

Within the past decades, Henry James has been seen going to the movies and to Paris, both far more likely destinations for him than battlefields of the modern world. Sending him off to war seems to be a preposterous idea, but the exaggeration inscribed in the title of the present volume is meant to stress the historicity of wars and battles underlying James's life and work, quite apart from conflict on which literature thrives at all times. The book consists of five parts devoted to various forms and aspects of conflict. It deals with both literal and metaphorical battles of which the author was aware or in which he was involved. Apart from addressing James's attitude to two major conflicts, the Civil War and World War One, the articles range from critical discussions of James's biography, criticism, and fiction, to studies of the intertextual connections between his oeuvre and works of both past and present authors.

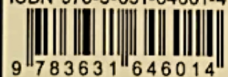
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Henry James Goes to War

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Introduction: Henry James in Times Past and Present

In the first paragraph of his book on Hawthorne, Henry James argues that "the flower of art blooms only where the soil is deep. [...] it takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature, [...] it needs a complex social machinery to set a writer in motion" (James 1966: 15). James's argument may have applied to Hawthorne, who made much of the little he had access to by way of local history, but is it true of James himself? His output belongs to the most substantial in Anglo-American literary history, but was the soil on which his expatriate flower of art bloomed deep enough? It is only too tempting to declare him ahistorical and apolitical, or even draw the conclusion that he was unmanly and un-American, as Theodore Roosevelt or Maxwell D. Geismar did at different times and in different publications. Despite his lifelong fascination with the great Napoleon, James did not write historical fiction, and when he tried, the attempts were at best incomplete (*The Sense of the Past*), ineffective ("The Romance of Certain Old Clothes"), or else a downright fiasco (*Guy Domville*). With the exception of his two novels *The Bostonians* and *Princess Casamassima*, he hardly addressed large social conflicts affecting either America or Europe. He participated neither in the Civil War, which marked the beginning of his adult life and to which his two younger brothers so willingly marched off, nor in the Great War, whose end and outcome he did not live to see. The world he lived in abounded in major political conflicts, as the timeline below shows. James could not have remained entirely disinterested and unaffected. He knew people who waged wars, witnessed wars, participated and suffered in wars, and those who commiserated with their victims. Interestingly enough, some of James's portraitists documented wars (Mathew Brady in his photographs of the Civil War, Fig. 2), commented on them in their art (John Singer Sargent's *Gassed*, Fig. 3), or made masks for wounded soldiers (Francis Derwent Wood).

A great deal of history

Chronology of world events	Chronology of Henry James's life
1821 Death of Napoleon Bonaparte (born 1769).	
1837 Victoria becomes Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, she reigns until 1901.	
1838 Rise of Chartism (the Chartist	