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in *The Awkward Age***

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"One crowded hour of glorious life":

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On May 12, 1900, Henry James wrote to his brother William from his new home in Rye, Sussex, in response to news of William's poor health. After wishing him a prompt release from a "mysterious visitation" of "fever and bleeding" and "a quiet and propitious period" of convalescence, the novelist divulged his own mundane yet surprising news: "I have totally shaved off my beard, unable to bear longer the increased hoariness of its growth: it had suddenly begun these three months since, to come out quite white and made me *feel*, as well as look so old. Now, I feel *forty* and clean and light."¹ The revelation is as remarkable for its symbolic value as for its informational pith. Having recently marked his fifty-sixth birthday, James was keenly, if not painfully, conscious that he had passed into the "elderly" stage of life: in words he had recently used to describe Mr. Longdon in *The Awkward Age* (1899), "he had ... conclusively doubled the Cape of the years—he would never again see fifty-five." In positing fifty-five as "the Cape of the years," James establishes the upper reach of "that bleak headland" of middle age, just as in confiding to William that cleanshaven he "feel[s] *forty*," he implicitly locates its temporal baseline.² Perhaps it is no coincidence that the dramatic alteration of James's appearance occurred amid a historical transformation no less striking. James, who had worn a beard

since the Civil War, faced the turn of the twentieth century "clean and light," delighting in a paradoxical sense of freshness and youth that defied his own advancing age; meanwhile the historic turn of the twentieth century created an atmosphere of cultural newness and modernity even as the advancing years announced that the world was only getting older. **[End Page 265]**

The dual meaning of "age" as a noun signifying both a historical epoch and the duration, to date, of an individual's life underscores an implicit resonance between time of life and historic time. In modern American fiction, this resonance is nowhere more conspicuous than in *The Awkward Age*. As Vivien Jones points out, the "awkwardness" to which the title alludes could refer to teenaged Nanda Brookenham, her middle-aged mother, or the elderly Mr. Longdon; it could refer equally to a "self-conscious age of transition" corresponding to the book's time of publication in the penultimate year of the nineteenth century.³ Pamela Thurschwell elaborates on the relationship between individual age and historical age in this novel, explaining that the title's double entendre invites inquiry into the construction of age as a signifier of personal identity: "The novel's titular pun equates the awkward, individual, in-between time of adolescence with the awkward, collective, in-between time of the *fin de siècle*."⁴ For Thurschwell, this duality "lead[s] us both towards the turn-of-the-century 'invention' of the modern adolescent, and towards James's exploration of the culturally constructed nature of age as an identity category."⁵

Thick with inuendo and misalliances and charged with an atmosphere of illicit sexuality and betrayal, *The Awkward Age* has been read primarily in terms of the compromised marriage plot precipitated by Nanda's coming of age. It is not solely a story of Nanda's transition to adulthood, however. It is, more generally, a novel about age, change, and the impact of ever-changing age on personal subjectivity and interpersonal relationships at any stage of life. The intersections of gender, generation, and the social and affective dimensions of growing up and growing old loom large in this novel as it sketches Mr. Longdon's connection to three generations of women, beginning with Lady Julia and (by way of her daughter, Mrs. Brook) concluding with her granddaughter Nanda. Although courtship and marriage structure the overall narrative arc, each scene of the novel invites us to think about how age and stage of life shape consciousness, experience, and social interaction. The novel explores age and aging persistently but often obliquely through an objective narrative mode in which James anatomizes the unstable nature of the relationships among the members of Mrs. Brook's social network upon Nanda's entry into adult society. Through protracted verbal exchanges between characters, punctuated by brief character sketches and vignettes of settings (or "sets" in this play-like novel), *The Awkward Age* queries the impact of modernity and temporality on identity formation and interpersonal relationships when subjected to conventional, though intensified, social pressures. At the same time, the novel invites us to contemplate the relationships between time and age. How do we experience time in relation to age, place, and stage of life, and **[End Page 266]** how do we experience age in relation to time, place, situation, and social environment? To what extent is age merely a convention? Can we be multiple ages at once? If so, do ages and stages necessarily align and proceed at the same pace? If not, what is it like when internal and external experiences of age are out of synch? Finally, do we inhabit age or does age inhabit us?

Like Jones, who analyzes this novel in relation to the advent of the New Woman, and Thurschwell, who considers the "invention" of the modern concept of adolescence in Anglo-American culture, I

investigate the constructedness of age-related categories in *The Awkward Age* in conjunction with significant cultural and sociotemporal shifts. Situating the novel within contemporaneous discourses of time, which underwent radical reorientations and recalibrations in the nineteenth century, I consider how the new ways of conceptualizing, marking, and being in time inform the often bewildering tropes of age and aging proliferating through *The Awkward Age*. Turning to its serialization in *Harper's Weekly* (1898–99), its first book editions, published by Heinemann (London) and Harper Brothers (New York) in 1899, and, finally, the revised New York Edition published in 1908, I examine how the material text—a timebound embodiment of a "timeless" composition—impinges on the subjective representations of time and age with which the novel contends. I argue that underlying its relentless surface attention to clock time, calendrical time, and chronological age is a deeper concern with the subjectivity of age and aging that shows through when we probe the different published versions of the novel in relation to the problematics of time. By attending to the difficulty of rendering, in print, inward experiences of embodied time, we can recognize how the problem of representing age as a dimension of consciousness challenges the conventions of the realistic novel and casts light on the way an aging, increasingly time-conscious James responded to this seemingly insoluble artistic and philosophical dilemma.

The Awkward Page

One day late in the winter of 1895 James recorded an idea for a "short tale" about a teenage girl's fraught entry into adult society. The "germ" quickened around "the little London girl who grows up to 'sit with' the free-talking modern young mother—reaches 17, 18, etc.—comes out—and, not marrying, has to 'be there'—and, though the conversation is supposed to be expurgated for her, inevitably hears, overhears, guesses, follows, takes in, becomes acquainted with, horrors." Warming to the idea, James prefigured the crisis in the pages of his notebook: "A young man who likes her—wants to take her out of it—feeling how she's exposed, etc. ... The young man hesitates, because he thinks she **[End Page 267]** already knows too much; but all the while he hesitates she knows, she learns, more and more. He finds out somehow how much she *does* know, and, terrified at it, drops her: all her ignorance, to his sense, is gone." By the end of the entry he had summoned forth "the type of the little girl who is conscious and aware." The passage concludes with the voice that would become Nanda Brookenham's, the voice she uses insisting, "I am modern—I'm supposed to know—I'm not a *jeune fille*."⁶

Many scholars have examined the ways Victorian and modern texts evince a fascination with modernizing concepts of time. Conceived and published on the cusp of late Victorian modernism, *The Awkward Age*—a text equally concerned with the way individuals inhabit a particular time (historical age) and the way they embody cumulative lived experience at particular moments in time (personal age)—becomes more legible in light of their research. Cultural historians and theorists have traced the late nineteenth-century preoccupation with time to a new temporal awareness brought about by the shift from natural time, determined by the sun, to "constructed" time, based on human conventions. In Britain this era of constructed time, which closely aligns with James's lifespan, became institutionalized with the establishment of nationally coordinated railway time in 1848. The creation of international standard time followed in 1884, to be succeeded by the global adoption of universal time over the ensuing decades. As Trish Ferguson explains, "The dawning of the clock-controlled world of the Industrial Revolution was a defining moment of a revolution in man's experience of time. It marked the

onset of a paradigm shift ... as the Victorians attempted to construct and control time, to use it for their own purposes."⁷

This "revolution" had a profound impact on the way people thought about time, space, and the progress of everyday life. In an influential essay, Reinhart Koselleck posits a correspondence between the "denaturalization of the hitherto traditional experience of time" prior to the Industrial Revolution and the modern experience of acceleration—the perception of increased speed and ever-quickenig events. Koselleck explains that "the increasing use of the term 'acceleration' since the turn of the nineteenth century bears witness to a change in the sensation and consciousness of time. ... It would seem that the term served to register an experience that had not existed before."⁸ Ferguson considers the literary impact of this shift in the experience of time: "New anxieties about the future emerged in this new world of temporal uncertainty and, as a result, literature of the era reflects radical new ways of thinking about time."⁹ Both Thackeray and Dickens, she notes, "acknowledged that the arrival of the railway entailed a profound psychological adjustment to an accelerated world."¹⁰ Citing "an apparent epidemic of temporal obsession" [End Page 268] in fiction of the early twentieth century, Clark Blaise argues that once writers "felt themselves in control of time, free to experiment with sequencing, able to shatter 'natural' consecutivity, their works grew closer to the stop-and-go flow of consciousness itself." In Blaise's articulation, modernism itself constitutes "an altered relationship to time."¹¹

In the late 1880s, at the height of James's career, time—and, by extension, narrative experiments with individual and historical age—began to seep into popular fiction on both sides of the Atlantic. In Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888) the protagonist, hypnotized into a century-long sleep, wakes up, unaged, in the year 2000 to discover a socialist utopia flourishing in the radically altered United States. Two years later, Oscar Wilde published *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890, the fable-like novella of a Faustian aesthete who remains eternally young while his portrait bears all the signs of age attendant on a "fast" and dissolute life. In the same year, William Morris published *News from Nowhere* (1890), the "ambitious temporality" of which Karen Chase sums up as "the projection of a *future* utopia drawn from precedents in the distant *past*" that produces "an image of social desire intended to generate a *present* political praxis."¹² In 1895, the year James recorded the "germ" of *The Awkward Age*, his future friend and neighbor H. G. Wells (they met three years later while James was in the midst of writing *The Awkward Age*) soared to fame with *The Time-Machine* (1895)—the first popular novel to explore the possibilities of time travel. In the same year, an event took place that inspired Joseph Conrad (another friend and neighbor at the time James was working on *The Awkward Age*) to write *The Secret Agent* (1907), a novel that revolves around an anarchist plot to blow up the Greenwich Observatory and thus (as Blaise observes) "destroy the viability of British society" by disrupting time itself.¹³ The same period ushered in what arguably would become the most enduring cultural text to explore imaginatively the theme of age: appearing on stage in 1904 and adapted into a fully developed novel in 1911, J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* turns on a girl's growing up and a boy's refusing to do so in a timeless, interior fantasy world known as Neverland. Henry James, who was influenced by the psychological studies of his brother William James as well as by turn-of-the-century theories of the plasticity and relativity of time, authored many texts that would be at home in this list. A "grammarian and philosopher of time," as Peter Rawlings identifies him, James explores temporal experience and representation in his fiction both through theme and technique.¹⁴ Rawlings finds "the dislocation ... of linear, unidirectional notions of time" to be ubiquitous in James's late fiction, which, he argues,

"specializes in constructing, within the volatile framework of philosophies of time then current, decadent mutations of America's vanishing dreamers."¹⁵ [End Page 269]

In complex and often subtle ways, *The Awkward Age* conveys a pervasive sense of time consciousness through a large cast of characters who, for multiple reasons, are anxiously attuned to time and its passage. Structural as well as thematic, the "synthetic category" of time is deeply embedded in the novel's form and fabric.¹⁶ Its "scenes"—an artifact of James's recently aborted career as a playwright—unfold within a chronological framework engineered with the precision of a Swiss watch: not only does each discrete "book" of the novel preserve the Aristotelian unity of time, but within each section narrative time closely approximates "real time," an effect facilitated by the author's new practice of writing by dictation and achieved through its conversational mode. Further heightening its temporal complexity, upon initial publication, this meticulously timed textual performance was physically embedded within the time-sensitive medium of a weekly periodical spotlighting U.S. news and cultural events.

In the sections that follow, I consider the novel's chronological trappings within the context of its early publication history. I begin with the serialization of *The Awkward Age* in *Harper's Weekly*—a vehicle that exerted its own extrinsic time scheme on the text's intrinsic narrative design—focusing on scenes of the novel in which characters display acute (often anxious or frustrated) time consciousness. This investigation of the relationships between form and chronology lays the foundation for an exploration of the relational quality of age and the way the new structure of the book edition stretches to accommodate generational time, the duration of which exceeds the constraints of the narrative frame. Finally, I turn to the problem of "sizing up" (as James puts it), in temporal terms, the "just extent" of a "situation, *any* situation" (xli, xxxi) deemed worthy of representation. This compositional problem epitomizes a larger conundrum involving time that the novel's translation from serial to bound book throws into relief: namely, one never truly knows how much one has left.

"It's about Time!"

In "The Death of the Lion" (1894), published one year before James conceived the plot of *The Awkward Age*, the narrator, a young journalist who works for a weekly periodical called *The Empire*, interviews Neil Paraday, a famous writer well on in years. "Proclaimed and anointed and crowned" by the *Empire*, Paraday finds that he has, at the age of fifty, become "a contemporary": as the young journalist puts it, "the poor man was to be squeezed into his horrible age."¹⁷ The phrase seems prescient when we consider the serialization of *The Awkward Age* in *Harper's Weekly*. Squeezed into columns, bound up with advertisements, and punctuated by graphic full-page illustrations broadcasting U.S. imperialist [End Page 270] activity at the height of the Spanish-American War, James, like Paraday, found himself "squeezed into his horrible age." To turn the pages of *Harper's Weekly* between October 1, 1898, and January 7, 1899, is to encounter the dense descriptions and dialogue of this difficult text compressed into narrow columns amid splashy tabloid action scenes that often violently interrupt the novel's mannerly round of social engagements. Moreover, the novel was "squeezed" into its "horrible age" by way of a periodical for which "*The Empire*" would have been a fitting moniker.

The aptness of the term "empire" as a name for the historical New York-based *Harper's Weekly* as well as the fictional London-based journal in "The Death of the Lion" points up the fact that, for Americans

and Britons alike, the world of the 1890s had perceptibly shrunk even as imperialist projects expanded. "As early as 1838," Blaise explains, "ten years into the rail revolution, magazines were discussing the shrinking of time and space."¹⁸ The sense of geographical contraction, intensified by the shortening of the amount of time it took to cross the Atlantic, the invention of the telegraph, and the setting of the transatlantic cable, went hand in hand with the shift in the comprehension of time. Additionally, as Sue Zemka notes, "newspapers and periodical literature ... promoted readers' mental insertion into a single temporality shared across geographical regions."¹⁹

Although it is generally acknowledged that novels and newspapers could unite a geographically dispersed readership, the precise invocation of time and place within *The Awkward Age*, together with the way its fine-grained, finely tuned internal time scheme competes with that of a big, bold, pictorial news magazine, undermines the cohesion that the text's diffusion through time and space might otherwise facilitate.²⁰ The weekly periodicity of *Harper's Weekly* disrupts the carefully orchestrated intervals of time that elapse within and between the novel's scenes. From the beginning of chapter 1 to the start of chapter 3, for example, a little more than forty minutes elapse; for readers of the serial, however, a full week passed between these two moments in the text. The resulting temporal dissonance between the intrinsic chronology of the novel and the extrinsic chronotope of its serialized embodiment recapitulates a persistent dislocation between abstract time and its human embodiment—age—within the novel itself.

Shifts in the experience of time influenced the novel in other ways. Over the course of the nineteenth century, as Blaise notes, time became "associate[ed] with business and industry, with schedules, with commercial entombment, with depression, and anxiety."²¹ In a similar vein, Ferguson observes that the "new temporal environment," with its attendant "deadlines, efficiency, and precision," would "shape not only the literature but also the working practices of Victorian writers."²² James's professionalism, [End Page 271] reflected in his dictation of his novel to a professional stenographer and periodic mailing of installments to Harper's New York office, heeded these imperatives of efficiency and speed. (To Wells, he wrote, while in the throes of composing *The Awkward Age*, "I ... have been so ridden, myself, by the black care of an unfinished and *running* (galloping, leaping & bounding,) serial that parting with a day has been like parting with a pound of flesh.")²³ This rigorous temporal sensibility, symptomatic of what Ferguson terms the "new disciplinary time culture," manifests not only in James's efficient deadline-driven working style but in the culture of bureaucracy and technological innovation that, within the novel, distinguishes both London time from provincial time and the narrative present from its historical past.²⁴ Disarmed by the "alarming eminence" of Vanderbank's apartment building with its "rumbling and creaking" lift ("one of *these* things—!") (2), a leery Mr. Longdon confesses, "I belong to a different period of history" (5). A self-described Rip Van Winkle, he confides that "there have been things this evening that have made me feel as if I had been disinterred—literally dug up from a long sleep. I assure you there have!" (5).

James sustains an exacting temporal realism that is introduced on the first page and projects beyond its last word, "tomorrow." Chapter 1 establishes the season, the precise time of night, and even the duration of the conversation between Vanderbank and Mr. Longdon, who continually consults his watch. Subsequent chapters supply additional chronological details, enabling readers to pinpoint, by working back, the temporal setting and duration of each scene. Not only can readers thus plot the

narrative timeline, but the prominence of clocks, watches, telegraphs, appointments, and, in the background, the occasional railway schedule or waiting cab, clearly marks it as the product of what Daragh Downes identifies as "a society painfully adjusting to the distinctive new tempos of modernity and the growing dominance of clock time."²⁵ In fact, time is not simply the medium in which events in the novel unfold. Time also works its way into conversations, many of which occur as a result of characters arriving late (as Vanderbank does in book 2), early (as Mr. Longdon does in book 2), on time (Mitchy in book 2), or at the wrong time (Vanderbank, book 8). Time also bears directly on the question of the "exposure" of girls, which is, as Mrs. Brook, maintains, "*the question ...—the question of the future*" (129).

If James, like Paraday in "The Death of the Lion," was "squeezed into his horrible age" through the novel's serialization in *Harper's Weekly*, then it is no less true that the "horrible age" gets squeezed into the novel. As Ferguson explains, "In a world where 'time is ... not passed but spent,' the Victorians drew clear correspondences between time and money."²⁶ In *The Awkward Age* this "time is money" credo manifests most conspicuously [End Page 272] in connection with the marriageability of girls: it is the alignment of Nanda's age and gender as she reaches nineteen that sets in motion, belatedly, the familiar trappings of the marriage plot. Vanderbank, the novel's most eligible bachelor, draws attention to the commercialism of courtship, with its implicit responsiveness to time:

"But beauty, in London ... staring, glaring, obvious, knock-down beauty, as plain as a poster on a wall, an advertisement of soap or whiskey, something that speaks to the crowd and crosses the foot-lights, fetches such a price in the market that the absence of it, for a woman with a girl to marry, inspires endless terrors and constitutes for the wretched pair—to speak of mother and daughter alone—a sort of social bankruptcy. London doesn't love the latent or the lurking, has neither time, nor taste, nor sense for anything less discernible than the red flag in front of the steamroller. It wants cash over the counter and letters ten feet high."

(17)

The cultural climate Vanderbank describes puts Nanda and her mother in a double bind. On one hand, the futures market rules in this mercenary nuptial economy. As Vanderbank formulates it, "How *will* she look, what will be thought of her and what will she be able to do for herself?" (17). On the other hand, as the novel makes clear, the girl's appearance—both her physical appearance and moral image—are time sensitive and, therefore, age sensitive. In the sultry atmosphere of Mrs. Brookenham's weekly salons, girls mature quickly and innocence (or at least its semblance) has a short "shelf life"; consequently, Nanda is in danger of being "spoiled" for the marriage market before the question of her beauty is resolved (as Vanderbank puts it, "There's a great question whether Nanda is pretty at all" [15]) and before a suitable match has been secured. The resulting time pressure impels the novel's plot forward over a period of some fourteen months, from shortly before Nanda's nineteenth birthday to shortly after her twentieth.

Complex relationships with time produce complex relationships with age. Within the novel's chronological frame, the narrator tends to be precise when referencing not only the month, day, and time of day, but also the age or life stage of the principal characters. The novel focuses as specifically on life stages as it does on chronology, giving voice to the anxiety and ideological instability attending

the new temporal consciousness and the doubleness of "tensed" (psychological) and "tenseless" (clock and calendar) time.²⁷ One facet of this temporal consciousness is an awareness that individuals inhabit, and are inhabited by, multiple times and ages simultaneously, a recognition that renders age ultimately irreducible to a number or even a fixed point in the finite trajectory of life.

It wasn't only the sense that the experience of time had become qualitatively different that intrigued James. His fiction responds to the sense that time is also quantitatively **[End Page 273]** different. In 1882 the naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace had observed that "various economies [of time and labour] give us such an advantage over our ancestors that, although the average duration of life has been but little increased, yet, such is the intensity of modern existence that we may be said to live twice or thrice as long as they did."²⁸ Theorizing time and the life course from the vantage point of psychology, William James devotes an entire chapter of *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) to the perception of time. Conceiving of time as a container as well as a medium of human experience, he observes that "time's content" can be "crowded and interesting, or simple and tame" and correlates differing perceptions of the duration of time with individual stages of life. He notes in particular "the variations of time-estimate between youth and age, and excitement and *ennui*."²⁹ As these observations suggest, individuals experience time differently *in* different ages and *at* different stages.

In *The Awkward Age*, James continually acknowledges such varieties of temporal experience. In book 5, in language reminiscent of his brother William's, Nanda tells Vanderbank that although what preceded the last three months was "an age, no doubt—but an age without a name," the recent months have been "one crowded hour of glorious life," have been "the fullest, the most important for what has happened in them, in all [her] life" (142). James also accounts for spatial variations in the perception of time, referencing an awareness that time seems to pass differently in different places. In the chapters set in the country, at Mertle and at Beccles, natural time asserts itself, at least when the action takes place out of doors: in chapter 16, for example, the terrace has the "afternoon shade" (134); at the start of chapter 17, using imagery suggestive of "old" Mr. Longdon, whose hair still has "deep shadows" (2) of black, the narrator reports that "the beauty of the view deepened as the afternoon grew old and the shadows long" (144); and in chapter 18 "the high daylight was still in the sky, but with just the foreknowledge already of the long golden glow in which the many-voiced caw of the rooks would sound at once sociable and sad" (155). In contrast, in the London chapters, whose scenes are set entirely indoors, time runs strictly by the clock. Moreover, the artificial time of London affects not only the arrangement of day-to-day activities but the pace of life and the duration of a day: as Vanderbank tells Mr. Longdon, "We do doubtless get up later than at Beccles; but that gives us, you see shorter days" (17).

James explores these shifting coordinates—historical time, physical location, quotidian time, personal age, and generational difference—illustrating how the boundaries between tenseless time, measured in minutes and hours, and tensed, or subjective, time are apt to blur in a world newly adapted to the idea of time as a human-made system, **[End Page 274]** as a set of conventions with arbitrary referents (however well established). This fluidity between objective and subjective experiences of time and by extension between objective and subjective experiences of age crystallizes in three discrete scenes marked by hyper-awareness of time. In these scenes, located in books 1, 8, and 10, the novel's

temporal realism brings into focus the often hazy division between objective measures of time and age and their social and psychological constructions.

Paradoxically, the focus sharpens around moments in which time seems to defy its own discursive representation. David Kurnick comments on the way the novel frustrates readerly attempts to visualize the action, picture the characters, and imagine their spatial relationships as the scenes unfold; he likens the text to "a blueprint for an impossible or withheld performance."³⁰ A specifically temporal instance of impossibility (though not one Kurnick highlights) occurs in book 2, in which James suspends the consistent forward progression of time to present sequentially two scenes that occur simultaneously. Even as the sequence precludes its own simultaneous representation, however, Mr. Longdon and Nanda come to understand age, the personal embodiment of time, as a form of simultaneity: a layering of past experiences onto present consciousness.³¹

Presenting concurrent scenes one after the other, James exploits the ability of narrative to replay time separated by distance sequentially, thereby producing for the reader the effect of being (like Clare Vawdrey in "The Private Life" [1892]) in two places at once. In chapter 11 we find Mr. Longdon, Mitchy, and Nanda paying a visit to Vanderbank. When Mr. Longdon is overcome with emotion upon meeting Nanda and recognizing her resemblance to her grandmother, Lady Julia, whom he loved, he retreats to an adjacent room, where Vanderbank joins him. The narrative then recounts the discussion that takes place between Nanda and Mitchy in the first room while, offstage, Vanderbank talks to Longdon in the second room. Chapter 12 shifts our attention to Mr. Longdon and Vanderbank in the adjoining room, where readers become privy to the conversation that took place at the same time as the one already narrated between Nanda and Mitchy. When Vanderbank returns to the first room and Nanda then joins Mr. Longdon, the narrator records the conversation between Nanda and Mr. Longdon. Here James foregrounds and then carefully stage-manages the coexistence of multiple temporalities, weaving together the structural convention of ordered, linear narrative time and the embodied, multidirectional awareness of time that shapes and structures individual consciousness.

In order to effect the shift from the end of the scene in one room to the beginning of the simultaneous scene in the adjacent room, the narrative must wind backward in time. Yet the vectoral movement of time strains against the limited ability of narrative **[End Page 275]** conventions to account for the way personal and historical pasts commingle in the subjective present. Mr. Longdon tells Nanda that although she "breathe[s] a different air" from her grandmother, he breathes "the same old one ... as much as possible" (102). The "air" of one's recent and distant pasts exists simultaneously, Mr. Longdon implies, but these atmospheres are qualitatively different, as they originate at two distinct points in history and are permeated by the "breath" of different (though overlapping) collective personal pasts. At the same time, although Nanda breathes "a different air" from Lady Julia as well as from Mr. Longdon, she embodies Lady Julia's hereditary traits, resulting in a physical resemblance that is emblematic of the coexistence of past and present and the way one's earlier selves, shaped by genetics as well as history and experience, are embodied within one's present being. Significantly this critical scene follows the moment when Mr. Longdon "knows that he's pierced to the heart" (93). In this "beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!" moment, James presents two radically different responses to the implications of such embodied temporalities, each involving a loss of control: Mr. Longdon loses control of his emotions when confronted with Nanda's striking resemblance to Lady Julia, while Nanda,

subject to Mr. Longdon's intense gaze of recognition and overpowering resurgence of love, is, in a sense, claimed by Mr. Longdon, who projects his own memories and desire onto her, despite her evident self-possession.

In book 8 James presents a second chronocentric scene in which time appears to be fractured and fragmented rather than compounded and consolidated—a phenomenon that has its own implications for the construction of age and identity. In this scene Vanderbank, deputy chairman of the general audit (3), demonstrates punctuality together with a bureaucratic attention to clock time that is symptomatic of what Downes characterizes as "Victorian London's intensifying chronomania."³² Arriving at Tishy Grendon's for a dinner party, "he looked at his watch, which exactly marked eight" (256). He is doubly stymied, however, in his attempt to be prompt. First, "consult[ing] once more his watch," he discovers that "the beautiful clock on the mantel was wrong." Although the mechanism contained in the beautiful clock is dysfunctional, indicating the limits of aestheticism as well as technology, human time proves no better: Nanda, who arrives shortly after Vanderbank, "mention[s] that she believed Tishy to have said 8.15, which meant of course anything people liked" (257). The temporal relativism suggested by this comment reflects not only what Rawlings describes as the "veritable carnival of relativity of turn-of-the-nineteenth century culture" but also the way modern society selectively connects people, turning a privileged subset into an "in group," while excluding others, isolating the outliers in time and space.³³ The suggestion of temporal **[End Page 276]** anarchy, of surrendering to a multiplicity of separate individual personal times, provides a context for the novel's slipperiness on the subject of age and, indeed, on the subject of language: in many instances, age has no linguistic specificity whatsoever. This imprecision is evidenced by Mrs. Brook's equivocation as to Nanda's age, which she refuses to pin down; the unstated prevarication regarding her own age (implied by Nanda's); the illogic of her remark that the duchess is "no older than any one else" (45); and the duchess's assertion that Nanda is "supposedly young, but she's really any age you like: your London world so fearfully batters and bruises them" (165). As in the scene in which Mr. Longdon subsumes Nanda into his private recollections of Lady Julia, ambiguity surrounding age as a category of identity is not emotionally or ideologically neutral; rather, age is projected onto a supposedly passive subject by external agents with agendas of their own. The duchess's comment that "she's really any age you like," for example, hints of the danger of having age imposed on one—of being forced to relinquish this integral aspect of identity to someone else, as occurs when Nanda's prior sequestration enabled Mrs. Brook to habitually make her out to be younger than her years.

In contrast to the scenes in books 1 and 8, in book 10 we find Nanda fully in control. Here, in the most time-conscious scene of all—a culminating sequence in which Nanda charitably lets off Vanderbank and decisively lets down Mitchy, before accepting Mr. Longdon's proposal—readers encounter Nanda hosting Vanderbank at 4:30, Mitchy at 5:30, and Mr. Longdon at 6:30, with a break for tea at 5:00. Vanderbank jokes (before looking at his watch), "You *are* making a day of it and you run us like railway trains!" (335). The timing, as Nanda points out, is the result of serendipity, however. In contrast to the earlier scenes in which time is precisely marked and measured, in book 10 time seems fluid, even elastic, despite the back-to-back appointments. This elasticity is most evident during "a single little minute" that passes between Nanda and Vanderbank. In describing this minute, the typically unobtrusive narrator dilates with mimetic irony that it was "a minute, I must yet haste to say, big enough in spite of its smallness to contain the longest look ever, on any occasion, exchanged between

these friends" (337). The temporal relativism indicated here corresponds to the malleable sense of age in the novel, which produces an indeterminacy that defies the temporal specificity: Mr. Longdon, who has a paradoxical sense of "newness" about him (derived in large part from the "perfection of his evening dress" [3]) as well as a sense of wonder that is at times childlike, is infantilized by others as an "old boy" while he refers to himself hyperbolically as "a hundred and three" (3); the duchess claims, with similar hyperbole, that the youthfully middle-aged Mrs. Brook "looks about three," that "she simply looks a baby" (165); and at the end of **[End Page 277]** book 10, Nanda, now twenty but with an "elderly" tone of voice, "might have been, as she wound up, a very much older person than her friend," the now-fifty-sevenish Mr. Longdon (366). The result is a text in which age inversion runs riot.³⁴

In *The Awkward Age* the narrator and characters alike use ambiguity, paradox, irony, and variations in perspective to describe complex, and sometimes dubious, qualities and motivations in age-related terms. Mrs. Brook's perpetual youthfulness ("she had about her the pure light of youth—would always have it" [27]), for example, is often described in hyperbolic terms—she possesses "a loveliness that was for the moment absolutely juvenile" (123)—but this projection of extreme youth is a way other characters (and the narrator) persistently let Mrs. Brook off the hook for her actions by associating her with inviolable innocence: Vanderbank "laugh[s] out ... at the childlike innocence with which her voice could invest the hardest teachings of life" (193). Thus, her superficial youthfulness has something of a Dorian Gray aspect to it, suggesting, as "her special sign," "an innocence dimly tragic" (27). At the same time, Nanda, like her brother Harold, who, with his "slight stoop" and "voice of a man of forty" (27) is described in terms reminiscent of middle age, seems "old" beyond her years—a quality that signals Nanda's independence and maturity but also enables her elders to relinquish responsibility for her.³⁵ As these examples illustrate, age in *The Awkward Age* is not a fixed signifier but a nexus of subjectivity and ideology, as James persistently defies readerly expectations through a series of juxtapositions in which the semantic opposition between youth and age collapses. In doing so, he decouples physical age from other measures of maturity in a move that mirrors the shift from natural time to clock time, and, in a further temporal reorientation, he upends familiar notions correlating age with conventional categories such as innocence and experience, vulnerability and strength.

What's most striking here are the tensions between self and other, singularity and uniformity, stability and flux that result from these dislocations of time and age. According to Stephen Kern, "The introduction of World Standard Time created greater uniformity of shared public time and in so doing triggered theorizing about a multiplicity of private times that may vary from moment to moment in the individual, from one individual to another according to personality, and among different groups as a function of social organization."³⁶ These scenes in *The Awkward Age* evoke such a "multiplicity of private times" along with a concomitant multiplicity of experiences, uses, and (to borrow from Rawlings) "abuses" of age. As this section has shown, the turn to temporality, concretized by the jarring discontinuities between James's text and *Harper's Weekly*, helps us recognize in the novel's intricate thematics of time radically altered conceptions of age and aging. **[End Page 278]** This recognition, in turn, points to the duality of age: it is both an idiosyncratic register of embodied time and a set of conventions for segmenting and structuring the life course so that it synchronizes with designated social rituals and roles while serving a host of other, less clearly defined individual and social ends. As this analysis suggests, the play of time and age in this novel is not merely lexical or

rhetorical "play" because age itself is fluid, multivalent, and above all relational, as, indeed, is identity itself.

"It's a Queer Life"

Near the beginning of *The Awkward Age* James offers a detailed sketch of Mr. Longdon, the first of many verbal cameos interspersed amid the novel's running dialogue and descriptions of scenes.

"Mr. Longdon was slight and neat, delicate of body and both keen and kind of face, with black brows finely marked and thick, smooth hair in which the silver had deep shadows. He wore neither whisker nor moustache and seemed to carry in the flicker of his quick brown eyes and the positive sun-play of his smile even more than the equivalent of what might, superficially or stupidly, elsewhere be missed in him; which was mass, substance, presence—what is vulgarly called importance. He had indeed no presence, but he had somehow an effect. He might almost have been a priest, if priests, as it occurred to Vanderbank, were ever such dandies."

(2–3)

Appearing in the novel's first periodical installment, the passage prefigures James's description of himself, just over nine months later, as beardless and "feel[ing] *forty* and clean and light" while simultaneously diverging sharply from contemporaneous visual representations of James himself. Like the newly cleanshaven James, Mr. Longdon, sporting "neither whisker nor moustache," seems younger than his years, with his "quick brown eyes" and the "sun-play of his smile," while his "slight" build, dark coloring, full head of hair, and dandyish array present a striking contrast to James at fifty-five, whom one acquaintance described as, in this period, "massive in face and figure."³⁷ (Notably, in his younger years James did have thick, smooth, dark hair and a lean build.) In his sketch of Mr. Longdon, James paradoxically projects attributes contrary to his own physical type onto a not-yet-realized portrait of the seemingly younger, lighter, trimmer literary artist who would emerge to face the twentieth century.

Yet even before they encounter this physical description, just five paragraphs into the novel, readers have already been conditioned to think of Mr. Longdon not merely as old but as hyperbolically aged. The words "old" and "elderly" are repeatedly [End Page 279] applied to Mr. Longdon—in the narration, in the speech of other characters, and in Mr. Longdon's own utterances. Moreover, Mr. Longdon ludicrously exaggerates his age, as when he declares, for example, "I'm a hundred and three!" (3). In part, this heightening of Mr. Longdon's sense of being old—in other words, his *feeling* old—derives from his reintroduction into London life after an extended absence: not only has the city changed, but the very technology of modern life has changed, as reflected in Mr. Longdon's wary allusion to the lift that carries him to Vanderbank's flat. Equally if not more important than Mr. Longdon's self-deprecation and self-fashioning, however, is the way he is continually interpellated as a much older man than either his biological years or his svelte and dapper (perhaps even on-trend) appearance would suggest because he is surrounded by companions who are fifteen, twenty, thirty, and even thirty-five years younger. From the first paragraph of the novel, where readers initially encounter "our young friend" Vanderbank and his "elderly fellow-guest" (1), Mr. Longdon is juxtaposed with other characters in verbal constructions that emphasize and even exaggerate these disparities of age. The effect of this hyperbole is to make Mr. Longdon even more of an unlikely suitor to Nanda—one whose

exaggerated age helps to account for his almost Cyranode-Bergerac-type appeal to Nanda—"I wish immensely you'd get married!"—in a "tone [that] betrayed so special a meaning that the words had a sound of suddenness" (154), as though he were, in fact, popping the question. The attribution of agedness, with its implications of social invisibility and effacement, also contributes to the sense that he "had indeed no presence" and helps account for the complete omission, at the end of book 9, of a scene in which he proposes to Nanda a "grand public adhesion," as Mitchy infers (352). The attribution of advanced age thus serves to marginalize the older man, suppress his "presence," and subordinate his plotline to those of all of the other major characters—until the final chapter of book 10.

A crucial feature of the way James represents age in *The Awkward Age* is its relational quality, which is both reflected in and facilitated by a structural framework conceived for the serialization but only fully realized in the bound book. In the preface to the New York Edition of *Roderick Hudson* (1875), James takes up the question of "where, for the complete expression of one's subject" "a particular relation stop[s]." ³⁸ In answer to his own question, he concludes that "really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily *appear* to do so." ³⁹ In the preface to the New York Edition of *The Awkward Age*, James recounts a scene in which he drew (literally) for the editor at *Harper's Weekly* an elaborate version of just such a circle devised with an intricate **[End Page 280]** "geometry of his own" for the containment and arrangement of the novel's scenes and relations. With excitement, he sketched "the neat figure of a circle consisting of a number of small rounds disposed at equal distance about a central object." The "central object" represented "the situation," the "subject in itself, to which the thing would owe its title," while "the small rounds represented so many distinct lamps ... the function of each of which would be to light with all due intensity one of its aspects" (xxxix–xl).

Oddly discordant with the linear progression and fractured spaces of the *Harper's Weekly* serial, this rotary structure can be readily discerned in the codex, where each "lamp"—a specific social occasion—is embodied in a discrete cluster of chapters, designated a "book." The practice of grouping the chapters of a long serial in this way when preparing the manuscript for book publication was not new to James: fourteen years earlier he had sectioned the forty-seven serialized chapters of *The Princess Casamassima* into six "books" before submitting it to Macmillan. ⁴⁰ Yet in the case of *The Awkward Age*, what might have been a purely enumerative editorial task took on a creative, compositional aspect on the christening of each book with the name of a principal figure.

In fact, the names of books in *The Awkward Age* serve a (meta)narrative function as well as an organizational one. In his essay "The Verbal Age," Tzvetan Todorov comments on the function of the names given to each book, pointing out that "these titles are the names of characters ... who are indirectly illuminated for us by the conversation, and who in their turn determine its course." In my reading, this "overlay" of named books serves a purpose beyond "illuminat[ing] ... the central subject which gives the novel its title" and each of the title characters in succession. ⁴¹ In the case of book 1, "Lady Julia," we can see that the added superstructure of what Todorov terms "character-books" foregrounds the relational aspect of identity. With no direct role in the action of the novel (literally no presence), Lady Julia nevertheless exists in the novel as far more than a facet of backstory and impetus to conversation and as more than just a memory in the minds of characters old enough to remember her. In fact, book 1 does little to illuminate Lady Julia herself, and the characters spend little time

discussing her; yet her existence in the historical past and in the consciousness of those present profoundly affects both character and plot, particularly those of Mrs. Brook, Nanda, and Mr. Longdon. The titling of book 1 after Lady Julia thus draws attention to generation and intergenerational links as an aspect of identity that intersects with age and aging.

Surprisingly, it is Nanda who, later in the novel, clearly articulates this idea. In the garden at Mertle, in conversation with Mr. Longdon and helped along by him, she observes: "One's just what one *is* ... in one's mind and what one sees and feels and the **[End Page 281]** sort of thing one notices." Mr. Longdon ventures to meet her point, prompting her by asking, "What you suggest is that the things you speak of depend upon other people?" Nanda's response is key: "We're both partly the result of other people," she offers, pointing to the example of Lady Julia, adding "*her* other people were so different. ... And yet if she had *you*, so I've got you too" (152–53). While the idea that "*her* other people were so different" calls attention to the sense of historical dislocation between people separated by generations, Nanda bridges the gap by triangulating from Lady Julia to Mr. Longdon to herself. Looking through the other end of the glass, we can see that Mr. Longdon "has" both Lady Julia and Nanda in the sense that his consciousness includes them both. Put into Nanda's terms, what he sees and feels and notices depends, to a degree, on them. In an earlier scene Mrs. Brook, referencing Lady Julia, remarks, "there have been times when I've felt that she's still with us, but Mr. Longdon makes it vivid. Whether she's with me or not, at any rate, she's with *him*; so that when he's with me, don't you see—?" (50). In naming the first book "Lady Julia," James makes concrete the importance of the older woman's memory, legacy, and influence on others in shaping the novel's premise, characters, and events. At the same time, "Lady Julia" (book 1) reveals the way generational ties connect past and present, while "Nanda" (book 10) shows how past and present, youth and age, complement, complicate, and help compensate for one another.

The naming of the "character-books" takes on a holistic, interpretive dimension when we consider that James titled these divisions from a position of hindsight as he looked back over the newly completed novel. In gesturing toward what Rachel Blau DuPlessis has termed "writing beyond the ending," James constructed a retrospective narrative frame in which "Lady Julia" (book 1) and "Nanda" (book 10) bracket the intervening books (and their eponymous characters), giving generational definition to its overall trajectory: to move from the first chapter to the last is to trace a lineal progression (though not an uninterrupted one) from Lady Julia to her granddaughter, by way of Mrs. Brook, whose name is given to book 6.⁴² Generational time and, in Kathleen Woodward's terms, generational consciousness thus become paratextually inscribed in the text's passage from periodical to book.⁴³

In *The Victorians and Old Age*, Karen Chase identifies the 1890s as a period of generational confusion when, "without any settled narrative of adolescence, youth fluttered, disturbingly indeterminate," and the "heightening of generational discourse [was] only incited further by the unstable definitions: When *are* we old? When *are* we no longer young?"⁴⁴ *The Awkward Age* can thus be seen as a response to the "sharp generational discord" of the 1890s, in which the gap between generations constitutes both a conflict **[End Page 282]** (represented most conspicuously by two mother (figure)-daughter pairs—Nanda and Mrs. Brook, Aggie and the duchess) and a qualified, tentative, incomplete remedy for the ruthlessness and moral vacuity of this "awkward" and decadent age.⁴⁵ This doubleness is reflected in the explicitly relational and relativistic framework of the named books. By superimposing

onto the chapter structure of *The Awkward Age* a superstructure in which "Lady Julia" initiates and "Nanda" resolves the narrative, James reinscribes the older woman and short-circuits the tragically failed primary marriage plot by way of the novel's ambivalent, compensatory outcome with the qualified triumph of its secondary courtship plot. For oddly in keeping with generic expectations, the novel does end with a pairing off, although the conclusion is bittersweet at best, and it's not only the troubling age gap (which early reviewers barely touched on) that makes it so. Rather, Nanda's grief, expressed in a torrent of tears, her anxious concern over Mitchy, and Mr. Longdon's pained awareness of the intensity of Nanda's feelings for Vanderbank imbue the ending with an uneasy mixture of desolation and consolation, longing and loss, that is both intensified and problematized by the separation of years.

The Notch Not Reached

Almost exactly a decade after the publication of the first book edition of *The Awkward Age*, James, believing himself close to his "latter end," gathered together stacks of personal letters he had received over the course of many years and fed them to a "gigantic bonfire."⁴⁶ A few months later the novelist became seriously, though not terminally, ill.⁴⁷ The conflagration proved premature, as James lived for seven more years: it had happened too soon. By contrast, on February 5, 1895, one month before he entered the germ of *The Awkward Age* into his notebook, James ruminated in the same volume: "What is there in the idea of *Too Late*—of some friendship or passion or bond—some affection long desired and waited for, that is formed too late?—I mean too late in life altogether."⁴⁸ Although James's musing most clearly anticipates "The Beast in the Jungle" (1903) the specter of a romance that, in multiple respects, is "too late" haunts the multiple plotlines of *The Awkward Age*. One of these plotlines—Mr. Longdon's—can readily be imagined as a notebook entry never written: e.g., *what is there in the idea of a young old man—aged in years but with a childlike receptivity and newness. ... A girl who likes him but not as much as she likes the man about town. ... The old man once in love with the girl's grandmother, whom the young lady resembles to a shocking degree, and in love with her memory still. His sacrifice, a vicarious courtship, the union achieved only after the man about town throws her over, wounding if not breaking her heart. ... As in the case of Strether of *The Ambassadors* (1903), in Mr. Longdon we find [End Page 283] emotional experience refined and made more acute and perceptive rather than blunted and diminished with age. As Koselleck observes—and James must also have felt—"with growing age, the scarcity of time gains a certain experiential thickness and intensity."⁴⁹*

One of the problems with time is that it is often impossible to tell how much is left. Mr. Longdon expresses this uncertainty unflinchingly (if, to Mitchy, ambiguously), when he says—in a verbal construction that calls to mind both his own name and the verb "to long (for)"—"Oh, I'm not for long" (327), which he goes on to paraphrase as "I sha'n't last forever" (328). In the preface to the New York Edition of *The Awkward Age*, published the year before he incinerated his letters, James teases out the narrative equivalent of this dilemma, which had been a recurring puzzle in his writing life. Here he evokes the problem of forecasting the length of a work of fiction—"the determination in advance, of the just limits and the just extent of the situation, *any* situation, that appeals, and that yet, by the presumable, the helpful laws of situations, must have its reserves as well as its promises" (xxx). *The Awkward Age*, which James initially projected as a "short tale," is one of several narratives that grew to exceed by far the scope he had originally envisioned for it.⁵⁰ In 1890, James had sworn off novels,

writing to his brother William on May 16 that "the *Tragic Muse* is to be my last long novel. For the rest of my life I hope to do lots of short things with irresponsible spaces between. I see even a great future (10 years) of such."⁵¹ The prediction did not hold true, but the problem of estimating the number of words, pages, chapters a given story might require remained vexing.

In the preface to *The Awkward Age* James reflects on the "many false measurements" he had made over the years when attempting to "size up" an idea.

"The little ideas one wouldn't have treated save for the design of keeping them small, the developed situations that one would never with malice prepense have undertaken, the long stories that had thoroughly meant to be short, the short subjects that had underhandedly plotted to be long, the hypocrisy of modest beginnings, the audacity of misplaced middles, the triumph of intentions never entertained—with these patches, as I look about, I see my experience paved: an experience to which nothing is wanting save, I confess, some grasp of its final lesson."

(xxx)

With its references to "modest beginnings," "misplaced middles," and "its final lesson," the passage suggests an analogy between the narrative design of *The Awkward Age* and the stages of life it dramatizes. From the "modest beginning" of the adolescent girl to the "misplaced middles" of the midlife characters, to the ambiguous, enigmatic, open-ended final word—Mr. Longdon's "tomorrow"—James's rumination on a specific technical **[End Page 284]** problem seems to take on broader implications when we consider the characters', narrator's, and author's experiments in representing age and narrativizing stages of life.

Reflecting on *The Awkward Age* ten years after its debut in *Harper's Weekly*, James expresses in this preface a sense of satisfaction in the novel despite a poor initial reception (more than one reviewer cited its prodigious page count as one of its faults) and discouragingly small sales. He writes: "The thing carries itself to my maturer and gratified sense as with every symptom of soundness, an insolence of health and joy" (xlvi–xlvii). The personification of the book implied in the youthful metaphor of "health and joy" is suggestive. One suspects that from the vantage point of sixty-five years of age, Mr. Longdon, too, despite his having "doubled the Cape of the years," exhibited "every symptom of soundness, an insolence of health and joy." No doubt he even appeared relatively youthful to the "maturer" James, notwithstanding his marginalization and the hyperbolic, at times facetious rhetoric of decrepitude in which Mr. Longdon and others in the novel habitually indulge. And yet it's difficult to reconcile the image of "health and joy" with the mood of the novel's ending, which denies the reader anything so pat as a "final lesson," despite James's characterization of it as "a fable of superior quality."⁵²

In more general terms, the "final lesson" of the preface is one of knowing how much is enough: "How do we know that the measure not recorded, the notch not reached, does represent adequacy or satiety" (xlvii)? With its open-ended last line—a conclusion more at home, perhaps, in serialization, where the physical end cannot so readily be anticipated as with the remaining bulk of a "thick book" (xxx)—the novel ends quite self-consciously by gesturing toward the "notch not reached," the day that has not yet dawned. Refusing closure, the abrupt, elliptical ending of *The Awkward Age* is the

culmination of the novelist's awareness that "relations," no matter how carefully and elaborately circumscribed, exceed the capacity of time, as well as space, to contain them.⁵³

Notes

1. Henry James, *Letters*, vol. 4, 1895–1916, ed. Leon Edel (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984), 138, 139.
2. Henry James, *The Awkward Age*, ed. Vivien Jones (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), 3, hereafter cited parenthetically.
3. Vivien Jones, introduction to *The Awkward Age*, viii.
4. Pamela Thurschwell, "Bringing Nanda Forward, or Acting Your Age in *The Awkward Age*," *Critical Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2016): 72.
5. *Ibid.*, 72. On the cultural construction of age in James's fiction, see also Melanie Dawson, "Interventions into Aging: Rejuvenation in *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Sacred Fount*," *Henry James Review* 37, no. 3 (2016): 292–304.
6. Henry James, *The Complete Notebooks of Henry James*, ed. Leon Edel and Lyall H. Powers (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 117–18.
7. Trish Ferguson, Introduction to *Victorian Time: Technologies, Standardizations, Catastrophes* (Hound-mills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 6.
8. Reinhart Koselleck, *Sediments of Time: On Possible Histories*, trans. and ed. Sean Franzel and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2018), 89.
9. Ferguson, *Victorian Time*, 2.
10. *Ibid.*, 2.
11. Clark Blaise, *Time Lord: Sir Sandford Fleming and the Creation of Standard Time* (New York: Pantheon, 2000), 165, 74. On the relationship between the new conceptions of time and modernism in the fiction of James and his associates, see Charles M. Tung, "Modernism, Time Machines, and the Defamiliarization of Time," *Configurations* 23, no. 1 (2015): 93–121, Isobel Waters, "'Still and Still Moving': The House as Time Machine in Henry James's *The Sense of the Past*," *Henry James Review* 30, no. 2 (2009): 180–95, and Betsy Klimasmith, "Salvaging History, "Modern Philosophies of Memory and Time in *The Age of Innocence*," *American Literature* 80, no. 3 (2008): 555–81.
12. Karen Chase, *The Victorians and Old Age* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), 233.
13. Blaise, *Time Lord*, 164.
14. Peter Rawlings, *Henry James and the Abuse of the Past* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), xviii.
15. *Ibid.*, 139, 141–42.

16. The phrase is Rawlings's. *Ibid.*, 131.
17. Henry James, *The Figure in the Carpet and Other Stories*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Penguin, 1986), 270.
18. Blaise, *Time Lord*, 141.
19. Sue Zemka, *Time and the Moment in Victorian Literature and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012), 5.
20. In his influential study *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), Benedict Anderson theorizes about the capacity of print to unite a widely dispersed readership.
21. Blaise, *Time Lord*, 37.
22. Ferguson, *Victorian Time*, 4.
23. Henry James, *A Life in Letters*, ed. Philip Horne (New York: Penguin, 1999), 312.
24. Ferguson, *Victorian Time*, 5.
25. Daragh Downes, "The Best of Time, the Worst of Time: Temporal Consciousness in Dickens," in *Victorian Time: Technologies, Standardizations, Catastrophes*, ed. Trish Ferguson (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 27.
26. Ferguson, *Victorian Time*, 7.
27. For more on the way changing understandings of time affected understandings of age, see Kay Heath, *Aging by the Book: The Emergence of Midlife in Victorian Britain* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press), 2009, 15–16. On tenseless time and tensed time, see Leerom Medovoi, "Age Trouble: A Timely Subject in American Literary and Cultural Studies," *American Literary History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 659.
28. Quoted in Ferguson, *Victorian Time*, 10.
29. William James, *Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. (New York: Henry Holt, 1890), 1:641.
30. David Kurnick, "'Horrible Impossible': Henry James's Awkward Stage," *Henry James Review* 26, no. 2 (2005): 110.
31. In this respect, the conception of age consciousness implied in this scene parallels Koselleck's conception of historical time. As Sean Franzel and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman observe in their introduction to Koselleck's book, "Time is not linear and progressing from one period to another, as the modern concept of history suggests.; Instead, there are multiple historical times present at the same moment, layer upon layer pressed together, some still volatile, others already hardened—this is what the metaphor of sedimented layers or strata of time attempts to capture" (xiii).
32. Downes, "The Best of Time, the Worst of Time," 17.
33. Rawlings, *Henry James and the Abuse of the Past*, 153.

34. On various types of age inversion and its uses in the Victorian period, see Claudia Nelson, *Precocious Children and Childish Adults: Age Inversion in Victorian Literature* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2012). On James and the reversal of age-related ideology, see Glenn Clifton, "Aging and Periodicity in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Ambassadors: An Aesthetic Adulthood*," *ELT* 59, no. 3 (2016): 283–302. On James and nonnormative aging, see Dawson, "Interventions into Aging."
35. I am indebted to an anonymous peer reviewer for the insight into Mrs. Brook's "Dorian Gray" quality.
36. Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983), 33.
37. William Rothenstein, quoted in Roger Gard, ed., *Henry James: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), 305.
38. Henry James, *Roderick Hudson* (New York: Penguin, 1986), 37.
39. *Ibid.*, 37.
40. *The Princess Casamassima* was serialized in the *Atlantic Monthly* from September 1885 to October 1886. The first Macmillan edition appeared in three volumes in October 1886.
41. Tzvetan Todorov, "The Verbal Age," *Critical Inquiry* 14, no. 2 (1977): 370.
42. Rachel Blau du Plessis, *Reading beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1985).
43. Kathleen Woodward, "Inventing Generational Models: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, Literature," in *Figuring Age: Women, Bodies, Generations*, ed. Kathleen M. Woodward (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1999), 149–70. On shifting attitudes toward aging in this period, especially the marginalization and stigmatization associated with old age, see also Dawson, "Interventions into Aging," 292–93, 296–97, and Sari Edelstein, "Reading Age beyond Childhood," *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture* 62, no. 1 (2016): 122–27.
44. Chase, *The Victorians and Old Age*, 198.
45. *Ibid.*, 190.
46. Quoted in Fred Kaplan, *Henry James: The Imagination of Genius* (New York: William Morrow, 1992), 521.
47. *Ibid.*, 521.
48. James, *The Complete Notebooks of Henry James*, 112.
49. Koselleck, *Sediments of Time*, 41. For an analysis of James's narrative strategies as they relate to temporality and mortality, see Rita Charon, "In Retrospect, Immortality: Death, Phenomenology, Ethics, and Henry James," *Henry James Review* 37, no. 3 (2016): 218–32.
50. James, *The Complete Notebooks of Henry James* 118.

51. James, *A Life in Letters*, 224.

52. James, *Letters*, 4:89.

53. *Ibid.*