality and violence through the medium of ghostly apparitions who may or may not appear, who may or may not be a symptom of the protagonist's unstable state of mind or the anxieties of the times. (2016: 139).

The quote suggests that *The Turn of the Screw* is less about a specific storyline and more about capturing and exploring the underlying tensions and forbidden topics of its era, using supernatural elements as both literal and metaphorical devices. In novels and plays, themes play a crucial role. These storytelling forms provide opportunities to reflect intricate ideas, philosophies, and underlying messages. How the story unfolds and characters develop intertwines deeply with the core themes that are shaping the progression and depth of the narrative. In addition, mainstream TV shows and movies, especially those made in Hollywood tend to prioritize the storyline or plot action. This does not mean that the themes of cultural anxieties, domestic violence and corruption are insignificant in these mediums; instead they are often used to serve and enrich the story's action. Themes in TV shows and movies are typically integrated in a way that strengthens or adds layers to the storyline, thus making it more captivating and meaningful without overshadowing the plot momentum. "A modern manual for adapters explains, however, that themes are, in fact, of most importance to novels and plays; in TV and films, themes must always serve the story action and "reinforce or dimensionalize" it, for in these forms, the storyline is supreme—" (Seger 1992: 14). Seger highlights the importance of identifying and preserving the core themes of the source material. He highlights how themes and storylines are approached differently across forms of media. Novels and plays tend to prioritize themes, which play a role in driving the narrative. However, TV shows and films place greater importance on the storyline or plot itself. In these mediums, themes should support, enrich, or provide greater depth to the unfolding story rather than overpowering it. The primary focus is ensuring that themes seamlessly complement and reinforce the storyline without overshadowing it. A successful adaptation should maintain the essence of these themes, even if other story elements, such as plot and character, are altered.

The theme of corruption in literature is a timeless and complex concept that authors from various cultures and historical periods have extensively explored. Corruption in the literature typically symbolizes the erosion of morals, ethics, or purity within individuals, institutions, or societies. This theme can take forms ranging from the personal moral decay of a character to the widespread corruption within political systems or societal frameworks. Throughout history, literature has used the portrayal of corruption to critique and reflect upon prevailing ethical

standards. In works like Shakespeare's plays, corruption often takes center stage as a theme examining the flaws of human nature and the consequences of power and ambition. In contemporary literature, corruption continues to be explored focusing on its psychological aspects and its origins in human nature. These writings focus on the struggles faced by the characters as they deal with ethical dilemmas, personal greed, or the corrupting influence exerted by power and wealth.

James' novella is filled with ambiguity, in almost every aspect of the story which challenges the adapter when transferring target themes from text to the screen. In this transfer, Hutcheon points out the difficult task of filling the gaps; "Adapters rely on the ability to fill in the gaps when moving from the discursive expansion of telling to the performative time and space limitations of showing" (Hutcheon, 2006: 121) which highlights a key challenge in adaptation: translating the implicit, expansive narrative style of literature into the more explicit, constrained format of visual and performative arts. Therefore, adapters must interpret, visualize, and expand upon the source material to effectively convey the story within the different medium's limitations.

Literature relies on words and often leaves some aspects to the readers' imagination. For example, a book might describe character appearance, emotions, or settings, but the vivid visual imagery is left for readers to create in their minds. When a book is adapted into a film, it can surpass these limitations by visually presenting what was only hinted at or suggested in the literature. This can include portraying characters' physical appearance and settings, capturing dialogues and sound effects audibly and controlling narrative pacing temporally, all of which contribute to a concrete realization of the original work. According to Robert Stam, an adaptation contributes to the original due to "the idea of adaptation as supplementing the gaps of the literary text" (2005: 10). Essentially, Stam argues that although the original literary work may provide descriptions and narratives, it is limited by its nature. From Stam's perspective, an adaptation fills the gaps in the text by translating its words into experiences and offering a more tangible and enhanced interpretation of the original narrative.

Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) intricately explores themes of anxiety and domestic violence to depict the inevitable path towards corruption. The novella is set in the late Victorian era. It reflects the darker elements of human nature

and societal norms capturing the prevalent fears and moral complexities of that time. James' portrayal of these themes not only reflects the specific cultural anxieties and domestic realities of that period but also presents a timeless examination of the gradual decline into corruption. Through this analysis, *The Turn of the Screw* emerges as a work in gothic literature while also offering profound insights into humanity's ongoing struggle with morality, societal pressures and ambiguity. The main aim of this thesis is to analyze two film adaptations of *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) and find out how they reflect on the themes of cultural anxieties and domestic violence that lead to the inevitable corruption and how do two directors fill the gaps with adaptations which are embedded in James' original novella.

In the early 20th century, adaptation studies emerged as a discipline primarily concerned with comparing literary works and their film adaptations. Fidelity or loyalty to the source text is a frequent debate in adaptation studies. Prominent scholars who have discussed this are Robert Stam, George Bluestone, and Linda Hutcheon. A significant aspect of this inquiry involved evaluating how well a film stayed faithful to its source material through fidelity criticism. This assessment incorporated elements of fidelity and transformation, typically establishing a hierarchy that positioned the original text above its cinematic interpretation. However, over time, the field evolved beyond solely examining adaptations through a "book to film" lens and began appreciating them as cultural artifacts deserving independent analysis. Nevertheless, despite these advances, fidelity holds considerable importance in contemporary adaptation studies, often serving as a springboard for more profound explorations. In *Novels into Film* (1961) George Bluestone discusses the pros and cons of transferring literary works to film. Bluestone pinpoints, "All the differences derive from the contrast between the novel as a conceptual and discursive form, the film as a perceptual or presentation form. In these terms, the filmmaker merely treats the novel as a raw material and ultimately creates his unique structure" (1961, p. ix). In adapting a novel to film, the filmmaker takes the novel's content as raw material but ultimately crafts a distinct structure specific to the film medium, creating a unique work different from the source novel. Linda Hutcheon's famous book *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006) expands the adaptation theory to various media and circumstances. Hutcheon examines creative

adaptability and cultural meaning negotiation. She actively interprets source material, believing change is transformative rather than productive.

Each adaptation can shed light on societal concerns pertinent to its own production time besides the source text's time. According to Hutcheon, "Time, often very short stretches, can change the context even within the same place and culture" (2006: 144). The time gap of fifty years between these adaptations provides a fertile ground for exploring how evolving societal norms have influenced the portrayal of James' themes. From the 1960s to the first decade of the 21st century, changes in cultural attitudes towards gender roles, sexuality, and family dynamics are reflected in these films' narrative and visual styles of these films. This temporal difference affects not only how the themes from James's novella are addressed, but also how they resonate with audiences from different eras, thereby, offering a multi-dimensional understanding of the novella. Through this lens, this study will focus on how these adaptations pay homage to the original text and also adapt to reflect and respond to the evolving cultural anxieties of their respective periods.

Chapter 2 will provide a theoretical framework for the history of adaptation studies and the discussions on the issue of fidelity in order to explicate how the relevant concepts are employed for the analysis of film adaptations of *The Turn of the Screw*. Accordingly, the approach of this study will be comparative based on the thematic transformation of a classic book in its film adaptations in different times and places.

Chapter 3 continues with the analysis of the source text, *The Turn of the Screw* (2007), on cultural anxieties of its era, domestic violence and the inevitable corruption to see how James presents these themes together in its ambiguous plot story.

Chapter 4 and 5 constitute an analysis of Jack Clayton's film adaptation *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) and Tim Fywell's "The Turn of the Screw" (2009). In these chapters, the analysis revolves around the interpretation of relevant themes, with a reference to fidelity. Although set in distinct periods and styles, both films provide a captivating perspective on the themes James intricately incorporated into his storytelling. *"*The Innocents*"*, taking place during the Victorian era, and the 2009 adaptation, which transitions to a post-First World War backdrop, not only capture the societal and psychological tensions of their respective times, but also resonate

with the universal themes in the novella. This analysis aims to explore how these adaptations interpret and portray the underlying anxieties, subtle depictions of violence, and the subsequent journey towards corruption that James skillfully crafted in his work. By examining these adaptations, we can uncover both their fidelity to and deviation from James' original vision, thus shedding new light on the enduring relevance of his story.

Chapter 6, the conclusion chapter, provides a summary of the arguments in the theoretical and analysis chapters and includes the answers to these questions of the thesis: How do *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) and "The Turn of the Screw" (2009) reflect on cultural anxieties and domestic violence that lead to the inevitable corruption while filling the gaps embedded in James' original novella? By adapting main themes, do adaptations retain fidelity and how does the time gap of fifty years affect the interpretation of themes? How do the adaptations reflect and question their own times while showcasing the novella?

Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* is a challenge and an inspiration for adapters. The purpose is not to proclaim any superiority of any adaptations over one another. Rather, adaptations expand the original work in many ways. This study offers a comprehensive literary analysis of *The Turn of the Screw* and various adaptations, focusing on how different storytellers, across different mediums and eras, have interpreted and reimagined the novella's central themes of cultural anxieties, domestic violence, and corruption. By concentrating on thematic and narrative elements, the study provides a deeper understanding of the fidelity and transformation of these themes in their transition from a classic book to a film representation.

II. THE HISTORY OF ADAPTATION STUDIES AND FIDELITY

In the early 1900s, adaptation studies emerged as a distinct academic discipline largely fueled mainly by technological advancements and the growing prevalence of film. During this period, comparative studies between literary works and their subsequent adaptations for the silver screen grew in popularity. The groundbreaking contribution to this subject was *Novels into Film* (1957) by George Bluestones. Bluestone conducted a comprehensive examination of how novels are adapted into films. Comparing and contrasting their similarities and differences, this period was dominated by fidelity criticism, which assessed how faithfully an adaptation remained true to its source material. To determine whether adaptations adhered to or diverged from their literary counterparts, academics analyzed whether adaptations followed or deviated from their literary counterparts. Due to its nature and medium difference, George Bluestones argues in *Novels into Film* (1961) that the film contributes to the source text through the incorporation of its film elements. As a new form of art, an adaptation is not a matter of superiority or similarity, but rather of being a distinct representational and audio-visual material: “All the differences derive from the contrast between the novel as a conceptual and discursive form, the film as a perceptual or presentation form. In these terms, the filmmaker treats the novel as raw material and ultimately creates his unique structure” (Bluestone, 1961: ix). In a case of comparison, these differences also manifest in divergences rather than similarities between the forms (1961: ix). By using the source text as "raw material," he alludes to the emergence of a new art form.

Fidelity to the source text is an ongoing debate in adaptation studies. Prominent names who have discussed this are Robert Stam, George Bluestone, and Linda Hutchen. These discussions include the loyalty’s (un)necessity and the various definitions of adaptation and its functions. In his book *Anatomy of Film* (1998), Bernard Dick argues the features and elements of an adaptive film. According to

him, “The adaptation must be different… The adaptation may preserve the essence of the original, even though it may alter plot details, add or eliminate characters, and change the conclusion” (1998: 200). Not only each adaptation has the space to create a different version of the source text but also must be an alternate form.

In his book *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (1996), Brian McFarlane investigates this approach, expanding it into two essential aspects: fidelity of transformation and fidelity of adjustment. He pinpoints “… two lines of investigation seem worthwhile: (a) in the transposition process, just what is it possible to transfer or adapt from novel to film; and (b) what key factors other than the source novel have exercised an influence on the film version of the novel?” (1996: 22) While transformation entails translating the narrative content from page to screen, adjustment entails making adjustments necessitated by the unique capabilities and limitations of each medium. This evaluation focuses on maintaining consistency while successfully navigating transformational processes. He also focuses on the issue of authorship, which is always complex in film, especially about the film version of a literary work. Not only will the directorial signature inscribe itself with varying degrees of forcefulness on adapted material, but will the spectre of the novel's author, especially in the case of the classic or best-selling novel, hover over the spectator and critic's reading of the film; but also, the status of the author(s) of the screenplay will intervene between the former two (Mcfarlane, 1996: 56) and argues this authorship accordingly with other adaptation examples.

Late in the 1960s, with the incorporation of poststructuralist theory, adaptation studies underwent a remarkable transformation. Roland Barthes is a significant figure in this movement. In his seminal essay, "The Death of the Author" (1967), he challenges the traditional emphasis on the author's intent in literary analysis. This prompted scholars to reevaluate the connection between source texts and their adaptations and to query the hierarchical binary established by fidelity criticism. Barthes argued that a text's meaning is not derived from the author's intention but rather from the reader's interpretation. (Barthes, 1967: 145) As a consequence, the concept of authorship as the final arbiter of a text's meaning has become obsolete. This shift in perspective resulted in a reorganization of the fundamental principles underlying adaptation studies.

Robert Stam defines adaptation as a text concerning intertextuality. He contends, “Adaptations are seen as parasitical on literature; they burrow into the body of the source text and steal its vitality (2005, p. 8), but indeed, “Film, as we are reminded, is a form of writing that borrows from other forms of writing” (2005: 1), so even if the adaptation offers alterations, it contains elements from the source text. For Stam, the fidelity issue is redundant due to the intertextual nature, which means that nothing is original. This means focusing on “loss” rather than “gains”, so he names this “hostility” (2005: 4). On the other hand, Stam criticizes the term “originality” because it always turns out to be partially copied from earlier (2004: 8). Texts are like mosaics made up of quotations; relationships with other texts shape their meaning. This emphasis on intertextuality marked a significant departure from replication in adaptations, allowing scholars to examine adaptations as reinterpretations or rewrites of original texts. This change shifted the focus from what had been "lost" during adaptation to what had been "gained" or "transformed." In her book *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2006), Julie Sanders endorsed this viewpoint. She advocates for valuing adaptations as autonomous creative works that frequently provide novel insights into the source material. (132). The intertextual approach encourages a more adaptable and thorough examination of adaptations so their dynamic nature and intricate interplay between influence, creativity, and reinterpretation are highlighted.

Gerald Prince's N*arratology: The Form and Function of Narrative* (1982) significantly contributed to adaptation studies by introducing a systemic approach to understanding narrative structures. The incorporation of narratological analysis into the study of adaptations provided indispensable instruments for dissecting and analyzing narrative elements. This framework allowed researchers to focus deeply on elements such as plot development, characterization, viewpoint perspectives, and chronological order within the narrative structure. The result was a more nuanced understanding of how these elements functioned individually and how they interacted within narratives, as well as a firm foundation for examining adaptations with greater sophistication. Through Prince's narratology lens, scholars were able to determine how various narrative elements may be transformed, transferred, or reimagined across different mediums. It highlighted the complexities of the adaptation process that transcend simplistic notions of mere source material fidelity.

Since the 1990s, adaptation studies have expanded significantly to integrate cultural and ideological perspectives. Scholars such as Linda Hutcheon (2006) and Thomas Leitch (2007) played pivotal roles in guiding this new direction by critically examining previous concepts of adaptation. They argue that adaptations are more significant than derivatives of their original narratives or texts. Instead, Hutcheon, Leitch, and other scholars argued that it is essential to recognize adaptations as cultural artifacts in their own right, as they embody and reflect the distinct cultural, social, and political contexts from which they emerge. This new perspective effectively shifted the focus from analyzing only the adapted text itself to investigating the conditions surrounding its creation as well as its implications upon reception, resulting in a more thorough analysis of adaptation. Hutcheon's method focuses on what she calls "repetition without replication" (2006: 172) in adaptations and she argues that these works deftly negotiate a creative tension between preserving the essence of their source material and introducing novelty through contextual variation and a unique alternative viewpoint associated with each particular adaptation (2006: 173).

As Hutcheon states, the concept of fidelity to the source text needs to be revised and limits the discussion of adaptations. She suggests that we focus on how the adaptation engages with the source and reflects its cultural and historical context (2006: 175). Hutcheon also emphasizes the importance of 'transcoding,' which involves interpreting and recreating the codes of one medium into another. She believes adapters are active agents who creatively transpose the source text into a new medium and cultural context. Drawing from Gerard Genet's theory of transtextuality, Hutcheon introduces the idea of 'palimpsest' to describe adaptations. This concept suggests that adaptations are layered works that preserve traces of the original text. Furthermore, Hutcheon includes the audience's role in her theory (2006: 40). She highlights the audience's prior knowledge of the adapted work as an integral part of their experience. According to Hutcheon, knowingness creates a unique aesthetic experience where rediscovery is just as crucial as novelty. She states:

> When most of us consider the move from print to performance, it is usually the common and familiar phenomenon of the adaptation of novels that comes to mind. Novels contain much information that can be rapidly translated into action or gesture on stage or screen or

> dispensed with altogether, admits novelist and literary critic David Lodge. In the move from telling to showing, a performance adaptation must dramatize: description, narration, and represented thoughts must be transcoded into speech, actions, sounds, and visual images (2006: 40).

As seen from the quote above, adapting a novel into a performance requires a shift, from "telling to showing" as described by Lodge (2006: 41). Novels heavily rely on descriptions, narration and characters' internal thoughts to tell the story in written form. However, when brought to life on stage or screen these elements must be transformed into auditory forms. This means that actions, visual imagery and sound can portray descriptions and narrations while dialogues or visual cues can represent characters' thoughts. The adaptation process involves reinterpreting and reshaping the novels content to suit the capabilities and limitations of performance mediums like theater or film, as stated by Hutcheon (2006: 42).

The advent of the digital era and the widespread availability of the internet in the twenty-first century have brought about significant changes in adaptation studies while concurrently redefining our understanding of what it means to adapt. The profound changes brought about by digital media have necessitated a critical reevaluation and expansion of traditional theories, as well as the emergence of novel perspectives regarding narrative structure, medium characteristics, and audience engagement. According to Linda Hutcheon, "Recognition and remembrance are part of the pleasure (and risk) of experiencing an adaptation; so too is change" presents a way to describe the popularity of adapted works (2006: 4). The audience's expectations determine the success of an adaptation. As Brian Mcfarlane adds, the 'essence' of the original text is difficult to determine "since any given film version is able only to aim at reproducing the film-maker's reading of the original and to hope that it will coincide with that of many other readers/viewers" (1996: 9). He also highlights the two different imaginative worlds and adds "the reader will not always find his film, since what he has before him in the actual film is now somebody else's phantasy" (Mcfarlane, 1996: 7). That's to say, the audience or the reader interpret a text in terms of their cultural, historical, social, and literary backgrounds. These differences may lead to discussions of fidelity and authenticity.

The medium of film has multiple advantages to tell a story such as music and visuals. The filmmaker Richard A. Hulseberg treats the original text as a source to reconstruct. The idea that the filmmaker has to restate the essence of the novel is old fashioned since the "novel is considered as the first or authentic embodiment of the story and the filmmaker as a kind of translator who moves not merely from one language to another but from one medium to another" (1978: 58). He focuses on the forms of "rewriting" since the source text is "reread" and "rewritten" with different perspectives.

The interdisciplinary conversation between literature and film within the field of adaptation studies has become more nuanced over time. "Although adaptation remained common, nonetheless, the choice of adapted works was more limited" (Hutcheon, 2006: 92). Traditional theoretical perspectives have tended to categorize original texts and their adaptations separately while primarily assessing adaptations based on their adherence to the source material (Hutcheon, 2006: 98). However, this focus on fidelity has been criticized as limiting, reducing the process of adaptation to a one sided and hierarchical relationship (Leitch, 2007: 122). Emerging theories propose a more dialogic understanding of adaptation that considers original texts and adaptations as intertextual entities within a shared cultural and artistic landscape.

Fidelity criticism established a hierarchy that favored literary texts over their film adaptations. Hutcheon argues that adaptations should be viewed as independent works of art rather than lesser imitations, "One lesson is that to be second is not to be secondary or inferior; likewise, to be first is not to be original or authoritative" consequently, adaptations were frequently perceived as inferior or tainted reproductions of their source material. It was determined that the paradigm above was restrictive and did not account for the prospect of creativity and innovation in the adaptation process (Hutcheon, 2006: xiii). The film theorist Bela Balàzs who is one of the prominent figures in adaptation studies between the 1920 and 1930, argues that film is a new art form and the "film script is an entirely a new form" (1953: 246-247). He emphasizes that recurrent adaptations of an original story are considered as two different perspectives: "Two films in which story and acting are the same, but which are differently cut, maybe the expression of two different personalities and present two different images of the world" (1953: 32). It is inferred that an adaptation

is rarely fully faithful to the original text or a replica of it even if it has pretty similar elements.

Robert Stam argues that film adaptations can be regarded as “mutations” to help their source text to “survive” instead of regarding adaptations as a parasite (2004: 3). He highlights that adaptations instead “adapt to changing environment and changing tastes, as well as to a new medium” (2004: 3) since they are new forms. Jean Mitry, a French film theorist discusses the impossible correlation of two mediums. The film can only provide “a valuable reflection of the original”; the adaptor, however, is a translator who “reproduces the things signified by the words” in the novel, and “the film from that moment, no longer is creation or expression but only representation or illusion (Mitry, 1971: 4-5). By leaving the words aside and focusing on the images and visuals, the adaptor creates his meanings and asserts the impossibility of a “scrupulous fidelity to the original work” (1971: 5). It is understood that an adaptation is not a unique work of art. However, it presents the original in an audio-visual form.

One of the main issues in terms of adaptation theory is whether it is possible to achieve the same effects in cinema as in literature. According to the French critic, Andre Bazin, even if a certain level of creativity is needed while transforming to the screen, faithfulness to the source text is fundamental. He argues that cinematic advantages are tools for the filmmaker to create a new perspective by keeping the essence of the original work’s essence. Bazin argues that “the filmmaker has everything to gain from fidelity” (Bazin, 1971: 65) and the filmmaker builds upon the essence and develops it. He believes that they have their own artistic and cultural value separate from the original work and use this power to create a new form that is both different and parallel to the source text. Some scholars do not accept the natural difference between the two mediums and end up assuming the superiority of one of the mediums. George Bluestone, however, positively discusses, “In film criticism, it has always been easy to recognize how a poor film destroys a superior novel. What has been sufficiently recognized is that such destruction is inevitable… the filmist becomes a new author in his own right” (quoted in Halliwell, 2012: 236). In this sense, the filmmaker is not a rewriter, a translator, or simply an interpreter. However, he is the creator of his original work. Even if the adaptation strictly follows the

original, it ultimately provides a seamless adventure since direct verbal borrowing transforms into a new form on the screen.

The adaptation discussions and the analysis of different mediums date back to the early days of film studies. Scholars and critics have argued and categorized components with various perspectives on fidelity. The adaptation debate revolves around 'how' and 'why' to adapt a literary work to screen by contributing to the criticism and revival of interest in the book itself. Some movies have been transformed from different forms of media, like novels, plays, short stories, and even real-life events. Here are a few examples: *The Godfather* (1972), directed by Francis Ford Coppola, this film was based on Mario Puzo's novel of the title published in 1969. It is often regarded as one of the best films in cinema. The trilogy of *Lord of the Rings* (2001-2003) consists of three fantasy adventure films that were based on the book series written by J. R. R. Tolkien. From 2001 to 2011, a series of fantasy films called *Harry Potter* was made, which were adaptations of the seven-part novel series created by J.K. Rowling. A cult film titled *Fight Club* (1999) was based on the novel of the same name written by Chuck Palahniuk in 1996. The film *Forrest Gump* (1994) is an adaptation of a novel published in 1986 and authored by Winston Groom with the same title. Recurring adaptations are widespread in cinema history. The reinterpretation of a story is simply a re-imagination of the director. In terms of intertextuality, an adaptation has similarities with prior text(s). Stam argues that "Film, we are reminded, is a form of writing that borrows from other forms of writing" (2004: 1) and as Hutcheon mentions, "Adaptations appear to affirm Walter Benjamin's sight that storytelling is always the art of repeating stories" (2006: 2) as they discuss intertextuality in screen adaptations. It is understood that nothing is separate from the prior text. Hence, the analysis of an adaptation requires seeking eliminations, additions, alterations, or transformations in terms of themes, characters, or even genres.

Adaptations have the ability to explore the thoughts, motivations and backgrounds of characters in more detail than what was originally presented in the text. They can develop known characters, introduce storylines and incorporate fresh themes and symbols that resonate with the prevailing spirit of the adaptation era. In this way, adaptations do not only fill in the gaps left by the text but also expand its narrative depth. This creates a conversation between both texts that enhances the

interpretation of the source material. It's worth mentioning that this concept doesn't imply a superiority between the work and its adaptation. Instead, it emphasizes how different mediums interact dynamically with each other to reread, rewrite, and reinterpret the source text by filling the gaps of unsaid words. According to the reception theory and Wolfgang Iser, the reader's prior knowledge fills in the spaces during the reading process. The 'unsaid' portions of the text are left for readers to infer their own meaning. Even in the simplest story, the act of reading provides this space: "the opportunity is given to us to employ our own capacity for establishing connections--filling in the gaps left by the text itself" (1972: 285). In film adaptations, the audience observes how the director fills in these spaces, as he rereads and reinterprets the original text from his own perspective. Even if he fills in the spaces for the audience, it is typically disappointing because it differs from how they would fill in the gaps. Similarly, Linda Hutcheon emphasizes that adapters employ the same storytelling techniques as novelists. As is the case with this study, screen adaptations "amplify and extrapolate, make analogies, and critique or show respect for the source material." A gothic story is transformed into a horror film and/or a series with primary references to its source material. Her criteria for an adaptation are "appropriation/salvaging, recognition, and engagement" (2006: 20), because 'showing' a story differs from 'telling' a story, adaptation involves distinct modalities of engagement.

III. THE TURN OF THE SCREW (2007)

A. Cultural Anxieties

Victorian society was characterized by rigid moral codes and societal expectations. *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) captures these anxieties by portraying emotions and desires. The presence of ambiguity and psychological tension in these narratives effectively highlights how late Victorians feared that their personal desires could clash with norms. The novella presents the theme of suppressing desires especially through the governess's character. Her hidden feelings and emotions for the children's uncle, her employer imply repressed desires (James, 2007: 17). The story's ambiguity adds to the uneasiness as it leaves room for interpretations of her connection with the children. Griggs states:

> But there are such unsettling matters subtly coded by James into this tale that to read it as a simple 'pot boiler', an 'amusette', or a fear-inducing horror story is to side-step its capacity to address the fin de siècle anxieties of the Victorian age. James interrogates these anxieties through guarded allusion and carefully crafted ambiguity: he is at pains to distance himself from the more disturbing potentialities of his story – its critique of the dysfunctional Victorian family and Victorian morality, its inferred sexual transgressions and the deconstruction of the Victorian obsession with both childhood innocence and the period's oppressive construction of women as angels or demons (2016: 138).

As it is stated above, In *The Turn of the Screw* (2007), James reflects concerns by dropping hints and creating an air of uncertainty. He indirectly challenges these aspects of society through his narrative instead of condemning them. He employs ambiguity about the undercurrents that existed during that period while allowing readers to form their interpretations regarding the characters and the society they represent. During this period, censorship took form. Literature had to meet moral and

decency standards. Any works of art or literature that were perceived as corrupt or indecent could face censorship or public condemnation.

In *The Turn of the Screw*, James weaves together themes of repression and Victorian moral values into the tapestry of the narrative. Nardin states:

> In order to define yet another element of this sense of uncertainty and danger, I wish to argue that The Turn of the Screw can be read as a tale which exposes the cruel and destructive pressures of Victorian society, with its restrictive code of sexual morality and its strong sense of class consciousness, upon a group of basically sane and decent individuals. Because the adult characters in *The Turn of the Screw* are trying to live by a set of social and moral norms that deny or frustrate some of the basic impulses of human nature, their good intentions turn sour and they begin to show marked signs of strain and mental deterioration (1978: 132)

This statement suggests that *The Turn of the Screw* can be interpreted as a story revealing the harmful impact of Victorian societal pressures, particularly regarding sexual morality and class distinctions. The argument is that the characters, despite being fundamentally rational and decent, experience mental strain and deterioration because they are attempting to conform to social and moral norms that go against basic human instincts. The author contends that the characters' good intentions become detrimental due to the oppressive expectations of Victorian society. In this thesis, descriptive study is fulfilled through the close reading method.

This novella, set during the morally upright Victorian era explores the consequences of societal and internalized suppression. The Governess personifies this notion of repression. Bound by society’s expectations based on her gender and social standing, she not only adheres to prescribed behaviors but also filters her perceptions and reactions to what occurs at Bly. Her interactions with the children’s uncle carry an unspoken tension that hints at desires deemed inappropriate by prevailing moral standards. While these desires are never explicitly expressed, they simmer beneath the surface and influence her decisions and interpretation of events unfolding around her.

The presence of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel themselves can be viewed as representations of hidden desires and transgressions embodying the consequences that arise when Victorian standards of propriety are forced. The appearances of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel in form take on symbolic significance in this ongoing battle between innocence and corruption. They represent spectral entities haunting Bly estate, and embody forbidden desires and societal transgressions. Quint and Jessel, with their pasts and their intrusion into the lives of the children even after death symbolize the subtle yet powerful impact of suppressed desires. They serve as reminders of the consequences faced by individuals who dare to challenge the moral standards of the Victorian era. The ghosts' influence over Miles and Flora represents the Governess' fear – the potential corruption that hangs over them like a looming threat. In her perspective, Quint and Jessel's mere existence challenges the line between acceptable and forbidden, casting a shadow over the children's future. The Governess' struggle against these apparitions vividly portrays the mindset of society – filled with dread about moral decline and an ardent determination to shield young ones from adult transgressions complexities.

One of the unsettling themes explored in *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) deals with how sexual repression can corrupt the mind of a governess and influence her treatment of the children under her care. The governess becomes fixated on her employer, who is the master of Bly and this fixation takes a twisted turn. Her unfulfilled longing for him becomes a motivation behind her actions. The governess believes that by preserving the innocence of the children and shielding them from what she perceives as spirits, she can win favor with and capture the attention of their master. However, her unrequited love for him, combined with her isolation and yearning, transforms her into a character who displaces her fears on the children. Throughout parts of the novella, we can feel the chaos consuming the governess as she deals with intense emotions for her employer and unfulfilled desires. She constantly yearns for his presence, which intensifies her determination to protect their innocence. This obsession drives her to measures, like confronting ghosts and subjecting the children to distress to safeguard their purity.

The initial encounter between the Governess and the children's uncle serves as a subtle harbinger of the novella's underlying themes of sexual repression. This interaction takes place when the Governess remembers their first encounter in

London, and also by the inner talks of the unreliable layered narrator (James, 2007: 24). These are some of the most ambiguous interactions in this story. This high level of ambiguity takes the sexual undertones and implications of repressed desires to another level and makes the story more chaotic. In chapter III, in one of her inner talks, the Governess is amazed by how far she has come, how she tastes freedom and authority for the first time in her life:

> It was the first time, in a manner, that I had known space and air and freedom, all the music of summer and all the mystery of nature. And then there was consideration—and consideration was sweet. Oh, it was a trap—not designed, but deep—to my imagination, to my delicacy, perhaps to my vanity; to whatever, in me, was most excitable (James, 2007: 25).

In this novella, the passage captures the musings of the governess who's the central character. Her thoughts are a mix of voices within her mind. It depicts how her perception of the surroundings changes over time starting with a sense of freedom and admiration and gradually evolving into a feeling of being trapped.

The children also bear burdens under society's morality. The weighty expectations surrounding their innocence and purity exert pressure on them. The Governess becomes fixated on safeguarding their innocence, which becomes a driving force behind the story. In the novella, we can see how the influence of morality greatly impacts the portrayal of Miles and Flora. Their lives are deeply intertwined with the divisions between innocence and corruption, purity and depravity that define that era. During that time, society placed pressure on young people, idealizing innocence to an almost unattainable level. For Miles and Flora, this pressure becomes not an external burden but a haunting presence that infiltrates their existence within the walls of Bly. The Governess describes her first impression of Miles with an exalted sense of his purity, "the same positive fragrance of purity in which I had from the first moment seen his little sister" (James, 2007: 23). This statement reflects the Victorian idealization of childhood as a state of grace and innocence to be protected at all costs. The Governess, appointed as their guardian to protect their values, takes on the responsibility of shielding them from the moral pitfalls of adulthood. Her role goes beyond supervision; she sees herself as a guardian of their souls. Her commitment to preserving their purity is more than a

professional duty; it is a personal mission driven by her internalization of society's moral standards at that time. She notes the challenge for Miles to maintain "a part of innocence and consistency," suggesting the intense pressure to conform to the strict moral standards of the time (James, 2007: 106). The Governess's protective instincts are so strong that she fears any action on her part might "betray too much," potentially leading the children into a "sad wild tangle" of moral confusion and loss of innocence (James, 2007: 64). In her eyes, the children must remain untainted as their childlike innocence serves as a haven amidst a world filled with hidden dangers.

The Governess's vigilant efforts to protect the children from what she perceives as the corrupting influence of these apparitions symbolize a struggle against moral decay and societal disorder. However, as the Governess becomes increasingly unstable in her pursuit, James suggests that such strict repression may not be sustainable and could even have effects. The psychological strain she experiences blurs the line between reality and illusion leading to questionable actions, at best and tragic at worst. In essence, *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) is an examination of the darkness that can hide beneath a facade of proper behavior. James employs this novella to question whether society's rigid moral code serves to protect or harm individuals or it shields them from corruption or drives them towards it. The story provokes readers to contemplate the nature of evil: Is it an external force preying upon innocence or does it originate from within as a result of suppressed emotions?

As another cultural anxiety during the Victorian era, there were strict societal expectations and gender roles that people had to adhere to. Women were primarily confined to being wives and mothers with social standing and opportunities. In *The Victorian Girl and The Feminine Ideal* (2013), Deborah Gorham asserts, "The ideal woman was willing to be dependent on men and submissive to them, and she would have a preference for a life restricted to the confines of home. She would be innocent, pure, gentle and self-sacrificing" (2013: 4). These expectations are reflected in the novella through the character of the governess, who finds herself responsible for caring for and educating the children. Her vulnerability and isolation represent the difficulties women face when trying to assert themselves in a male-dominated society. The Governess in *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) serves as a representation of the desires and emotions that women experienced during this era.

Her infatuation with her employer, who happens to be the children's uncle, highlights the conflict between desires and societal expectations set by Victorian moral codes. She is bound by these norms. Her intense focus on protecting the children can be seen as an attempt to establish herself within her limited role.

The Turn of the Screw (2007) is famous for its ambiguity leaving large room for interpretation. Ambiguity also extends to the character of the governess as readers are left questioning the reliability of her storytelling. This reflects the unease during the late Victorian era towards women who dared to challenge societal norms often portraying them as potentially unreliable or overly emotional. The governess' inner talks add a sense of calm and validation in her actions, which holds significance for her. Her isolation at Bly, both physically and socially emphasizes how women had agency during the late Victorian era. She finds herself cut off from society and faces daunting challenges posed by supernatural events and children's behavior all on her own. She believes that her discretion, approach and appropriate response to a request have made her a feel accomplished. The governess adheres to societal norms and expectations. This feeling of justification aligns with her perception of fulfilling her role as a governess:

> It was a pleasure at these moments to feel myself tranquil and justified; doubtless, perhaps, also to reflect that by my discretion, my quiet good sense and general high propriety, I was giving pleasure—if he ever thought of it!—to the person to whose pressure I had responded. What I was doing was what he had earnestly hoped and directly asked of me, and that I could, after all, do it proved even a greater joy than I had expected. I dare say I fancied myself, in short, a remarkable young woman and took comfort in the faith that this would more publicly appear (James, 2007: 26).

The passage suggests the influence of the master at Bly, who remains mostly unseen throughout the novella. The governess believes that what she is doing aligns with his hopes and expectations. This influence from the master although indirect plays a part in shaping her character and guiding her actions. Through the governess's thoughts, we gain insight into how she perceives herself. She sees herself as a woman who not only follows her employer's wishes but also believes that others will acknowledge her actions. This demonstrates her need, for validation and desire to be recognized as

virtuous and praiseworthy. Also, in the same chapter, she utters, “Someone would appear there at the turn of a path and would stand before me and smile and approve. I didn’t ask more than that—I only asked that he should know; and the only way to be sure he knew would be to see it, and the kind light of it, in his handsome face” (James, 2007: 26). This self-talk shows her desire, for recognition and approval likely from the missing owner of the estate. Her longing for his acceptance and the imagined vision of his approving smile demonstrates her need for validation and how external affirmation shapes her view of herself and her actions. This internal conversation reveals the interaction between what the governess wants and the impact of society’s expectations by emphasizing a mix of emotions and motivations.

The novella also touches upon the theme of silenced voices among women. Miss Jessel, the previous governess, is depicted as a tragic figure who had a troubled relationship with Peter Quint, a male figure in her life. Her suffering and abuse remain unaddressed reflecting how her experiences are ignored or dismissed due to prevailing norms, within their household. In one of the conversations between the governess and Mrs. Grose, “It must have been also what she wished! Mrs. Grose’s face signified that it had been indeed, but she said at the same time: Poor woman—she paid for it!” (James, 2007: 55). As it is stated here, a woman’s wishes can take her to her own demise. This relationship was against norms in every way. Even though both Miss Jessel and Quint are included and blamed for their sins, the hints on Miss Jessel’s motivation are implied more than Quint’s due to the society’s gender norms. Another clue for that is Mrs. Grose’s remarks about Jessel’s position as a governess, “Of her real reason for leaving? Oh, yes—as to that. She couldn’t have stayed. Fancy it here—for a governess! And afterwards I imagined—and I still imagine. And what I imagine is dreadful.” (James, 2007: 55), implying that the things she does ‘as a governess’ are clashing with the norms of society for a woman of such a high position.

B. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence, which is also referred to as partner violence or family violence, refers to a recurring pattern of abusive behavior that occurs within personal relationships or households. In such cases, one individual seeks to exert control and power over another. This type of violence encompasses emotional, psychological and

sexual abuse and may employ tactics like threats, intimidation or manipulation to maintain dominance. Domestic violence can manifest in many ways. First, physical abuse involves the use of physical force to cause harm or injury to a family member or intimate partner. It includes actions such as hitting, punching, slapping, kicking or any other act of assault. Second, emotional and psychological abuse revolves around manipulating and controlling someone. It encompasses threats, constant criticism, humiliation, isolation from support systems as well as undermining their self-esteem and sense of self-worth. Lastly, sexual abuse; within the context of domestic violence sexual abuse entails coercing or forcing a partner into engaging in sexual activities, against their will. It can also involve non-consensual sharing of intimate images or sexual harassment.

Discussions around domestic violence were often silenced in late Victorian society. There were legal protections and women faced significant societal stigma when seeking assistance. In *The Turn of the Screw* (2007), the female protagonist hints at experiencing violence as they become victims of psychological abuse. The reluctance to openly address this issue, prevalent in Victorian times, is reflected in the underlying messages conveyed within these narratives. The central theme that carries power and sensitivity in both the original novella and its subsequent adaptations is the issue of domestic violence. The apparition of Miss Jessel represents the fear individuals have when they deviate from gender norms, while Peter Quint's ghost symbolizes the relentless cycle of abuse within a home, emphasizing the dangers of male dominance over women. During a conversation with Mrs. Grose, the Governess uncovers a truth about her predecessor, Miss Jessel. She learns that Miss Jessel was trapped in a sexual relationship with Peter Quint, who was previously employed as a groundskeeper. The abuse inflicted upon Miss Jessel encompassed physical and sexual brutality that was witnessed by everyone in the household including the children. These continuous acts of violence had an impact on Miss Jessel's mental well-being, leading to obsessive behavior that may resemble conditions like Battered Woman Syndrome. Tragically, after Peter Quint's death, Miss Jessel took her own life by drowning. Even after their deaths the staff within the household chose to turn a blind eye to this violence treating it as an open secret without intervening or offering any support. It is through these haunting spirits that return to possess the children that Quint perpetuates his cycle of violence and

asserts dominance within the household, consequently, putting Miles, Flora and even the governess herself at risk.

The book implies that the children may have witnessed Jessel and Quint's explicit sexuality and it is counted as domestic violence. The relationship between Quint and Miles illustrates a disturbing closeness. When the Governess learns that "Quint was much too free" (James, 2007: 44) with Miles, she suspects a too-close relationship between them and reacts as "Too free with my boy?" (James, 2007: 44) in a sudden shock. Also, a similar relationship between Miss Jessel and Flora is implied in conversations with Mrs. Grose as she utters "To get hold of her" and the Governess continues as "her eyes just lingering on mine—gave a shudder and walked to the window; and while she stood there looking out I completed my statement; That's what Flora knows" (James, 2007: 54). The ambiguity of these conversations empowers these implications while opening the way to the inevitable corruption. The original novel merely hints at the intensity of suffering endured by Miss Jessel. It implies that these unresolved sins played a role in calling these evil spirits back. However, given that it was released in 2007, discussing or portraying intimate content explicitly was not socially acceptable. As a result, the book only implies such concerns, which adds its ambiguity.

In *The Turn of the Screw* (2007), the disturbing presence of violence is not only embodied by the ghosts of Miss Jessel and Peter Quint, but also deeply intertwined with the power dynamics in Victorian households. The story portrays a structure steeped in authority and submission, which was prevalent during that era. The pervasive silence and denial surrounding this abuse are as prevalent as the apparitions themselves. The governess's narrative, filled with uncertainty, sheds light on the manipulation and hidden nature of violence behind doors. It reflects society's inclination to conceal rather than confront such issues. Additionally, the spectral figures in the story symbolize lasting trauma suffered by victims— scars on their minds similar to haunting memories of abuse. This shows that looking respectable is often more important than meeting essential needs, which leads to a culture where people deny violence instead of stopping it. The profound impact of these realities on children highlights their corrupted innocence. It serves as a chilling testament to their exposure to domestic violence, emphasizing its cyclical nature and far-reaching consequences so, James's delicate approach not only highlights the long-standing

hesitation to confront domestic violence, but also offers a critical examination of the societal systems that enable its continuation. Thus, makes the novella an insightful exploration of these matters.

C. Corruption

Cultural concerns like repression and women's position, and theme of domestic violence lead to an inevitable result gradually, which is the corruption as a prevalent one. The theme of corruption shows itself in the further pages. During the Victorian era, there was a strong concern among society about preserving innocence in the face of changing social norms and moral uncertainties. One prevalent worry during this time was decay and degeneration. The presence of forces reflects a perceived erosion of moral values and highlights the potential consequences of societal changes. These concerns about corruption mirror elements within the narratives themselves.

As the Governess interacts with Mrs. Grose, one of the very first signs of her fear of corruption unfolds. They talk about the letter and after that the Governess inquires her oppressively about Miles being a good boy. She admits when asked if he ever does terrible things. Then, the two have the following conversation: "I held her tighter. "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." She stared, taking my meaning in; but it produced in her an odd laugh. "Are you afraid he'll corrupt you?" (James, 2007: 21) The underestimation here may sign as the Governess' real fear which is her corruption.

The corruption of innocence in *The Turn of the Screw* (2007), primarily revolves around how the governess perceives the situation. In the novella, the innocence of children is at risk due to the influences. The Governess sees Miles and Flora as angelic figures. However, as she becomes more obsessed with protecting their innocence, her perspective becomes distorted. She begins to believe that Peter Quint and Miss Jessel, employees of Bly, who have passed away are corrupting the children. Her fear influences this fear, her suppressed romantic feelings for the estate's master. As her conviction grows stronger it becomes a battle between her

instincts and inner turmoil. For example, when she first sees Flora, she utters “The little girl who accompanied Mrs. Grose appeared to me on the spot a creature so charming as to make it a great fortune to have to do with her” (James, 2007: 13). While she drives over to meet Miles, she mentions the weird feelings that she has, “and all the more for an incident that, presenting itself the second evening, had deeply disconcerted me” (James, 2007: 18). Additionally, when the governess asks about his night stroll, Miles answers “Think of me-for a change- BAD!” he answers her questions as “When I’m bad I AM bad! … How otherwise should I have been bad enough?” he asked (James, 2007: 80) showing an adult-like reaction.

Many other interactions between Miles and the governess illustrate the ambiguous corruption showing itself via children’s behavior. Miles' speaking ability and his tendency to use high-level language make their conversations more uncomfortable and uncertain (James, 2007: 104). In the same conversation, when asked about his dismissal from school, Miles uses language too mature for his age, claiming that he said "things that he liked” that others didn't, creating an ambiguous impression about his past (James, 2007: 106). Here, the balance of power between the Governess and Miles is unclear, causing the Governess to question the supposed innocence of this child. This changes the way power and influence are shared in the story, as his conversations with the governess sometimes have a hidden depth, an implied knowledge that suggests the apparitions have corrupted him.

The Governess describes Flora as a symbol of innocence, "The little girl who accompanied Mrs. Grose appeared to me on the spot a creature so charming as to make it a great fortune to have to do with her. She was the most beautiful child I had ever seen" (James, 2007: 13). Flora's interactions with the Governess are filled with childish joy and curiosity. However, there is an underlying tension in Flora’s relationship with the governess considering what remains unsaid. Despite Floras' innocent and gentle nature, the governess firmly believes that Flora is aware of Miss Jessel’s ghostly presence. Strangely enough, Flora never acknowledges this fact. Her silence holds immense power, causing discomfort and anticipation. In chapter nineteen, the Governess notices Flora's suspiciously perfect behavior, calling her an "old, old woman" and remarks that Flora seems to know more than she accepts, highlighting the sense of unease (James, 2007: 115). This is a key moment in the evolution of Flora's character, from apparent innocence to a character that might be

hiding secrets. The look in Flora's eyes as depicted by the governess is "…the singular reticence of our communion was even more marked in the frank look she launched me. 'I'll be hanged,' it said, 'if I'll speak!" (James, 2007: 117). Their conversations seem disconnected as if two separate discussions were taking place simultaneously which lies in ambiguity. In these situations, the Governess and Flora's relationship is defined by silences and unspoken comments that are just as important as actual discussions.

The malevolent spirits haunting Bly, Peter Quint and Miss Jessel represent a certain form of corruption in the story, that is sexual or transgressive corruption. Both have a history of actions – Quint's sexual escapades and Jessel's affair with him. These spirits are seen to be exerting their influence on the children, even after their death. The question of whether the spirits, in the story are real entities or figments of the governess' imagination remains uncertain adding to the atmosphere of moral decay portrayed in the narrative so, the Governess comes to the conclusion that Quint is after Miles. He wants to be seen by him. This ambiguous and sudden feeling occurs at the end of chapter five, just after she learns that Quint is dead. In the beginning of chapter six, her first interaction with Mrs. Grose is as follows: "He was looking for someone else, you say—someone who was not you?" asks Grose, "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!" (James, 2007: 43) Here, it is witnessed that Mrs. Grose is trying to understand Governess' true feelings by asking her calmly just as if she thinks there is something wrong with the Governess' mind. Also, the Governess starts to feel the corruption around the house mainly because of the stories she starts to hear about Miss Jessel and Quint and utters, "It does strike me that my pupils have never mentioned" (James, 2007: 44), which looks suspicious to her. However, Mrs. Grose insists that it wasn't Miles, "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." The Governess answers, "This gave me, straight from my vision of his face—such a face!—a sudden sickness of disgust. "Too free with my boy?" (James, 2007: 44). The sexual corruption shows itself as Mrs. Grose talks more about the mysterious past of Bly house. The corrupting influence of these spirits is evident in how they affect the children. For example, Miles' use of language and his

knowledge about adult matters, which he couldn't have acquired on his own are seen by the governess as indications of their corruption. Such transformation from innocence to corruption due to evil-spirited forces emphasizes how easily purity can be compromised when faced with exterior influences.

In the final chapter of *The Turn of the Screw* (2007), we witness the Governess desperately trying to protect Miles from the presence of Peter Quint. It represents a moment in her battle against what she believes are malevolent forces aiming to corrupt the children. Her reaction is instinctual and driven by a desire to shield Miles from this perceived evil she firmly believes exists. Quint's spectral image appearing at the window intensifies her fears and subsequent actions that are a response to this perceived threat. As she questions Miles about his past wrongdoings, there is an air of desperation in her tone. Her inquiries about stealing at school and his expulsion become a search for truth—to comprehend the extent of Miles corruption fully. The boy's answers evade admission, but hint at unspeakable acts without providing concrete details. His mention of "saying things" he liked that resulted in his dismissal leaves much room for interpretation adding to the haunting atmosphere filled with moral ambiguity and decay (James, 2007: 146).

The Governess's strong determination to confront what she believes is corrupting Miles reaches its climax as she faces off with Quint, both literally and symbolically. In this moment she tries to make Miles acknowledge the presence of the ghost hoping that it will release him (James, 2007: 146). His reaction surprises her; he sees nothing, leaving the governess to question whether the corruption might actually originate from within herself. This ending suggests that the true horror and corruption may not be supernatural in nature, but psychological—emanating from within the governess. Her unwavering protectiveness and extreme actions could be seen as a reflection of her inner struggles and a response to the restrictive societal norms of that time. The tragic outcome with Miles' death leaves us wondering whether the governess saved him from corruption or tragically became an instrument of his downfall (James, 2007: 146). Thus, the ambiguous ending of the novella continues to spark debates about the nature of evil at Bly and how reliable the Governess is as a narrator.

James weaves together supernatural elements leaving readers to ponder the reliability of the governess as a narrator. Are the things she perceives happening or

are they a reflection of her inner struggles? This uncertainty is intensified by the governess' obsessive actions to protect the children from corruption so, actions that ironically lead her towards somewhat mental decline so, the novella goes beyond a ghost story corrupting innocent minds; it illustrates by suggesting that true corruption stems from being influenced by societal norms and moral complexities. As the narrative unfolds, James encourages readers to question what corruption truly means: Is it an external malevolent force preying on innocence or a manifestation of our fears and the darkness lurking within our souls? In *The Turn of the Screw* (2007), corruption is not an external force, but a complex psychological labyrinth. The purity of the children is not merely endangered by beings, but it is deeply intertwined with the inner world of the Governess and the restrictive societal norms of its times. In other words, the profound type of corruption stems from the inner struggles we face. Our anxieties, yearnings, and the pressures imposed by society can twist our perspectives and lead us to engage in behaviors that are just as harmful as any evil force.

As it turns out, the novella captures the concerns of that time through the character of the governess. Her suppressed and complex relationships mirror society's worries about conflicting personal desires and societal norms. James deliberately employs ambiguity to emphasize the concerns challenging societal norms without overtly condemning them. In addition, the governess's actions are driven by her yearning for her employer. Her fixation on protecting the children's innocence and seeking approval from her employer is seen as a manifestation of her fears and unmet desires. Secondly, Miles and Flora carry the weight of society's expectations for purity and innocence reflecting the idealization of childhood. The governess' determination to preserve their purity underscores the pressure on young individuals to uphold innocence. The novella reflects the darkness beneath surface level propriety questioning whether society's moral code safeguards or harms individuals. Thereby, it suggests that rigid repression may not be sustainable or even beneficial. Additionally, the governess embodies women's desires and emotions during this era. Her infatuation with her employer highlights the clash between yearnings and societal expectations. The novella presents uncertainty surrounding the reliability of the governess reflecting Victorian unease towards women who challenged societal norms. Hence, Miss Jessel, for instance, who brings attention to

the theme of women's silenced voices, reflects how Victorian society disregarded women's sufferings.

The story portrays society's tendency to hide rather than confront issues related to domestic violence. The ghostly figures represent the enduring trauma experienced by victims of abuse emphasizing its nature and far-reaching consequences. The book hints at the possibility that the children may have witnessed sexuality, and suggests a disturbing connection between Quint and Miles as well as potentially between Miss Jessel and Flora. In addition, the Governess's perception of the situation plays a role in exploring the theme of corruption. Her fear and repressed feelings for the estates master lead her to believe that the children are being corrupted by the spirits of former employees. The interactions between the governess and the children highlight how corruption can be ambiguous. The governess' desperate efforts to protect Miles from Peter Quint symbolize her struggle against the perceived forces. The novella concludes ambiguously leaving readers questioning whether true horror and corruption are supernatural or psychological in nature. Having said this, we can come up with the idea that the novella goes beyond being a mere ghost story; it further suggests that genuine corruption originates from societal norms and moral complexities. This suggests that corruption is not something out of exterior forces, but rather an intricate interaction, among our internal fears, desires and the pressures of society.

IV. “THE INNOCENTS” (1961)

A. Cultural Anxieties

Henry James’ *The Turn of the Screw* has given rise to multiple interpretations owing to its inherent ambiguity. Diverse perspectives range from considering it merely as a conventional ghost story to analyzing it deeply as an exploration of psychology. Further exploration reveals the Governess's hallucinations are theorized to be rooted in her suppressed sexuality. Alternatively, feminist scholars interpret her experiences as a reflection of women’s struggles within the Victorian society. This array of interpretations contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding the novella while emphasizing its timeless significance and ambiguous nature. “In transfers from a telling to a performance mode, differences of philosophy, religion, national culture, gender, or race can create gaps that need filling by dramaturgical considerations that are as likely to be kinetic and physical as linguistic” (Hutcheon, 2006: 150). When adapting such a text into a performance, the ambiguous elements can create 'gaps' which means that the aspects of the story that are conveyed through the written word, including cultural concerns or character motivations, might not be immediately apparent or easily translatable to a visual or performance medium.

In his work “An Eye for An I: Adapting Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* to the Screen” Recchia underlines:

> Clayton solves the problem by changing the framework within which the story is told. Where James uses a well-defined framework of multiple narrators to complicate the reader's task of evaluating the events that the governess reports, Clayton reduces the narrative frame to such a deceptively simple format that his viewers find themselves unsure of the perspective from which they are witnessing events that occur within the film. The effect is essentially the same - an insoluble ambiguity; but Clayton's method allows him to depict each crucial scene in a manner more consistent with his visual

> medium yet still reasonably faithful to the spirit of James's narrative drama" (1987: 30).

The quote brings attention to a difference, in how the story presented in Henry James's novella compared to Jack Clayton's film adaptation. James' original work employs a framework, with narrators making it challenging for readers to assess the events and determine the reliability of the governess' account. On the other hand, Clayton's film simplifies the narrative structure creating a visually focused and audience centered experience. Despite this change, the cinematic adaptation still captures the ambiguity of James' story while adapting it to suit the medium of film.

*"*The Innocents*"* (1961), directed by Jack Clayton and based on Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) is a film adaptation that captures the essence and atmosphere of the era. Set in an English country estate, the movie stays true to the late 19th century backdrop highlighting the architectural and stylistic elements synonymous with the Victorian period. Nardin states:

> 'The essentially hierarchical plan of English society', James once remarked, "is the great and ever-present fact to the mind of a stranger; there is hardly a detail of life that does not in some degree betray it." The pervasive influence of this hierarchical plan certainly seems to be ever present in *The Turn of the Screw*. The question of the "proper" marriage is the point at which Victorian attitudes about class and sex intersect. Hence it provides an excellent focus for an examination of how well Victorian norms regulating social relationships work in satisfying basic human need (1978: 132)

The statement proves the Victorian background of the novella. With its gothic and mysterious undertones, this adaptation effectively connects visually and narratively to the Victorian source material. By immersing viewers in Bly's architecture and décor, the film serves as a bridge between two eras – preserving the ambiance of the Victorian times while providing a lens to explore anxieties prevalent in both periods. The 1960s witnessed significant societal transformations, particularly shifting gender roles and evolving social dynamics. *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) incorporates these changing sensibilities into its storyline. The film engages with anxieties specific to that decade such as exploring women's evolving roles within society touching upon aspects related to women's liberation movements along with how perceptions of

domesticity and security were influenced by Cold War tensions. The film achieves this by incorporating aspects of the late Victorian era that are deeply connected to ideas of home life family obligations and the mental unraveling of the governess. This contrast between two historical periods provides a foundation for the movie to explore the fears and concerns of both the late Victorian era and the 1960s. As a result, it creates a storyline that resonates with audiences, from both time periods.

The time gap between two adaptations is effective while reflecting the anxieties. As for the cultural anxieties of its own time, the movie *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) effectively portrays the concerns and social norms prevalent during the 1960s. The 1960s were deeply influenced by the Cold War, a period marked by fear and mistrust of unknown forces. This is reflected in the suspenseful atmosphere that permeates the film. The presence of ghosts and the ambiguity surrounding their existence or symbolic meaning can be likened to the fear of hidden threats, unknown threats prevalent in Cold War society. The usage of shadows, whispers and unsettling visual effects further contributes to this climate of apprehension and suspicion. Moreover, the aftermath of World War II left a mark on society characterized by themes such as loss, trauma and a struggle to regain normalcy. In the film, the haunted setting of a mansion becomes a metaphor for the post-war sense of loss, and highlights humanity's need for solace and protection. The behavior exhibited by the children and how their governess responds can also be interpreted as manifestations of societal trauma as well as challenges faced in dealing with the effects of war.

Another concern during the 1960s was that society held conservative views on family dynamics, gender roles and sexuality. *"*The Innocents*"* challenges such issues by exploring the character of the governess. Particularly, initially portrayed as a female figure responsible for caregiving and protection she becomes more assertive and independent throughout the film. Such a striking evolution can be seen as a departure from expectations of women during that time. Also, the 1960s witnessed a growing fascination with theories which is reflected in this film. It interprets the psychological states of its characters especially that of the governess. Her mental state fluctuates between concern and paranoid fear mirroring contemporary interest in psychology during that era. The behavior of the children also contributes to this exploration; Miles' precociousness hints at deeper complexities while Flora's innocence takes on a darker undertone. These elements resonate with society's

fascination with understanding the psyche during that period. To conclude, *"*The Innocents*"* can be seen as a film that reflects the concerns, cultural norms and fascination with human psychology during the 1960s. It does this through its storytelling techniques, character development and visual style.

The Turn of the Screw (2007) has a subtle and ambiguous approach to depict cultural anxieties such as inner conflicts and repressed sexuality of governess (James, 2007: 40) The movie, *"*The Innocents*"* (1961), fills these gaps and silences by emphasizing the forbidden desires and suppressed feelings via visual imagery and subtle performances. Portrayed as a suppressed woman, Miss Giddens tries to deal with transgressive desires while trying to prove her sanity. *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) mirrors this aspect by emphasizing the governess' struggle with repression. Her internal battle to hide her growing attraction towards the master reflects the anxieties surrounding repressed emotions and sexuality during Victorian times. The film maintains a theme of desires and emotional confinement highlighting the tension between societal expectations and personal fulfillment. Everything starts with the Governess and the uncle. In the first scene (a flashforward), Miss Giddens is praying fearfully: "All I want to do is save the children not destroy them." The first line is a powerful start to the concepts of obsession, corruption and innocence. "…They need affection and love and someone to whom they can belong to and who will belong to them" (Clayton, 1961: 04:30). Uncle repeats the sentences from the flashforward scene where Miss Giddens prays. This shows how effective was uncle's words on Miss Giddens. Overall the quote emphasizes the significance of bonds and a sense of belonging, particularly when considering the well-being of children. It brings us attention that love and affection hold in people's lives, young ones and their yearning to establish these connections, with their caregivers and loved ones.

To mirror Miss Giddens' repressed mind, Clayton chose to convey the sexual implications related to the children more overtly than James does in the novella. Firstly, for a child of his age, Miles is disturbingly sexual, toying with, flattering, and gazing his Governess. The sense of sexual tension is more on the surface in the scenes with Miss Giddens and Miles. These taboo attractions suggest a deeper connection among the occurances. For example, Miles tells Miss Giddens to kiss him goodnight and kisses her on the lips as she tucks him into bed after he has increased her paranoia by going nighttime strolling in the garden for no apparent reason.

Uncomfortably, she does not pull away; the kiss lasts too long (Clayton, 1961: 17:30).. The first apparition on top of the castle is symbolic in this way. Miss Giddens finds Miles there instead of a man, and Miles tells her, "She says you make little groans and moans all night" (Clayton, 1961: 07:30). This can be interpreted either as a childish ignorance, or Miss Giddens is trying to rationalize her feelings towards a child by paralleling him with Quint. What the children are doing can be simply evaluated as childish games, but the way they speak, act or the tone in words are viable reasons to get suspicious, especially for Miss Giddens. For example, before Miss Jessel's apparition down by the lake, Flora was singing the "*Oh willow I die"* just like when she suddenly disappears from the room, Miles was playing the same song on the piano. Such clues keep the secret communication between the children more ambiguous along with the power of their discourse. Thus, it is possible to state that the silent communication between the children in the novella is filled by a disturbing reaction.

In *"*The Innocents*"* (1961), the ghosts represent Victorian anxieties and Miss Giddens' repressed nature. The nuanced narrative in the book still shows this suppressed sexuality with a high level of ambiguity, but in the film, these presences, especially Quint, openly reflect Miss Gidden's oppressed nature and hidden desires. In the first apparition on top of the castle, the ghost's face is not clear; it is just a siluette. After that, the scene with hide and seek is crucial to answer the question of 'Are the ghosts real?'. Miss Giddens finds a picture of a man in a music box. After a few minutes, she sees the ghost of that man on the window. This time, he has a face (Clayton, 1961: 07:30). He is Peter Quint, the master's valet, as it is on the picture, and, now, on the window. This shows that the ghosts are probably the products of her mind. After the scene where Miss Jessel appears in the schoolroom, Miss Giddens is sure that the children are possessed by these spirits. "And hungry. Hungry for him. For his arms and his lips. But she can only reach him- they can only reach each other by entering the souls of the children and possessing them" (Clayton, 1961: 59:30) is the way she describes the reason why these spirits are after children. She believes that the only way to get rid of them is to make children confess that their souls are haunted by Quint's ghost.

As Griggs states, "Clayton's exploration of the cultural anxieties embedded within his narrative is realized in the very different medium of film and it is his

manipulation of screen space that takes us into territories that expand rather than replicate the story" (2016: 147). The quote suggests that in his film, director goes beyond simply retelling *The Turn of the Screw*. Instead, he uses the capabilities of film to explore the cultural and psychological anxieties present in the story like sexual repression and Victorian societal roles. Clayton's use of cinematic techniques such as visual composition and sound design adds new layers and depth to the narrative, offering viewers to fulfill the gaps of the original novella.

Another concern during the late Victorian period was women's limited roles and lack of power within society. Women were frequently confined to responsibilities and had little autonomy. *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) captures this anxiety by portraying a Governess who finds herself in a household, where she lacks authority or control. Her struggle to assert herself and safeguard the children becomes symbolic of societal issues in women's limited agency. The film underlines how women faced situations during this era while also resonating with contemporary audiences through its depiction of her journey, towards independence and suffrage. In the film, Miss Giddens personifies differently as she transitions between duties as a caring guardian, an obsessive detective, and a distressed woman facing the eerie setting of Bly Manor. This character comes to life on-screen by means of visual language integrated with her spoken words, internal thoughts, and nonverbal cues. As she becomes consumed by alleged hauntings, her idyllic days at Bly, filled with innocence and hope, progressively transform into a gloomy narrative marked with cultural anxiety. This demonstrates how film adaptations can expand upon and deepen the themes of their source material as well as filling the silences of the novella.

Mrs. Grose, while initially portrayed as an unassuming and uneducated housekeeper in James' novella, mainly serves as a conduit for the information regarding Peter Quint and Miss Jessel—the former Governess and valet. The inner conflicts or repressed emotions of Mrs. Grose are displayed in the original story and its adaptations. In the movie, denial and condonation are her prominent reactions when unexpected things happen. For example, Mrs. Grose tries to stop Miss Giddens from going to the local vicar because she is afraid that "it might cause talk, a scandal" (Clayton, 1961: 58:55) referencing the repressing nature of society and the fear of leaving her comfort zone. Mrs. Grose wants to oversee the problems related

to school. She feels comforted when Miss Giddens decides not to make a big deal out of it not to "spoil his homecoming" (1961: 30:33). Mrs. Grose explains the close relationship between Miles and Quint to Miss Giddens. She utters, "It made me sick to see Miles trotting after him like a little dog" (Clayton, 1961: 44:33) in one of the rare times she actually gives out information. Initially portrayed as both caring and responsible in her duties as housekeeper of the manor, Mrs. Grose establishes a strong bond with the children, Miles and Flora, assuming a motherly role that offers them protection in unsettling surroundings. However, as the story progresses, Mrs. Grose's demeanor shifts noticeably, especially with Miss Giddens. She intentionally avoids discussing the mansions' grim history and provides evasive responses when confronted about potential supernatural happenings. This lends her character a sense of mystery and adds to the overall intrigue of the movie.

Mrs. Grose's way of depicting the love between Miss Jessel and Quint is a clue that there was something demeaning in that affair especially with the woman. "Love? Oh, I suppose that's what she called it, but it was more like a sickness, a fever that leaves the body burned out and dry" and she keeps explaining their relationship (Clayton, 1961: 57:15). According to Mrs. Grose, she was prepared to endure any kind of brutality; "She would stare at him as though she craved a smack if he delivered one. With absolutely no sense of either pride or shame. She would get down on her hands and knees to approach him. And he was making fun of her. His laughter was so vicious" (Clayton, 1961: 58:25). The quote presents a faceted perspective, on the experiences of women in *"*The Innocents*"* (1961). It offers a view of a character's potentially agitated love affair challenging the idea that women are passive. The quote also presents love as harmful, deviating from romantic narratives and questioning stereotypes that depict women primarily as nurturing and self-sacrificing.

To conclude, *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) presents Miss Giddens as a governess who grapples with the sexual norms of the era. At the beginning of the film, she densely prays for the safety and innocence of the children under her care and showcases her concern for their well-being. Clayton portrays the tension and forbidden attractions particularly through Miles, which adds depth to the underlying themes of the novella. Also, the apparitions of Quint embody anxieties and may be interpreted as manifestations of Miss Giddens suppressed desires. These spectral

figures blur the line between reality and the supernatural, suggesting a link to the unsettling behavior exhibited by the children. The movie reflects upon women's autonomy during that time period by highlighting Miss Giddens lack of authority at Bly Manor. Mrs. Grose's character further emphasizes this repression as her denial and compliance.

B. Domestic Violence

The Turn of the Screw (2007) by Henry James and *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) directed by Jack Clayton are renowned for their exploration of horror and the supernatural. They both contain elements that can be interpreted as themes related to psychological and emotional abuse which accounts as domestic violence. In *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) the main character, who is a Governess, undergoes a torment, as she believes, she is shielding the children from malevolent spirits. Her gradual descent into obsession can be seen as a form of manipulation or abuse affecting her relationship with her charges. In *"*The Innocents*"* (1961), however, the governess's mental state and her connection with the children play a bigger role in establishing an eerie atmosphere.

The ambiguity surrounding the events in both *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) and *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) contributes to the tension and allows for different interpretations regarding the nature of abuse. Both the novella and the film maintain an element of uncertainty about whether supernatural events are genuine or mere products of their protagonists disturbed minds. First of all, Flora and Miles display behavior that Miss Giddens finds peculiar and sinister. Their actions, which she views as malicious, contribute to her growing sense of unease and anxiety. Weird and creepy behaviors of children can be a sign of their past abuse. The scene where Flora gets lost and Miss Giddens finds her by the lake. Miss Giddens is not supposed to talk about Jessel and Quint in front of the children. Instead, she ignores this warning by Mrs Grose and asks Flora if she sees Miss Jessel's ghost. Frightened, little Flora screams and cries, while insisting she doesn't see anything. Miss Giddens' strong belief in corruption scares the little girl. Nobody else can see the ghosts. In the church scene, the corruption of children is unbearable anymore, and she tells Mrs Grose that she wants to speak to the master. Miss Giddens sees Flora running around the cemetery, finds Miss Jessel's grave and sees the flowers that

Flora likes and utters “Flora…” worriedly (Clayton, 1961: 01:03:12). This scene can be accounted as a climax for Miss Giddens’ doubts and also illustrates the thin line between innocence and corruption. After reading the letter from school, Miss Giddens is worried about Miles and his power to “…contaminate…to corrupt” (Clayton, 1961: 38:03). These words are powerful enough to see Miss Giddens’ obsession about purity. One of the reasons for that is the weird behaviour of children. For example, in the scene with Flora’s pretend birthday party, Miles reads a poem:

> …Gone is my lord, and the grave is his prison.
>
> What shall I say when he knocks on my door?
>
> What shall I say when his feet enter sofly
>
> Leaving the marks of his grave on my floor?
>
> … Welcome, my lord (Clayton, 1961: 47:00).

This creeps only Miss Giddens, while Mrs. Grose watches him amazed. A child of his age can spell this kind of a poem by heart leaving the viewers wondering about his lord who obviously visits him by leaving the marks of his grave. Miss Giddens becomes increasingly worried and anxious as she believes that supernatural forces are influencing the children and the estate. Her emotional state deteriorates as she becomes more obsessed with safeguarding the children from what she perceives as dangers. Taking on the responsibility, Miss Giddens tries to protect the children by attempting to control their behavior. While this can be seen as a form of domestic violence towards children, it is driven by her belief that she is acting in their interests.

Miss Giddens discovers the fate of her predecessor, Miss Jessel and her relationship with another employee named Peter Quint. The movie implies that the children may have witnessed Jessel and Quint’s explicit sexuality, as an implication of domestic violence. The film utilizes this exposure to highlight the tension, between norms and the hidden truths that lie beneath society’s surface. The narrative focuses on how these children gain an understanding of the world around them. Mrs. Grose also witnessed their sexual relationship in some of the rooms in the daylight. She is not sure if the children saw them, and Miss Giddens is terrified of the things she learns about Jessel and Quint. Grose also implies that these people might have used the children, but Miss Giddens is sure that they are still being used. When

children witness the relationship between two adults it introduces the concept of being exposed to adult experiences and behavior at an early age. This exposure can be mentally distressing for children in a society that heavily emphasized the importance of innocence and purity during childhood. For example, Miss Giddens starts to hear the sounds of two lovers having secret affair. “The children are watching” or “Knock before you enter!” (Clayton, 1961: 01:11:30) implicating that the children might have witnessed their affair. These ghostly and ambiguous sounds leave both Miss Giddens and the audience at a place which questions the children’s safety and the possibility of their past abuse inside their own house. Also, in the scene with the ghost on the tower, Miles tells her, “She says you make little groans and moans all night” (Clayton, 1961: 40) that proves the relationship between children and the excessive knowledge they have about sexual discourse happening around them. Even if the children do not fully grasp the nature of what they've seen it can still shape their perception of relationships, sexuality and power dynamics. Such early exposure has the potential to create confusion, fear or even normalize behavior. The portrayal of adults’ sexuality symbolizes that the children are no longer shielded from realities in a world that should protect them. By embracing multiple viewpoints, the story beckons readers to confront the unsettling implications of the characters' experiences. This open interpretation fills the silence about children’s past abuse which is implied in the novella.

Miss Giddens finds herself alone with the children in a remote location. This isolation, coupled with her responsibility as their guardian creates a sense of control. The way she perceives threats to the children can be seen as a form of exerting control or providing protection. The estate is located in a countryside away from the bustling city life of the late Victorian era. This physical seclusion not contributes to the ambiguous ambiance of the film and also isolates the characters from the outside world. It creates a feeling of being confined as if the estate itself is a world of its own. Due to this isolation, Flora and Miles have limited exposure to the world. Their lives mainly revolve around the estate, Miss Giddens and a few household members. The absence of influences like friends, extended family or other authority figures makes Miss Giddens their primary figure and this greatly impacts their lives. Miss Giddens does not only act as their governess, but also serves as their sole connection to adulthood. Her role as their guardian and educator becomes all-encompassing in

this environment. This isolation intensifies her sense of responsibility, towards ensuring the children's well-being. In her mind, she believes that she alone possesses the ability to protect them from both supernatural threats. As these influences present themselves, Miss Giddens gains significant control over shaping the children's environment. She determines their schedules, their socializing and even their knowledge about the history of the estate and the unfortunate incidents that occurred there. The fact that there are no figures of authority further emphasizes her role as the one in control of their existence.

It's worth noting that the novella and the movie explore psychological and emotional aspects that can be interpreted as forms of abuse or manipulation. The horror in both the novella and film arises from the uncertainty surrounding whether malevolent spirits genuinely pose a threat to the children or if it is merely a distortion in perception, by the protagonists. *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) captures the depiction of domestic violence in the novella, which can be interpreted in various ways. In the movie, Deborah Kerr portrays a governess who is responsible for the care of two children, Miles and Flora. Her efforts to establish authority over them reflect the psychological aspects commonly associated with domestic violence. The use of manipulation, isolation and her strong belief that she must shield the children from unseen dangers all serve as symbols of dynamics present in cases of domestic violence. Through narrative techniques, the film creates a gripping and oppressive atmosphere within the household. The audience is able to witness the turmoil experienced by the characters as well as witness how their relationships deteriorate within this domestic setting—a powerful portrayal that effectively conveys domestic violence as an integral part of the broader narrative.

C. Corruption

Clayton's movie *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) interprets the concept of moral decay in line with the cultural fears and instances of domestic abuse that lead to the inevitable corruption depicted in the story. As the governess' mental instability grows and her fixation on shielding the children from perceived evil forces deepens the theme of corruption becomes more prominent. The film maintains an air of uncertainty leaving viewers to ponder whether this corruption is supernatural or a

result of the governess' deteriorating state of mind. This ambiguity, which is central to the novella, reflects the uncertainties during the late Victorian era and the inherent anxieties associated with domestic life. The theme of corruption encompassing both moral and psychological aspects and emerges as a significant thread that connects the film to its literary origins while illustrating how profoundly these experiences impact the characters' lives.

Miss Giddens is trying too hard to save children's purity due to her imaginative mind. She strongly believes that the children are possessed and corrupted by evil spirits. The relationship between Miss Giddens and children makes children look suspicious and makes the story more ambiguous while questioning the purity of them. The question of purity sometimes shows itself when the children suddenly stop talking and pretend they do not hear Miss Giddens. After the letter from Miles' school, Miss Giddens is shocked by Flora's intuition, but Flora does not even answer her. In addition, Miles never answers the questions about school, and instead, he changes the subject quickly to how beautiful Miss Giddens is to become a Governess (Clayton, 1961: 15:20). Flora's brave attitude toward darkness and her words about death interprets the corruption that their innocent souls have gone through. Flora's words about what happens after death cripple Miss Giddens leaving her speechless, but shocked; "Wouldn't Lord just leave me here to walk around? Isn't that what happens to some people?" (Clayton, 1961: 17:20). As the story unfolds, the characters' psychological states gradually deteriorate, causing them to become more disturbed and paranoid; so, the fear of being abandoned and left to wander can be interpreted as a reflection of their declining well-being as it is displayed in the adaptation.

Miss Giddens is too afraid of corrupting the children; so, she reads into their words and actions. On one side, the children's behavior supports this idea when Miles talks like an older person than his age, talking with sexual undertones, and Flora being ignorant of certain questions. Thus, we can assess that such examples empower the idea of corruption as it is clarified in the film. On the other side, these nuances are highlighted by the director. When children utter certain words, for example, Miss Giddens pauses or looks terrified or keeps asking the same questions with big gestures which end up frightening the kids and making them behave even

stranger. We see that the filmmaker strengthens such images although they are left vague in the source text. After they stay alone with Miles, Miss Giddens starts questioning him slowly. When Miles happily says, “We’ve got the whole house to ourselves”, Miss Giddens answers, “More or less. There are still the others” (Clayton, 1961: 01:29:50), so this might be terrifying for the child who knows that the house is empty. However, Miles’ reaction is the opposite of what is expected from a child. He skillfully changes subject to Flora’s health. Flora and Miles differs significantly from how they are in the original text. In James' writing, the children keep an air of ambiguity, leaving questions about their innocence unanswered due to their odd behavior and possible connections with supernatural beings; but in Clayton’s version, this ambiguous gap is filled with adult-like children.

The movie adaptation shifts off track by enhancing the characters, displaying a more obvious instance of corruption brought on by Miss Jessel and Peter Quint’s ghostly presence. Flora's seemingly innocent melodies and rhymes acquire a distressing undertone, suggesting that she is uncomfortably familiar with the frustrating history of the mansion. In contrast, Miles displays unsettlingly mature behavior coupled with eloquence that betrays his young age - possibly influenced by the deceased valet Peter Quint. For example, when Mrs. Grose talks about Quint and the things happened to Miss Jessel, she says that Miss Jessel used to be very happy but “…she changed. It was hard to believe, her being an educated young lady, and Quint being, well, what he was.” (Clayton, 1961: 49:20). According to Mrs. Grose, this change in Miss Jessel’s character can be seen as a form of corruption. Her innocence and happiness were gradually eroded by her relationship with Quint, indicating that their affair had an impact on her. Mrs. Grose portrays Quint as a figure who brought harm and had an influence on those around him, particularly Miss Jessel. This suggests that he played a role in corrupting innocence and morality within the estate. When Miss Giddens asks what she means by that, Mrs. Grose suddenly ends talking by saying, “There is no point in telling tales of what’s over and done with” (Clayton, 1961: 50:22). Mrs. Grose’s reluctance to go deeper into the past as evidenced by her statement shows her desire to avoid confronting the disturbing aspects of history. This avoidance contributes to the atmosphere of secrecy and hidden corruption within the narrative. Then, Miss Giddens responds, “Over and done with. Yes, but is it?” which shows her suspicion that the past’s corruption might

still have lasting impacts in the present (Clayton, 1961: 49:20 which implies that the consequences of Miss Jessel and Quint's affair continue to affect the events in the movie contributing to the theme of corruption.

The central theme of corruption in the film revolves around the loss of purity. Miss Giddens tells Mrs. Grose to take Flora to her uncle and leave her alone with Miles. Miss Giddens insistently thinks that Miles wants to speak and this chance should be given. Mrs. Grose utters, "you'd know that waking a child can sometimes be worse than any bad dream. It's the shock. And then being suddenly deprived" (Clayton, 1961: 01:25:30). Mrs. Grose is hinting at the notion that abruptly awakening a child from sleep can be distressing for them. The jolt of being pulled out of a dream can be unsettling for young children, and this symbolizes disturbing the child's innocence. Mrs. Grose's statement emphasizes the idea that any disruption to a child's sleep can disturb potentially contributing to their loss of innocence. In addition, the mention of "being deprived" implies that the child is being deprived of the sanctuary of their dreams and the uninterrupted sleep that represents purity and innocence. Deprivation metaphorically represents influences and experiences that may disrupt a child's innocence and lead to corruption. For instance, in the scene which Mrs. Grose takes off for London, Miss Giddens says, "And, Mrs. Grose, please wait till you see Miles again before you judge me" (Clayton, 1961: 01:27:00) which expresses her wish for Mrs. Grose to reserve judgment until she has the opportunity to explain or present her side of the story. This implies that Miss Giddens may feel unfairly criticized for her actions. On the other hand, Miles, as a symbol of corruption, becomes intertwined with the theme. Miss Giddens might be suggesting that there is more to Miles' behavior and the corruption motif than what meets the eye. Then, Mrs. Grose replies "I can't judge you, miss. A body can only judge themselves" (Clayton, 1961: 01:27:02). Mrs. Grose's remark regarding self-judgment correlates with the theme of corruption in the film. The characters' grapple with society's expectations and psychological distress which can be interpreted as self-corruption.

The way Miss Giddens is talking to Miles is like she is talking with an adult about a very serious life-threatening matter as she is shouting and screaming. She is asking about school, letter, and 'the others'. As Miles begins to sweat and shake, loses his mature self and becomes a kid again screaming "I haven't done anything"

(Clayton, 1961: 01:30:00). Finally, Miles confesses that he said things at school, and sometimes he hurt things. He mentions he hears screaming things that he cannot name at night, and the school masters think that he is frightening the other boys too. However, when Miss Giddens asks about these screams and implied apparitions, Miles claims that he makes them up which is an expected child behavior. Miss Giddens keeps questioning him hysterically and Miles starts yelling and cursing at the same time with Quint's apparition on the window behind him. Miles utters "You're afraid you might be mad" and he thinks that's why she keeps asking these questions. However, Miles is tough, he is "not a baby like Flora" and he is aware that she is trying to make him admit something that isn't true. He continues "You think you can run to my uncle with lot of lies but he won't believe you, not when I tell him what you are- a damned hussy, a damned dirty-minded hag!" (Clayton, 1961: 01:36:00) with the ghost behind him, laughing at the end, and at the same time with him. Miss Giddens utters, "You are safe, you are free. I have you, he's lost you forever" and she kisses him on the lips (Clayton, 1961: 01:40:00). The quote could suggest that Miss Giddens believes they have safeguarded or shielded another character from a corrupting influence or negative experience. The feeling of safety and liberation might be a reaction to the perceived threat of losing one's innocence. It also implies a power dynamic where one character asserts that they have secured the affection and protection of the other. In relation to corruption, this can be interpreted as a display of control. The phrase "he's lost you" suggests that Quint has already lost Miles, indicating a loss of innocence or purity. Corruption often involves the erosion of innocence and this may reflect Miss Giddens' effort to counteract or reverse that loss. Moreover, the act of kissing on the lips may symbolize a connection between the characters. In terms of corruption, it can represent vulnerability and susceptibility to corruption, within relationships. The last interaction between them led little Miles to death. Two corrupted emotions Miss Giddens seems to have are both visible in this narrative; first, her strong belief in corruption of innocence and the sexual undertone in their relationship.

As for fidelity, in examining *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) which is based on Henry James novella *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) from the perspective of adaptation theory and fidelity to the original work, we come across a captivating interplay between staying true to the source material and incorporating creative

deviations for cinematic expression. Jack Clayton, the director, not only stays loyal to James' thematic core but also innovatively interprets and presents it in a way that suits the medium of film. One crucial aspect of adaptation theory revolves around striking a balance between honoring the essence of the piece (fidelity) and reimagining it for a new medium and audience. *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) successfully achieves this by preserving themes from the novella – such as the uncertainty in perception, psychological complexities within characters and a gothic atmosphere. Notably, the film effectively captures anxieties prevalent during Victorian times, particularly those related to repression, sexuality and women's roles. This is evident in how Miss Giddens portrayed as a governes. While James' novella subtly explores her conflicts and hidden desires with ambiguity, Clayton's film brings these aspects into sharper focus through visual storytelling and impactful performances. As such, it maintains fidelity to James work while emphasizing elements that can be directly conveyed through visuals – an essential trait of cinema.

Moreover, the film adjusts the structure of the narrative to suit its medium. While James' novella presents a narrative framework with various narrators resulting in a challenging and subjective reading experience, the film simplifies this structure. However, this alteration does not diminish the ambiguity of the story. Instead, it aims to make the narrative more accessible to the audience while preserving the essence of the work. This aspect is crucial when adapting a story across media platforms. In terms of setting and atmosphere, the film demonstrates fidelity. The Victorian backdrop along with its elements in depicting a country estate and its overall tone closely aligns with James' descriptions in his novella. By capturing this eerie and oppressive ambiance through representation, it successfully immerses viewers into an unsettling atmosphere just as James did through his descriptive prose. Therefore, it maintains fidelity to both setting and mood as portrayed in the novella. However, *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) also diverges creatively by presenting explicit depictions of psychological and sexual undertones. This divergence should not be seen as straying from fidelity but rather as an expansion upon themes present in James' novella that have been adapted for cinematic storytelling. For example, the movie portrays the children's behavior and their interactions with the governess. It subtly hints at underlying tensions, which adds to the unsettling nature of the story and emphasizes themes of repression and forbidden desires more prominently than in the original

novella. To sum up, *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) stays true to *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) while using visual storytelling to illustrate the themes. Hence, it shows that being faithful in an adaptation doesn't necessarily mean replicating everything, but, rather capturing its essence while filling the gaps of the original text.

V. THE TURN OF THE SCREW (2009)

The 2009 television adaptation of *The Turn of the Screw* establishes a connection to Henry James' famous work. Keeping the title the same as the novella, the BBC presented this adaptation as a Christmas broadcast, emphasizing its appeal as a captivating ghost story for adult audiences. Ben Stephenson, the BBC Controller of Drama, highlighted this aspect by mentioning, "Christmas wouldn't be a Christmas without a ghost story for adults to watch in front of the fire" (BBC Press Release, 2010). The adaptation aimed to evoke a Victorian family setting, similar to what James initially used to in the novella.

In the novella, the themes are subtle, requiring further clarification in interpretation. The 2009 film adaptation, by utilizing visual storytelling and modern filmmaking techniques, brings these themes of cultural anxieties, domestic violence and corruption into sharper focus to resonate with contemporary audiences. This involves depicting societal pressures or conflicts inherent in the story more explicitly. In essence, the film adaptation is seen as capable of 'filling the gaps' by taking the implications and subtleties of the original text and making them more explicit or examining them in a new light, thereby potentially offering a more explicit perspective on the novella's themes.

As for the time gap between adaptations and cultural anxieties of their respective times, the years following the 9/11 attacks had an impact on society influencing various aspects of culture including films. People experienced a sense of vulnerability and fear towards unseen threats. The movie captures this sentiment by depicting apparitions and an atmosphere of danger. These ghosts can be interpreted as symbols for those threats creating an ambiance of uncertainty and fear. The Governess's growing fear towards the supernatural elements in the house mirror society's apprehension of the unknown.

By 2009, societal views on gender roles and sexuality had evolved significantly. The film adapts to these changes by presenting its characters in an

intricate manner particularly focusing on the Governess. Unlike the versions where she might have been portrayed as naive or hysterical, the 2009 adaptation presents her as a multi-dimensional character with depth and agency. This is evident in her interactions and relationships, where her character transcends gender roles to become a symbol of strength and complexity. Also, during this period, there was an increasing recognition and comprehension of mental health issues. Thus, the filmmaker seems to utilize such medical progress to clarify the ambiguity and fill the gap of unclarity as it is included in the novella. For instance, the film reflects this by exploring the state of the Governess than simply portraying her as a victim of circumstances losing her sanity; the movie presents a more nuanced perspective which is differently handled. It reflects her mental state with empathy and sophistication acknowledging the complex psychology of her character. Thus, we can interpret it as a departure from adaptations that may have oversimplified mental health.

Utilizing cinematography and visual effects in the 2009 adaptation enhances the film's ability to convey these themes effectively. For instance, the use of lighting, camera angles and sound design all create an atmosphere of foreboding and unease, reflecting the anxieties of that time. The film incorporates references and sets that reflect its era, including the design of settings, costumes, and dialogue, which resonate with the experiences and expectations of contemporary audiences. It also portrays events and societal norms relevant to the early 21st century, anchoring the story firmly in its time. These elements together create a film that adapts a classic story and also reflects the period in which it was made. It showcases how storytelling evolves in response to societal changes and concerns.

The novella's psychological aspect is applied in a far more direct manner than in *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) since the story starts in a psychiatric hospital. This scene is after the incident in which she is decided insane. While this kills some of the ambiguity in the beginning, her strong attitude, the flashbacks, and the layered narrative will bring the ambiguity back to the story. The multiple framework of the narrative is one of the backbones for maintaining ambiguity in James' novella. The narrative is handed over to others by flashbacks from Carla and Mrs. Grose and a male gaze is added to the narrative by adding Dr. Fisher. However, as we go back and forth, we keep undecided about the Governess's state of mind. Is she really

insane or falsely accused of murdering a child? Does Dr. Fisher really see the devil at the end, or is it just the Governess's imagination? Is he just naive enough to be manipulated because of his obvious attraction to the governess? To answer such questions related to ambiguity, Hutcheon states, "It obviously depends on the individual director's ability to provoke our imaginations, to move us to fill in the gap" (2006: 76) as she describes the responsibility of the director when adapting the gaps of the original text.

A. Cultural Anxieties

Cultural anxieties such as repressed desires and implied transgressive sexuality along with Victorian morality in this adaptation are going to shape the story once again. Shifting from the late 1890s to post First World War, "The Turn of the Screw" (2009) aligns with the fears and anxieties embedded in James' text – "fears of sexual transgression and decaying Empire – to those of a society coming to terms with the horrors of war" (Griggs, 2016: 156). What is inferred in the novella and *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) becomes a solid background as time and place in Fywell's adaptation. "Despite a distinct emphasis upon the presence of supernatural evil in this adaptation, director Tim Fywell and scriptwriter Sandy Welch attempt to retain a sense of the novella's capacity to address the unspoken fears and anxieties that permeate society, whether Victorian, Edwardian, or contemporary (Griggs, 2016: 156).

The foremost implication of repression embedded in both James' tale and Clayton's film is the sexual tension between the Governess and the uncle. Innocence is one of the core features of James' Governess. Ann has the same features in the beginning, but she evolves as the story progresses. However, at their first meeting with the uncle, he says, "I don't need Bly, for now anyway. I may need it in the future, of course, when I marry" (Fywell, 2009: 04:25), emphasizing on these qualities, trying to manipulate her. As soon as he utters these words, the Governess's eyes sparkle and a bell-like sound chimes. He continues, "I will come and visit to inspect what you do" by touching her hand (Fywell, 2009: 5:00). Ann isn't afraid of

accepting his charm, and she dreams about him and she even sees an oasis of him at Bly since she is seen fixated on him. Moreover, she utters, “The master would be so proud of me” when she is first endorsed by another male, Miles (Fywell, 2009: 35:00).

The transgressive desires and child sexuality are explored here in a more disturbing manner than in *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) and *“*The Innocents*”* (1961). One of the servants, Carla, gives out information about “Filthy, dirty, evil things” that Quint and Master got up to (Fywell, 2009: 37:42) in her flashback - which is filtered through Ann’s perspective- that layers the narrative and adds to the ambiguity. As she talks about Quint’s violence and constant rape, Carla adds, “and there were some that liked it”, she emphasizes on transgressive sex between Jessel and Quint. (Fywell, 2009: 28:50). She makes her believe that Quint came for seducing “the new governess” and possess master Miles. This idea disturbs the Governess much. Especially after forming this idea, she starts to see more explicit and sexual images. For example, after the first Jessel apparition on the lake, Ann has a dream about Jessel and Quint having sex passionately, ending with Jessel’s painful scream (Fywell, 2009: 42:15) hinting on the figments of Ann’s mindset. When Dr. Fisher asks about Jessel and Quint, Ann defines their reason to come back as “To live through them. To be together again. Men will be men and women will be women, don’t you know that yet?” implying on their sins with a disgusted look on her face (Fywell, 2009: 36:47). The implied transgressive sexuality in the novella is vague; whereas, it is an open interpretation in 2009 adaptation.

During the era, which spanned from the 1870s to the early 1900s, women primarily held domestic roles as society believed in the concept of separate spheres. Although there were some opportunities to women, their career options were often limited and mostly revolved around teaching or nursing. Influential female writers emerged in this period through their insistent feminist voices and allegations that lead the ways in female rights by challenging norms and expectations. Women were bound by codes that dictated their behavior and even influenced their fashion choices. In “The Turn of the Screw” (2009), the narrative is controlled by the male hands due to Welch’s way of keeping the novella’s multiple framework by adding Dr Fisher and other male doctors. Fisher’s colleague says, “A female mind is less of a challenge. They don’t have anything to do all day so they imagine all kinds of

things” hinting on women’s position in society (Fywell, 2009: 06:50). However, at one conversation with Dr. Fisher, when she is asked if she is afraid of being corrupted, she responds, “I am not some hysterical female who only thinks of men” which challenges the initial judgement on her by putting her in a psychiatric hospital. Additionally, when faced with the corruption, Ann states, “Education was the only weapon I could think of” (Fywell, 2009: 57:37). Ann’s use of the word "weapon" suggests that she sees education not as a way to gain knowledge, but as a powerful tool to create change and overcome obstacles. This viewpoint could indicate that the character believes in the transformative and empowering nature of education, using it to navigate challenges in the story.

The term "Ophelia-like suicide" refers to a form of self-inflicted death that resembles the tragic fate of Ophelia, a character, in "Hamlet." Ophelia, driven to madness by the circumstances surrounding her, meets her demise by drowning in a stream. Her death is often interpreted as a symbol of innocence lost and the destructive consequences of societal expectations and personal relationships. “Ophelia-like suicide” is attributed to Jessel in this adaptation of the novella. She is pregnant and drowns herself at the lake due to her painful love towards the valet, Quint (Griggs, 2016: 156). Further, at an apparition on the lake, Ann shouts at Flora saying “Is that who you want to be with? Do you want to be a woman just like her?” (Fywell, 2009: 1:10:12). The scene is better clarified here to lighten the ambiguity inherent in the novella. Thus, we can assess that the director incorporates the gap through adaptation technique as indicated by Hutcheon’s theory.

The ambiguity surrounding Ann’s character is seen as the story progresses. At the beginning, the Governess declares herself as “the captain of the ship” in “a world of women cast adrift” subtly hinting the after-war crisis. However, in the middle of the story, where nobody believes her about the apparitions and their motives, she says that she did “What women always do, I gave in of course” and adds “But like women also do, I was going to watch and wait. (Fywell, 2009: 53:08). Ann has the naivety and innocence of a respectable Victorian woman, yet has the power and ambition of a woman who tries to deal with post-war anxieties in society. As soon as she realizes that the master is never coming and they will never become a “family”, she loses interest in him, and she becomes more decisive and self-assured, “I didn’t care anymore that the Master would be disappointed” in order to protect the children

from evil (Fywell, 2009: 1:01:13). The manipulative nature of the master does not help with the anxieties Ann has as a woman. As soon as he realizes that she is vulnerable, the master says, “But there are so many women, beautiful, accomplished, virtuous. How can one choose?” in a flirtatious way, but then his mood suddenly changes and he says, “You’re not the nervous sort are you? Some girls are” quite rigorously (Fywell, 2009: 04:27). Then, he behaves softly again. This is a male type tactic to manipulate the Governess and takes advantage of her. In this scene, we can interpret it as an attempt to fill the gaps of silence as it is underlined in the novella, in the characterization of the uncle.

Not only the male hands, “… Here are also moments when the narrative is handed over to others within her story world: flashbacks from Carla and Mrs Grose as well as from Ann present a backstory that serves to explicate matters that in the novella are explored through ambiguity and inference” (Griggs, 2016: 157-158). In James' novella, many elements of the story, especially those relating to the history and motivations of characters like Quint, Jessel, and even the children, are left ambiguous. The film adaptation diverges from the novella by using a narrative structure that involves multiple perspectives and flashbacks as required by cinematography techniques. This approach fills in some of the narrative gaps and ambiguities that are present in the original text. Hence, the women; Carla, Mrs. Grose and Ann are seen to transform into voices for the silenced women of the novella, who render the vague notions more clear through 2009 film adaptation. Otherwise, for these female characters, the motif of voiceless women would stay equally ambiguous even in the adaptation.

B. Domestic Violence

About domestic violence during this time, children were frequently affected indirectly by this pervasive issue. The presence of violence within households had negative consequences for children who either witnessed or experienced abuse. Society’s emphasis on the importance of home and women’s responsibilities sometimes created an environment of silence, making it challenging for children to

seek help. Children raised in homes where domestic violence occurred faced psychological trauma, which significantly impacted their overall well-being. Their needs and experiences were often overlooked. The social stigma surrounding family matters and insufficient legal protection made it more difficult for these children to overcome their challenges. The abusive childhood of Ann is an example of domestic violence in "The Turn of the Screw" (2009). Her father is a parson who constantly threatens and scares her with big expectations on her religious entity and on her quest for fighting the evil. She rediscovers herself at Bly, "I thought I wasn't strong enough to be a warrior. At Bly, I discovered that I was" (Fywell, 2009: 1:06:29). Even though she is overwhelmed by her father's expectations, Ann emerges as a strong, brave and logical woman who devotes herself to saving the children.

There are explicit clues about the fact that children are neglected and abused in this adaptation of the original novella. Everything starts after the master leaves for London and leaves Quint at Bly in charge. Carla, the servant, tells Ann about Quint's violence and rape in Bly house. Since "the war took all the men" in the house, female servants were stuck with Quint at home without any protection from his violence and rape (Fywell, 2009: 28:45). As Griggs states, "Carla's flashback recount of the violence and sexual debauchery of not only Quint, but the master of Bly spells out the very real evil that is merely hinted at in both the novella and Clayton's "The Innocents" (2016: 158). In the novella, much of the darker elements, particularly those related to the characters Quint and the master of Bly, are subtly implied rather than directly stated. Thus, it is cleared that the 2009 adaptation fills the gaps of domestic violence, implied in the novella, by adding a more talkative new character, Carla.

The relationship between Jessel and Quint is illustrated as a type of domestic violence on children as they witness their explicit sexuality around the house. Ann to Grose, "The children have been neglected. They have had no useful parenting. Quint and Jessel taught them depravity while you looked the other way" (Fywell, 2009: 55:30) suggesting the damaging impact of neglect and negative influences on children, and the consequences of turning a blind eye to such issues. She underlines the moral responsibility of adults in the lives of children and criticizes her. Here, Ann bravely utters these words to Mrs. Grose emphasizing the violence the children have to endure. Another case of violence the children might face is about Miles' expulsion

from school and its unanswered question in the novella. The question is whether Miles is corrupting or being abused by other children. As Griggs states, “As with many of the novella’s open-ended story threads, Miles’ expulsion from school is explained: we hear the off-screen voices of boys declaring ‘he’s evil’” (2016: 160). In this way, one of the gaps related to children’s true nature is filled by director’s interpretation.

Not only Jessel and Quint’s explicit sexuality but also the effect they have on children’s behavior is questioned in the adaptation. This is mostly unveiled by Ann, “because he’d been taught wicked things, things that normal children should not know” (Fywell, 2009: 1:02:17). When asked about their parents, Miles gets agitated, and says, “If they have cared about us, they wouldn’t have left” with a Quint-like voice (Fywell, 2009: 44:55). One cannot be sure whether the children is abused by implementing negative ideas in their minds about their parents, or Miles said those words but the Quint-echo was the figment of Ann’s imagination, or Miles is possessed. The Governess implies the fact that not only these evil spirits affect the children, but also they try to keep doing the same thing by uttering “I believe that the closer I got to teaching the children what was normal, what was right, the more they would try to stop me” (Fywell, 2009: 52:23). Another example to clarify the ambiguity through filming is when Ann loses the kids around the garden, she sees Miles beating and cursing Flora as if they are possessed by Jessel and Quint, “You bitch! You have to learn!”, while Flora promising to be better, hints the abusive and violent relationship between the lovers (Fywell, 2009: 1:09:07). As she tries to save Flora from Miles, she slaps Miles and sees Quint in him, so she even slaps harder for several times. Thus, the director reinforces this scene through additional visuals with the purpose of underlying the notion of children violation by the Governess. We can interpret this as an attempt to fill the gap originally seen in the novella.

C. Corruption

The exploration of corruption in literature is a theme that authors consistently investigate. Literary works extensively portray the consequences of corruption.

Characters grappling with the temptation or aftermath of corruption provide a narrative landscape allowing authors to explore ethical dilemmas, question authority and explore the fine line between virtue and wrongdoing. Through these portrayals literature does not only reveal the harsh realities of corruption, but also prompts readers to contemplate the ongoing struggle, for justice and honesty in flawed social systems. As in the novella and Clayton's version, "The Turn of the Screw" (2009) ends up with corruption, especially the corruption of innocence. For instance, when she is asked if she believes in God, Ann states, "I believe in the other" (Fywell, 2009: 25:30) which symbolizes her strong belief in evil even though she is raised with strong religious ideas. In this adaptation, the embedded notions in *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) namely cultural anxieties and domestic violence lead to the corruption as in the novella and Jack Clayton's adaptation *"*The Innocents*"* (1961).

The unconventional behavior displayed by children in this adaptation illustrates the notion of corruption. One significant example is when Flora shows awareness of Miles' early return home indicating their shared involvement in activities. Additionally, the motif of children whispering to each other emphasizes the conspiratorial nature of their interactions. For instance, after an apparition, Flora discreetly asks Miles if he thinks she was seen saying, "Do you think she saw..." (Fywell, 2009: 35:30). Here, we understand that the manifestation of corruption goes beyond sharing secrets; it is also reflected in Miles reaction to Carla's tragic death and in the simultaneous appearance of Quint's laughter. Such examples further reinforce the theme of corruption especially within Ann's psyche. The interplay between these instances is captured in the haunting question by Miles, "You see what we see don't you?" (Fywell, 2009: 1:02:36), highlighting how deeply corruption influences the narrative structure. Lastly, one of the most eerie moments is when Miles comes out of the train and first meets the Governess. His attitude contains some child, some adult and some evil feeling that he will endure until the very end. At one point, Ann comes to the conclusion, "Now I realized that the children not only knew about the ghosts, but wanted them to come back" (Fywell, 2009: 55:02). The fact that the children do not only know about the ghostly beings, but also want them to come back adds a creepy aspect to their connection with the supernatural. This understanding goes against what we would expect from innocent children, and

thus, hints at a deeper involvement between them as well as the spectral apparitions beyond just recognizing their ghosts' existence at Bly.

In "The Turn of the Screw" (2009), the theme of corruption is prominently highlighted through how the main character believes in evil. This belief remains strong when she is imprisoned, emphasizing "her role as moral arbiter, lone saviour" (Griggs, 2016: 159). Her unchanging commitment to this belief despite limitations emphasizes how corruption deeply affects her mind. Moreover, when it's mentioned that "despite the early twentieth century's faith in science, evil prevails" it adds an interesting layer to the story by suggesting a conflict between religious beliefs and scientific certainty (Griggs, 2016: 159). This observation goes beyond the period of the twentieth century and resonates with present-day audiences, who still struggle against the clashes between religious and scientific perspectives. Corruption pervasive concept that goes beyond historical eras encouraging us to reflect on how belief systems interact with malevolence in our society. The governess emphasizes that recognizing the existence of evil is not acknowledging its historical persistence, but serves as a defense against its recurrence. Ann confronts Dr. Fisher, "If you don't believe in evil, evil throughout the ages, if you don't believe in Quint he will keep coming back for you" captures a deep understanding of the nature of evil and its enduring influence (Fywell, 2009: 1:14:27). By mentioning Quint, she suggests that acknowledging the evil forces is crucial to resist their impact. This statement implies that denying the existence of evil makes individuals susceptible to its resurgence, highlighting both psychological and moral corruption. In her warning, the Governess underscores that confronting evil is essential in protecting oneself against its reappearance.

As stated by Griggs, "Each text exists on a continuum that builds on the anxieties at the centre of James' narrative; each recycles and intertextualizes permutations of this narrative ad infinitum"; so, the critic suggests that there is an expansion of various texts and movie adaptations based on *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) (Griggs, 2016: 160). The expansion aims to go deeper into the central anxieties present in Henry James's novella. The term "continuum" implies a relationship between the source material and its adaptations, signifying a dynamic exchange of ideas and themes. The phrase, "builds on the anxieties at the center of James narrative" indicates that subsequent versions don't simply replicate the story

but rather explore the underlying tensions initially presented by James. The term "intertextualizes" implies an intertwining of texts, where each adaptation refers to responds to and influences others. This dynamic process of adaptation and reinterpretation ensures that the anxieties central to James narrative remain relevant and impactful across cultural and temporal contexts. Thus, this quote emphasizes how the original novella endures, as a narrative that continuously inspires reinterpretations while maintaining its thematic essence.

In the movie “The Turn of the Screw” (2009), the exploration of corruption engages with elements of gender dynamics and the protagonist’s dedication to safeguarding the children. The question, “Were you afraid that he would corrupt you, eventually, like he did all the other women?” emphasizes how corruption has a pervasive influence implying its ability to seep into personal relationships and compromise individual’s moral integrity (Fywell, 2009: 1:12:32). Then, we see a flashback which is one of her dreams in which the master and Ann having sexual intimacy in her room at Bly in which the image changes from master to Quint and she has a disgusted expression once again. Ann’s reply, “I am not some hysterical female who only thinks of men. My one thought was of the children and how to save them”, which showcases an attempt to challenge traditional gender stereotypes and underscores her focus on shielding the children from perceived evil influences (Fywell, 2009: 1:13:05). This contrast highlights the exploration of corruption not as a moral transgression, but as a disruptive force that penetrates societal norms.

In “The Turn of the Screw” (2009), we can see the inevitable corruption unfolding as Ann tries to protect the children from the evil forces that haunt their home. Ann states, when sending Flora away with Mrs. Grose, “Make no mistake, I will do whatever it takes. I will be ready for them when they come” (Fywell, 2009: 1:15:43) This shows her determination to confront the approaching danger head on. When Ann tells Miles that he can't go back to school his outburst echoing Quint’s voice reveals a disturbing transformation. There is a discrepancy between what Miles says and how his lips move – “You’re lying! you’re a lying Bitch!” hears Ann; however, we can read Miles’ lips saying, “You’re lying! you’re a lying Witch!” (Fywell, 2009: 1:17:58). This adds an element of uncertainty to their interactions and highlights the presence of corruption. Finally, they are alone with Miles. The complexity of this corruption deepens as Ann reassures Miles of her eternal love for

him. However, their intimate moment takes a turn after a sudden kiss on the lips by Miles, Ann briefly sees Miles transform into Quint. “You’re very sweet. I love you too”, says Miles, in a creepy way (Fywell, 2009: 1:19:40). It shows a line between affection and the dark forces that follow them. Ann’s strong determination, Miles’ distorted expressions and the mysterious transformation during their kiss all highlight how corruption seeps into every aspect of the story. The incident is utilized by the director who corresponds this filming technique that of Hutcheon’s adaptation theory in which the filmmaker is at liberty to reinforce the influence of the scenes for the purpose of filling the thematic gaps.

The corruption is in another form in the confrontation scene. After Ann’s strong conviction that Miles has to “name him” to be able to free from his corruptive influence, “Go! I want you to go!” yells Miles while looking at Quint. As soon as Quint enters the room, Miles utters “You’re just a pathetic, worthless bitch!” with Quint’s echoing sound and evil look on his face (Fywell, 2009: 1:22:32). “I will not let you take him!” shouts Ann (Fywell, 2009: 1:22:57). She hugs Miles as his soul is possessed by Quint. In this scene, Ann who strongly believes that Miles needs to identify an apparent corrupting influence in order to free himself from its control. The phrase "name him" implies that by recognizing or calling out the spirit Miles can somehow weaken its grip on him. When Miles catches sight of Quint, he shouts out demanding the spirit to leave. However, when Quint materializes, Miles reacts with an aggressive insult that appears to be influenced by the very presence of the spirit. This suggests that Quint’s manifestation is somehow affecting Miles. The description of Quint having a sound and menacing appearance adds a supernatural or otherworldly element to his character amplifying the tension and horror in the scene. Ann’s firm declaration "I will not allow you to take him!" showcases her stance towards Miles and highlights her determination to rescue him from being possessed by Quint. The moment when she embraces Miles while his soul is seemingly under Quint’s control portrays a struggle between Ann’s efforts to save the child and the spirits’ attempt at dominance. The scene captures themes such as the idea of ownership, the conflict between good and evil and the intricate psychological elements commonly seen in adaptations of James’ writings. After we make sure that Miles can also see the ghost, ambiguity fades away and leaves itself to the inevitable

corruption of innocence. Miles dies. Either by the hands of a crazy governess or evil spirits.

As for fidelity, another additional scene which decreases the level of ambiguity is the last scene where Quint's face appears as one of the guards who take Ann for execution and Dr. Fisher sees him. The ending of the BBC's 2009 adaptation of *The Turn of the Screw* introduces a significant departure from both the original novella by Henry James and other adaptations. In this version, there is a change in how the story concludes, which sheds new light on the interpretation. Unlike others, this adaptation presents Ann as a strong and rational individual who firmly believes in the existence of evil and ghosts. She feels compelled to fight against them to protect the children she cares for. This contrast sharply with James' original portrayal of the governess and Jack Claytons *"*The Innocents*"*, where uncertainty about her mental state and whether ghosts are real were key themes. To further emphasize this departure, the ending shows Ann being taken away for execution after being accused of killing Miles. This dramatic conclusion significantly alters both the narratives' direction and Ann's fate by moving away from the open-endedness and ambiguity found in James' novella. In addition to these changes, this adaptation introduces Dr. Fisher, a psychiatrist who offers a clinical perspective on Ann's state of mind throughout the story. Being initially skeptical about her claims, his perspective shifts by the end. He begins to witness the presence of ghosts himself initially as whispers then captured in photographs and eventually he perceives Quint transforming into one of the prison guards. This transformation in Dr. Fisher shifting from a man of science to someone who acknowledges the existence of the supernatural highlights a transition from relying solely on scientific reasoning to acknowledging unexplained phenomena that may possess supernatural qualities. The story then returns to Bly where the initial events unfolded, with the introduction of a governess. This suggests a repetitive nature in the narrative, hinting that similar events may unfold once again. To conclude, the ending of BBCs adaptation takes a stance on acknowledging supernatural elements and provides a more conclusive and dramatic resolution compared to James' original novella. It deviates from James' characteristic subtlety and psychological ambiguity by opting for a direct and less ambiguous approach

towards portraying the supernatural aspects within the story while keeping the layered narrative ambiguity.

VI. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis is to explore how *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) and "The Turn of the Screw" (2009) reflect on cultural anxieties and domestic violence that lead to the corruption while filling the gaps in James' original novella. These elements contribute to the theme of corruption that James interwove into his novella, *The Turn of the Screw* (2007). The novella illustrates the themes of cultural concerns prevalent during the late Victorian era. It explores perceptions of women, domestic violence and the concept of corruption. The novella captures these concerns through the character of the Governess, whose relationships and suppressed emotions mirror society's anxieties about reconciling personal desires with societal norms. The narrative employs ambiguity that discloses anxieties, challenging conventions without explicitly condemning them. As stated by Griggs:

> James presents the conundrum without the solution, and in so doing leaves his readers and would-be adapters free to interpret his enigmatic tale as they see fit. Its one common and enduring feature is its capacity to disturb and disrupt, whether in a Victorian or a contemporary cultural context, and it is this thread that continues to unravel as the novella is reworked, re-imagined and revised (2016: 146)

James does not provide an answer to the mysteries in the novella. This lack of closure grants readers and those adapting the story for mediums the freedom to interpret it based on their own insights and inclinations. The novella's focus to disclose ambiguous Victorian anxieties remains consistent regardless of the text or adaptations. Moreover, the impact of the story can vary in cultural settings. Whether during Victorian era or in contemporary times individuals can comprehend and reimagine the novella in ways that mirror specific concerns, anxieties and interests of those particular periods.

All three works explore themes of cultural anxieties, domestic violence and corruption. The interpretation differences they have are because of the creativity needed to fill in gaps in such ambiguity. As Hutcheon states, "In 1898, Henry James published and in 1908 revised what he himself thought of as a 'potboiler' called *The Turn of the Screw*. The fight over this text has always been over its resolute and deliberate ambiguities" (2006: 68), and it depends on the individual director's ability "to provoke our imagination, to move us to fill in the gap". The gaps of *The Turn of the Screw* are filled as it is reimagined in different adaptations (Hutcheon, 2006: 76). Each new interpretation contributes layers to the narrative ensuring its continued relevance on the readers and audience. These two adaptations of the novella differ in terms of the way they interpret these gaps.

As for the cultural anxieties, the novella, *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) incorporates them into its narrative, reflecting the concerns in Victorian society. In "The Innocents", the film adaptation, the director, Clayton, fills the gaps in terms of cultural anxieties, such as presenting Miss Giddens as a governess who grapples with the sexual norms of the era. Clayton portrays the tension and forbidden attractions particularly through Miles. Thus, it is possible to state that the silent communication between the children in the novella is filled by a disturbing reaction. The apparitions of Quint embody anxieties and can be interpreted as manifestations of Miss Giddens' suppressed desires (Clayton, 1961: 21:30). The movie illustrates women's autonomy during that period by highlighting Miss Giddens' lack of authority at Bly Manor. Mrs. Grose's character further showcases this repression as her denial and compliance.

In "The Turn of the Screw" (2009), the second adaptation, the director, Fywell explores the themes by resonating with the anxieties experienced during both the Victorian and modern times. At the heart of this narrative lie themes of cultural anxieties, Victorian morality and how women's roles changed after World War I. "What women always do, I gave in of course", Ann adds, "But like women also do, I was going to watch and wait" (Fywell, 2009: 53:08). The women, Carla, Mrs. Grose and Ann are seen to transform into voices for the silenced women of the novella. The film explores these ideas through Ann's character; she starts off as innocent and naive and grows more assertive and self- assured as she confronts the dark realities at Bly Manor. Her interactions with the uncle and the children reflect society's

concerns during that era; fears about unconventional sexuality and child exploitation. The implied transgressive sexuality in the novella is vague; whereas, it is an open interpretation in 2009 adaptation. The characterization of the uncle is an attempt to fill the gaps of silence as it is underlined and left ambiguous in the novella.

In the novella, much of the darker elements of domestic violence, particularly those related to the characters, Quint and the master of Bly, are subtly implied rather than directly stated. In "The Innocents", the interpretation about children's past abuse fills the silence of abuse which is implied in the novella. The things Miss Giddens hear at night such as, "The children are watching" or "Knock before you enter!" (Clayton, 1961: 01:11:30) implicate that the children might have witnessed their affair. In addition, the use of manipulation, isolation and Miss Giddens' strong belief that she must shield the children from unseen dangers all serve as symbols of domestic violence. Through narrative techniques, the film creates an oppressive atmosphere within the household. In 2009 adaptation, the director fills the gaps of domestic violence implied in the novella, by openly illustrating Ann's abusive father, by interpreting the children's possible abuse and their encounter with sexuality explicitly, and by adding a new character, Carla, who informs about the house's wicked past, As Griggs states, "Carla's flashback recount of the violence and sexual debauchery of not only Quint, but the master of Bly spells out the evil that is merely hinted at in both the novella and Clayton's "The Innocents" (2016: 158). The film reflects the effects of domestic violence on children, depicting the neglect and abuse at Bly (Fywell, 2009: 1:02:10). Ann's efforts to protect the children from malevolent spirits and societal corruption, coupled with her own experiences of domestic violence, underscore her struggle against the corruptive influence of such violence.

In terms of corruption, in *The Turn of the Screw* (2007), it is firmly believed by the governess that Miles is being influenced by the evil spirits of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel. To release Miles from their grasp in one last desperate attempt, she takes actions that lead to his abrupt and mysterious death. The ending deliberately leaves it open-ended for each reader's personal judgment on whether these specters were real or mere creations within the governess' mind. However, *"*The Innocents*"* captures this uncertainty on film while staying true to its original inspiration. Likewise, in this movie adaptation, a climactic encounter between Miss Giddens and Miles results in a shocking demise for him as well. It presents an even more visually intense

culmination scene wherein Miss Giddens becomes increasingly frantic for Miles to acknowledge Quint's presence, ultimately leading to his death directly tied to her own actions (Clayton, 1961: 01:40:00). As Hutcheon states, "Yet, the novella's famed ambiguity is retained to the very end, as the music underlines the doubt as to the real cause of Miles' death by having the governess' vocal line fade on a chromatic dissonance (2006: 69). Thus, this scene fills the gap about Miles' death while preserving the ambiguity until the last moment which is interpreted more clearly resolved than it is done in the novella. Yet, we can state that such an ambiguous demise is still prevalent in the last scene no matter how Clayton tries to clarify the ambiguity on the viewer's mind.

In 2009 adaptation, depiction of corruption differs from Clayton's film. The 2009 adaptation presents corruption not as a moral transgression, but as a disruptive force that penetrates societal norms. The children are portrayed as victims of supernatural forces, which symbolizes corruption (Fywell, 2009: 1:15:40). While this approach is less ambiguous than in the novella, it still captures the essence of James exploration into the effects of violence within a household. Ann firmly believes in the existence of evil and sees herself as a moral guide, which emphasizes how innocence can be corrupted. The adaptation challenges viewers to contemplate whether corruption arises from evil forces or human psychology. In all three narratives, corruption is not merely a threat; it represents a complex combination of internal battles, societal expectations and unspoken horrors that exist within domestic spaces. Ultimately, this leads to a loss of innocence and moral clarity.

Another question of this research is how the time gap of fifty years affects the interpretation of themes, and how the adaptations reflect and question their times while showcasing the novella? According to Hutcheon, "Time, often very short stretches, can change the context even within the same place and culture" (2006: 144). The director adapts the source text to his own time with his own perspectives. In this respect, this research argued that transformation is inevitable as the time passes. The conditions of time and place alter the adapted work and its themes. The aim is to employ these concepts as narrative tools to shed light on 'how' and 'why' a classic book is adapted and transformed in different temporalities and how they adapt to the context and time in which they are produced demonstrating the level of fidelity to the source text. As Stam states, "The art of film adaptation partially consists of

choosing which generic conventions are transposable into the new medium, and which need to be discarded, supplemented, transcoded, or replaced" (2004: 6), which is affected by the time gap. It highlights the importance of making thoughtful choices in the adaptation process, considering the differences between literary, social and cinematic conventions.

The fifty-year gap between these adaptations offers a rich context for examining how changing societal norms have impacted the depiction of James' themes. The exploration of anxieties in *"*The Innocents*"* (1961) and "The Turn of the Screw" (2009) vividly portrays the specific concerns society had in those times. In the 1960s, influenced by the Cold War and the aftermath of World War II, *"*The Innocents*"* explores themes of fear, suspicion and the struggle for normalcy after the trauma of war. The film's atmosphere, character dynamics and exploration of theories reflect the conservative social norms and growing interest in understanding human psychology prevalent during that era. On the other hand, "The Turn of the Screw" (2009) captures the anxieties experienced during the early 21st century. Themes of vulnerability, distrust and hidden threats resonate with our perception following 9/11. The films portrayal of gender roles, sexuality and mental health represents a shift towards more progressive perspectives on these matters—a reflection of societal changes by 2009. Hutcheon's method focuses on what she calls "repetition without replication" (2006: 172) in adaptations and she argues that these works negotiate a creative tension between preserving the essence of their source material and introducing novelty through contextual variation and a unique alternative viewpoint associated with each particular adaptation (2006: 173). Both films serve as artifacts that encapsulate and respond to anxieties and societal transformations at their respective times. They adapt Henry James' story and also provide insights into how cinema reflects evolving human experiences by examining cultural fears and societal norms.

The last question is whether adaptations retain fidelity by adapting main themes. Robert Stam states that 'interpretations' and 'rewritings' of source novels, in analyses "which always take into account the gaps and transformations" in the passage across very different media and materials of expression (2004: 5). This suggests that when evaluating adaptations, success is not determined by blind fidelity to the source material. The analysis should consider the gaps and transformations that

occur when moving across different media and materials of expression. In essence, it emphasizes an approach to adaptation assessment that goes beyond a simplistic notion of fidelity.

Clayton's *"*The Innocents*"* is an example of a creative adaptation that stays true to the original work. It effectively captures the atmosphere, deep psychological elements and Victorian concerns of repression and sexuality particularly in the portrayal of Miss Giddens. Although there are some changes in the narrative, the film maintains the ambiguity and themes of the original story. Clayton's adaptation stands out by exploring psychological and sexual tensions, which adds to its visual impact. This approach showcases how adaptation involves reimagining a tale for a medium while remaining loyal to its core essence. The 2009 adaptation maintains the themes of corruption, cultural anxieties and domestic violence found in the novella. However, it changes the setting and how it portrays supernatural elements. In contrast to the subtlety of the novella, the film takes a direct approach and places it in a modern context creating a distinct psychological framework by putting Ann in a mental hospital. It incorporates flashbacks and multiple perspectives with a focus on Ann's mental state adding complexity and ambiguity to the story. The film provides a conclusive ending compared to the novella by accusing Ann of murder and having Dr. Fisher acknowledge supernatural occurrences. This departure from the open-ended narrative demonstrates how this adaptation offers a unique interpretation of James' story while staying faithful to the core themes.

Henry James' novella, *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) gains more significance as adaptation studies continue to evolve. The novella's ambiguous exploration of themes like domestic violence, corruption and the cultural anxieties makes it highly adaptable to diverse audiences. This adaptability plays a role in understanding how various adaptations of the novella reflect and reinterpret these themes on how each adaptation mirrors specific societal concerns and interpretations of James' original concepts. Through its adaptations across mediums such as films, TV series or other forms, fresh interpretations and perspectives are brought forth providing contemporary contexts for audiences to engage with James thought provoking themes by filling the gaps. These adaptations ensure that classics like *The Turn of the Screw* continue to thrive but also facilitate their recognition in new generations by reflecting evolving cultural and societal conversations. For the answers to the

questions queried in the first chapter, two adaptations explore the theme of corruption arising from anxieties and domestic violence as well as filling the gaps which are inherent in James original story. In addition, the time gap between two adaptations showcases the evolution of societal concerns and their influence on James' themes. *"*The Innocents*"* stays truer to the source material by capturing the novella's ambiguity and psychological depth, whereas "The Turn of the Screw" (2009) offers an interpretation that aligns more with current trends in visual interpretations. Overall, the adaptation has the power to reflect and question the spirit of their times while showcasing the lasting significance of a classical work throughout periods.

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