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# The Absent and Disinterested Other: Henry James's Experimental First Person Narrative in "The Ghostly Rental" (1876)\*\*

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**Abstract:** The article is an analysis of Henry James's ghost story titled "The Ghostly Rental." The author focuses, first of all, on the first-person narration in this story, published in 1876, soon after James left the United States. The author also examines the figure of the narrator's friend.

Key words: first-person narrative, ghost story, the Civil War, Henry James, "The Ghostly Rental"

#### Nieobecny i obojętny Inny: Eksperymentalna pierwszoosobowa narracja w opowiadaniu *The Ghostly Rental* (1876)

**Streszczenie:** Celem artykułu jest analiza opowieści o duchach pt. *The Ghostly Rental*. Autorka skupia się na pierwszoosobowej narracji w utworze opublikowanym po raz pierwszy w 1876 roku, czyli wkrótce po wyjeździe Jamesa ze Stanów Zjednoczonych. Przedmiotem badania jest między innymi postać przyjaciela narratora.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Narracja pierwszoosobowa, opowieść o duchach, wojna secesyjna, Henry James, *The Ghostly Rental* 

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he Ghostly Rental" was published in Scribner's Monthly in September 1876. It was not reprinted during James's lifetime. Posthumously collected in Leon Edel's Stories of the Supernatural (1970), it became known as one of James's early ghost stories. It is a firstperson narrative in which the narrator looks back on his youth when he was a Divinity School student. He was obsessed with the idea of spiritual experience, and the story details his adventure in an old colonial house known as a "haunted house." As many of James's stories do, however, it ends for the narrator in a dissatisfactory way: the ghost proves to be a sham and the haunted house burns down. It is important to note, however, that this story was written in the year of the Centennial of American Independence. Moreover, it was one of the first stories James wrote after he left his native country in the winter of 1875. James must have been highly conscious of his newly gained identity as a cosmopolitan writer who, at the same time, must retain his past American identity. Interestingly, "The Ghostly Rental" contains double historical time and double narrative consciousness: the narrator writes about his antebellum innocence and ignorant youth from the point of view of the year of the Centennial. As James was keenly aware of the significance of the Civil War, which broke out in 1861, his own narrative voice also reflects a split post-war American consciousness. This paper argues that "The Ghostly Rental" is James's adventurous experiment in the first-person narrative and examines how it is crafted to voice such a double consciousness and how the first-person narrative can inflate its possibilities so as to resonate with other voices in the text.

One peculiar fact about "The Ghostly Rental" is a reference to the narrator's friend with whom he has "formed an especial friendship." Yet, this friend is mentioned only once at the outset of the story and then disappears. The unnamed friend has a bad knee, which explains why he is unable to undertake the narrator's adventurous walk and why he is dismissed from the story. It is not likely, however, that the narrator has forgotten about his friend. The unnamed friend is conspicuous by his absence and thus in a way present throughout the story. He is a kind of unconscious projection of the past America that the narrator wants to un-remember. He might be the figure of Henry James, Sr., who had suffered a major injury and seen a ghost, and whom Henry Jr. seeks to dismiss in order to tell a ghost story of his own youth. This absent presence might also represent Henry himself, who as a young man at Harvard in 1861 suffered an "obscure hurt" from firefighting, which eventually forced him to stay at home instead of going to the front to fight in the Civil War.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever his biographical inspiration might have been, this non-participatory, disabled friend, though silenced, remains in James's text. The presence of the narrator's friend who has nothing to do with the actual story of "The Ghostly Rental"—is arguably a crucial element as it suggests some other undefined and hence unknown voice in the story. It is also significant that the narrator, speaking in 1876, looks back on his youth thirty years earlier. In the year of his country's Centennial, James writes a story that frames two periods, with the pivotal year of 1861 in between. In a Janus-like manner, "The Ghostly Rental" at once looks back to complacent pre-war America and looks forward to its future. In what follows,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> L. Edel, *The Life of Henry James*, Harmondsworth 1977, p. 145.

I would like to examine the split American consciousness and the way in which James crafts his first-person narrative to portray such a double voice.

## "A Complex Fate"

In 1875, James left his home country and started a new life as a cosmopolitan writer in Paris. He had an idea for *The American*,<sup>2</sup> an international episode in which a rich American tries to marry a French noblewoman, and sent its first installment to the *Galaxy* for publication. Not hearing from the publisher, and in need of money to keep up with his expensive Parisian life, he quickly wrote two short stories, "Crawford's Consistency" and "The Ghostly Rental," which, to quote Leon Edel, are "two tales in his old, pre-*Roderick Hudson* vein" and were "deemed inferior" but "sold to Scribner's for \$300."<sup>3</sup> It might have been fortunate for him that he had a chance to write these stories before setting out on his second novel, *The American*, since he had to reflect on the country he had just left and ascertain his own voice, or his point of view as an outsider. Just before he left America, he famously declared his future in his letter to Charles Eliot Norton:

It's a complex fate, being an American and one of the responsibilities it entails is fighting against a superstitious valuation of Europe.—It will be rather a sell, getting over there and finding the problems of the universe rather multiplied than diminished. Still, I incline to risk the discomfiture!<sup>4</sup>

Needless to say, his "fate" means that he is to serve as a go-between or a translator and to redress prejudices about American and European cultures. As Colm Tóibín points out in *All a Novelist Needs* (2010), a serious writer like James, who is interested in "complexity," worked "in the interstices between America as a wasteland, untouched by tradition, and America as a golden opportunity."<sup>5</sup> In other words, for James "an international episode" involves not so much a transatlantic geographical issue but a historical one, the idea of the American landscape being a space on which a series of visions of "golden opportunity" was projected in the course of history. An "American" story then needs be told by a narrative voice, which can shed light on both historical and geographical issues of the "golden" "wasteland." For James who looks back on his own country, the Civil War in particular left an indelible mark on the American consciousness, not to mention that of his own. Although "The Ghostly Rental" is set in the 1840s, it is narrated in a way that foreshadows America's crucial experience of the Civil War.

LITTERARIA COPERNICANA 1(21) 2017

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Following the use of James's "America" or "American," these expressions all refer to the USA in this paper.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> L. Edel, op. cit., p. 468.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> H. James, *Letters*, vol. I, Cambridge 1974, p. 274.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> C. Tóibín, All a Novelist Needs: Colm Tóibín on Henry James, Baltimore 2010, p. 55.



De Vere Gardens. Photo by Mirosława Buchholtz

Thanks to William Dean Howells, who as editor immediately gave James a helping hand, *The American* appeared in the May issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Although seeming-ly an innocent young American, its main character, Christopher Newman, unpredictably gives voice to a great complexity as early in the novel as Chapter 2.<sup>6</sup> Having just arrived in Paris, he meets his old friend Tristram, and tells him why he has given up his business back home and come to Europe. He was about to take revenge on his business counterpart, he relates, but suddenly lost interest and retreated. He woke up one morning and thought the following:

[W] ith the most extraordinary change of heart—a mortal disgust for the whole proposition. It came upon me like *that*! [...] all this took place quite independently of my will, and I sat watching it as if it were a play at the theatre. I could feel it going on inside me. You may depend upon it that there are things going on inside us that we understand mighty little about.<sup>7</sup>

One may think of Newman as a stereotypical American, complacent and simple-minded, who has come to Europe with a wild dream to marry the best woman and conquer the who-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> As the first installment consists of the first three chapters, James must have already written this part when he wrote "The Ghostly Rental" although it came out later in September in *Scribner's Monthly*. Christopher Newman's dark side portrayed in the second chapter might have offended the American publisher (the *Galaxy*).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> H. James, The American, New York 1907, p. 31 (The Novels and Tales of Henry James, Volume 2).

le world. However, James characterizes Newman from the outset as an already experienced man who is aware of something shadowy, unknown and uncontrollable inside himself. He is able to observe and objectify himself. He is aware of the Other within. The story develops in a way as an "international episode" as he crosses the Atlantic for a new adventure, but it is not a story about an innocent hero acquiring experience. He may be ignorant of the world of European aristocracy, but he is also characterized as an experienced man who has moral depth. In "The Ghostly Rental," the narrator as a young man also has a fellow college friend, but he neither speaks with him nor includes him in his spiritual adventures. Hard-headed and insensitive, he is unable to have a conversation with a disabled friend and to objectify himself.

The difference between Newman and the narrator of "The Ghostly Rental" is clear: the former has and the latter lacks the Civil War experience. "The Ghostly Rental" takes place in the 1840s whereas *The American* is set in the 1870s. What lies between is the Civil War. The narrator of "The Ghostly Rental" does not know the war but Newman does. He has fought in it and so has Tristram, who is his fellow soldier. Meeting Tristram, therefore, has made Newman stop to think of his past and tell his story. As I will argue later, James regards the Civil War as a pivotal experience in the American consciousness. The narrator of "The Ghostly Rental," in fact, unfolds his past experience as a young man from a post-war point of view and looks back on his young self that was proud, complacent, and narrowminded. His disabled friend must disappear, since the young narrator is unable to see anything but the reflection of his own fancy. The friend, once mentioned, however, is there forever in the narrative landscape as the externalization of the unknown and the unpleasant.

### A Rose Garden in the Wilderness

The twenty-two-year old narrator of "The Ghostly Rental" is in search of ghosts, which may be his response to the spiritual experience of the Fox sisters, who in 1848 claimed to have heard a ghost rapping on the wall of a farm house. Their encounter with a ghost widely occupied the nation's interest and is said to have been the dawn of spiritualism in the US.<sup>8</sup> As a Harvard Divinity School student, however, the narrator of James's story shows a scholarly interest and is the follower of William Channing, whom he thinks to have replaced severe Calvinism with "a rose of faith delightfully stripped of its thorns."<sup>9</sup> Since his disabled friend cannot go out, the narrator relies for company on his own "eyes" instead of his good friend as he strolls á la Ralph Waldo Emerson, while actually carrying Pascal's *Essays* in his pocket. Instead of being open-minded and ready to accept a divine experience, or "a transparent

LITTERARIA COPERNICANA 1(21) 2017

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> See B. Weisber, *Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism*, San Francisco 2005. Interestingly, a ghost of a different type appeared also in 1848; Karl Marx in *Capital* equates money with a ghost which functions as "a means of circulation only because in it the value possessed by commodities has taken on an independent shape." Further, "Every commodity, when it first steps into circulation and undergoes its first change of form, does so only to fall out of circulation once more and be replaced again and again by fresh commodities. Money, on the contrary, as the medium of circulation, haunts the sphere of circulation and constantly moves around within it." As I will claim in this paper, Marx's ghost or "spectre" may well foreshadow my point about Captain Diamond turning into a money-obsessed ghost of capitalistic America.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> H. James, "The Ghostly Rental," in: Complete Stories 1874–1884, New York 1999, p. 157.

eye-ball" oneness with Nature, as Emerson would have done, the narrator tends to interpret the natural phenomena as an observer, or "a thinking reed" á la Pascal. He thinks and hypothesizes. For example, when he sees the "pale [...] tints [...] of faded rose-color [...] of the western sky," he interprets this phenomenon as a symbolic representation of a "skeptical smile on the lips of a beautiful woman."<sup>10</sup> The narrator makes observations of this kind, which are a mere reflection of his own sentimental fancy. His friend with the bad knee, on the other hand, may denote an unpleasant spiritual experience such as the one that Henry James, Sr. had when he saw a ghost, an evil presence, in the corner of his room. His son Henry might have simply allowed his narrator to discredit such an indoor spiritual experience and to go out in the open in search of a more pleasant and innocuous spiritual experience.

When the narrator sees the old colonial house, he immediately decides that it is haunted. In a way, he is already destined to be attracted to the uncanny darkness of its interior: he feels something "familiar" there.<sup>11</sup> He peeps in through the window, and a large shadow on the wall excites him. Observing an old man who salutes at the door and goes into the house, he experiences a sense of "discovery" whose fragrance, as it were, makes him ecstatic like the fragrance of a "flower."<sup>12</sup> The dark old house in his imagination is transformed into a rose garden. He further learns from Miss Deborah, an elderly lady and gossipmonger, that the old man, Captain Diamond, goes there regularly to receive the quarterly rent from his dead daughter. As she was seeing a man during his absence, he drove her from the house, which he believes to have eventually caused her death. The daughter's ghost started to haunt the house and, in turn, drove her father out, but, out of pity for the penniless old man, she now pays him the rent. Not much intrigued by the seduction story of the daughter, the narrator, nevertheless, becomes interested in the Captain, who tells the narrator that "Jonathan Edwards and Dr. Hopkins" are only "chopping logic" and boasts of his own empirical knowledge. He tells the narrator: "It's not a matter of cold theory [...]. With these eyes I have beheld the departed spirit standing before me as near as you are!"<sup>13</sup> The narrator is impressed and regards the Captain's ghostly experience as credible. Martin and Ober argue that he sees the ghost because of his Calvinistic mindset, and although the Captain critiques the eighteenth-century Calvinist theologians, he is but another byproduct of New England's religious spirit:

It is [...] his Calvinist conscience, his sense of guilt and sin, that induces the state of mind that leads him to see the ghost, and this conscience is transmitted to his daughter, as we realize when she, in her turn, imagines she has killed her father and believes that she sees *his* ghost.<sup>14</sup>

At the end of the story, as Captain falls ill, he asks the narrator to go and collect the rent. Confronted by the daughter's ghost, however, the narrator dares to pull off its veil and proves that it is in fact a human being, a beautiful woman in her thirties, who has been

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p. 164.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p. 168.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> W. R. Martin and W. U. Ober, "Captain Diamond and Old Hickory: Realities and Ambivalence in Henry James's 'The Ghostly Rental," *Studies in Short Fiction* 26. 1 (1989), p. 4.

acting as a ghost for the past twenty years. The narrator discovers the truth about the daughter's ghost, but it is she this time who claims to see a ghost of her father. The bedridden Captain dies at that very moment and, unaware of his sudden death, she sees his ghost. She cries to the narrator: "My father [ ... ] is in white [ ... ] in his shirt."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, she regrets having deceived her father, which probably enables her to see his ghost. Even the narrator takes part of the blame and cries out, "It's the punishment of my indiscretion—of my violence!"<sup>16</sup>—even though he never sees the ghost. The haunted house may then figure as a device that helps expose the Calvinistic sense of guilt.

The narrator indeed unveils the truth about the ghost in the haunted house and thus also about father and daughter relationship, whose pivotal part or visible sign was the rent. Its amount, "133 dollars," was regularly paid to the Captain four times a year for twenty years. Obsessed with the rent, the Captain seems to worship it by saluting at the door of the haunted house, as if it were a sacred place. What is real for the empiricist Captain Diamond is the weight he feels in his hand of the rent paid in "good American gold and silver."<sup>17</sup> The narrator takes the money to the Captain, but he finds him dead. His "sable" servant Belinda is sitting alone outside the door. The rent was the mediator between the Captain and his daughter, but with the father dead, the rent money is useless and there is no one to receive it. The haunted house reveals the ghostly projection of America's reality of the money-driven patriarchal family system, with an African-American out on the street. The house burns down as soon as the true story has been exposed.

## Tree of Knowledge

As an American ghost story, "The Ghostly Rental" is devoid of clichéd settings and stage props typical of European ghost stories. In *Hawthorne*, James refers to the American lack of cultural items representing "high civilization" which can motivate a novelist.<sup>18</sup> His list gave his fellow countrymen an impression of criticizing America as inferior to Europe, but he himself confesses in his letter to Howells that he suffers from not having cultural "paraphernalia" in order to write the very American story, *Washington Square*.<sup>19</sup> This novel portrays a family story, and if there is anything American about it, it is perhaps a money-driven family plot with rich mother dead, and father and daughter in conflict. "The Ghostly Rental" shares this basic plot; the dead mother is said to have owned the house and the chauvinistic and possibly racist father interferes with the daughter's free will, and has a black African servant. He is anxious about money even at his deathbed and at the end appears as a "white" ghost in the house he used to let to his daughter.

Thirty years after the publication of "The Ghostly Rental," in *The American Scene*, a monumental travelogue and memoir of his 1904–1905 tour of the United States, James writes about the impressions of his return visit to Cambridge and Boston after a quar-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> H. James, "The Ghostly Rental," op. cit., p. 187.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Ibidem, p. 188.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ibidem, p. 173.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Idem, *Hawthorne*, Ithaca and London 1966 [1879], p. 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> M. Anesko, Letters, Fictions, Lives: Henry James and William Dean Howells, New York 1997, pp. 147–148.

ter of a century's absence: "the imagination [...] fixes the surrounding scene as a huge Rappacini-garden, rank with each variety of the poison-plant of the money passion."<sup>20</sup> The rosy smell, which the narrator of "The Ghostly Rental" imagined in the 1840s, as it were, has gone rank, emitting a poisonous and toxic smell of money half a century later in 1904. If the American haunted house is to be turned into a Rappacini garden, where in Hawthorne's story a "poison-plant" grows and a daughter is trapped to produce "rank" money, in "The Ghostly Rental," the "white" ghost may well represent a new ghostly legend of the white male capitalistic world of Jacksonian America. This connection becomes clear when we note that the narrator has established Diamond's resemblance to Andrew Jackson.

Indeed, Captain Diamond's facial resemblance to Andrew Jackson, the countrybred son of Irish-Scottish immigrants and hero of the War of 1812, who restructured the American banking system and distrusted paper money, is significant. One may understand why the Captain receives the rent in gold and silver. Also it must be remembered that Jackson, far from being an abolitionist, ran a slave-owning plantation. Captain Diamond has a black maidservant named Belinda, who acts as a messenger between her master and the narrator. Just as Jackson's slaves were at his deathbed,<sup>21</sup> Belinda was at the Captain's. Although the word "slave" is not used in the story, Belinda is identified simply as "sable," which is an obvious case of accentuating her skin color. While neither the narrator nor the daughter is given a name, the Captain and his maidservant bear the names of Diamond and Belinda, as if to stress the reality of their existence. The "white" ghost in the haunted house then can be interpreted as the spirit of Jacksonian America. The "sable" Belinda sits outside on the bench as a real figure, a haunting and homeless shadow in the American landscape. That the haunted house, which is said to have been originally "painted white,"22 burns down is doubly suggestive: it gives a backward glance to the Jacksonian "white" America and a forward glance to the Civil War. The narrator has comprehended "a familiar meaning"<sup>23</sup> about the house because it holds a hidden story of his origin. The house, once white and shiny like a diamond, has now fallen apart and turned into sizzling pieces of charcoal.

In his *Autobiography* James writes about a fusion of memory. He remembers his first year at Harvard in 1861. The shock of the war that had broken out that year and the pain of his injury from firefighting a year before are fused:

[T]he queer fusion or confusion established in my consciousness during the soft spring of '61 [...]. One had the sense [...] of a huge comprehensive ache, and there were hours at which one could scarce have told whether it came most from one's own poor organism [...] or from the enclosing social body, a body rent with a thousand wounds and that thus treated one to the honor of a sort of tragic fellowship.<sup>24</sup>

His personal wound, or "the obscure hurt,"<sup>25</sup> inflicted during firefighting in Newport, becomes "fused" and "confused" with the social wounds of thousands of people in the battle

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> H. James, *The American Scene*, London 1907.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> R. W. Remini, Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy, 1833–1845, New York 1984, p. 526.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> H. James, "The Ghostly Rental," op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Idem, Autobiography, New York 1956, p. 415.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> L. Edel, *The Life of Henry James*, op. cit., p. 147.

of 1861. The former leaves a scar on his body and the latter on that of the native land, and together these physical wounds quicken his mental pain, drawing out a post-war traumatic effect. Newman in *The American* is a good example. He embraces an unknown shadow within, which he is unable to explain and which he would not have had, had he not participated in the Civil War. James seems to be saying that regardless of the actual experience in battle, the Civil War not only troubled his native land but also the American conscience. Such fusion and confusion of personal and social memories are projected in the last scene of "The Ghostly Rental": "The haunted house was a mass of charred beams and smoldering ashes; the well cover has been pulled off, in quest of water [ ... ] the loose stones were completely displaced, and the earth had been trampled into puddles."<sup>26</sup> With the chaos of displaced stones and trampled puddles, the scene appears like the aftermath of an earthquake. Belinda's "sable" color, mentioned in the scene just before this one, resonates with the "charred" remains of the house that was once white, and is suggestive of the upcoming political and social turmoil.

In *Hawthorne*, written in 1879, three years after "The Ghostly Rental" and *The American*, James points out the significance of the Civil War that caused seismic changes in the American mindset:

[T]he Civil War marks an era in the history of the American mind. It introduced into the national consciousness a certain sense of proportion and relation, of the world being a more complicated place than it had hitherto seemed, the future more treacherous, success more difficult. At the rate of which things are going, it is obvious that a good American will be more numerous than ever; but the good American, in days to come, will be a more critical person than his complacent and confident grandfather. He has eaten of the tree of knowledge.<sup>27</sup>

The narrator in "The Ghostly Rental" with a post-war consciousness finds in his young self a typical "complacent and confident" pre-war mind. Although the narrator as a young man in the 1840s does not see the ghost, by 1876, as an aged man, he must have tasted the bitter fruit of "the tree of knowledge." The story is haunted by the rank smell of the "white" ghost's money, and the undeniable presence of a "sable" servant. Furthermore, the daughter does not even have a name or presence outside the haunted house. For James to write about America for the Centennial is to discover its absent and immaterial "paraphernalia." They include the nuclear family, father-daughter conflict, money-driven human relationship, the woman question, the "sable" race, and all that the progressive "white" America has repressed. "The Ghostly Rental," from my perspectvie, marks a pivotal moment in James's writing career. He started his life as a cosmopolitan writer just as his country celebrated the centennial of its independence. He reassured himself of being "an outsider" and, at the same time, of being an American with a "complex fate," which meant caring not only for trans-Atlantic cultural issues but also for the ruins of his country's past. The story spells neither optimism nor celebration. It exposes instead the "white" mercantile and militaristic ghost of Captain Diamond as an American spirit, who renders his own daughter and a "sable" servant homeless and turns them indeed into ghostly figures.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> H. James, "The Ghostly Rental," op. cit., p. 190.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Idem, *Hawthorne*, op. cit., p. 114.

In "The Ghostly Rental," James commemorated the centennial from the point of view of a post-war observer with an awareness of split American consciousness that is successfully rendered in the style of a memoir. James in fact experimented with the first-person narrative in the early stages of his career. All but one of the seventeen stories that he wrote between 1869 and 1877 are first-person narratives.<sup>28</sup> Naturally the first-person narrative is limited in scope, as it only has a single viewpoint. James, however, seems to have made use of it in order to stretch time and create a sense of history. James describes in his "Preface" to The Ambassadors that although the first-person narrative is not suitable for long fiction, it has a privilege of being "at once hero and historian."<sup>29</sup> Ichikawa rephrases it as a double privilege of being "at once the subject and the object."<sup>30</sup> When the narrator looks back on his/her past, the narrative embraces two time frames, the remembered past, and the speaking present. Although The American is not a first-person narrative, it is possible to look at Newman's narrative as an example. As he remembers his past, he sees himself as the object of his tale and speaks in a split consciousness of a man who knows the time both before and after the Civil War. In "The Ghostly Rental," however, in order to make the firstperson narrative double-voiced, or at least to open it up for such potential, James refers to the young narrator's friend, who has nothing to do with the story but whose presence suggests the possibilities of the externalization of the narrator's unconscious, or the Other. James states that "the first person, in the long piece, is a form foredoomed to looseness,"<sup>31</sup> but it works successfully in a short piece or, perhaps, a travelogue that consists of a series of short narratives.

In *The American Scene* James wondrously makes use of such a multi-voiced first-person narrative and refines it. The first-person narrator is constantly on the go, changing his viewpoint, and referring to different narrative perspectives. He is the "I" which becomes the third person in references such as "[h]e,"<sup>32</sup> "the restless analyst,"<sup>33</sup> "the restored absentee,"<sup>34</sup> "the cold blooded critic,"<sup>35</sup> "the fond observer,"<sup>36</sup> or "our anxious explorer."<sup>37</sup> Interestingly he also refers to himself as "the one vague and disinterested presence"<sup>38</sup> or "the disinterested rambler,"<sup>39</sup> assuming the presence of some other voice of an unknown perspective that might be joining in his voice. Here his narrative voice freely changes pitch, distance, and point of view, inviting everything in to represent his native land. This web-like structure that catches every particle may have its roots in "The Ghostly Rental," in which James adds the absent presence of the narrator's disabled, silenced, and disinterested friend. It is a pioneering Janus-like narrative that has incorporated the Other in the seemingly innocent American landscape.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> M. Ichikawa, Henri Jeimuzu no Katari: Ichinin-sho no Katari o Chushin ni, Osaka 2003, p. 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> H. James, *The Art of the Novel*, New York 1950, p. 320.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> M. Ichikawa, *Henri Jeimuzu no Katar*, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> H. James, *The Art of the Novel*, op. cit., p. 320.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Idem, *The American Scene*, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Ibidem, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Ibidem, p. 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Ibidem, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Ibidem, p. 99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Ibidem, p. 368.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Ibidem, p. 107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Ibidem, p. 212.

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