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**GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN *THE HAUNTING OF BLY MANOR*: AN ANALYSIS**

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*To my mom, my dearest ghost,  
the one I wish to see  
at every dark corner;  
at every mirror;  
at every long corridor.  
I hope your love haunts me  
for the rest of my existence.*

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Finally, to myself: thank you for keeping pushing until the end. This is just the beginning and the best is yet to come.

*“What haunts [us] are not the dead,  
but the gaps left within us by  
the secrets of others.”*

*Eric Savoy*

## RESUMO

Dentre os vários gêneros literários, há um especialmente dedicado a fazer nossos corações dispararem e nossas mãos suarem: o Gótico. Esse gênero incorpora ansiedades culturais presentes em nossa sociedade, que se refletem nos personagens, eventos e até mesmo nos cenários das histórias de horror. Essas histórias assombrosas podem nos ser apresentadas de várias formas, como livros, filmes e séries. Assim, este trabalho tem como objetivo oferecer uma análise qualitativa de *A Maldição da Mansão Bly* (2020) sob a perspectiva gótica, investigando os elementos góticos presentes na minissérie e analisando o que os fantasmas representam e como eles se relacionam com os vivos. Para tal, recorreu-se à lista de elementos góticos tradicionais de Sena (2017) para identificar a presença de tais aspectos, realizando então uma interpretação do *locus horribilis* segundo as ideias de Sencindiver (2010) e dos impactos dos traumas dos fantasmas em suas ações pós-morte com base nos estudos de Caruth (1996) e Savoy (2002).

**Palavras-Chave:** *A Maldição da Mansão Bly*; Literatura Gótica; fantasma; trauma.

## ABSTRACT

Among several genres of literature, there is one specially dedicated to making our hearts race and our palms sweat: the Gothic. This genre embodies cultural anxieties present in our society that reflect on the characters, events, and even the sceneries of horror stories. These ghost stories can be presented to us in many forms like books, movies, and even series. Thus, this work aims to offer a qualitative analysis of *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020) from the Gothic perspective, investigating the Gothic elements present in the show and analyzing what the ghosts represent and how they relate to the living. In order to do so, Sena's (2017) list of traditional Gothic elements was used to identify the presence of said key elements, consequently leading to an interpretation of the *locus horribilis* according to Sencindiver's (2010) ideas and of the ghosts' trauma impacts on their post-death actions based on Caruth's (1996) and Savoy's (2002) studies.

**Keywords:** *The Haunting of Bly Manor*; Gothic literature; ghost; trauma.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Among several genres of literature, there is one specially dedicated to making our hearts race and our palms sweat: the Gothic. In that sense, gothic literature embodies and evokes cultural anxieties present in our society, varying according to diverse aspects, such as political revolutions, shifts in sexual and domestic organization, and scientific discoveries. These aspects reflect on the characters, events, and even the sceneries of horror stories. In the nineteenth century, for example, with the emergence of figures like Charles Darwin, Dmitri Mendeleev, and John Dalton, as well as important findings in the field of Biology and Chemistry, scientists, fathers, husbands, madmen, and criminals populated horror stories, as well as defined the landscapes as “desolate, alienating, and full of menace” (BOTTING, 1996, p. 2). In most of these stories, an uncanny movement from homely to unhomely can be noted (SENCINDIVER, 2010, p. 25). This shift occurs due to how gothic literature impacts our minds:

Gothic terrors activate a sense of the unknown and project an uncontrollable and overwhelming power which threatens not only the loss of sanity, honour, property or social standing but the very order which supports and is regulated by the coherence of those terms. (BOTTING, 1996, p. 5)

These threats are associated with “supernatural and natural forces, imaginative excesses and delusions, religious and human evil, social transgression, mental disintegration, and spiritual corruption” (BOTTING, 1996, p.1). In that sense, as established by Horace Walpole in *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), there are some elements that can characterize the genre: the setting in a castle or old mansion, an atmosphere of mystery and suspense, an ancient prophecy, and a woman in distress, for example. These elements are present not only in literary works, but can also appear in movies, series, and adaptations.

An example of adaptation that can illustrate this scenario is *The Haunting* anthology, a production created by Mike Flanagan and streamed by Netflix. The anthology is composed of two seasons that share the majority of the cast: *The Haunting of Hill House* (2018) and *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020). The first is a supernatural horror drama based on Shirley Jackson’s 1959 novel of the same name. The second, which is the object of analysis in this paper, is a gothic romance drama based on Henry James’s literary works. Although the plot heavily incorporates elements from the author’s short stories *The Romance of Certain Older Clothes* (1868) and *The Jolly Corner* (1908), the season is mostly based on *The Turn of the*

*Screw* (1898). In addition to that, all episodes are named after James' works, mostly his short stories.

*The Haunting of Bly Manor* tells the story of the wealthy Wingrave family and their employees, having the Bly Manor, a countryside manor in the United Kingdom as the main location for the narrative. The narrative follows the events that occur mostly upon the arrival of Danielle Clayton, a young American woman hired as an au pair by the uncle of the two Wingrave children, who recently lost their parents in an accident.

*The Turn of the Screw*, first published in 1898 by the American general-interest magazine *Collier's*, is considered both a work of Gothic and horror fiction. As it is the main source for the adaptation, the series and the novel follow mostly the same storyline, with the main difference between the two being the presence of the romantic elements and the ending scene.

*The Jolly Corner*, considered one of James' most noted ghost stories, was first published in 1908 by the magazine *The English Review*. The short story narrates the adventures of Spencer Brydon, a middle-aged man who returned to his childhood home after living abroad for more than thirty years. He walks around the house late at night, believing that he is being haunted by his alter ego.

Finally, *The Romance of Certain Old Clothes* is a short story first published in 1868 by American magazine and multi-platform publisher *The Atlantic*. Despite plot alterations, this work is used as the background for the major plot in *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020). This narrative is set in colonial New England, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and follows the story of the two Willoughby<sup>1</sup> sisters: Perdita and Viola<sup>2</sup>, who fight for the heart of Arthur Lloyd, a young American man. Perdita ends up marrying Lloyd, but dies soon after and makes her husband promise to keep her collection of clothes untouched until their daughter can wear them. Viola, back into Lloyd's life as a nursemaid for the baby, succeeds in marrying him not long after but is haunted by the ghost of her sister.

The aim of this research is to investigate the Gothic elements present in *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020) in order to identify the presence and function of the gothic elements in the narrative. To analyze *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020) from the Gothic perspective, I will investigate the series with the following questions in mind: a) What gothic elements are

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<sup>1</sup> Changed to "Wingrave" after the 1885 revision. It is also the surname of Miles and Flora's family in *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020).

<sup>2</sup> Although the name of this character was changed to Rosalind after the 1885 revision, I have decided to keep Viola as it is the name used in the 8<sup>th</sup> episode of *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020).

present in *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020)?; and b) What do ghosts represent and how do they relate to the living?

In this research I intend to provide a qualitative analysis of the Gothic elements present in *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020), identifying and analyzing them according to Botting (1996), Sena (2019), and Sencindiver (2010). Afterwards, the relationship between the ghost figures and the living will be interpreted based on Caruth (1996), Cohen (1996), and Savoy (2002). It is hoped that this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how the Gothic works. Although being considered by many an “umbrella-term” for a myriad of cultural manifestations of transgression, marginality, and otherness, the gothic has a purpose: it provides “the principal embodiments and evocations of (...) anxieties” (BOTTING, 1996, p. 1) of the present culture. In other words, despite adapting overtime, the timelessness of the sensations it provokes remains.

This research is also an opportunity to acknowledge what is already known about the characteristics of Gothic works, and to explore and investigate how those characteristics function. This paper could pique the curiosity of students of literature or, more specifically, gothic literature or cinema, or of people that are interested in this theme.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

During the development process of this analysis, the material that is about to be presented was fundamental in stating concepts and presenting perspectives of the subject. The works here listed approach the elements that will be explored in this paper, serving as great sources for this analysis in each of the following steps: identifying and analyzing the key characteristics of the Gothic genre in *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020) according to Botting's (1996) introduction section, Sena (2019), and Sencindiver (2010); analyzing and interpreting the figure of the ghost based on Savoy (2002), and, finally, the relation between ghosts, trauma, and the living according to Caruth's (1996) ideas.

Botting (1996) introduces the Gothic genre highlighting its different styles and forms, presenting its history from the eighteenth century to the postmodernist era. The shifts in Gothic literature reflect the society of a time: in the eighteenth century, for example, the main focus was on objectifying and expelling figures that represented darkness and evil (such abstract concepts), restoring proper limits: villains should be punished and heroines, well married (BOTTING, 1996, p.7). As time passed, the issues embraced by the genre transformed into more internal subjects due to the political, philosophical, and aesthetic uncertainties caused by the French Revolution. This transformation opened up space for the *uncanny*, that is, the familiar turning into unfamiliar and threatening. With the advance of science in the nineteenth century, the family was not as safe as before, as husbands, fathers, scientists, and madmen were added to the list of dangerous figures in horror stories. Finally, as the ultimate shift of the familiar into the uncanny, one could not trust one's own self and "doubles, alter egos, mirrors, and animated representations of the disturbing parts of human identity" became figures of horror and terror (BOTTING, 1996, p.8). It is a great work to start being familiarized with the subject.

Sena (2017) postulates that the Gothic has actually influenced Brazilian literature produced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries more than meets the eye. The author, aiming to identify and describe the presence of Gothic elements in Brazilian Naturalism of the eighteenth century, enlists recurrent and typical aspects of the literary Gothic tradition like the monster, the space, and the resurgence of the past, for example. Thus, the list developed by Sena will be used as a guide to identify the same key gothic elements present in *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020), which will be then further analyzed according to the theoretical framework displayed below.

Cohen (2005) explores the relation between the monster in Gothic Literature and society, and also what they reveal about the context in which they are inserted. The author presents seven theses in order to understand cultures through the monsters, suggesting that every creature represents some major cultural issue of a time. In each thesis, Cohen recalls an issue, relating it to specific aspects present in people's lives, such as desire, fear of death, diseases, and racial, sexual, economic, and political differences. In the first thesis, *The Monster's Body Is a Cultural Body*, the author describes the monster as the embodiment of a culture, that is, it constructs and projects a cultural moment of a time, a feeling, and a place. According to Cohen (2005), this figure "signifies something other than itself: it is always a displacement, always inhabits the gap between the time of upheaval that created it and the moment into which it is received, to be born again" (COHEN, 2005, p.4).

Caruth (1996), in the introduction section of *Unclaimed Experience*, establishes the metaphor of a wound to discuss trauma according to Freud's theories. The author uses the epic romance *Gerusalemme Liberata* to illustrate different aspects of trauma, postulating that "the term trauma is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind" (CARUTH, 1996, p.3). Narrating key scenes of Tancred and Clorinda's story, Caruth discusses the urge that a mental wound has to be addressed, the unwitting repetition of events and behaviors caused by said wound, and how impactful the unexpected nature of it is. In this analysis, this theoretical framework will be crucial to interpret the post-life behavior of the deceased, linking it to the events passed during their lives.

Savoy (2002), in his chapter for *The Cambridge Companion of Gothic Fiction*, discusses the rise of American Gothic, emphasizing the constant presence of the past in the Gothic cultural production in the United States. Furthermore, two important aspects are also discussed: the *hidden* and the *lost*. The author explains that the ones who are most likely to come back to haunt us are the ones who suffered some kind of shame during their life and were forced to take these situations to their graves, being, then, objected by their previous culture and descendants. In that sense, this work will also be fundamental to analyze the ghosts' actions mentioned before.

Sencindiver (2010) discusses space in Gothic fiction, arguing that, although embracing numerous functions and representations, it is still "aberrant, oneiric, monstrous, and always uniquely combined with disturbing otherness and its fearful cognates" (SENCINDIVER, 2010, p. 2). Covering topics like architecture, boundaries, sublimity, and unhomely homes, the author examines the expression of fear and otherness through spatiality,

illustrating with a range of iconic Gothic works such as Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Henry James' *The Jolly Corner* (1908), and Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (2000). Considering that the Bly Manor is the scenario for the narrative I aim to investigate, this material will have an important role in the analysis of the haunted events' site.



### 3. GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN *THE HAUNTING OF BLY MANOR*

*The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020)<sup>3</sup> has several Gothic elements that contribute to the overall atmosphere of the show and its narrative structure. As presented by Sena (2017), some aspects are fundamental in the structuring of a gothic narrative, which will be contemplated in this analysis: “the construction of narrative spaces, exotic or familiar, which are described as *loci horribiles*”<sup>4</sup>; “the ghostly relationship with the past that resurges to haunt the present”<sup>6</sup>, and “the characterization of characters as monstrosities due to human nature or psychopathologies”<sup>7</sup> (FRANÇA, 2017 apud SENA, 2017, p. 36).

#### 3.1. THE SPACE

When exploring gothic fiction, we will eventually come across “the horror of its chambers” (SENCINDIVER, 2010, p. 3). In a gothic narrative, the *locus*, commonly addressed as a haunted place, functions as the setting for the events that the story follows (SENA, 2017). As time passed and the necessity to contemplate urban spaces grew, locations like the laboratory, the hotel, the sanatorium, the hospital, and the house assumed the role of *locus horribilis* (DONADA and ZANINI, 2020, p. 6). In *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020), the Wingrave family’s seventeenth-century manor in the English countryside is the major scenario for the plot. In ghost stories, common objects, actions, and situations are often defamiliarized and used as a tool to provoke fear. Thus, this is the case of the home, as in the gothic narrative there is a “general drift of the uncanny movement from homely to unhomely, (...) where an apparently homely house turns gradually into a site of horror” (VIDLER, 1994, p. 35 apud SENCINDIVER, 2010, p. 25).

According to Barros (2020), the Gothic places are often marked by the union of two key characteristics: the gloomy and the splendid. The Bly grounds are composed of an imponent manor with a great number of rooms, bathrooms and corridors, tall and large stairs, a kitchen, a dining room, a classroom, a greenhouse, a church, a lake, a well and a garden filled with statues, flowers, trees, and bushes. Before Viola and Perdita, the house was

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<sup>3</sup> In the appendix, located on page 43, I offer a character map in order to help readers understand who the characters are and the connections between them.

<sup>4</sup> All translations are mine.

<sup>5</sup> Texto original: “(...) a construção de espaços narrativos, exóticos ou familiares, que são descritos como *loci horribiles* (...)”

<sup>6</sup> Texto original: “(...) a relação fantasmagórica com o passado, que ressurge para assombrar o presente (...)”

<sup>7</sup> Texto original: “(...) a caracterização de personagens como monstrosidades, por conta da própria natureza humana ou de psicopatologias.”

already the family's residence and further becomes the home of several generations of their descendants until the current timeline. The old house represents both "building and family line", becoming "the site where fears and anxieties returned in the present" (BOTTING, 1996, p. 3). Therefore, considering the troubled events that happened in the sisters' generation and the insistent presence of the Lady in the Lake at Bly, the house could be interpreted as a place that hosts and reveals the ghosts' unresolved issues from the past and also an agent that connects past and present generations.

**Figure 1 - The Bly Manor**



Source: Episode 1, 2020, 40'15"

According to Sena (2017), *loci horribiles* are oppressing environments that strongly affect both narrative and character development. As it will be explained in further detail in section 3.2.1.3, Viola's traumatic experience and will to stay at the manor created a gravity force around Bly grounds. In that sense, the Wingrave's manor is, in fact, an oppressor environment, for it traps the souls of the ones who died there. In addition to that, the place is also oppressor to the living, as it offers danger to their lives due to the evil that lies within the waters of the lake and the ghost of Quint that plans to take the children's bodies permanently whatever it costs. In accordance with these ideas, Sencindiver (2010) postulates that "sinister buildings share an intimate connection with their distraught residents in more than one sense" (SENCINDIVER, 2010, p. 19), that is, beyond being the residence to Viola's lineage, the house could also be seen as an extension to her trauma. In that sense, Viola, who was once abandoned, now traps spirits in her orbit.

### 3.2. THE MONSTER

In *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020), the quiet and isolated Bly grounds are populated by a significant number of unrested souls, be they still owning their stories and names, be they already cursed with anonymity. Analyzing the narrative, it is possible to assume that the manor was the place for a great number of conflicts and unfortunate events aside from the ghosts' own deaths. In that sense, according to Cohen (2005), the monster "signifies something other than itself" (COHEN, 2005, p. 2). That is, when taking a closer look at the word "monstrum", it etymologically means "that which warns" or "that which reveals" (COHEN, 2005, p. 2). Thus, said unfortunate events often assume the form of haunting figures like ghosts, specters, or monsters, for example, to help those events emerge to the surface (HOGLE, 2002, p. 2). The figure of the ghost, that is, the departed ones, that haunt the living commonly were shamed when alive or forced to take ineffable secrets to the grave (HOGLE, 2002, p.174). Therefore, the ghosts present in the narrative will be examined and interpreted taking into consideration their life and death stories and, in some cases, their impact on the foreshadowing of events.

#### 3.2.1. VIOLA WILLOUGHBY

##### 3.2.1.1. LIFE STORY

Viola and her younger sister, Perdita, lived in the manor during the 1800s, for it was part of their family estate. After the death of their widowed father, the sisters became heirs of the place. Although being a female character described as witty (Episode 8, 2020, 3'32" - 3'33"), Viola is still forced by the patriarchal system to marry a man to maintain the family united and the heirlooms under their possession. In order to keep the manor in the family, the sisters chose a cousin, Arthur Lloyd, to marry Viola. Even after perishing to the rules of society, Viola still showed one of her key characteristics: stubbornness. When standing before the vicar sealing her marriage to her fiancé, Viola did not vow "to obey", not even when the vicar asked her to (Episode 8, 2020, 7'2" - 7'19").

As Viola and Lloyd's life together starts, the elder Willoughby noticed a restless feeling, about which she would reflect by performing a repetitive habit in the middle of the night: she would fall asleep, wake up, and walk around the house wondering if it was the unfamiliar feeling of now owning her parents' bedroom or if it was the growing feelings for Lloyd that were bothering her. Viola ultimately became fond of her husband, building a

relationship of loyalty and care. The couple had a daughter, Isabella, who strengthened even more her sense of family and union. Thus, when the girl was born, Viola held her in her arms saying “It is you, it is me, it is us” (Episode 8, 2020, 9’50” - 9’59”). Shortly after that moment, Viola fell ill with “the lung”, being forced to be isolated in a bedroom (not the couple’s) for her family's safety. When the vicar was once again called to the manor, it was to bless Viola’s soul and secure her a place in heaven. However, the stubbornness showed up again and Viola did not accept participating in the rite, saying to the vicar “I do not go. Just tell your god I do not go” (Episode 8, 2020, 15’30” - 15’46”). As time passed, Viola’s impatience and loneliness grew in her heart, causing her to become aggressive, mainly towards her sister, who she understood was taking her place as a wife and a mother. This idea was planted in her mind after witnessing Perdita dancing with Lloyd and her daughter one night.

**Figure 2 - Viola and the baby**



Source: Episode 8, 2020, 9’40”

During her living time, Viola was quite interested in expensive products, such as fine jewels and fancy dresses. One day she ordered her possessions to be brought to her room, where she carefully and lovingly disposed of them in a trunk, covered in dried rose petals and a transparent delicate fabric. As her death wish, Viola asked her husband to promise to open the trunk only when their daughter was old enough to wear the items. After the Lady of Bly Manor’s death, the trunk was kept in the attic.

### 3.2.1.2 DEATH STORY

During one of Viola's coughing crises while Lloyd was away, Perdita, being exhausted from tolerating Viola's aggressive behavior – which included face-slapping and insults towards Perdita –, strangled Viola (Episode 8, 2020, 26'57" - 27'28").

When Bly fell into a hole of debt and uncertainty, Perdita suggested that they use the items in the trunk, which was strongly denied by Lloyd, now her husband. Stubbornly, the younger (and living) Willoughby quietly went to the attic, opening the trunk just to be choked by (not so) mysterious ghostly white hands that appeared from the sleeves of a fancy dress.

The murder committed by Perdita thus opened the gates for the returning of the dead, as this betrayal could be classified as an event that “ought to have remained hidden and secret, and yet comes to light” (FREUD, 1919, p. 369–70 apud SAVOY, 2002, p. 376). It was pushed into light by the feeling of betrayal and rage that remained attached to Viola's soul. As affirmed by Hogle (2002), “the threat to the family lies in its own depths, in the strain of madness and ‘melancholia’ that had been unsuccessfully ‘exorcized’” (HOGLE, 2002, p. 173). Consequently, this act of betrayal inflicted by Perdita could have set a behavior pattern in their bloodline. Later, in Henry (the Wingrave children's uncle) and Dominic Wingrave's (the Wingrave children's father) generation, there is also an act of betrayal between siblings. It is suspected that, by having an affair with his brother's wife, Henry could possibly be Flora's father. In the narrative, we have one more generation of siblings, which is the current one: Flora and Miles. Considering these past events, could Flora and Miles be doomed to betray each other in some type of way, echoing the behavior of the ones that came before them?

### 3.2.1.3 SHE WOULD SLEEP, SHE WOULD WAKE, SHE WOULD WALK... BUT FORGET

Bruhm argues that “(...) loss is usually material (parents, money, property, freedom to move around, a lover, or family member), but the materiality of that loss always has a psychological and symbolic dimension to it” (BRUHM, 2002, p. 263). Following the narrative, it can be said that Viola lost it all: the parents, as in the beginning of the miniseries we are informed that her dead father was a widowed man; the money and property, as an ill woman she did not have the vigor to enjoy it; the freedom to move around, as the lung forced

her to be isolated in a room that was not even hers; a lover, as she could not act as an ordinary wife to Lloyd anymore; and a family member, her daughter, who she could not be near in fear of risking the girl's health. Even though these elements were not in fact gone, they seemed to be out of reach to the older Willoughby, as she was not allowed to interact with them anymore.

All the events described above can be understood as traumatic events, as Caruth (1996) postulates: "Freud indicates suggestively, [that a traumatic experience] is an experience that is not fully assimilated as it occurs" (CARUTH, 1996, p. 5), that is, they seem to be continuously present in Viola's life as a gap. Under the psychological analysis of the Gothic, we desire the lost object or another object, person, or practice that could take its place (HOGLE, 2002, p. 263). In that sense, the dead Willoughby sister now does not fill the trunk only with her heirloom to her daughter, but the memory of her husband and the little girl, adding also her love for them and, finally, her hope of reuniting with her family again. Consequently, the object not only does become a symbol of her loss, but it also symbolizes her expectations of meeting her daughter again.

When waking up from her death, Viola is lying on a bed, covered in rose petals and a transparent white fabric, especially her face (Episode 8, 2020, 37'6" - 37'18"), which could be related to her cause of death. The elements disposed on her body are the same that she used to cover the jewelry and fancy clothing before securing them inside the trunk. In that sense, the space inside the trunk simulates a room, with a wardrobe, a bed, and a mirror. In replacing her lost "objects" for the content in the trunk, Viola recreates an already known space to rest her soul while waiting for the day her daughter would finally use the heirloom. In there, she performs her old repetitive habit to deal with restless feelings again and again: she would sleep, she would wake, she would walk around the room. Performing this coping mechanism, Viola goes through the acceptance of her death, understanding that she is no longer alive and that that place is a limbo where she is doomed to wait for her daughter to open the trunk. To the woman's disappointment, when the door to the room (a symbol for the lid of the trunk) is finally opened, Viola faces no one but Perdita. The dead sister, visibly furious, chokes the living one, causing Perdita's death scene mentioned here in the previous section.

**Figure 3** - Viola covered with fabric and petals



Source: Episode 8, 2020, 37'09"

Aiming to not lose anyone again, Lloyd and his daughter decide to throw the trunk in the lake, drowning Viola's spirit along. This action provokes a feeling of abandonment and loneliness, as it "shattered Viola's heart" (Episode 8, 2020, 45'1"). She then, out of stubbornness again, decides to not go and stay at the grounds of Bly instead. Thus, Viola ignored the pull of the next world, creating her own gravity. In that way, the ghost of the Willoughby older sister becomes the beacon that attracts the ghosts of the ones who died in the grounds of Bly, imprisoning them in the property.

Consequently, the abandonment seems to motivate the opening of the gap provoked by the previous events, originating once more restless emotions in the deceased Willoughby. Said emotions can be caused by trauma, which is defined by Caruth as "a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind" (CARUTH, 1996, p.3). Since what remained of Viola here is not her mind, as she forgets everything, but her spirit, I will take the freedom to say that the death of her beloved father, the illness, the stubbornness of not dying and having to watch her family move on from her, and finally her murder were wounds made to her spirit, as she, as a ghost, still reflected these events in her behavior. Therefore, the ghost again repeats a habit she used to have when alive: she would sleep, she would wake, and she would walk.

At first seeking for her daughter, she wanders around the house, visiting the bedroom that used to be hers. As time passes, Viola slowly forgets what her aim in walking was. Bruhm (2002) explains that trauma destroys what is called "narrative memory", that is, the

capacity of processing a life event using coherence and analytical understanding (BRUHM, 2002, p. 269). The outcome of not accepting the absence of her family is the incapability of retaining her memories and her own physical appearance as she begins to fade, resulting in a blur of what she once was. Thus, having forgotten her objective, Viola takes people she encounters in her walk, drowning them in the lake. One of the victims she made was the valet, Peter Quint, who is the first ghost appearance the audience witness.

**Figure 4** - Viola with a faded face



Source: Episode 8, 2020, 51'53"

#### 3.2.1.4 DANI'S INVITATION

In episode 9, when the Lady of the Lake is taking Flora to the water with her, Dani runs into the lake to try to save the little girl. In a desperate attempt, the au pair shouts a phrase long known to the ghost: "It's you, it's me, it's us." (Episode 9, 2020, 10'52" - 10'58") That way, Dani is inviting Viola's spirit to enter her permanently and the Lady of the Lake accepts. Consequently, that action results in the release of all spirits that were trapped in Bly. After these events, the residents of Bly prepare to leave the manor: Jamie is cleaning the house, Owen is mourning Hannah's death and Henry is helping the kids get ready to live with him. In Dani's room, the au pair is having a conversation with the gardener about how she feels hosting Viola's spirit:



I feel her. In here. So quiet, so quiet... She's in here. And this part of her is in here. It's quiet but it isn't peaceful. It's rage. And I have this feeling that I'm walking through this dense, overgrown jungle and I can't really see anything except the path right in front of me. But I know there's this thing hidden, this angry, empty, lonely beast watching me, matching my movements. It's just out of sight, but I can feel it. (...) She's waiting. At some point, she's gonna take me. (Episode 9, 2020, 16'40" - 19'41")

After 5 years of peace living with Jamie, the past emerges once again to the surface and Viola gradually becomes part of the au pair's life one more time: Dani starts to see the ghost in glasses, mirrors, and reflected in the water. Therefore, with the resurgence of Viola's curse, the au pair experiences the same symptoms the ghosts had: "It's like everyday I feel myself fading away, but I'm still here and... I don't really understand how that is." (Episode 9, 2020, 33'38" - 33'45"). One night, after having a nightmare about choking Jamie, Dani decides to leave her and return to the manor. Jamie follows her, traveling to Bly and entering the lake just to encounter the au pair's body lying on the bottom. As cited by Sena, "there is the case where the evil is within the haunted house, usually in the form of a secret from the past that will not stop tormenting the residents until the issue is solved. The latter often ends with the destruction of the house or the death of its residents"<sup>8</sup> (SENA, 2017, p. 39 apud MAJLINGÓVA, 2011, p. 20). Even though the gardener tried to be taken as well and as explained by the narrator, the Lady of the Lake is also Dani now, and Dani refuses to take anyone else with her. The au pair, then, sacrificed herself to protect her loved ones and to put an end to her suffering, taking Viola with her.

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<sup>8</sup> Texto original: "(...) há o caso em que o mal está contido dentro da casa assombrada, normalmente na forma de um segredo do passado que não irá parar de atormentar os moradores até que a situação seja resolvida. Este último caso frequentemente termina com a destruição da casa ou com a morte de seus moradores."

**Figure 5** - Dani at the bottom of the lake



Source: Episode 9, 2020, 38'40"

### 3.2.2. PETER QUINT

#### 3.2.2.1. LIFE STORY

Peter Quint was a young handsome Scottish man who worked as a valet to the children's uncle, Henry Wingrave. He is the first ghost in the manor that the audience has contact with, although we do not know he is already dead. The valet appears to Dani, the au pair, in one of the towers of the manor (Episode 1, 2020, 35' 45"). In the main narrative, Quint is also the first victim of the Lady in the Lake that the audience witnesses.

**Figure 6 - Quint's first appearance**

Source: Episode 1, 2020, 35' 45"

He has a manipulative personality, as it is demonstrated in Episode 3: he is presented buying fancy and expensive clothing and alcohol with “Tainted Love” by Soft Cell as a soundtrack. Later, we discover that it is for his boss, Henry Wingrave, as he does errands and other services for him. Thus, the valet participated in the choosing of a governess, which turns out to be Rebecca Jessel. He met her before the interview at the office, explaining that he worked ‘with’ Mr. Wingrave, and not ‘to’ him, exposing that he has a way with words. He also put Rebecca Jessel’s documents and photo on the top of the papers Henry is holding, as Mr. Wingrave says “We both know you don’t make mistakes” (Episode 3, 2020, 5’39” - 5’42”). After this hiring moment and some flirty conversations with the governess, Peter visited the manor during one of Jessel’s tutoring sessions to the kids with the excuse that he picked some beautiful flowers that deserved to be given to a beautiful woman. The valet then proceeded to hand them to Flora, suggesting her to share, while looking at Jessel. As time passes, their relationship bloomed into an intense, but quite secret, romance. In one of their encounters, Quint expressed how he felt around Jessel by saying “I feel hopeful. And that doesn’t happen often to me” (Episode 3, 2020, 22’40” - 22’54”).

Quint came from a poor and unstable home with an abusive father, leading to a disturbed relationship with both of his parents. Later, when Quint is already dead and stuck in a repetitive memory during a “dream hopping<sup>9</sup>” experience, we learn that he was sexually

<sup>9</sup> Dream hopping, in the miniseries, is when the characters are pulled into reliving a memory, be it good or bad. It is equivalent to the expression “tucked away” further mentioned in this analysis.

abused by his father and that his mother did nothing neither to prevent it nor to provide some comfort to her son. This event in Quint's life will be analyzed more deeply in the next section. When released from a mental institute, Quint's mother came to his apartment to ask for money, threatening him of telling his father where he lived and also of blackmailing him by telling his boss about his juvenile records. This situation was the major force behind the valet's actions in Bly, resulting in a plan to steal Mr. Wingrave's money. In spite of developing a relationship with Jessel, Quint proceeded with the plan and stole a great amount of money.

#### 3.2.2.2. DEATH STORY

One night, Quint encountered the kids in the corridor alleging that they heard something strange downstairs, but he demanded them to go back to bed. Quint then went to the prohibited wing of the manor, where the children's deceased parent's belongings were, and stole a necklace from a drawer. On his way back, the valet encountered the children again but was intercepted by the Lady in the Lake, who grabbed him by the neck. The kids horrifyingly watched Quint being dragged downstairs.

#### 3.2.2.3. DREAM HOPPING

In an episode of "dream hopping", Quint is dragged to a situation where he talks to his mother. When the dead valet senses that he is being tucked away, for he hears insistent and gradually louder knocks on a door, he complains, visibly uncomfortable for being forced to remember that moment. In the scene, he opens the door to his mother and she enters examining the place and Quint himself. The woman explained that she was just released, implying that she was kept in some kind of mental institution. The valet then realized that she went for him for money following his father's orders, and the mother then proceeded to threaten him, first using his father: "You know he'd kill you if he could" (Episode 7, 2020, 7'52" - 7'57"). This speech seemed to trigger Quint, as he starts to cry:

I was a kid back then, I didn't understand what was happening to me. I didn't know what it meant. And you were there. You were there to tell me it was okay. That what he was doing was okay. You said I was being silly. (Episode 7, 2020, 40'02" - 40'27")

In this scene, it was strongly implied that the valet was sexually abused by his father. As a result, as time passed, the bond Quint had with the man was destroyed. Savoy (2002) postulates that Freudian theory justifies that the rise of melancholia is provoked when:

the subject has sustained an ambivalent and unresolved relation to a lost object: the mourner turns the residual anger felt for the lost object – a parent, say – inward onto the ego, in a narcissistic identification with the lost object. This identification incorporates the lost object in order to recover and preserve it. (SAVOY, 2002, p. 173)

The lost object, in this case, is the healthy relationship between Quint and his father, in addition to the integrity and ownership of the valet's own body. While the others "hop" in different – pleasant and unpleasant – memories, Quint is only able to be "tucked" in this one, signaling how much this situation affected his later life and how much of an open wound it is.

In Episode 3, Quint gifts Miles, the older Wingrave child, with a lighter that used to belong to the valet's father, explaining that "It's a little piece of him. One of the only nice bits, really" (Episode 3, 2020, 29'04" - 29'09"). Therefore, it could be understood that, although unaware, Miles is accepting (welcoming?) a part of Quint's trauma. Consequently, this "trade" could be related to one of the later actions of Quint: possessing Miles. As explained by Caruth (1996), "the experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will" (CARUTH, 2002, p. 2). Accordingly, Quint is doomed to repeat what was done to him through possession: violating someone's body as his own was, too, violated in some way by a masculine adult figure.

The valet's whole personality is built in the desire to deny his past and conquer a new life for himself, whatever it costs. When the mother entered the house, she said repeatedly "Look at this. And look at you." (Episode 3, 2020, 6'37" - 6'43"), referring to the allegedly nice apartment he was living in, as well as the good clothes he was wearing. Quint seemed to be pursuing a different life, aiming to climb in the social pyramid, living the experiences he desires through Henry's tasks and hiding his old self. In one of his conversations with Miss Jessel, Dani's predecessor, he says that "(...) you may not know it to look at me, but there is a ceiling that I too cannot break through" (Episode 3, 2020, 22'14' - 22'20"). In that sense, the fact that he possesses other people's bodies could be also related to his strong desire of living a different life, that is, being someone else. Quint's life seems to be filled with unfortunate experiences and events, which are apparently still triggering to him.

When being able to appear to Jessel, Quint explains that the ones who die in Bly are doomed to be trapped there forever. He explains to her that he learned how to possess a living body with the other ghosts in the manor and shows her by entering her body. The couple tries to exit the Bly grounds, but while Jessel keeps running off the property, Quint's spirit is retained by the Lady's gravity. The valet then, moved by the dread of being left behind, takes advantage of a moment when Jessel is tucked in a good memory of them to possess her body and heads to the lake. Intending to drown her, Quint makes the governess enter the water but is startled by the vision of his own decomposing body lying on the bottom of the lake. At that moment, the valet leaves Jessel's body, letting her drown alone. Therefore, Quint's return from the dead could be related to two factors: his death and his love. For the fact that Quint disappeared one night from the manor and his body is disposed of at the bottom of the lake, no one besides the ghosts and the children know that he is dead. In many scenes where the manor receives mysterious phone calls, the employees think that it is Quint calling because Dani reported that she has seen him around the property and also because they believe Quint does not know Jessel is dead. In that sense, his death is a secret. Regarding love and as said before, Quint's life seems to be filled with traumatic events that led to unpleasant feelings. When the valet finally meets someone that he desires to be around and build a life together, this opportunity is ripped off his life by the Lady's hands, resulting in an unsolved issue.

#### 3.2.2.4. POSSESSION AND FORESHADOWING

Besides its relation with trauma, Quint's act of possessing Miles also works as a foreshadowing device in the miniseries. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, foreshadowing is "the organization and presentation of events and scenes in a work of fiction or drama so that the reader or observer is prepared to some degree for what occurs later in the work". In that sense, in the first episode, we discover that Miles used to study at a Christian boarding school, but was expelled. In episode 2, it is shown that Miles is involved in some violent events: first, he climbs a tree until he reaches a dangerous height and jumps from there (Episode 2, 2020, 12'51" - 13'22"); second, he engages in a physical fight with a friend, choking the boy to unconsciousness (Episode 2, 2020, 15'05" - 15'44"); and finally, he kills the priests' white pet pigeon, placing it on an open bible at the school's church (Episode 2, 2020, 20' - 20'08"). Later, we discover that Miles received a drawing from Flora asking him to go back home. Therefore, all these violent acts were oriented by Quint in order to take him

home and reunite the ghosts' vessels so they can continue with their plans of escaping the Bly grounds.

It is also noticeable that the child displays some adult behavior, which the people from the manor find very uncommon for Miles as they perceive him as a sweet and polite boy, but blame it on the recent loss the children had. Miles speaks in a very flirtatious way, using words like “dear” with the women in the house, and even kissing Dani’s hand when they meet for the first time. In one scene, when Dani is changing clothes, Miles is caught peeking through the door crack and does not seem ashamed of it, for he continues his talk with her. His body language is also uncommon for a ten-year-old child, as he walks and stands with his hands behind his body. In addition to that, the boy is also caught smoking and even performs some angry outbursts, like swearing and talking back to adults, especially Hannah, who the valet did not have a good relationship with.

**Figure 7 - Miles kissing Dani’s hand**



Source: Episode 1, 2020, 19'12”

### 3.2.3. REBECCA JESSEL

#### 3.2.3.1. LIFE STORY

Rebecca Jessel, commonly addressed as Miss Jessel by the people from Bly, is the previous au pair who worked for Henry Wingrave to take care of the Wingrave children. In one of her conversations with Quint, she told him that she used to have a close relationship

with her father, but their relationship deteriorated as she started to speak up and become more independent. Besides that, her father also did not approve of her desire of becoming a barrister. Regardless of her father's opinion, Jessel studied Public Law, which motivated her decision of applying for the position at Bly for Henry works in a law firm. In that sense, she hoped to use the job and her acquaintance with Lord Wingrave to earn a pupillage. Jessel later explains that she abandoned her law studies because of the sexual harassment many women suffer in this field.

Jessel was an intelligent and sharp-tongued woman. In episode 3, when Jessel is about to be interviewed by Henry, she was told she had a stain in her blouse but fixed it by putting her hair on top, brushing it off. When entering the room, Henry made the same comment, to which she answered "The children are what? Seven and nine? I expect being precious about blouses won't serve me well" (Episode 3, 2020, 4' - 4'08"). She had a good relationship with the people from Bly, especially Flora, who seemed to become very fond of her as she even copied her speech and mannerisms (the expression "perfectly splendid", in particular). Among the people from Bly, Jessel became romantically interested in Quint, but as the relationship between them started growing more serious, she discovered that he could be violent and manipulative at times, but maintained the relationship nonetheless. When the valet disappeared, the employees assumed that he had run away, including Jessel, who was crestfallen and deeply heartbroken at the idea of being abandoned. She was often seen melancholic, quiet, and inattentive.

### 3.2.3.2. DEATH STORY

When Quint starts appearing to her as a ghost, he explains that he can possess the living and talks to her about entering her body so they could be together. Quint, not bearing the fact they would fail in living together in these conditions, suggests entering her body permanently, asking her to say the words "it's me, it's you, it's us" and promising they would be equals this time. The valet led his lover to the lake so they could be together in death. Jessel, unaware of Quint's intention of drowning her, agreed to the deal, and only understood his intentions once she was left alone to endure the water in her lungs. While being possessed, Jessel is 'tucked away' into a good memory of theirs: one night, the two were together in Jessel's room at the manor, lying in bed. As she sinks, the dream-hopping room also starts to fill with water and Quint is not seen anymore. The next morning, Jamie sees Flora standing at the margin of the lake, looking at it. When she approaches the little girl, she



sees Jessel's dead body floating face down. It was assumed that she committed suicide due to Quint's abandonment. In this scene, the audience is able to see Jessel's ghost screaming and crying at the opposite margin (Episode 7, 2020, 34'13" - 34'35"). As a result, Jessel's spirit is now gravitating in Viola's orbit just like Quint's.

**Figure 8** - Jessel crying after seeing her dead body



Source: Episode 7, 2020, 34'30"

Considering what Jessel reported and what we witnessed, we could say that she had unsuccessful relationships with men. First, distancing from her father, second, assuming she would be harassed by men in her workplace; and, finally, her awry romance with Peter Quint. These patterns of events are

particularly striking because they seem not to be initiated by the individual's own acts but rather appear as the possession of some people by a sort of fate, a series of painful events to which they are subjected, and which seem to be entirely outside their wish or control. (CARUTH, 1996, p. 2)

In that sense, the pattern observed here is that those men she got involved with seemed to invalidate and violate Jessel in some way. She is seen as an intelligent, independent, and strong-willed woman. In spite of that, her father does not validate her desires and who she wanted to become, discrediting Jessel herself. Men from work would objectify her, ignoring her capability and study to harass her. In episode 3, Jessel explains to Quint that three women she knew that got a pupillage to work as a barrister left within the first

year because of harassment. She also added, “A sea of old men trying to run a hand up your skirt every day for six months while you try to persuade them that your brain isn’t between your legs” (Episode 3, 2020, 20’44” - 20’50”). After that, Quint proceeded to imply how smart she was, too good for that “nanny” job, describing her plan of charming the family first, impressing Henry to earn the pupilage, and leap over “the hands”. He finished by saying “I see you, Rebecca” (Episode 3, 2020, 21’31” - 21’33”). Although Peter did not seem to objectify her and admired her intelligence, and even felt passion, it did not prevent him from invalidating her as well. In this case, he invalidates her will of living, entering her body to violate her not sexually, but physically and psychologically, murdering her.

### 3.2.3.3. PRESENCE, POSSESSION, AND FORESHADOWING

Among the children, the one designated for Jessel to use as a vessel to live out of Bly is Flora. The deceased au pair and the little girl built a close relationship for the moment they met, Flora was already walking and holding hands with her around the Bly grounds, showing the place. As said before, the girl even copied Jessel’s way of talking as the expression “perfectly splendid” is repeatedly said when Dani arrives at the manor.

Differently from Quint’s possession over Miles, the foreshadowing does not come from the possession itself, but from the presence of Jessel’s ghost. In some scenes, it is noticeable that Flora is looking at someone or even talking to someone who cannot be seen. In episode 1, when Dani is helping Flora with a bath, they are talking about the bubbles in the bathtub when the girl laughs, looking over the au pair’s shoulder. When Dani looks over too, Flora notices a butterfly clip on her hair, which makes her frown almost immediately, and asks where the au pair got the object, saying that she should not have that as it used to belong to Miss Jessel. Dani proceeds to explain that it was Miles who gave it to her, but we cannot be certain if it was really the boy or Quint disguised as him. Looking over to Dani’s shoulders again, Flora nods and smiles, correcting herself: “I was wrong. It’s actually fine” (Episode 1, 2020, 26’06” - 26’09”). Thus, the girl seems to have a constant presence that she looks for orientation and approval.

Also in episode 1, when Dani is talking to Miles while tucking him to sleep, he asks about the hair clip. When Dani explains that Flora seemed to be a little upset, Miles responds “She is always a little upset” (Episode 1, 2020, 27’40” - 27’43”). Again, in this moment, we cannot tell if this conversation is happening between Miles and Dani about Flora, or Quint

and Dani about Jessel, as the deceased au pair has a great amount of influence on the little girl.

### 3.2.4. HANNAH GROSE

#### 3.2.4.1. LIFE STORY

Hannah was the housekeeper of Bly manor. It is known that she worked in Bly since before the death of the Wingrave children's parents, except she was not a live-in employee. After Sam, Hannah's husband, left her for another woman, she decided to accept Charlotte's invitation and took a live-in position at the manor. Hannah is a serious, but kind woman and seems to take great pride for the house she works at.

The housekeeper used to have a good relationship with the children and also with the majority of the other employees of Bly. Amongst them, it is noticeable that she had a special relationship with Owen, with whom she exchanged shy flirty conversations and looks.

#### 3.2.4.2. DEATH STORY

Hannah dies shortly before the new au pair's arrival. The housekeeper is pushed into a well by Peter Quint while possessing Miles' body. She falls on her neck, staring eternally at a crack in the wall. It is noticeable that Hannah and Quint did not have a good relationship: the housekeeper caught the valet stealing from Charlotte's belongings, caught Quint and Jessel in the prohibited wing while Jessel was wearing Charlotte's fur coat, had a negative opinion on their relationship, and also spotted Miles (possessed by Quint) smoking, which she thought was Quint's influence on the child. In that sense, Quint might have thought that Hannah interfered too much as moments before pushing her, the valet says "You're such a bore and you don't know when to leave well enough alone" (Episode 5, 2020, 46'50" - 46'57").

Bruhm (2002) explains that the Gothic itself is a narrative of trauma and that its characters "usually experience some horrifying event that profoundly affects them, destroying (at least temporarily) the norms that structure their lives and identities" (p. 268). At first, after dying (which is the traumatic event), Hannah still manages to perform her daily activities, while the other ghosts had difficulty in touching and holding objects, as we can see when Quint tries to touch Jessel (Episode 7, 2020, 18'16" - 18'21"). This difference between Hannah and the other ghosts could possibly be due to the fact that the housekeeper does not know or strongly denies that she is dead, that is, denies the trauma and delays the processing

of this event. Thus, Hannah can be seen by and can interact with the living. She also continuously dream hops, trying to keep herself and her memories safe. Exceptionally, the housekeeper even has access to other people's memories. As time passes, Hannah will eventually experience what Viola went through and what all the other ghosts of Bly are doomed to: forgetting. In her case, we have the opportunity to see it at an early stage.

As discussed in section 3.2.1.3, experiencing a traumatic event can affect our "narrative memory". Therefore, the memories that Hannah chooses to relive become gradually more confusing and also incorporate new elements, such as the characters in that memory asking why she is there or commenting on present events. As a manner to ground herself and avoid forgetfulness, the housekeeper starts to repeat her name, the year, and where she currently is. According to Bruhm (2002), "images of haunting, destruction and death, obsessive return to the shattering moment, forgetfulness or unwanted epiphany" (BRUHM, 2002, p. 268) can all cross a traumatized character's mind. Consequently, at a certain point, Hannah is trapped in what possibly is her favorite memory: the day she interviewed Owen Sharma to the position of cook at the manor.

**Figure 9** - Owen and Hannah



Source: Episode 7, 2020, 54'06"

The characters seem to be performing an act, as in some cases Owen helps Hannah remember what she was supposed to say or where they have stopped. When she asks Owen why they are living that situation again, the cook argues that she is the one that should

explain it since it is all her mind and that he is, in fact, a part of her. In that sense, even though denying her death, this might be the way she encountered to deal with the traumatic experience of being murdered. As Caruth (1995) postulates:

there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience (...). (CARUTH, 1995 apud BRUHM, 2002, p. 268)

This behavior only ceases when the housekeeper gets to live the traumatic experience again, being forced to process what happened. Miles, possessed by Quint, guides Hannah through the garden of Bly to show her a “surprise”. Using Warner Bros’ animated character Wile E. Coyote, Quint describes what Hannah has been doing: even though she has passed the cliff (death) and there is no more ground to run (no more life to live), she keeps going. The possessed child then forces Hannah to look into the well. Frightened, the housekeeper is hesitant at first, but finally looks down, seeing her dead body and having the realization that she is dead. There lies her “unwanted epiphany”.

### 3.2.4.3. HABITS AND FORESHADOWING

As Hannah’s death is very recent, she is still holding on to her life habits at Bly. On the one hand, although dead, Hannah still takes care of the manor, performing her routine of cleaning and taking care of the children. On the other hand, she does not perform some crucial aspects of the living. And here lies the foreshadowing.

While the other residents of Bly are often seen drinking and eating together, Hannah does not. When questioned, Hannah often replies that she has already eaten, that she will eat later, or that one of the adults needs to stay sober. She’s distractible, and often shown looking off into the distance as if in a trance. In addition to that, Hannah frequently touches a spot on the back of her head, looking confused. The housekeeper also sees cracks in the walls of the manor and even asks Jamie, the gardener, to take a look at them. However, Jamie says to Hannah that she did not find the crack. The pattern of the crack is always the same and it appears randomly around the house. Later, we discover that this specific crack was probably the last thing Hannah saw before dying, as it was on the wall of the well.

**Figure 10** - Hannah seeing a crack on the wall



Source: Episode 5, 2020, 17'29"

In episode 1, Hannah is seen in the church of Bly lighting candles. There are four candles in total that she lights religiously and sits in front of them. Thus, this habit of lighting four candles could also be a foreshadowing tool. When we think about the number of dead people that the living of Bly acknowledge, we have three: Charlotte, Dominic, and Jessel. No one amongst the living, aside from the children, knows that Quint is dead and all employees think that he is just missing. Thus, Hannah could be lighting the fourth candle, even unknowingly, to herself.

**Figure 11** - Hannah in the church



Source: Episode 1, 2020, 41'23"

### 3.2.5 MINOR GHOSTS OF BLY

The minor ghosts of Bly are some of the deceased that are trapped in its grounds, doomed to orbit in Viola's gravity. When presented to the Lady in the Lake's backstory, the audience witnesses some of the victims she made along her journey of death. Therefore, some of these victims are the plague doctor, the little boy, and Perdita. The plague doctor was murdered for he was in Viola's way. When she returned to the house for the first time after sleeping, the manor had turned into a shelter for the ill. Viola heads straight to where it used to be her room and the doctor intercepts her, warning of the plague. Without hesitation, Viola chokes him. The little boy is a child Viola encountered in her room when she returned to take her daughter. As Viola's memories are already fading away at that moment, she is only capable of remembering that she is expecting to see a child on her bed, then taking the boy with her. Finally, as described in depth in section 3.2.1.2, Perdita is murdered out of revenge, for she opened Viola's trunk.

**Figure 12** - Little boy's ghost



Source: Episode 6, 2020, 60'07"

Caruth (1996) includes in her analysis of trauma Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), as she says that his thoughts are that "what returns to haunt the trauma victim (...) is not just any event but, significantly, the shocking and unexpected occurrence of an accident" (CARUTH, 1996, p. 6). Therefore, what could bring these unrested souls back to "life", besides Viola's gravity, is the unexpectancy of their death. Although we do not have details of two of these ghosts' early lives, all of their deaths were sudden, causing confusion. In that sense, we have here a feeling of uneasiness and injustice, that is, the "shamed" sensation mentioned in here before.



#### 4. CONCLUSION

As mentioned in this work, the Gothic encompasses a myriad of cultural manifestations of transgression, marginality, and otherness. In that sense, the Gothic can be expressed in multiple ways such as architecture, art, cinema, and literature, for example. Aiming to focus on narratives, the essential elements in the structuring of a gothic story were presented here: the *locus horribilis*, the ghostly relationship with a past that returns to haunt us, and the monstrosity originated in human nature or psychopathologies. The present analysis demonstrates that *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020) includes all three: the Bly manor is classified as a *locus horribilis*, since it serves as the setting for the events that the narrative follows and also oppresses not only the dead by imprisoning them in its grounds, but also the living to some extent, as they are subjected to the threats the dead inhabitants of the house offer. Concerning the resurgence of the past, the Lady in the Lake's constant apparitions sustain the insistent presence of older times, reinforcing that the unresolved issues and secret events can still affect the current residents of the house. Finally, the transformation of Viola into the monstrous figure relies on the trauma of being murdered, her rage for having been betrayed, and sadness stemming from her sense of abandonment, resulting in a stubborn will to stay and in the numerous deaths over the years.

Although covering a great number of aspects related to the impact of the ghosts' trauma on their post-death actions and the living, a gap is still left to investigate: the impact of the living's trauma on their relationship with the ghosts. Thus, further research on the show could aim to provide a deeper analysis of Danielle Cleyton, seeking to research the possibility of classifying the au pair as the traditional gothic heroine. In addition to that, it would also be interesting to conduct a study on Cleyton's previous trauma concerning her fiancé and her sexual orientation, discussing the impact it could possibly have on her decision to invite Viola inside herself.

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## 6. APPENDIX

### 6.1. CHARACTER MAP

#### 6.1.1 THE DEAD

##### 6.1.1.1 BLY GHOSTS

##### 6.1.1.1.2. VIOLA WILLOUGHBY/LLOYD

One of the heir sisters that lives in the Bly Manor during the 1600s. Although she becomes ill, she dies choked by her sister, Perdita. Later on, she becomes the Lady of the Lake.

##### 6.1.1.1.3. PERDITA WILLOUGHBY/LLOYD

Willoughby younger sister who murders Viola out of rage. Perdita marries Arthur Lloyd after Viola's death. She dies, also strangled by her sister, while opening Viola's trunk.

##### 6.1.1.1.4. PETER QUINT

Henry Wingrave's valet. Quint is murdered by the Lady of the Lake in the night he plans on escaping the manor with all the Wingrave's money. Quint has a fling with Rebecca Jessel.

##### 6.1.1.1.5. REBECCA JESSEL

The governess of Bly Manor before Daniele Cleyton. She is murdered by Peter Quint, who possesses her body and drowns her in the lake.

##### 6.1.1.1.6. HANNAH GROSE

Manager of Bly Manor. Hannah works for the Wingrave family for years and has a close relationship with them, except Henry Wingrave. She has a romantic interest in Owen Sharma, the cook. Hannah is murdered by Peter Quint, who possessed Miles' body.

#### 6.1.1.1.7. EDMUND O'MARA

O'Mara was Daniele Cleyton's fiancé. After having an argument about canceling the wedding, O'Mara is hit by a truck. His image then appears to Cleyton for years.

#### 6.1.1.2. THE NON-GHOSTS

##### 6.1.1.2.1. CHARLOTTE WINGRAVE

Charlotte is the Wingrave children's mother. She had an affair with Henry. Charlotte died in a car accident in India.

##### 6.1.1.2.2. DOMINIC WINGRAVE

Dominic is Miles' father and, possibly, Flora's uncle. He died in a car accident, with Charlotte, in India.

#### 6.1.2. THE LIVING

##### 6.1.2.1. BLY EMPLOYEES

##### 6.1.2.1.1. DANIELE "DANI" CLEYTON

Dani is the new governess of Bly. She sees the Bly ghosts and has a great relationship with the living people of Bly. Dani marries Jamie Taylor, the gardener, but ends up sacrificing her life to put the Lady of the Lake to rest.

##### 6.1.2.1.2. JAMIE TAYLOR

Jamie is the gardener of Bly. She is the narrator of the story and marries Dani, living with her for 10 years.

##### 6.1.2.1.3. OWEN SHARMA

Owen is the cook of manor. He is in love with the manager, Hannah Grose.

### 6.1.2.2. THE WINGRAVES

#### 6.1.2.2.1. FLORA WINGRAVE

Flora is the younger Wingrave sibling. She is 8 years-old during the present story. She can see the Bly ghosts and communicate with them. Flora is the vessel for Jessel's spirit.

#### 6.1.2.2.2. MILES WINGRAVE

Miles is Flora's older brother. He's ten years-old during the present story. He can also see the Bly ghosts and communicate with them. Miles is the vessel for Quint's spirit.

#### 6.1.2.2.3. HENRY WINGRAVE

Henry is Miles' uncle and, possibly, Flora's father. He becomes responsible for them after their parents' death. Henry does not live with them and hires Dani to take care of the Children.