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Pain and the Possibility of Spaces Between:
Henry James’s Last Tale

1. Introduction

From his early tales of international episodes that deal with the conflict between the new and old worlds to his last unfinished novel, *The Sense of the Past* (1917), where the reader finds both international and supernatural themes, Henry James dedicated his entire career to depicting the lives of those who inhabit “spaces between.” These include spectators who are essentially excluded from his stories’ incidents or plots; the sexually ambiguous; the lower middle-class and their conflicted position between the middle and working classes; those who see apparitions between the natural and supernatural; and children torn between their parents or adults. As Leon Edel points out, James’s twin naturalist novels, *The Bostonians* (1886) and *The Princess Casamassima* (1886), also feature protagonists who do not truly belong to any community or group (James, *Letters* III 3–4). In addition, James’s ambiguous narrative style also causes the reader to vacillate between contradictory interpretations. In this paper, I will investigate how James’s last completed tale, “A Round of Visits” (1910) collected in *The Finer Grain*, demonstrates his anxiety regarding identity, or, his belonging to “spaces between.” In my study, I use the expressions “spaces between” and “between-ness” as I believe they evoke a sense of physical and psychological space between countries, things, people, or ideas, where James belonged and created his art.

The tales collected in *The Finer Grain* have received less critical attention than James’s other stories because they are often considered a sort of “appendage”
(Hocks 2) to the New York Edition, a monumental 24-volume collection of his works. However, they represent the author’s whole career as they were created shortly after his comprehensive revision of his entire body of work for the collection. In addition, given the author’s biography, the collected tales reflect his anxiety about his identity; as Hugh Stevens notes, the late short stories “attend to the construction of identities, rather than to the expression of identities already constituted” and “[i]dentity in James’s late fiction is both burden and necessity” (117). In the following sections, after giving an overview of the situation in which James was mired in 1908, I will explore the text of James’s last work to clarify how both the protagonist and author recognize and attempt to reconcile their anxieties of identity. Through my discussion, I seek to demonstrate that his last tale signifies not only his anxiety in relation to his belonging, but also his attempt to affirm his identity as a novelist both belonging to and depicting the spaces between.

2. Background of The Finer Grain

As is well known, Henry James suffered from severe depression and an eventual nervous breakdown from 1908 through 1910, during which time he wrote the stories in The Finer Grain. In October 1908, James received a letter from his agent James Brand Pinker, informing him that the royalty for the first installment of the New York Edition would be very low—“a meagre $211” (Edel 434)—and this news “knocked [him] rather flat” (James, Life in Letters 468). Four years previously, James’s revisit to his native country after more than twenty years of absence had brought him both honorary and pecuniary success. The American people had hailed him a master, and the series of lectures on Balzac that James gave in several major cities had attracted large audiences and revenue. After returning to England, James devoted himself to the publication of the New York Edition, the first installment of which appeared in America in December 1907. This contrast to the homage he had received in his native country some years before probably amplified his shock and soon after receiving this news, James became both physically and psychologically unwell. On February 25, 1909, he consulted Dr. James Mackenzie, the famous London cardiologist, in the fear that he was suffering from angina pectoris, before finally succumbing to a severe nervous breakdown in 1910 (Mair 286–87, quoted in Janowitz and Tintner 297–98).

In addition to the shock James received in October 1908, there were complex
reasons for his breakdown, including his exhaustion from nearly four years of toil and anxiety about his financial instability. Moreover, both his own illness and that of his brother William troubled the author. Apart from these personal reasons, the social circumstances of the time may have increased his anxiety. As mentioned in the introduction, James had always been interested in the lives of those he deemed to belong to “spaces between.” His own geographical between-ness of nations and his sexual ambiguity might have been threatened by the waves of nationalism and jingoism prevalent at the time. As depicted in *The American Scene* (1907), during his visit to America in 1904–1905, James visited several Civil War monuments commemorating heroic figures such as General Ulysses S. Grant and General Robert E. Lee. According to G. Kurt Piehler, in the 1890s and 1900s, there was “a shift in attitude toward war and toward the role of the military in [American] society” with military achievement tending to be associated with nationalism: “During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many national leaders, most notably Theodore Roosevelt, argued that the United States must maintain a large navy and adopt a system of universal military training” (71–72). As a result, The Great White Fleet, America’s navy battle fleet, departed on a voyage in 1907 to demonstrate the United States’ naval power to the world. Meanwhile, in Europe, there was a surge of a new type of nationalism. Unlike the nationalism that had flourished from 1830 to 1870 that is considered "a democratic mass political nationalism of the ‘great nations’ stemming from the citizenship ideals of the French Revolution,” European nationalism at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries comprised a “narrow ethnic or linguistic nationalism” characterized by Bonapartism and the Dreyfus affair (Smith 11; Tanigawa 44–47). Thus, both his personal situation and the surrounding social circumstances must have affected James’s anxiety regarding his nationless state of being, and his feelings of mentally and physically belonging to spaces between.

The five tales of *The Finer Grain* are considered to reflect James’s personal situation at the time he wrote them (Krook 349–52, etc.). Although there are no formal devices to create coherence amongst the five tales and the author had difficulty choosing a title pertinent to all five tales (Anesko, “Last Words” 232), many critics have found a unity in them. Richard S. Lyons indicates the pattern of reversal and loss “of fortune [as well as] of friends and loved ones . . .” (202). Respecting Lyons, Richard A. Hocks observes that “the world in common is that of modernity” within which “[n]one of [the] characters will ever meet, and yet
none of them who do meet ever deeply understand each other” (13). More recently, Michelle Pacht has noted that “The Finer Grain examines with increasing despair the sensitive man’s response to devastating changes occurring in society” (59). Concerning “A Round of Visits,” critics have focused on the author’s relationship with his native land, America. For example, Adeline R. Tinter states, “‘A Round of Visits’ . . . gives us as close a picture of hell as James ever invented, and that hell is for James the reality of New York life” (Twentieth-Century World 33).

Unlike the other four tales, the relationships between the three male characters have been focused on, due to the absence of a “grain woman” in this text. In the other four tales, the protagonists’ relations and visions of grain women move the plots and action: in “The Velvet Glove,” Berridge’s fancies of the celebrities in Parisian society, especially of the princess, are elucidated; in “Mora Montravers,” Sydney’s imaginings of a young couple, especially the woman of the new age, Mora, are rendered; “Crupy Cornelia” develops around White-Mason’s relationship with Mrs. Worthingham, the new New York, and then with Cornelia, the old New York; “The Bench of Desolation” shows how the appearances of Kate and Nan affect Dodd’s vision and fate. “A Round of Visits” also features three women (including Winch’s sister-in-law); however, each encounter is only a brief “visit” and the central problem of the protagonist Mark Monteith is always his own pain, derived from his relationship with his best friend Phil Bloodgood and dealt with in the interaction with his other friend, Newton Winch. He must embrace the bitter feeling forever and try to understand, manage, and coexist with it, which likely reflects James’s similar pain as he was writing this tale. The aim of the next section is to focus on the description of the protagonist’s pain and examine the process by which both the protagonist and the author attempt to manage that pain. I will demonstrate that James’s last story prefigures his process of recovery from his nervous breakdown, as James often realized in real life what he had written in his stories.

3. Tangible Pain and the Sense of Nowhere-ness

Throughout “A Round of Visits,” the protagonist Mark Monteith feels pain. This pain comes from his close friend Phil Bloodgood’s betrayal, but, at the same time, it embodies various aspects of the protagonist’s uneasiness about his own betweenness. Richard P. Gage points out Monteith’s isolation and want of human companionship (232), and Bloodgood’s betrayal represents Monteith’s homeless-ness,
with Monteith feeling as if Bloodgood has left New York with all of Monteith’s old acquaintances. He is an expatriated as well as a temporarily repatriated American, and even the name of the hotel where he stays, “Pocahontas,” symbolizes the conflict between British colonists and Native Americans. Monteith is not merely a victim of fraud, but induced the fraud himself by leaving his property under his friend’s management. Thus, it could even be posited that it is Monteith who has made his best friend a criminal, just as Gray Fielder made Horton Vint a swindler in *The Ivory Tower* (1917). Unlike Gray, however, Monteith induced his friend’s crime by remaining abroad, being considered a “shirker . . . [who] never would come” back to his country (“A Round of Visits” 903). Thus, his cosmopolitan identity, i.e., his geographical between-ness, is an indirect but primordial cause of Monteith’s pain, which he attempts to grasp and digest in the course of the story. Monteith feels pain from the beginning of the text:

. . . it was through information reaching him on Wednesday evening that he had measured his loss, measured above all his pain. These were two distinct things, he felt, and, though both bad, one much worse than the other. It wasn’t till the next three days had pretty well ebbed, in fact, that he knew himself for so badly wounded. (“A Round of Visits” 896)

Despite the fact that he is aware of his pain on Wednesday, he does not realize until the weekend that he is wounded. In other words, it takes more time for him to conceptually recognize his pain or understand its cause. Here, James depicts only the sense of pain without mentioning its cause, implying the superiority of the senses (physical sensation) over intellectual acknowledgment. Although there is a long interval between the physical sensation and intellectual awareness, the description here reminds us of what William James says in his *Psychology: The Briefer Course*: “we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble, and not that we cry, strike, or tremble because we are sorry, angry, or fearful” (243). The sense of pain (yet without an acknowledgement of its cause) is repeatedly mentioned in the opening chapter of the text: “He had waked up on Thursday morning, so far as he had slept at all, with the sense, together, of a blinding New York blizzard and of a deep sore inward ache” (“A Round of Visits” 896). In this scene of morning grief, James metonymically compares Monteith’s “loss,” mentioned in the previous excerpt, with the mammonish city of New York.
and its hostile weather.\textsuperscript{7}

Up to this moment, the pain or ache he feels is some sort of metaphor; it is not exactly a real physical pain or ache but rather a sense of uneasiness or malaise—although accompanied by physical reactions like shallow breathing and rapid heartbeat. However, this, in-a-sense metaphorical inward pain becomes a more tangible, physical pain later on the same day:

Even when in the course of that worse Thursday it had occurred to him for vague relief that the odious certified facts couldn't be all his misery, and that, with his throat and a probable temperature, a brush of the epidemic, which was for ever brushing him, accounted for something, even then he couldn't resign himself to bed and broth and dimness, but only circled and prowled the more within his high cage, only watched the more from his tenth story the rage of the elements. ("A Round of Visits" 897)

In this scene, through his physical sensations, Monteith comes to realize he has the influenza epidemic, a fact that renders him "a vague relief," because he is now able to grasp the cause of the pain that has been plaguing him since the beginning of the story. Thus, Monteith's intangible, metaphoric pain turns into a more concrete and tangible pain from the epidemic, just as James's depression after October 1908 later turned into a cardiologic disorder.\textsuperscript{8}

Nearly ten years previously, James had written a story about a little girl with the anxiety of belonging in which he also compared the child's bitter feelings with physical pain. In \textit{What Maisie Knew} (1897), being too young to describe her complicated feelings with appropriate vocabulary, Maisie tries to grasp the wrench of her parting from her governess, Mrs. Wix, through the practical feelings she has experienced at the dentist shortly before: "The child [Maisie] had lately been to the dentist's and had a term of comparison for the screwed-up intensity of the scene" (416). Here, Maisie needs to employ more physical and concrete experience in order to comprehend the abstract, psychological phenomena that afflict her. This transition from so-called heartache (psychological experience) into the ache from the tooth extraction (physical experience) in \textit{What Maisie Knew} is similar to that seen in "A Round of Visits," although Monteith's influenza is not a metaphor but an actual occurrence. In other words, in this later tale, James significantly turns a psychological experience into a physical one. Likewise, in his auto-
biography, which he launched after publishing *The Finer Grain*, he describes the
pain of being in spaces between through a non-metaphorical physical experience. The well-known incident that is considered to have determined the author’s identity as a cosmopolitan writer is described through the physical experience of being “[j]ammed into the acute angle between two high fences . . . I had done myself, in face of a shabby conflagration, a horrid even if an obscure hurt . . .” (*Notes of a Son and Brother* 297–98). In this critical scene, as Ross Posnock points out, James describes his own identity as being physically “[p]inned in a stance of in-betweenness” (183). His physical status, stuck between high fences, defines his recognition of his own identity, and is connected to the memory of the lasting pain. This linking of physical between-ness, identity, and pain is what we have seen in “A Round of Visits.” Monteith’s New York stay also suggests his physical between-ness; he feels uneasy both in the harsh mid-winter blizzard and in the gaudy, tropical, labyrinthine interior of the hotel. Moreover, the whole structure of the plot implies that Monteith continuously inhabits the middle; indeed, the final scene could be considered a duplication of the first, with Tintner noting that this affinity indicates a concept of roundness in the text as both “ends tie together, the beginning and the final scene” (*Cosmopolitan World* 272). In his last tale and his autobiography respectively, the author describes his protagonist’s and his own belonging to the spaces between, situations that they originally choose but that later torment them. Through tangible experience, Monteith grasps the metaphysical pain “he must now live with always” (“A Round of Visits” 896)—with the waning of the New York blizzard, he recovers from the influenza on Sunday, and realizes that he has been hurt through the intangible, residual pain.

Struggling to swallow the sense of pain he now faces, Monteith then needs someone to listen to his story; he considers that “there was something of his heart’s heaviness he wanted so to give out” (897) and begins a round of visits to transfigure the whole experience into something he can digest:

But he wanted, as with a desperate charity, to give some easier turn to the mere ugliness of the main facts; to work off his obsession from them by mixing with it some other blame, some other pity, it scarce mattered what—if it might be some other experience; as an effect of which larger ventilation it would have, after a fashion and for a man of free sensibility, a diluted and less poisonous taste. (“A Round of Visits” 901)
Although Monteith sets out into the tropical hotel lounge and then into the freezing streets of New York and meets two women, he cannot rationalize his pain as he is forced to listen to their stories rather than tell them his own. Clearly, Monteith needs to verbalize his own experience as the author himself did when he suffered from a nervous breakdown. James explained his illness to William in his letters and, although he was skeptical about Dr. Mackenzie’s prescription, he still felt a temporary ease after consulting the famous cardiologist (Edel 436–39). However, it was the long and thorough process of remembering and narrating his past in the creation of his autobiographies that finally cured him. In 1911, James was diagnosed by a “fashionable” New York doctor, Dr. Joseph Collins, as “display[ing] many of the characteristics of adult infantilism” (452–53), and, as Mikako Ichikawa observes, both the character and the author demonstrate their infantilism in the text of “A Round of Visits” (344). Like a small child yet without a steady identity or the proficiency in describing their own situations with proper vocabulary, both Monteith and James need not only concrete, tangible experience but also the process of verbalization in order to understand their indescribable abysses.

As examined so far, in order to understand his experience, Monteith first needs a process of transforming his intangible experience into a physical one, and then a process of verbalizing the very experience in order to exorcize it. These mirror the processes needed by the author himself to overcome his difficulties when writing the last five tales. However, Monteith is never able to talk and is therefore never free from his pain, because, strangely, his desire to talk is suddenly quenched when Newton Winch, the host of his last visit, asks him to talk about Bloodgood. This may suggest that the protagonist is not yet ready to digest his experiences, as James too was not ready until he began the process of writing his autobiography after his nervous breakdown in 1910. Thus, Monteith can neither be a talker nor a listener, and his feeling towards Bloodgood vacillates between forgiveness and vengeance: he feels pain for his own betrayal in friendship (or love) as well as for Bloodgood who is in hell for what he has done. Belonging to the space between, in the sense that he never reaches or belongs anywhere, nor gains stability, either physically or psychologically, Monteith wanders off to continue his round of visits.
4. Intersubjective Consciousness

Given the helpless situations of Monteith and the nightmarish ending of the tale, many researchers have found that “A Round of Visits” expresses a state of desperation. As seen in the previous section, I also found “A Round of Visits” to be a dark, depressing piece of work; James’s struggle to rationalize his painful situation, derived from his between-ness, is reflected in the embodiment of the protagonist’s painful experience and in an ineffectual process of verbalizing it. However, I believe not only the author’s agony, but also, importantly, his positive efforts to affirm his own identity may be glimpsed in the text.

In the first place, through Winch’s suicide, James tries to terminate his alternative self—what he would have been like if he had stayed in America. In “Providence” (“A Round of Visits” 909), Monteith realizes that it is his destiny to listen to others who need to share their stories, and he decides to visit his invalid friend, Winch. Winch is Monteith’s old friend who remained in America while Monteith was living across the Atlantic. Monteith and Winch are represented as sharing many common features. For example, their residential environments display striking resemblances: they both live on the upper floors of tall New York buildings whose interior decorations show a particular likeness to modern New York style: “The scene was smaller, but the rich confused complexion of the Pocahontas” (910). Moreover, both have been recovering from influenza: it is described as if Monteith’s inward sore “turns into (or, turns out to be)” the flu, while on the other hand, it seems to Winch’s sister-in-law that influenza’s “horrid poison just seemed to have entered into poor Newton’s soul” (903). Their complementary relationship also suggests their likeness when both feel that each other’s case is “interesting” (912), given that Monteith has been searching for someone to take interest in his story. Concerning these similarities between the two characters, Tintner argues that the title of the tale symbolizes the whole structure of the story and that the final scene in Winch’s apartment is a representation of the first scene (Cosmopolitan World 271–72), where Monteith comes down with the flu in Pocahontas. Hocks, who supports the view that Winch is Monteith’s “double,” points out that the final scene “evokes that unmistakable aura of an encounter with one’s own alter ego; it is almost as though James finally gives us the scene between the alter and the ego, so to speak, that did not quite transpire in ‘The Jolly Corner’” (9). While an apparition is in a sense an embodiment of a conception or an idea, the author thus goes further to make it
tangible with flesh and blood. As it is generally considered that Winch mirrors what Monteith would have been like if he had stayed in America instead of going abroad, the ending of the plot is significant: Monteith’s alter ego commits suicide for which Monteith is responsible. It can be said that the author embodies the ghost of his alternative life in order to terminate it—ghosts never die but humans do. This is similar to Monteith’s attempt to understand and compromise with his pain through the more concrete experience of influenza followed by the process of verbalizing his pain.

Furthermore, because of the author’s attempt to affirm his identity we can see that he finds the potential to generate consciousness in the space between people as shown in the encounter between Winch and Monteith. Consciousness belongs to the tangible space between their bodies as the following extract shows:

Everything had changed, we have noted, and nothing could more have proved it than the fact that, by the same turn, sincerity of desire had dropped out of Winch’s chords, while irritation, sharp and almost imperious, had come in. “That’s because he sees I see something!” Mark said to himself; but he had no need to add that it shouldn’t prevent his seeing more—for the simple reason that, in a miraculous fashion, this was exactly what he did do in glaring out the harder. It was beyond explanation, but the very act of blinking thus in an attempt at showy steadiness became one and the same thing with an optical excursion lasting the millionth of a minute and making him aware that the edge of a rug, at the point where an arm-chair, pushed a little out of position, overstraddled it, happened just not wholly to have covered in something small and queer, neat and bright, crooked and compact, in spite of the strong toe-tip surreptitiously applied to giving it the right lift. (“A Round of Visits” 920, emphasis added)

Here, during a moment of non-verbal communication, Monteith sees that Winch sees that Monteith sees; then, Monteith has a kind of revelation in which he finds a revolver Winch has hidden and tries to push out of his friend’s sight. This shared vision, however, reveals a bitter reality; the closeness between the two old friends suddenly vanishes and there is a distance between them: “they were suddenly facing each other across the wide space with a new consciousness” (“A Round of Visits” 919). Monteith realizes that Winch has tried to commit suicide with the
revolver before he arrived, and he comes to believe that Winch is another Bloodgood. The shared vision, the reality Monteith acquires, makes him to realize the limits of their co-understanding; although Winch has been sympathetic and interested in Monteith, he only wanted someone to be with him while he waited for the police, and, above all, he is a perpetrator, not a victim like Monteith, of another fraud. Nevertheless, we can still observe the author’s attempt to find a positive meaning in the spaces between. As Jessica Berman says, “[in late James] limited perspectives begin the very movement towards community” and “community is partially constructed in the play between the several incomplete perspectives . . . and the common recognition of the limitation of their interconnection” (22). Indeed, however bitter it may be, to know the truth is far better than staying in a fool’s paradise—James laments in his letter to Pinker after the shocking news that the New York Edition did not sell: “I hadn’t built high hopes—had done everything to keep them down: but feel as if comparatively I have been living in a fool’s paradise” (Life in Letters 468).

Furthermore, we find the same kind of non-verbal communications in the texts written in James’s major phase when he was proud of his between-ness. One of the most famous examples is the revelation scene in The Ambassadors, where there is a non-verbal, but eloquent passage between Strether and the couple in a Paris suburb: Madame de Vionnet and Chad see that Strether looks at them, and Strether sees that they see that he sees them (310). As Sharon Cameron notes, “[i]n the novels [of Henry James] consciousness is not in persons; it is rather between them” (77), and the reflector character, on whose consciousness the narrator relies, acquires the truth when his consciousness forms intersubjectively. Indeed, in What Maisie Knew, James clearly describes the process of the generation of consciousness between persons: “there was an extraordinary mute passage between her vision of this vision of his, his vision of her vision, and her vision of his vision of her vision” (525). Here, Maisie’s consciousness is created through the exchange of visions. Likewise, in the last scene of “A Round of Visits” when the police come to arrest Winch, the two friends again share the same consciousness without words: “[Monteith] moved his own eyes straight to the chair under which the revolver lay and which was but a couple of yards away. He felt his companion take this consciousness in” (“A Round of Visits” 923, emphasis added). Here, again, Monteith sees that Newton sees what Monteith sees. Thus, James relates the intersubjective communication that occurs between Winch and Monteith.
As evinced in the above excerpt and quote, in describing the spaces between people as where consciousness belongs, James emphasizes the importance of vision and optical exchange along with other sensual and verbal information; while Monteith senses something strange in some of their conversational turns, it is when he sees the revolver that he gains complete understanding. During his conversation with Mrs. Folliott, Monteith feels that “she shouldn’t have the benefit of a grain of his vision or his version of what had befallen them” (“A Round of Visits” 901). Although the word vision is not always based on optical sensations, together with the frequent use of the verbs “see” and “watch” as well as the sudden invocation in Monteith’s consciousness of “a vision of his old friend hunted and at bay” (916) during his conversation with Winch, it should be considered that James uses the word “vision” to emphasize its physical connotations. George Butte focuses on the importance of “look,” saying, “Some of the most complex and poignant moments of Jamesian deep intersubjectivity begin with the look; however, not only look, but looking at looking and . . . looking at looking observed . . .” (135). Therefore, in “A Round of Visits,” when Monteith is asked by Winch if “You’d [he’d] like to see him [Bloodgood]” (916), Monteith replies, “he’d [He’d] see I bear up; pretty well!” (917). Like Winch, Bloodgood “must be” “in the sort of hell” (915), but will acquire a new consciousness by watching Monteith, who, although swindled by him, sympathizes with him, showing “wonderful” (923) capacity for endurance. Thus, intersubjective communication is carried out between human bodies, and the space between is the place where consciousness is created. We now recall the letter James wrote to encourage Grace Norton:

I don’t know why we live— the gift of life comes to us from I don’t know what source or for what purpose; but I believe we can go on living for the reason that . . . life is the most valuable thing we know anything about and it is therefore presumptively a great mistake to surrender it while there is any yet left in the cup. In other words consciousness is an illimitable power . . . .

(Letters II 424)

Here, James equates life with consciousness, and the spaces between are the very stages on which the author, who attempted to write about “life,” belongs: in “The Art of Fiction,” James writes, “The only reason for the existence of a novel is that
it does attempt to represent life” (46). Although confronting abysmal difficulties regarding his identity, James was still trying to affirm his pride in being a writer of spaces between.

5. Conclusion

In this essay, I have discussed how Henry James’s anxiety and struggles concerning his between-ness is reflected in “A Round of Visits,” which he wrote in the middle of his own identity crisis. Monteith’s cognitive process of realizing his pain through tangible experience and his desire to verbalize his experience anticipate what the author would later do in the creation of his autobiographies. Although most critics have found only desperation in the tale, as seen in the last section, it captures the author’s attempt to affirm his own identity where he tries to describe the spaces between as where life is created. Thus, the text shows not only James’s deep inner pain and torment but also the pride he takes in his style and career. It is true, however, that we are precluded from an optimistic view because, as previously mentioned, Winch commits suicide even after Monteith thinks they have achieved mutual communication. This implies the limitation of shared understanding between people, which, in turn, suggests the author’s deep anxiety about his between-ness.11 As the title shows, this text may not have any concrete goal or intended interpretation; the reader is presented with the author’s confidence in his between-ness in one scene and his agony in the next. The text vacillates between the two interpretations as if to embody the concept of “round” while the reader remains in the middle, never reaching the absolute truth. Although “A Round of Visits” was originally published as the last of the five tales in the periodical, James later rearranged it to appear in the middle of the collection. Given the elaborate unity in the mood and themes of the collected stories, this rearrangement again serves to suggest the author’s existence in the middle.

Notes

This manuscript is based on two presentations first delivered at the meeting of the Kansai Branch of the Nathaniel Hawthorne Society of Japan, held on March 21, 2016, at Kwansei-Gakuin University. It was later revised, extended, and presented at the 7th annual meeting of Jamesian studies in Japan held on September 2, 2017, at Saga University.

1 Homi K. Bhabha uses the concept of “inbetween-ness” to discuss the marginal-
ized situations of diaspora and immigrants in the context of postcolonialism. Some critics consider James is “situated in one of those ‘in-between’ spaces that Bhabha emphasizes” (Walton 39). John Carlos Rowe also argues, “In many respects, James identifies with people marginalized, especially by the modernization process, although he takes relatively little account of how peoples of color were displaced by Euro-American colonialism” (212). I agree with those critics who consider that in his later works, James identified himself with those who were marginalized in society. I also find a connection between my argument that James desired to verbalize his anxiety regarding his liminal identity and the act of “enunciation” that Bhabha proposes. However, in this discussion, to avoid confusion with “inbetween-ness” in the postcolonial context, I use the expressions “spaces between” and “between-ness.”

2 According to Theodora Bosanquet’s records, James seems to have started on the tales around November 1908 (67). The five stories were published successively either in American or British periodicals: “The Velvet Glove” in March 1909, “Mora Montravers” in August and September 1909, “Crapy Cornelia” in October 1909, “The Bench of Desolation” from October 1909 through January 1910, and “A Round of Visits” in April and May 1910. Later, all five tales were collected in his last collection of short stories, *The Finer Grain*.

3 The series of lectures yielded him more than $4,050 in total (Anesko, *Friction* 177).

4 Adeline R. Tintner and Henry D. Janowitz indicate that four stories out of the five show a preoccupation with death (298–99). Mikako Ichikawa also argues that the five stories reflect James’s gradual process to nervous breakdown in 1910 (341).

5 James mentions the “grain” woman in his explanations about the five tales in *The Finer Grain* that he sent to the publisher for the book’s dust-jacket: “In point of fact, indeed, it happens in each case to be the hero who exhibits this finer grain of accessibility to suspense or curiosity, to mystification or attraction—in other words, to moving experience: it is by his connection with and interest in the ‘grain’ woman that his predicament, with its difficult solution, is incurred” (Gage 200).

6 James often does what his characters do in his novels. For example, James’s fourth phase can be considered his “second chance” as described in “The Middle Years” (1893). James also revisits his past while creating his autobiographies as White-Mason lives in the past memory in “Crapy Cornelia.”

7 This sort of morning grief is a feature of depression and according to Edel’s account, James is likely to have felt this way himself: “he lingered in bed mornings,
dozing in a kind of withdrawal from his daily existence” during the early period of his severe nervous breakdown. We may also consider James’s “last effort to work off his depression” on January 4, 1910 as a similar “morning depression” situation: “in the early morning he [James] began to make notes . . . for a new fiction,” shortly after which “he collapsed” (437–38).

Leon Edel notes that although Dr. Mackenzie denied James’s disease, “apparently Henry did not believe all that Sir James Mackenzie told him. He continued to speak of having had a ‘cardiac crisis’” (436).

James explained his loss of appetite in his letter to William written on February 8, 1910, for example (Letters IV 546–48). In another letter to his brother, James reported his visit to Dr. Mackenzie, and wrote that the doctor “is extraordinarily encouraging and reassuring” (Letters IV 516).

In his letter to William dated October 29, 1888, James writes, “[I]t would be impossible to an outsider to say whether I am, at a given moment, an American writing about England or an Englishman writing about America (dealing as I do with both countries), and so far from being ashamed of such an ambiguity I should be exceedingly proud of it, for it would be highly civilized” (Letters III 244).

Concerning “A Round of Visits,” Philip Sicker also says, “Human relationships are themselves little more than visits, as characters inevitably return to the isolated condition in which they began” (173).

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