

**From Nowhere to Everywhere:
The Inbetweenness in Henry James's Works after the New York Edition**

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how Henry James's works after the publication of the New York Edition embody his unique identity of "inbetweenness." Throughout his career, James's liminality is reflected in his obsessive depictions of characters living on the fringes of their society, such as the passive onlookers, the sexually ambiguous, and the lower middle class. They all experience anxieties associated with their perceptions of belonging and never succeed in reaching any kind of stability. The term inbetweenness used in this thesis refers to the physical and psychological spaces between countries, people, objects, and ideas, the space to which James belonged and where he created his art.

Although the author dedicated his entire career to the question of his liminal identity, this thesis focuses solely on his final works as they require further examination. Despite having received far less critical attention than his other works, these final works demonstrate a sophistication in his artistry, as they were written after the thorough process of selecting and revising his entire body of work to publish the New York Edition. Moreover, James's identity was seemingly more severely challenged in this period than before, because he suffered from depression in 1908 and had a nervous breakdown in 1910. There is a general consensus that James recovered from this crisis by recalling and narrating his past in his autobiographies. After that, he continued to write novels until his death. This series of events indicates the stages of his mental progression: an identity crisis, recovery, and the reaffirmation of his identity toward the end of his life. This thesis examines how this process is reflected in James's final works.

The first four chapters clarify how James vacillated between "nowhereness" (i.e., a sense of exclusion) and "everywhereness" (i.e., a confidence in his ability to transcend different values) when he was writing the stories in *The Finer Grain*. Chapter One examines how James faced a severe identity crisis as a cosmopolitan writer after the publication of the New York Edition. First, providing an overview of his predicament after 1908, this opening chapter then focuses on James's final completed short story, "A Round of Visits." It explores the portrayal of the protagonist's pain and his encounter with his friend. It also explains how the story not only depicts James's anxiety as a writer belonging to inbetween spaces, but also prefigures his process of recovery from his nervous breakdown.

The following three chapters demonstrate how the other stories in *The Finer Grain* embody his sense of inbetweenness by referring to actual locations. Since the problem of identity is intrinsically connected to physical and geographical places, the places appearing in *The Finer Grain* have great significance. Chapter Two focuses on the characteristics of the opening setting of "Crapy Cornelia,"

New York Central Park, and considers how it embodies the image of perforation that symbolizes the past for the protagonist. By investigating this image not only in “Crapy Cornelia” but also in James’s autobiography, this chapter illustrates how the image serves to represent the concept of the non-existent nature of memories and how both the protagonist and the author take refuge in it.

Chapter Three examines three stories in the same collection, “Crapy Cornelia,” “The Velvet Glove,” and “The Bench of Desolation,” focusing on the use of the colors black and white/silver. It clarifies how the pairs of contrasting colors provide us with a clue as to how to reinterpret each text in the context of the twentieth century. This chapter also demonstrates that while each pair of contrasting colors is significant in each text, reflecting the location of each story, they all exemplify the limits of understanding between people with different values. Although these limits may reflect James’s disillusionment, it is also likely that they indicate his attempt to co-exist with others. Additionally, it reveals his belief in the possibility of existing in the space between different values.

In Chapter Four, the newly emerging “suburbia” of London depicted in “Mora Montravers” is analyzed. While London’s suburbia is located between the city and countryside, the status of its lower-middle-class residents also lies between the working class and the stable middle class. Thus, they are the geographical and physical embodiments of inbetweenness. Although the suburban residents were mocked for trying to mimic their social superiors and struggled to climb the social ladder at the turn of the century, their values had become dominant in British society by the mid-twentieth century and James foreshadows such a new society in which these suburban values would be assimilated into mainstream society. Thus, although most critics consider the stories in *The Finer Grain* gloomy and depressing, the first four chapters of this thesis showcase the author’s faith in the positive aspects of liminal identities.

Chapter Five discusses the shift in James’s attitude toward the reaffirmation of his liminality through the examination of his Civil War experience in *Notes of a Son and Brother*. His Civil War narrative is usually interpreted as a confession of his desire to claim a share in the memory of one of the most important events in U.S. history. It is also seen as an attempt to unburden himself of the sense of guilt he harbored due to his nonparticipation in the war. However, through the analysis of this narrative, this chapter suggests another intention behind his nationalistic urge; his attempt to blur the lines between war and art, direct and indirect experiences, nation and individual, and body and language is articulated. Thus, James’s autobiographic enterprise expresses his reconfirmation of his identity as a novelist whose texts blur the borders between oppositions through language.

Addressing James’s last two novels, which were unfinished, the following two chapters illustrate how he demonstrated his ability to capture the continuity of cause-effect relationships by depicting chronological and geographical networks of being. Through a close reading of *The Ivory Tower*, Chapter Six examines the author’s attempt to transcend the limits of the novel structure and include not only the histories of the characters, objects, and locations, but also the possible relationships between them, both within and beyond the text. Chapter Seven explores the author’s other unfinished novel, *The Sense of the Past*, and explores how the text embodies the spirally evolving, endless acts

of reading and writing literary texts. With this infinitely spiral relationship between (re-)reading and (re-)writing, and the paradox intrinsic in its time-travel plot, as well as the fact that the novel is unfinished, James's last novel tries to convey the countless possibilities of choices and plots for literary texts. In his pursuit to grasp the expanding web of existence and non-existence in the last two texts, James proclaims his identity once again as a novelist of inbetweenness.

In conclusion, it is reasonable to argue that James's works in his final phase evince the shift from his unstable and anxious state between nowhere and everywhere, to his confident and constructive state of everywhere. In addition, this thesis attests that his works in this period demonstrate the author's matured skills in capturing the different facets of society and people at the time. This increased sophistication is shown through the perspectives of his male protagonists, who consciously or unconsciously embrace a sense of non-conformance within their societies. James's final phase is neither an appendage to the New York Edition nor a fragmented "Afterword" to his major phase; it represents the culmination of the author's entire life and career.