

## Chapter I

# INTRODUCTION

### I.1. Background of the Study

Henry James was the largest literary figure to come out of America during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Henry James had traveled from the New world, known as America, to the old world, known as England, to achieve more profoundly literary view and was able to get a degree in fiction at the level of George Elliot, Turgenev, and Zola, at the time when American literature was still young and its writers were still about to begin their works (American Writers 39).

There are several reasons that support the thesis writer to choose Henry James for her study. The first reason is the fact that James was the pioneer who applied the turning point to the English novels through his essay The Art of Fiction containing crucial statement by James about his own art (Tanner 46). James has an extraordinary grasp of the English language, which is reflected in

his highly stylized writing-Thomas Hardy called it "a ponderously warm manner of saying nothing in infinite sentences" (46). According to American Writers (1974), "James found the English novel still in the easy undisciplined and relaxed form it had been from its early days, and he refashioned it into a complex work of literary art" (39). "With James, English writing about the theory of the novel comes of age." (Tanner 46).

The second reason that encourages the thesis writer to study James' work is the fact that fiction was assuredly where James' essential talent and interest lay and it was the form to which he devoted almost all of his literary efforts (Critical Survey of Long Fiction 1434). James is a prolific writer who wrote a lot of novels and his works have become best sellers until nowadays. His works were much influenced by the patrician attitude of his father concerning on aspects of religion, philosophy, and developed certain degree of mysticism (Wilson 386).

The third reason why the thesis writer is fascinated with Henry James is that James was not only a practitioner of fiction, but was one of the finest critics and theorists (Edel 5). It was he who gave us the useful terms, for instance, the theories of consciousness, psychology, and realism, for the criticism of the novel (American Writers 319). This means that his visions and formulations in literature have increasingly entered into the texture of twentieth century literature. Many of his theories have been applied by other fine writers. It is stated that Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Graham Greene, and Dorothy Richardson are among many novelists who derived techniques or

aesthetic ideas of the source of James. Even during James' lifetime, certain of his fellow novelists abroad regarded him as Master (Wilson 386).

The last reason which the thesis finds interesting to study James' work among other literary works, is the fact that James is a unique writer who applies the certain type of realism. "James' sort of realism in this case means being faithful to his character and the acts of his character are always understandable in terms of the character's true nature, while characters from other novels often do things or commit acts that do not seem to blend in with their essential nature. This means that when James creates a certain type of character early in the novel, this character will act in consistent manner throughout the entire book and will never refer to the reader's mind of what the character should do"(Tanner 23). In the Critical Survey of Long Fiction, it is said that in a James' novel; "what is most significant is not what transpires in the plot, but rather the attitudes, emotions, and discoveries which unfold in the consciousness of his characters" (1436).

According to Critical Survey of Long Fiction, James' matured contributions to the art of novel were developed for some fifty years (1440). Leon Edel, possibly the most respected James' scholar, has indicated that "James' writing can be divided into three periods; international theme, social issues, and occasionally bizarre stories" (1441).

There were times when the fictions of Henry James show him having experimentation at every turn, selecting themes showing the crisis of his career; the troubled feelings that he was a "lost" author, unwanted by an indifferent and

illiterate world (American Writers 331). Those were the times when James wrote several plays, yet unfortunately he could not be successful as a playwright; proved at the time when James was booed at the opening of his play Guy Domville in 1895 (Tanner 47). "When he was not writing his parables about unsuccessful writers, he wrote ghostly tales, indeed most of his tales in this form belong to this haunted period" (Edel 29).

It was between 1885 and 1900, after the difficult times of James in his theatrical ventures, he returned to write fiction in which he wrote series of stories about ravaged childhood and adolescence and also published series of remarkable novels and stories which are told from the point of view of disturbed men, young women who are obsessed, haunted and perhaps insane. Those works are The Other House (1897), What Maisie Knew (1897), The Turn of The Screw (1898), The Spoils of Ponyton (1897), In The Cage (1898), The Awkward Age (1899), and The Altar of The Dead (Critical Survey of Long Fiction 1440)

According to Leon Edel, "the series above belong to a period of experimentation in James' career, between the humiliating collapse of his failures as a dramatist" (Trotter 230). During this period, James was preparing the basic for the achievement of the late novels, extending and refining his narrative techniques, and trying for doing something different and unusual ( 231).

The reason why the thesis writer is curious to study The Turn of The Screw is the fact that this novel is the most celebrated story that belongs to the haunted period. "The Turn of The Screw, which combines both the theme of tormented childhood and the ghostly element, was written due to the psychological aspects

of James during the times when he felt unwanted by the illiterate people which presented him the idea of writing stories related to his personal experiences and the condition he had felt himself at that time” (Edel 29). This statement is supported with the criticism written by F.W.Duppee (1956) as follows :

This James does in The Turn of The Screw to a degree of which he himself appears to have been unaware, for he wrote and said many conflicting things about the story. A tale, as we might say, of total irony, it is saved from being a mere exercise in mystification by its great charm and pathos. It was, moreover, close to James’ mind at that time. Concerned with the difficulty of making sense, of piercing the moral and metaphysical mysteries, the story was an incident in the strenuous work of reconstruction to which he addressed himself in the five years following the theatre crisis (p.160).

The Turn of The Screw basically features a young, inexperienced woman whose love to her master is hopeless, for knowing that she is only a governess and as agreed, her master cuts off all communication between them. She dreams of something ‘heroic’ for the children, as her charges, to please her master. Her kind of self-sacrifice in this case is attempting to protect the children from the ghosts in the mansion where she works as a governess. The ghosts here are suggested from the death of the former servant and ex governess.

The Turn of The Screw then was regarded as one of James’ finest achievement as well as being his most puzzling and controversial work. When it was published, Oscar Wilde declared it “a most wonderful, lurid, poisonous little

tale" (Kaplan 15). "The Turn of The Screw contains of ambiguous accounts to the reader's mind in which they have to choose in determining whether they should participate in the side of good faith of the governess, as the narrator as well as the main character in this story, or even think that the governess is the only one who frightens the children to horror" (Edel 30).

The ambiguity captured in The Turn of The Screw has indeed raised more argument or provoked claims by critics, because the truth is that every reader can have his own interpretation. In the first phase of the debate, critics tried to decide what the story means. In the second phase, started by Shoshona Felman's "Turning The Screw of Interpretation" (1977, in Felman 1982b), critics stated that "its meaning is its undecidability. The story itself has become an allegory of the will, or the desire, to interpret" (The Psychopathology of Modernism: Henry James's *Odd Women* 231). "James revealed on more than one occasions how he deliberately put ambiguity so that the reader would imagine his own horror" which is emphasized by Edel that it is based on the theory that "a nightmare is most frightening to the person who dreams of it" (29).

The Turn of The Screw consists of the possibilities and effects which may deeply intricate the readers in which they must be aware, and they must give decision about the existence of ghosts (F.W. Duppee 159). In order to achieve a correct understanding about the novel, it is important to notify that there are some problems concerned on the governess, as the narrator of the story, as written by Edel as follows :

The haunted governess is the narrator, but she supplies few tangible "facts", and the reader is placed in the difficult position of having determined, from the story she tells it-how reliable a witness she is. James called this "a trap for the unwary". Most readers caught up in the movement of the narrative, understandably take the governess' account of good faith (29).

The Turn of The Screw illustrates James' matured theory of the ghostly tale. This takes the perception that James presents the mystery in a discrete and unique way, not by means of ghosts in common figures people know. James' ghosts walk mostly in daylight, in other words, the theme of ghosts James creates has nothing to do with real ghosts, darkness, haunted old house, and so on, yet more deeply than those, The Turn of The Screw basically conveys James' view, that in reality, "the only thing which has the greatest capacity to scare themselves is nothing but their own creation of horror which finally evokes fear and damnation to themselves"(30). The governess, who is the main character in The Turn of The Screw, falls in love with her employer although she knows exactly that there must be no communication between both of them. She does not use her logic that it will be impossible for her to love him due to their great differences of social classes.

The governess manages hard to do the house works well and takes good care of Miles and Flora, her charges, in order that her master will see how great she has done her job and be thankful to her. However, the governess does not seem to be satisfied with merely doing her job as a common governess. She keeps

thinking of her master day by day and her nature of being imaginative even leads her to have hallucination.

The reason why thesis writer is interested in analyzing the governess is because of the fact that the governess is the central and most complex character who is capable of having hallucination. This arouses the thesis writer's curiosity to analyze the causes and effects of the governess' hallucination.

### **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The fact that the governess tends to have hallucination in her daily life raises the thesis writer's curiosity to know what causes her to have such hallucination and also the effects of her hallucination.

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to discuss the causes of the governess' hallucination, then, to explain the effects of her hallucination.

### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The thesis writer hopes that this study will serve the purpose in giving the readers, particularly the Faculty of Letters students, the knowledge of Henry James, an American master of fiction, who had introduced a complex work of Literary Art to the English novels. The thesis writer also gives the fact although James is regarded as a master of fiction, he also had experienced a certain period in which he felt like a 'lost' author who was unwanted by an indifferent and



illiterate world. In studying The Turn of The Screw, the writer indeed hopes that this study will open the readers' mind that actually The Turn of The Screw is not a common ghost story since this novel conveys the illustration of James' matured theory of ghostly tale which means that he shows the mystery in unique way, not by means of ghosts in common figures people know. The thesis writer also hopes that by reading this thesis the readers will get the knowledge that using hallucination to reach one's goal is harmful, just like the governess in this novel since it finally leads to her downfall.

### **1.5. Scope and Limitation**

The thesis writer limits her scope by observing the governess' nature since she is the central character, as well as the narrator in; the two different social condition of the governess, the master and his way of thinking, the condition of Bly, and the unexplained mysterious death in Bly that contribute great parts to the possibility of having hallucination. The thesis writer would also study about other characters, whom are Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper and the confidante of the governess, and also the children, Miles and Flora, as her charges, since these characters may function as means to know the process of how the governess grows to be neurotic and possessive with the children as the results of her hallucination.

### **1.6. Methodology**

To serve the purpose in obtaining the data and information needed for her study, the thesis writer does the library research in order to study the novel The

Turn of The Screw published by The Penguin Group, Britain, 1994, the books consisting of the theories of Henry James, and also the critics' opinion about Henry James, especially those discussing and criticizing The Turn of The Screw, to support her analysis.

In writing this thesis, the thesis writer uses theory of characterization to analyze the character traits of the governess. The writer also applies the theory of setting to analyze the two different social conditions of the governess; her former place in a Hampshire vicarage which is a confined village, and her new working place at London, exactly at Bly, the name of the luxurious, fancy, and also mysterious country mansion. In supplying the readers a more profound understanding of the governess' character, the writer uses related theories which explain the meaning of neuroticism and hallucination, as parts of the governess' nature, to explain her uncommon personality.

### **1.7 Organization of the Study**

This thesis is organized in four chapters. The introductory chapter explains the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, scope and limitation, methodology, and the organization of the study. The second chapter entitled the review of related literature consists of the theories of literature that includes the theory of setting and characterization, and related theories namely the theory of Neuroticism and hallucination. The third chapter is the analysis discussing about the causes and

effects of the governess' hallucination. Finally, the fourth chapter is about the conclusion of the analysis which also discusses about the findings of this thesis.