

Henry James – muzeum pisarza / Henry James: The Writer’s Museum.
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Abstract. This essay reviews the 2017 issue of *Litteraria Copernicana*, edited by Miroslawa Buchholtz, Dorota Gutfeld, and Grzegorz Koneczniak. The issue, entitled “Henry James: The Writer’s Museum,” contains critical articles, translations, interviews, reviews, and other pieces centered on or connected to James, such as poetry or remembrances by notable scholars. The issue’s main languages are English and Polish, yet some contributions appear in French, German, or Italian. Even though the range of literary forms included—as well as the five languages used—might initially give the impression of a farrago, this international scope is the issue’s strength: it is like a “museum” that contains many diverse exhibits of equally high quality. The articles have been selected carefully for their academic merit; the reviews and translations deal with the latest trends in James scholarship; and the poems, remembrances, and playful pieces serve to entertain Jamesians, both amateur and professional alike. A “must have” for a James lover, the 2017 issue of *Litteraria Copernicana* is a multifaceted volume, but one in which each side gives off its own impressive luster.

Keywords: Henry James; journal; review.

The volume of *Litteraria Copernicana* devoted to Henry James is an our-times, true museum—a collection of wonderful exhibits, interactive and playful, yet equally serious and valuable. “The museum you have entered is alive with activity,” writes Miroslawa Buchholtz in the Introduction: there is the noise of human voices and music, the stillness of paintings and sculptures, movements of actors on stage, even a whiff of the supernatural. There is poetry, too, of which the aforementioned, brief Introduction might be an example—a lovingly written piece for a lovingly prepared exhibit. James

is certainly the Museum's most important presence, but he does not always appear in the center—his figure is an inspiration, a reflection, or a suggestion in various objects on display. “Variety” best describes the volume, the quality that is most noticeable in the languages of the pieces: predominantly English and Polish, but also French, German, and Italian. Yet it is no Tower of Babel experience—there is no confusion, no chaos here—just as in any proper Museum, visitors will study some objects in depth, look at others in passing, or simply record the existence of a few—yet even this “simple recording” will increase the visitor’s pleasure.

In the journal the reader discovers six major sections, all titled in Polish: “*Studia i rozprawy*” (“Articles and Studies”), in which the major scholarly texts appear; “*Przekłady*” (“Translations”)—the section includes James-inspired poems as well as academic articles, originally published in English, now in their Polish versions; “*Wywiady*” (“Interviews”) with Jamesians—five scholars, a translator, and a director of a theater; “*Mistrzynie*” (“Maestras”), about remembrances of notable academicians; “*Varia*”—where a reader will find some opportunity to play, either on his or her own, or to relax remembering amateur (but excellent) stagings of James; and finally, “*Recenzje*” (“Reviews”) of recently published James interpretations and biographies, new translations, stage and film adaptations, and an art exhibition. All of this, I repeat, will not confuse or overwhelm a reader; the Museum’s curators made sure that the exhibits please the eye with their colorful mosaic, and arranged them with logic in mind. This artistic conglomeration is primarily meant for the academics, Henry James insiders.

Greg W. Zacharias’s “The Complete Letters of Henry James” opens the issue. Ten volumes of James’s letters have already been published. The eleventh is “well underway,” announces Zacharias (12). The author of the article is the Director of the Center for Henry James Studies at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. He writes about the stormy history of James’s letters, about the jealously guarded access which Leon Edel “notoriously” held, and about the joy of later scholars who could finally read them all. Zacharias presents the history of the letters’ editions, which will—hopefully—be crowned with the completion of his and his colleagues’ project. Among these colleagues, familiar names appear—such as Michael Anesko or Millicent Bell—and many others, alongside the names of students and assistants; in this project, it is not the fame of a scholar that matters. The letters’ ultimate edition is to be print and digital, and Zacharias explains how, surprisingly, producing the electronic edition has been one of the stormiest aspects of the enterprise. The reasons—among others—was the 2008 “global financial meltdown” which put a curb on university expenses (20). This

article is highly readable, not just informative. There is humor, as in the reference to the residents of Nebraska, who are “proud and resilient”: “Given the high level of pride in Nebraska for home-state achievement, I thought it might be time to develop pride in its publishing and scholarship as well as football,” writes the author (17–18). And there are even entertaining glimpses into James’s private life: for instance, we find out that young James had problems with spelling. Zacharias uses such words as “satisfaction and pride” referring to his and his colleagues’ work; they “love” it (22). His enthusiasm is catching.

Hitomi Nabae’s “The Absent and Disinterested Other: Henry James’s Experimental First Person Narrative in ‘The Ghostly Rental’ (1876)” deals with one of James’s earliest short stories, infrequently noticed by critics. “The Ghostly Rental” is not a gem of James’s fiction, yet in its analysis, Nabae points to matters so curious that, I predict, more of us will wish to read the story. Nabae notices a character who never makes his actual appearance, the narrator’s friend. The friend with “a bad knee” does not accompany the narrator on his excursion; Nabae suggests that the friend represents the uncomfortable American past which is best to be “unremembered” (26). The article’s author interprets the story in the context of James’s novels of the same period, *The American* and *Washington Square*, as well as *Hawthorne*, discovering in “The Ghostly Rental” references to such American experiences as “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” (33). The “absent friend’s” voice, the voice of “the other” (34), the narrator does not hear. But Nabae’s reader wants to hear it, and reaches for the story.

In Misun Yun’s “What James Saw: The Bethnal Green Museum and Charles Eliot Norton,” we find a fascinating insight into young James’s views on art and the lower classes. Yun recalls the correspondence between James and Norton, “a co-editor of the *North American Review* (1865–1868) and a co-founder of the *Nation* (1865)” (38), and compares these two critics’ reviews, James’s “The Bethnal Green Museum,” written for the January 1873 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, and Norton’s “The Manchester Art Exhibition,” for the same journal of twenty years before. Yun structures her article by alternating paragraphs on James’s and Norton’s reviews. Both James and Norton contrast the proletarian surroundings with the museums’ beautiful insides, yet while Norton suggests that, among the poor, this will “awaken . . . an awareness of the unjustness of the world in which industrial labor dominates” (41), James’s “mordant irony” implies that both the rich and the poor enjoy the exhibition, and that for the impoverished, “it is

a device for perfecting the ‘imperfect consciousness’ . . . regarding their own wretchedness” (42). Each of the reviewers pays attention to different aspects of the exhibitions: Norton concentrates on selected paintings and comments on art history, “[filling] the gaps in the exhibition” (43). James deals more thoroughly with “works present” (43). The example of the responses to Sir Joshua Reynolds’s *Nelly O’Brien* shows the two critics’ beliefs: Norton “prioritizes pictures with nobler subject matter which he believes to enhance the beholder’s noble emotion,” and so he dismisses *Nelly* for “the girl’s humble characteristics”; James “sees it as exerting ‘real force’ on the beholder” and notices “the sitter’s intense individuality” (45). James pays his full attention to the girl in the picture; he even provides her “fantasy biography” (45). The technique of the painting (color and light) “[sensitizes] viewers to the singularity and significance of any humble human life” (46). Yun concludes that James saw the “arrogance” in the idea that art can “ameliorate injustice and enlighten the poor” (46). For James, viewers of all classes, privileged and impoverished, educated and ignorant, have a right to appreciate art in their own ways.

Urszula Gołębiowska’s “Potyczki Henry’ego Jamesa o wolność powieści” (“Henry James’s Battles for the Freedom of the Novel”) will not surprise a seasoned Jamesian, but offers a gold mine of fascinating and gracefully presented issues for a (relative) novice. This article, the only one in Polish in the main section of the Museum, may be addressed to Poles for whom Henry James is only a famous name, but is worth reading even for those well-acquainted with his *oeuvre*. Gołębiowska reminds readers that James rejected didacticism and entertainment as the novel’s aims, yet, apart from aesthetic functions, his writing contains deep ethical concerns. James shows his ethics by accepting otherness; his imagination and intuition rather than experiences and intellect have formed his works. “The writer does not represent what he knows and controls, but approaches the unknown that inspires disinterested wonder,” writes the article’s author (54). The ethical result of the above is not only the “characters’ autonomy” but also James’s point-of-view technique—the evidence of his “fascination with otherness” (55). Additionally, claims Gołębiowska, the point-of-view technique allows the writer to express the “fragmented consciousness” of the characters, which is impossible to express by the narrator and to understand by the characters—this is what James’s ethic means. The article discusses “The Figure in the Carpet” in detail; in the story, a literary critic fails as he relies excessively on intellect; the critic rejects the “emotional” acceptance of otherness.

Sonoko Saito’s article, “The Materiality of Ghosts in ‘The Bench of Desolation’ (1910): An Exploration of the Pocket Metaphor” poses

a thesis that “references to pockets in James’s stories signal not only detachment from but also involvement in the vulgar, material world. Pockets are suggestive of money and its tenacious grip on life” (62). The author provides examples from James’s various texts (*The Europeans*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The American Scene*) and analyzes “The Bench of Desolation” in depth. Unusually, in “The Bench” a woman, not a man, is in control of “the pocket”; gender roles are undermined, and the male hero becomes confused. The three characters of the story, the man and two women, attempt to interpret one another, and the man’s “inability to read” others (69) causes all their misfortunes. In the penultimate section of the article, titled “Alternative Readings and Life Stories,” Saito writes about James’s revisions, “Just as Herbert frequents the bench, James also frequented his already published printed text” (71). The story, changed and re-written, offers multiple readings: it “marks the plurality of James’ [own] life” (71).

Two articles follow, written in French and German, respectively. Max Duperray’s “Du fantastique littéraire: retour à la question du surnaturel chez James” addresses the supernatural in James’s fiction, and interprets “The Turn of the Screw” in numerous literary and critical contexts. Katarzyna Szczerbowska-Prusevicius’s “Die referentielle Funktion der Musik in Benjamin Brittens Oper *The Turn of the Screw*,” an interdisciplinary, beautifully constructed, and convincing paper, shows how James’s textual ambiguities are expressed by Britten’s opera—“The Turn of the Screw” translated into a theatrical and musical experience.

Michael Halliwell’s “Henry James Goes to the Opera” provides a most detailed, thorough, and interesting overview of opera’s role in James’s writing. “There are,” says Halliwell, “two aspects to James’s use of opera: the first is the opera house, its spaces and particularly the opera box as an important site of social interaction”; in his later fiction, James “gradually begins to integrate operatic performance thematically into his fiction as well” (100–01). Firstly, Halliwell provides examples from James’s biographical writings. In *A Small Boy and Others*, James recalls his experiences with listening to famous singers and witnessing performances where both “theatrical” and “the auditory impression” mattered, and Halliwell points to some “Freudian overtones” apparent in the depiction of one event. The second part of the essay interprets particular texts, arranged in chronological order (102). Thus in “Eugene Pickering” the “central scene . . . takes place in the opera house,” and the characters also perform, as on the stage. “In a sense,” observes Halliwell, “their relationship is pure theatre, and the ‘reality’ is the art that occurs on the stage” (105). Madame Blumenthal of this early

story “echoes” James’s later most theatrical heroine, Madame Merle of *The Portrait of a Lady* (104–05).

I find the discussion of *The American* especially interesting. James chooses a performance of *Don Giovanni*—an “opera concerned with transgression and the blurring of classes”—as a setting for the crucial scene between Newman and the Bellegardes. Unfamiliar with high art, Newman is also an “outsider . . . in this company” (106–07). The other “parallels” include “Newman’s relationship with Claire,” the “fatal duel,” and even “James’s own rather lifeless adaptation of the novel” (107). Simple and clear, this analysis offers a most convincing key to *The American*. Halliwell then proceeds to mention *Italian Hours*, where Italy represents an operatic performance—superior music and superior setting, “the Opera when the manager has been more than usually regardless of expense” (James, qtd. in Halliwell 108). Regarding *The Portrait of a Lady*, Halliwell analyses the two versions of the novel, 1881 and 1908. In the later edition Isabel’s “element of performance is emphasized”—she resorts to “ricks” of “operatic prima donnas,” who, as the author of the essay recalls, “always exerted a great fascination for James” (110). A discussion of “A London Life” points to the similarity of opera’s role in *The American* and the story. Here, too, the opera, *Les Huguenots*, reflects the plot. The story’s setting is an opera box and its vicinity; the heroine perceives the “doors of the boxes [as] prison cells, analogous with her perception of her future life” (113). In a story titled “Glasses,” the blind heroine acts—during *Lohengrin* performance—in order to hide her infirmity. Here, the ending is more hopeful—unlike Elsa in Wagner’s opera, “Flora retains her knight who will be henceforth completely at her service” (114).

Halliwell continues with an interpretation of short stories from James’s late years: “The Two Faces” in which an evil character arranges a stage (on her terrace) where she can humiliate another, watched by an audience of guests, and “The Velvet Glove,” where a young author is “seduced”—with the aid of Wagner’s music—into writing a preface to a romantic novel. Yet the ending of the article is reserved for an analysis of “Collaboration” (1892)—“a little known short story where music-making is the central narrative and artistic focus” (116). After the Franco-Prussian War, two young representatives of the warring nations together start composing an opera. This costs them a loss of social ties, even a loss of the Frenchman’s fiancée. Yet the German musician and the French poet persevere; they work together on the composition. This, suggests Halliwell, “seems to be an illustration of [James’s] belief . . . that music has the capacity of ‘universal solvent,’ unlike the other art forms which much more strongly retain their national characteristics and identities” (120). James ends the story while the Opera is

being composed. The reader hopes for the superior result of this international cooperation. A soft image of the Frenchman's former fiancée, playing one of the German's composition, suggests some optimism—perhaps.

A fitting conclusion for this very exhaustive essay is expressed early, and directly connects James with music: "James's often parodied, ornate and sometimes convoluted late prose style, has its own musical elements, and one might speculate that its increasing complexity mirrors his engagement with the musical world around him" (104). But we accept the "ornate and convoluted" style of an opera. Parodying James—"ornate and convoluted"—just as parodying an opera, only shows the parodist's ignorance of high art.

All of the articles contained in the above section offer views on James that are characteristic for the times we live in: in particular, gender issues (not just the classical "woman question"), James's attitude to "otherness" (as central to his ethics), and the problem of class. This last issue I find especially notable. James, contrary to popular opinion, shows—though rarely—deep sympathy and understanding towards the working and lower classes he is not a member of. *The Princess Casamassima* is the best illustration of James's sympathy with the working class Hyacinth Robinson, and Yun's piece, in which the author recalls James's attitude to the proletariat expressed in his non-fiction, encourages further investigation of this theme.

The second part of the volume, "Translations," offers texts rendered from English to Polish. Three poems open the section, all impressively translated by Mirosława Buchholtz. Marianne Moore's "Picking and Choosing," "Why cloud the fact / . . . that / James is all that has been said of him" (2002: 97–98) reassures the James lover. Denise Levertov's "Making Peace" offers hope—"A line of peace might appear / if we restructured the sentence our lives are making" (1987: 40)—as James's use of language offers solace to a troubled reader of everyday news. Then comes Natasha Saje's "Reading the Late Henry James," provocative and disturbing. Let yourself be disturbed, James aficionado. This museum is not for children.

The three articles which follow have all previously been published in English, in the fifth volume of *Dis/Continuities: Toruń Studies in Language, Literature and Culture*, titled *Henry James Goes to War* (Peter Lang 2014). Elaine Hudson's "The Spoils of Henry James: Between the Public and the Private" speaks about James's ambivalent attitude to literary tourism, that is, to sharing with the public the private homes of famous writers. James obviously disapproves of the fashionable practice in his 1903 story, "The Birthplace," but then shows his Lamb House to a journalist of *Harper's Weekly*, and in 1904 "Mr. Henry James at Home" is published. Did James promote himself in this way? Or did he rather try to cover his tracks, his

really private matters, by allowing the public to see an image created for this very purpose? The answer, as Hudson suggests, might be found in a line from “The Birthplace”—the writer whose home became a museum is not there; “This man isn’t anywhere” (139). About himself, James shows us what he wishes to show.

Katie Sommer’s “Henry James and Soldiers during World War I: Four Letters” might be the most moving piece about James I have ever read. Sommer, a participant in the *Complete Letters of Henry James* project, writes about James’s final years, when, aging and ill, he tried to contribute to the Great War effort by offering friendship and aid to soldiers. James visited hospitals, sent care packages, and even helped to pay for dental care. Sommer acknowledges suggestions that through this involvement James wished to make up for his non-participation in the Civil War, or that he perhaps wanted to be “relevant” in the twentieth century. Then she says, “but the constant devotion and activity are much more a genuine expression of his kindness, empathy, and concern for the soldiers he deeply respects and comes to care for” (143). The article includes both transcripts and photographs of the soldiers’ letters. Sapper Williams wrote: “Dear Sir I am writing to thank you once again for what you have caused to be done to my mouth I have got my teeth in too day [sic] . . .” (151). Sapper Williams was killed in May 1917, a little over a year after his benefactor’s death.

Sylwia Wojciechowska’s “Amoenus versus Horridus: ‘The Turn of the Screw’ and the (Counter)Pastoral” presents how the initially idyllic story gradually changes into a nightmare. At the beginning, among numerous pastoral elements, the image of cawing rooks appears; as the plot progresses, the atmosphere of dread thickens. It is the framework of pastoral convention, *unconventionally* used, argues Wojciechowska, that creates the story’s ultimate horror.

“The Turn of the Screw” is a leitmotif of *The Writer’s Museum*, interpreted, translated, and staged. This text, most familiar (to readers) and most unusual (for the writer) reflects a paradox—we think we know James but we only recognize a fraction. By the multiplicity of approaches shown in this volume, we learn that even this fraction remains largely undiscovered. Similarly, the biographical pieces show a Master some of us will not easily recognize—an old man, sorrowful and tender towards the soldiers, awed and crushed by the Great War; or a scheming advertiser, skillful in the art of his own promotion.

In the section of “Interviews,” Grzegorz Koneczniak speaks with Professor Annick Duperray, the chair of the European Society of Jamesian Studies; the language of the interview is French. They talk of James in today’s

France and other European countries: of translations, American literature reading lists, and film adaptations; of responses to James by contemporary scholars as well as university students. Professor Duperray, together with her husband Max, whose article is also in this volume, are long-time Jamesians and translators of James's stories.

The next three interviews are in English. In "The Virtues of Inclusiveness," Miroslawa Buchholtz interviews Professor Susan Griffin, the current editor-in-chief of *The Henry James Review*. Griffin gives invaluable advice not only to "young Jamesians" but to all who wish to publish on James: a young scholar is reminded of the fact of not being "the first person to write on 'The Turn of the Screw'"; a more advanced researcher will appreciate listing some aspects of James's writing which "receive little attention" (176–77).

Interviews with professors from Taiwan, Italy, and Japan provide some perspectives characteristic for these countries. Doctor Sherry Lee, interviewed by Grzegorz Koneczniak, states that in Taiwan, where "most scholars [are trained] in comparative literature or literary theory/cultural studies," James is approached through "their own interests" such as "exchange economy," "bodily practices," "visual culture," or "urban studies." Professor Rosella Mamoli Zorzi, speaking to Miroslawa Buchholtz, claims that James's *Italian Hours* "could certainly be used as a very special guidebook even now," and sheds some light on the Hendrik C. Andersen Museum in Rome: "I think Andersen's statues deserved all the horrible and negative comments which James made, in spite of his love for the young sculptor" (184–85). Professor Keiko Beppu, in her talk to Dorota Gutfeld, gives a fascinating glimpse into Japanese culture: for example, James's language "translates well" because "the complexity and ambiguity caused by the complex, convoluted, rhetorical style is more or less similar both in Japanese and Jamesian way of expression" (188). Themes which "resonate well with Japanese audience" include "the respect for 'the path of duty'" (though in contemporary Japan, this is already "anachronistic") and a "tacit understanding without directly articulating one's emotions or thoughts" (188).

The final two interviews are conducted in Polish. Jacek Dehnel speaks about his new translation of "The Turn of the Screw" to Dorota Gutfeld. He rejects the idea of "simplifying" James's style: if a translator wants simplicity, there are simple writers to translate. With James, one does not translate from English, but from Jamesian. A translator is a servant to the author, not the author's snooty teacher. Dehnel divides the interpreters of "The Turn" into "apparitionists" and "non-apparitionists"; he himself is "non-apparitionist," and repeats after Edmund Wilson that a crazy governess is much more terrible than a ghost. Dehnel titled his new translation differently from the previous

one (by Witold Pospieszała, 1959) in order to underline the psychology rather than the supernatural in the novella. The last interview also refers to "The Turn of the Screw," this time to its operatic version by Benjamin Britten, staged in *Opera na Zamku* (Opera in the Castle) in Szczecin, Poland. The director of the Opera, Jacek Jekiel, speaks to Katarzyna Szczerbowska-Prusevicius. The Polish title of Britten's opera is the same as in Dehnel's translation of the story, yet the English title is also retained, so that the viewer is free to choose his or her own interpretation. The costumes of the performers deserve some special attention—in contrast to the minimalist setting, they are lavish, Victorian. Miss Jessel's costume is "provocative"—transparent, and Quint's is modern, reminding the interviewer of a motorcyclist's outfit. Jekiel underlines that the ambiguity of the text is retained in the Szczecin operatic version—there is no obvious key to its interpretation.

The various voices in these interviews—serious, playful, or ironic; informative, suggestive, or even slightly insinuating—are like the sound of James's characters' interactions—or like society at large.

The part titled "Maestras" is devoted to memories about notable women in the academic profession. Michael Anesko, Philip Horne, and Tamara Follini, in "A Memorial Hour" remember Millicent Bell (1920–2015). Anesko writes about the conflict between Leon Edel and Bell, about how Edel "berated and tried to censor [Bell] when she sought to publish her . . . study on James and Edith Wharton back in mid-sixties," calling her "that Bell woman." Bell avenged herself with the critical assessment of Edel's famous biography of James—her review honestly acknowledged the biography's merits, still calling it a "failure," with some aspects "forced and somewhat vulgar" (214–15). Horne reminisces about Bell's private life, the affectionate relation with her husband, her love for swimming (which Anesko also remembers). And like Anesko, Horne quotes Edel wishing that the publication of her book on James and Wharton "should be stopped" (219). Both writers compare Bell to James's characters—Anesko to Mrs. Birdseye from *The Bostonians* (but from the final chapters—as a good Jamesian should remember, Mrs. Birdseye's image undergoes in the novel a substantial transformation), and Horne to Milly Theale—*The Wings of the Dove*'s affluent and angelic heroine. Follini too recalls Bell's personal charm and her most friendly attitude to colleagues in the profession, but also Bell's critical insights, especially her interpretation of Kate Croy, "in an assessment of the novel's ending that is unmarked by sentimental or idealist tones, and is conducted with a discerning, calm objectivity . . . that is yet feelingly sympathetic to the complex motivations and mostly frustrated desires that shape the compromises of individual lives." Bell shared "the qualities

of lucidity, spontaneity and skepticism" with "James's characters that she most admired" (223–24).

In "Margaret Schlauch, an Icon and a Scholar," Liliana Sikorska remembers a medievalist, a political exile from McCarthy-era America, and an academic in Polish universities with a career spanning four decades. Schlauch, born in Philadelphia in 1898, died in Warsaw in 1986. She was "an active member of the Communist Party of America," and in Poland, of the Polish Workers' Party (226). Reading Sikorska's memories, one feels awed by Schlauch's figure—her Marxist sympathies, her textbooks ("the dreaded name on the covers" [225]), her refusal to acknowledge "changing critical approaches." Yet Sikorska "[understands] that she came out of a different school of thought" (228). Courageous, strong-minded, and controversial, Schlauch "has remained a symbol of academic achievement" (230).

If Bell is clearly a figure who has her rightful place in James's Museum, Schlauch initially appears somewhat out of place here. To my mind, however, her function is apparent—an unfamiliar exhibit in a museum provokes a thinking process leading to explanations. Schlauch, like James, was an exile. And Schlauch was a Marxist—is it a far-fetched connection to James's interest in the proletariat—an issue present in the volume and, in my opinion, worthy of still more attention?

The section "Varia" opens with a list of conferences devoted solely to James, in many parts of the world: the USA, France, Italy, Japan, England, Poland, Turkey, Scotland, China, and South Korea, pleasing the reader with the conferences' rising frequency. Thus between 1993 and 2010, there were eight Jamesian conferences; in 2011—two; 2012 and 2013 had three each; 2014—two, there were none in 2015, but I suppose the potential organizers waited for the Master's death anniversary in 2016, which year boasted six. Seoul hosted a conference in July 2017. A map of the world is provided, with all these sites marked—truly, the Earth is dotted with places to which the Jamesians swarm. Then, we are given a transcript of an email from the South Korean President of Henry James Society to Mirosława Buchholtz, confirming the affinity of James scholars across the world. Content to be one of them, the reader moves on to a quiz—a set of six photographs of doors—and is invited to guess the doors' connection to the Master, and email his or her answer to the editors. Prizes are not announced, but the little game is a reward in itself.

Alberto Caruso, composer, contacted Colm Toibin, author of 2004 novel *The Master*, and together they collaborated in creating the opera about James, under the same title. In "The Master, l'opera lirica basata sull'omonimo romanzo di Colm Tóibín, musica di Alberto Caruso, libretto

di Colm Tóibín,” Caruso writes about the experience of staging the opera in the United States, with conservatory students as performers. This is the only piece in “The Museum” written in Italian: “with its soft elisions, its odd transports, its kindly contempt for consonants and other disagreeables,” as James himself wrote about the language in *Portraits of Places* (20). The non-Italian speaking visitor of the Museum feels regret, and finds some consolation in photographs which adorn the article.

The section finishes with Marta Sibierska and Jarosław Hetman’s “Staging Henry James: A Memory,” about the performance of James’s *Summersoft* by The Spinning Globe—a theatrical group associated with the Department of English of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. One of the two performances of the play took place in 2013, during the James conference, and I had the great pleasure to watch it. The authors write about the challenges of staging James, in English, with Polish students, or about some changes made for the sake of our-times’ viewers (“a rabid reformer” is presented as “Greenpeace-like” activist) as well as our-times’ safety regulations, which, surprisingly, imposed new meanings on the play:

We were not able to light up a cigarette on stage. Thus, our Yule took it out, asked Prodmore the question, but, despite his answer as if in the affirmative, he had to hide it back in his pocket. This seemingly minor change that we were forced to introduce shifted the sense of the whole conversation: Yule became even more passive and pathetic than James designed him to be, and his situation gained an even more bitter, tragic tint. The sense of a little solidarity between the two characters that share a smoke, the bridge over their political and social differences that James built between them was gone. (250)

There are more fascinating examples in the article—and the play was fascinating, too, funny, well-acted, fast-moving—which I confirm with no reservations. One only wishes that the photographs included in the printed article were clearer (they are clear in the electronic version of the magazine)—but still, justice is given to the facial expressions and gestures of the youthful actors.

“Varia” is the least serious, yet a very pleasing part of the issue. It is meant for the James insider, who loves meeting other professionals and working with enthusiastic students. The section, adorned with games, figures, and photographs, is like a toy, a gift to play with after a hard day’s work.

“Reviews,” six of them, written in Polish, constitute the final part of the journal. The first one, by Mirosława Buchholtz, assesses a biography

of James, recently published in Germany: Verena Auffermann's *Henry James* (Deutscher Kunstverlag 2016). It is rather a "photo-biography"—richly illustrated impressions on James's life and writing. In this book we watch James, as Buchholtz observes, as if through a keyhole: seeing clearly, but in a limited way. The review is humorous—Auffermann paints James's portrait unsympathetically at times, but perhaps it is for the better, says Buchholtz, as we all know that brutes are attractive. Affermann "tactfully" overlooks the fact of James's ironic attitude to the Germans (he gave them ridiculous names), which is very nice, but she also gives facts which would be sensational . . . if true. Buchholtz warns the reader that a clear thesis, strong argumentation, together with some truthfulness are missing from the biography, yet gives a final praise—the book offers "provocative generalizations" and "half-truths," engaging the reader's own thinking process.

By the same author, the next article reviews two 2016 critical volumes: George Monteiro's *Reading Henry James: A Critical Perspective on Selected Works* (McFarland) and Geraldo Magela Cáffaro's *The House, the World, and the Theatre* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing). Neither of the books is very long (which fact the reviewer appreciates—they will not try the reader's patience) and neither is meant to be a milestone in James criticism; however, the terms "repetitive" or "fascinatingly new" are relevant in meaning, as Buchholtz wisely notices—many scholars will find these books both useful and innovative (263). Monteiro's book is beautifully written—it is characterized by excellent style and certain dramatic tension. One of the incidents, reported in the review, is Monteiro's encounter with the formidable Leon Edel and Edel's "monopolistic practices" (264). Surely, the ghost of Edel haunts the volume. Buchholtz praises many aspects of Monteiro's work, but it is defining "the connections of James with poetry" that constitutes the books' exceptionality (263). Caffaro's book, "strictly academic" as opposed to personally written Monteiro's, belongs to the field of comparative criticism. Its credo, as the reviewer observes, lies in rejecting literary sources and influences, for the sake of "convergences" (270). Ultimately, Buchholtz judges Monteiro's accessible volume higher than the learned, theoretical book by Caffaro (272); perhaps a nostalgic, personal, "gritty" literary criticism will evoke "'a right good salvo of barks,' a few strong wrinkles puckering the skin between the ears"—isn't this what we all really desire? or truly need? "Picking and Choosing," Marianne Moore agrees.

Dorota Guttfeld writes about the new Polish translation of "The Turn of the Screw" by Jacek Dehnel (interviewed earlier in this volume) and contrasts it with the 1959 version by Witold Pospieszała. The new translation

calls the reader's attention to psychology, the old one—to the supernatural. Dehnel's translation underlines the governess's excessive emotionality as well as the eroticism of the woman's obsession, and the younger translator is much more careful to draw ambiguities from James's text. Gutfeld lists many examples of how the two translators deal with particular words or passages—a fascinating, in my opinion, presentation for the Polish-speaking reader.

Marta Sibierska watched the performance of *The Portrait of a Lady* staged in Teatr Wybrzeże, Gdańsk, Poland, and observed that the director, Ewelina Marciniak, will please the audience unfamiliar with the book, but will annoy a Jamesian. The play is, of course, a loose adaptation of the novel. This "looseness" is strongest in the finale of the play—the screenplay finishes much before the novel's ending, when Isabel realizes her husband will never let her visit the dying Ralph. This very pessimistic concept deprives James's tale of its ambiguity. Why, asks the Jamesian? The Gdańsk performance is "maximalist"—there is modern dance, live music, rich light effects, films projected over the screen and on the curtain, extravagant costumes, nudity, even a pond with real water in the middle of the stage... (283). Yet, says the reviewer, it is all somewhat unoriginal, derivative—we have seen these things before. In Marciniak's version, the frame of the portrait is rich, yet it fails to support the canvas, as Sibierska poetically (and rightly) notices (284). Having watched the performance, I cannot agree more.

Jarosław Hetman briefly reviews Beth Vermeer's *Caged*—made for "Remembering Henry James" project in Italy, 2016. The movie is not a film adaptation of "In the Cage," but an our-times response to the story. James's telegraph operator turns into a telephone canvasser. This, in Hetman's opinion, is the biggest drawback of the "response"—James's heroine observes and interacts with people, while the canvasser only repeats mechanical, marketing phrases. The filmmakers allowed themselves some metacinematic effects—it turns out at the end that the young woman is an actress, playing her role in the call center. Ah, we have also seen this before. What the filmmakers ultimately achieve in this shallow piece is the viewer's confusion, says Hetman.

Grzegorz Koneczniak visited the online exhibition of *book arts*—artistic objects made by Claire Jeanine Satin, inspired by the life and works of Henry James. What these objects are is difficult to explain—the reader is invited to see the artist's webpage, satinartworks.com. Are these still books or are they objects of art, asks Koneczniak after Megan L. Benton (289). The reviewer is sure about this, however: Satin's artworks open before the reader and the viewer the artistic and multidimensional approach to James

This final piece might refer to the journal I have just reviewed: it is, in a sense, a piece of art. The volume is physically beautiful—of large format and clear print, with wide margins for scholarly notes, with numerous interesting photographs, among them, of James's Lamb House, of actors in performances inspired by James, of letters written to James, and many others; most of the photographs come from private collections of scholars, and give the volume an intimate touch. I am at a loss to find words of criticism, yet feel obliged to provide some. Perhaps the quality of the pictures could be better in the print version of the journal. There are virtually no typographical errors—I found a quotation which should be set off, and a repetition of “the”—none other. In the whole volume there is one mistake, which I will leave for the readers to find—in a passing remark, a character is ascribed to the wrong novel. This, in my opinion, only adds to the Museum's value. The little imperfection, like the birthmark on Georgiana's cheek, makes the journal alive.

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