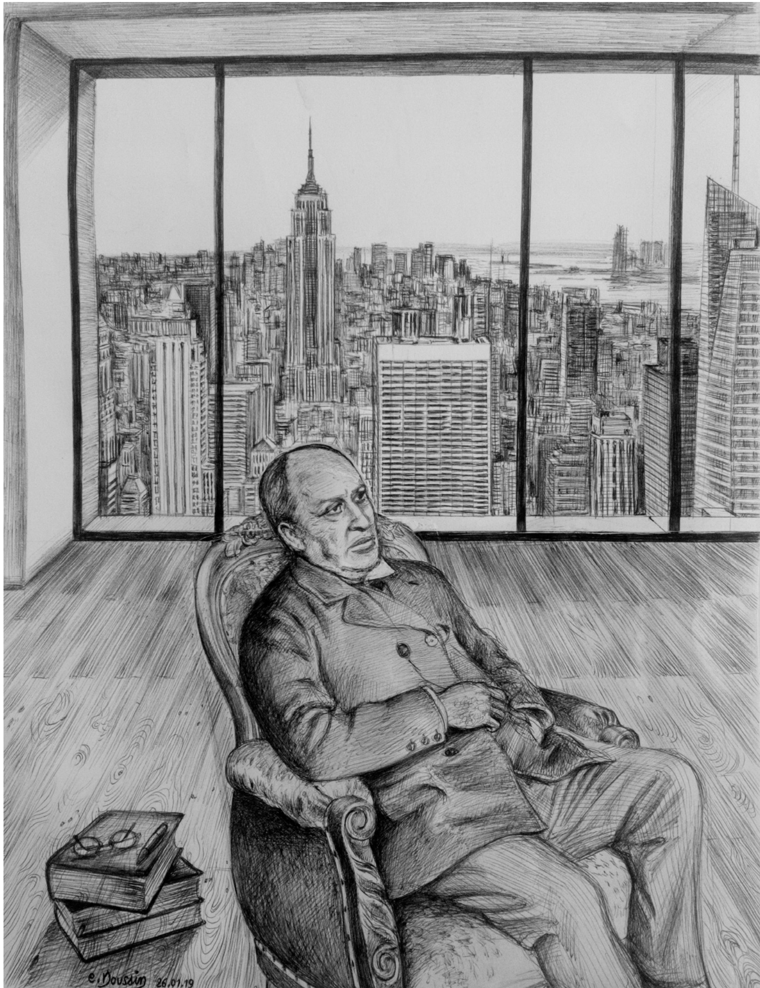
Reading Henry James in the Twenty-First Century



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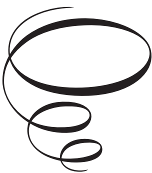
Reading Henry James in the Twenty-First Century:

Heritage and Transmission

Edited by

Dennis Tredy, Annick Duperray and Adrian Harding

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



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INTRODUCTION

One hundred years ago, in his flat in Chelsea, London, after long bouts of delirium and high fever brought on by a series of strokes, Henry James passed away, or as he is said to have mumbled to his friend Howard Sturgis a few weeks prior, "So it has come at last—the Distinguished Thing." Among his final statements was also a request to his sister-in-law concerning his nephews, who would be handling his estate: "Tell them to follow, to be faithful, to take me seriously" (Tóibín). It seems most fitting that James, as he lay dying after a long life profoundly dedicated to letters, art and culture, would be so focused on how seriously his literary heritage would be treated by (and for) future generations and how faithfully it would be transmitted. His vast and unrivalled legacy of written work—including twenty-two novels, well over a hundred short stories, a dozen plays, half a dozen book-length biographies and autobiographies, a good deal of travel writing, hundreds of critical reviews and essays, as well as thousands of recovered personal and professional correspondences—would indeed be taken very seriously, and would ceaselessly fascinate and influence scholars, theorists of all stripes, authors, critics, philosophers, psychologists, painters, dramatists, filmmakers and the general reading public for a century, thus far. As the popular moniker implies, James is 'The Master,' and his disciples and followers can be found in myriad forms and fields of practice, all seeking what they see as a faithful transmission of Henry James's rich heritage.

HERITAGE AND TRANSMISSION

However, the notions of 'heritage' and 'transmission' in the work and literary life of Henry James are indeed more problematic than they appear at first glance and point to several potential paradoxes. Within James's fiction, for example, 'transmission' between characters or between the author and the reader was usually staged as the failed or enigmatic 'encryption and decryption' of texts and objects, both material and immaterial. This could be rendered, for example, as the transmission of a child's impressive yet unspecified knowledge of the sordid world of adults in *What Maisie Knew* (1897), of the true aesthetic value and priceless *objets d'art* in *The Spoils of Poynton* (1896), of an elusive 'truth' concerning

unspeakable occurrences in *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) and other ghostly tales, of which fate Isabel Archer actually chose at the closing of *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), or what Milly, in *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), actually felt about Densher and Kate's betrayal and how this was imaginatively, and somehow more powerfully, transmitted to Densher in spite of Kate's burning Milly's unopened deathbed letter—among so many other cases of failed, enigmatic or unspoken transmission in James's works.

Of particular interest is how James applied this same dynamic of thwarted transmission to his stories of authors and artists, for here the notions of 'transmission' and one's 'heritage,' particularly an artist's legacy, go hand in hand. In "The Middle Years" (1893), Dencombe, on his deathbed, eloquently proclaims that he will leave no rich literary legacy behind him, that the "pearl" will not be recovered by the public and passed on as it will forever remain "unwritten" and "lost." In stories and novellas such as "The Aspern Papers" (1888), "The Figure in the Carpet" (1896) and "The Real Right Thing" (1899), James similarly stages the failed transference of an author's heritage, in spite of the best efforts of the author's devoted followers to receive that transmission and pass on that supposedly sacred legacy. A dialectic of transmission and omission seems to abound in James's fiction, an essential tool among the author's signature "techniques of ambiguity," and at once both a puzzling crux and the charm of many of the author's works for readers over the past century. This in turn points us back to James himself, leading us to wonder how "faithfully" James had actually hoped to pass on his legacy, how many blanks he had chosen to keep unfilled and how many secrets undisclosed. In 1909, for example, James gathered together hundreds of "private papers—forty years of letters from his contemporaries, manuscripts, scenarios, old notebooks" and burned them, seeking to keep certain contours of his own 'figure in the carpet' and details of his personal life forever out of the public eye (Edel 664). Yet the last fifteen years of Henry James's life seemed nevertheless dedicated to ensuring the successful transmission, though on his own terms, of his literary and artistic heritage to future generations, notably through the lengthy Prefaces he wrote for the New York Edition of his collected works of fiction from 1807 to 1809, as well as of his personal life, its struggles and triumphs, through his later autobiographical works *A Small Boy and Others* (1913) and *Notes of a Son and Brother* (1914). An author's heritage, be he fictional or actual, seems indeed to be characterized by a complex dialectical tension between transmission and non-transmission.

Moreover, how does one reconcile this staging of such problematic transmission of one's literary or artistic heritage with the 'sense of the past' that permeates James's fiction and with his calls, particularly in his critical

works and paratextual writings, for the faithful transmission and re-appropriation of the legacy of past masters in one's own literary endeavors? What do we make of James, who even as a child of twelve strolling the Parisian streets would hear "some immortal quotation, the very breath of civilized lips" echoing from "every lighted window" he passed (*A Small Boy and Others* 280), and who, in so many essays, reviews and private correspondences throughout his lifetime, would call on his contemporaries to learn from past masters while forging the new novel, to seek "continuity, responsibility, transmission" in so-called modern movements (*The American Scene* 11)? On another level, then, the successful and faithful transmission of past heritage was not only possible for James, it was essential.

One of the most striking and somewhat paradoxical aspects of James as a writer-critic may indeed be his ability to combine this 'sense of the past' with a 'sense of the future' and a related call for the advancement and development of literature. This is what Gertrude Stein would call his inherent "future feeling," another apparent paradox in which James, in spite of or perhaps thanks to his back-reaching tendencies, could be seen as more forward-thinking than his English contemporaries, as more 'modern' than the self-proclaimed 'modernists' that would follow him (Stein 221). How would this aspect of James fit in with Barthes's claim that to be truly "*avant-garde*" one needs to be above-all part of the "*arrière-garde*" (1038), or with Antoine Compagnon's more recent work on the true '*antimodernes*,' those authors and thinkers who openly fight modernity and its implied break with the past but who are in the end the only true modernists? To what extent would these paradoxical assessments apply to James?

If there are inherent, nuanced notions of "transmission" and "heritage" within James's works and lifetime of literary scholarship, craftsmanship and experimentation, those same notions come strongly into play when one sets out to appraise James's legacy and influence in literature and the arts since his death, the centennial of which was only recently celebrated. In one very basic respect, Henry James served future generations as a chronicler of his time, for his many writings on his own literary masters and his contemporaries, however critical they may have been at times, inform and shape our vision of those authors and thinkers today—from Balzac to Zola, Gautier to Taine, Goethe to Turgenev, Hawthorne to Stevenson, etc.—and our view of the tensions at work between the various and often rival literary movements of his time (Realism, Impressionism, Naturalism, Expressionism, French vs. British vs. American literary and cultural trends and identities, and so on), often at the heart of his many prescriptions and proscriptions regarding literature of his time and of the coming twentieth century.

However, much more than a chronicler of his time, James would have a far greater influence on a century of literary and cultural movements than he could ever have imagined from his deathbed in Chelsea. Almost immediately, his experiments in form and point of view, leading him to an aesthetic approach that supplanted a conventional omniscient narrative voice with the Jamesian reflector-character, would bloom into the stream-of-consciousness techniques and 'death of the author' mindset of the first half of the twentieth century, not only making James an influential modernist *avant la lettre* and to some extent *malgré lui*, but one who had an immediate and often admitted influence on the likes of Virginia Woolf, Edith Wharton, Marcel Proust, Flannery O'Connor, Graham Greene, and so many other twentieth-century authors—many of whose connections are uncovered and traced in this volume. By mid-century, James's fiction and theories on form would fuel both the close-readings and structural linguistics of the structuralists of mid-century and the theories of the French post-structuralists and semiologists that followed—from Michel Foucault's notion of the *épistème* and focus on the dynamics of power, knowledge and language, to the complex literary theories and 'death of the author' premises of Roland Barthes, to the deconstructionism and phenomenology of semiologist Jacques Derrida. Add to this the frequent psychoanalytical readings of James applying Freudian and especially Lacanian theories (mirror stage, shifting signifiers, present absences, and so on), for which many of the author's works serve as ideal models, not to mention James's impact on late twentieth-century feminism (which had to come to terms with James's choices to so often make women the mitigating consciousness of his works, 'Subjects' rather than objects, in spite of his rather patriarchal views on women elsewhere), and, more recently, the way James's works and personal life have decidedly served "the burgeoning of polymorphously directional fields loosely gathered under the rubric 'queer theory'," as critic Lynda Zwinger points out (2). One of those "directional fields" would include very recent efforts to address James's own ambiguous sexuality, 'outing' him as it were as a closeted homosexual, indeed a focus of such works as Eve Sedgwick's 1986 essay "The Beast in the Closet: Henry James and the Writing of Homosexual Panic," Sheldon M. Novick's two-volume biography of Henry James (1996, 2007), and Colm Tóibín's recent piece in *The Guardian,* "How Henry James's Family Tried to Keep Him in the Closet" (2016).

Though James would surely be appalled by the indiscretion of such explorations of his private life, they are indeed part of a larger and very current trend seeking to "resurrect the author" and to convert the Master himself into a relatable and even popular icon for the twenty-first century.

The fascination for the figure of James has indeed never been stronger, with the book market being flooded with fictionalized biographies of the author's life and with 'dramatized' renderings of his personal and professional experiences. These include Colm Tóibín's *The Master* (2004), David Lodge's *Author, Author* (2004), Michiel Heyns's *The Typewriter's Tale* (2005), Edwin Yoder's *Lions at Lamb House* (2007), Joyce Carol Oates's "The Master at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 1914-1916" (2008), Cynthia Ozick's "Dictation" (2008) and Paula Marantz Cohen's *What Alice Knew* (2010). Add to this a number of modernized 'rewrites' of James's stories—including Cynthia Ozick's *Foreign Bodies*, her 2010 retelling of *The Ambassadors*, and Emma Tennant's 2003 rewrite of "The Aspern Papers," *Felony*—along with novels in which the main character's obsession with the works of Henry James drives the plot—such as A.N. Wilson's *A Jealous Ghost*, a ghost story around a woman obsessed with "The Turn of the Screw," or Alan Hollinghurst's *The Line of Beauty*, a gay coming-of-age novel about a young man doing his doctoral thesis on Henry James in the 1980s, both published in 2005. This resurgence and often hijacking of Henry James go beyond general trends of nostalgic fantasy or post-modern pastiche, for it posits James as one of the strongest and most popular cultural icons of our current generation. This recent turn in James's heritage is, like so much of his impact in the last one hundred years, not without paradox, for in spite of this popularization of James among today's writers, many of today's readers, as Lodge points out, still shy away from picking up one of his novels for the first time, and the inclusion of a novel by James on a college syllabus can illicit groans from uninitiated students, due to the preconceived notion that his work is too verbose, too complex and too elitist for today's readers. James today thus finds himself both approachable and elitist, both readable and unreadable, both relevant to and disconnected from today's world.

READING HENRY JAMES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

To commemorate the centennial of Henry James's death and to better understand the impact and the scope of the author's influence today and during the past century, thirty Jamesian scholars from twelve different countries and five continents were asked to explore various ways in which the notions of 'heritage' and 'transmission' currently come into play when reading James. The resulting twenty-nine chapters of this volume are divided into three main sections, each focusing on different ways in which James's legacy is being re-evaluated today—from the impact of James's legacy on authors, playwrights and film-makers over the past century (Part

One), to new discoveries regarding European authors and artists who influenced James (Part Two), to very recent approaches more radically re-evaluating James for the twenty-first century (New Historicism, Philosophical Aesthetics, Sociology, Cognitive Science, Normative Race, Queer Studies, etc.) that could help explain James's continued pertinence and impact today (Part Three).

Part One then, entitled 'Under James's Influence,' sets out to demonstrate James's specific impact on several twentieth- and twenty-first-century authors, playwrights and film-makers, tracing new lines of influence within James's legacy. The first chapter, by leading Jamesian scholar Eric Savoy, uncovers clear Jamesian imprints in two stories by British novelist Muriel Spark: "My Father's Daughter" (1959) and its belated sequel "Open to the Public" (1997), both of which borrow heavily from elements of plot and theme in James's "The Aspern Papers" (1888), a connection cemented by a poetics of chiasmus and shared metaphors of the spectral, and reinforced through Barthesian notions of authorship and the Derridean notions of both "archive fever" and "anarchivic drive." In Chapter Two, a second former president of The Henry James Society, Sheila Teahan, follows the "ghostly transmissions" that tie the late Philip Roth's 1979 novel *The Ghost Writer* to its key subtext by James, "The Middle Years" (1893), demonstrating how Roth's central entanglement of three characters—created when young writer Nathan Zuckerman faces the hermeneutic puzzle embodied by the great author E.I. Lonoff and his lover Amy Bennette—is a recreation of the triangle formed in James's story between Dr. Hugh, ageing author Dencombe and the wealthy Countess whom Dr. Hugh neglects as his fascination with Dencombe grows. Among the ties that bind the two stories are allegories on the ghostliness of reading and writing, a similarly futile hunt for a great author's 'figure in the carpet' and a shared dynamic of problematic transmission and revision. In the following chapter, Algerian Jamesian scholar Souad Baghli Berbar finds similar traces of influence and intertextuality between William Somerset Maugham's 1921 story "The Fall of Edward Barnard" and James's 1903 novel *The Ambassadors*. Leaning on notions of intertextuality and confluence from the likes of Bakhtin, Barthes, Kristeva and Genette, Baghli Berbar demonstrates how Maugham rewrites Lambert Strether's journey to Paris to find out why his fiancée's son, Chad Newsome, has not returned to Woollett, Massachusetts, as his own tale of Bateman Hunter's trip to Tahiti to find out why his friend Edward Barnard has not returned to Chicago and to his fiancée Isabel Longstaffe—allowing Maugham to transpose James's story to another cultural setting and toy with a different outcome for James's scenario, years before he would more explicitly bring James into his later

novels *Cakes and Ale* (1930) and *The Razor's Edge* (1944). In Chapter Four, Cambridge scholar Rachel Bryan unearths another case of intense transmission of Jamesian influence in several works by the Anglo-Irish novelist Elizabeth Bowen, who was even warned by critics of the risk of her writing becoming 'too Jamesian' but who nevertheless seems to have embraced what could be seen as the "contagion" of the Master's influence and a deep artistic affinity between them that included a shared focus on consciousness and impressions, as well as a penchant for elusive syntax and sliding signifiers. Bryan then explores those affinities through comparative readings of Bowen's 1935 novel *The House in Paris* and James's 1903 *The Ambassadors*, and between Bowen's *The World of Love* (1955) and James's "Maud Evelyn" (1900) and *The Spoils of Poynton* (1897).

The next three chapters of Part One then explore how three of today's authors have inherited and re-interpreted James's legacy in rather unexpected ways. In Chapter Five, for example, Italian scholar Carlo Martinez explores the astonishing influence Henry James has had on noted Native American author Leslie Marmon Silko, an unlikely disciple of the Master who has nevertheless been very vocal about her indebtedness to James and about the influence he has had on her works of the past thirty years—from *Confidence* in 1977 right up to her 2010 *The Turquoise Ledge*—and on her literary sensibility in general, on so many levels. As Martinez proves, Silko's personal take on what James's heritage really is today could make all Jamesian scholars re-evaluate and redefine that legacy. In the following chapter, Indian scholar Vijay Prakash Singh shows how James's "The Turn of the Screw" and the author's neo-Gothic heritage, particularly in terms of the symbolic use of the English country house as more than a mere backdrop for a horrific tale, have been transmitted to and modified by Sarah Waters in her recent ghostly novel *The Little Stranger* (2009). Singh points out shared themes and devices (such as disparities of class, corruptible possession, deadly psychological torment, and variations on unreliable narration) in a comparison that even lends credence to a reading of James's tale in which the ghosts are "real" and not figments of the governess's troubled psyche. In Chapter Seven, Italian Jamesian scholar Anna De Biasio takes on Joyce Carol Oates's more blatant treatment (or mistreatment) of Henry James in her 2008 story "The Master at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 1914-1916," in which Oates imaginatively details an elderly James doing volunteer work during the First World War, overcome with fear of exposure of his homosexuality and by his disturbing attraction to the sensual aspects of the wounded soldiers' bodies. Oates's admittedly "grotesque" treatment of James here—in line with the current trend in often intrusive or over-the-top fictionalized autobiographies of

James outlined above—sets up a sharp contrast between James's subtle, ambiguous prose and this brutal and explicit account of an imagined visceral experience on the part of James. It says a great deal about today's views of the once sacred and private author persona, and reveals as much about Oates as it does about James.

The remaining four chapters in Part One move away from traces of James's influence among fiction writers and on to his heritage among playwrights and filmmakers. This begins with a chapter by British Jamesian scholar Dee MacCormack that sets out to debunk many of the unfortunate and long-standing clichés regarding Henry James's failed stint as a London playwright in the 1890s. This reassessment, heavily researched in both primary and secondary sources, provides key context to the London theatre scene at the time and to forces at work that were far beyond James's control, along with details on the affinity James had for the Théâtre Français and its difficult applicability to the London stage. In the following chapter, the Italian Philosopher Matteo Gonfiantini pens a detailed case study of contemporary stage director Luca Ronconi's adaptation of James's *What Maisie Knew*, his 2002 'staged novel' *Quel che sapeva Maisie di Henry James* in Milan. Ronconi's unorthodox transposition techniques are in fact a continuation of James's own legacy, Gonfiantini shows, for they include an unusually direct, intimate approach that is more a "stage publication" and a reading of James's text than a recitation of its dialogue, a case of deconstruction as well as reconstruction, and a staging of tension between seeing and understanding. Even Ronconi's startling choice of an elderly actress for the role of Maisie as both character and mediating stage presence plays with themes of memory and perception dear to James, along with reversals of both young and old and past and present. In Chapter Ten, noted Italian Jamesian scholar Rosella Mamoli Zorzi takes a closer look at stage and film adaptations of James's 1888 "The Aspern Papers" before focusing squarely on James Ivory's 2018 production of the novella's latest transposition to film, set in Venice and directed by first-time French filmmaker Julien Landais, based on the French stage production and translation by Jean Pavans. Mamoli Zorzi acquires much of her insight on the film adaptation from her own experiences with the cast and crew in Venice, from a profound understanding of the many past adaptations of this tale of non-transmission, and from interviews and private papers from Jean Pavans, who exposes his adaptation techniques. These include a dialectic of faithfulness to James's text and dialogues and of his many changes to key subtexts referenced in the tale, as well as his striking reversal of the power dynamics at work in its plot. Finally, the last chapter of Part One is my own contribution—a detailed overview of film adaptations of one of the few

works by James to have been transposed to the screen more than "The Aspern Papers"—"The Turn of the Screw" (1898). This analysis stresses how the notion of successive, 'imperfect' transmissions of something unspeakable and a notoriously closed matrix of mutually exclusive readings are built into the novella, and how the subjective retellings of the tale began with scores of literary critics of the mid-century, before moving on to screen-writers and filmmakers of the past sixty years. The chapter demonstrates how each of the sixteen adaptations provided new subjective touches to the tale and worked not only off of James's legacy but also off of the ever-growing heritage of interpretations, themes, subtexts and staging devices used by previous filmmakers, with a special focus on certain filmmakers—such as Clayton, Winner and Aloy—who safe-guarded the ambiguity of James's double reading of the events at Bly while 'upping the ante' as it were on both sides of the tale's unsolvable equation.

In Part Two of this volume, "European Connections," modern-day re-evaluations of James's personal and literary ties to his Russian, French and English contemporaries, one hundred years on, uncover new lines of influence and transmission. In Chapter Twelve, renowned French critic and Jamesian scholar Jean Perrot traces a thread in James's 'figure in the carpet' that had gone completely unnoticed until today—the influence of works by nineteenth-century Russian author Nikolai Leskov, whose impact on James has been overlooked by a century of research and criticism that has been too squarely focused on James's more explicit ties to another Russian author, Ivan Turgenev. Through careful scrutiny of James's fiction and letters, as well as of Leskov's works in their original Russian, Perrot uncovers how this heretofore unknown source would have been familiar to James and draws striking connections between two 1864 works by Leskov, his first novel *No Way Out* and his short story "Lady Macbeth of the Mstensk District," and, respectively, James's *The Princess Casamassima* (1886) and *The Wings of the Dove* (1902). In the following chapter, two Brazilian Jamesian scholars, Natasha Costa and Guacira Leite bring to light new elements behind the more recognized transmission that occurred between Honoré de Balzac and Henry James. Through a close comparative reading of staging and phrasing used in Balzac's *Le Père Goriot* (*Old Goriot*, 1834-35) and James's *The Golden Bowl* (1904), Costa and Leite shed light on key similarities and differences in the spatial techniques (setting, props, symbolic objects, etc.) used by the two authors. In the chapter that follows, international-American theorist and scholar Eric Roraback adopts a more theory-based approach to that connection between Balzac and James and expands it to a triumvirate of influence by including French post-structuralist semiologist Roland Barthes. Leaning heavily on the works of

Antoine Compagnon and on primary sources from all three writers, Roraback exposes their shared "anti-modern" sensibility that paradoxically makes them all more modern, showing us how all three were remarkably and simultaneously forward-looking and backward-looking, as well as how all three writers play such an essential role in today's critical and literary thought as to be considered contemporaries.

In Chapter Fifteen, American Jamesian scholar Phyllis van Slyck traces a line of transmission between James and another major French literary figure, Marcel Proust. By focusing essentially on connections between James's *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) and Proust's *La Prisonnière* (1923, volume 5 of *Remembrance of Things Past*), and bringing in Sartre's notion of 'mental images' and what Ricœur calls 'memory-image', van Slyck establishes how both authors represent the troubled if not failed transmission of memories, the disruptive relationship between imagination and memory within the mediating consciousness, and material objects in both works as vessels for captive memories. The following chapter, by French philosopher and literary scholar Isabelle de Vendeuvre, draws on James's own use of the myth of Endymion and its various representations (European folklore, Greek myth, poetic figure in Keats, etc.) to draw a distinction between James's satirical representation of the dandy or aesthete—with its inherent criticism of Oscar Wilde—and that of the true awakening of artistic sensibility. Vendeuvre demonstrates how two of James's protagonists—Hyacinth Robinson in *The Princess Casamassima* and Nick Dormer in *The Tragic Muse* (1890)—along with James himself were imagined as "sleeping the sleep of Endymion" and benefiting from that wandering dreaminess that allows for the awakening of the true consciousness of an artist. Part Two then concludes with an extended chapter by Cambridge Jamesian scholar and former president of the Henry James Society, Tamara L. Follini, who provides one of the most in-depth analyses to date tracing the influence of the work of French painter Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) on Henry James. Follini provides profound insight on Watteau's artistic techniques and their transposed equivalents in James, as well as on James's often subtle referencing of Watteau in his fiction, through close analysis of four of James's novels (*The Portrait of a Lady, The Wings of the Dove*, *The Sacred Fount* and *The Ambassadors*). Follini also traces the painter's influence, notably what James saw as Watteau's "lightness of style," on James's own writing style, and wonders whether the creative labyrinths of Watteau might have helped engender James's experimental narrative and syntactical forms.

Part Three of this volume, entitled "Rehabilitating James for the Twenty-First Century," goes on to probe the way today's scholars are

reassessing James's heritage through the more contemporary lenses of current trends in epistemology, cognitive science, linguistics, strongly political and sociological strains of New Historicism, Normative Race and Queer Studies, as well as to explore the popularity (or unpopularity) of James among today's writers, educators and students.

In the Chapter Eighteen, for example, John Holland, an independent scholar working in France, traces the circuitous and reciprocal transmission occurring between author and reader through the use of "voice" as both a psychoanalytical and a narrative device. Through an analysis of three works by James—"The Middle Years", "Nona Vincent" and *The Wings of the Dove*—Holland reveals how the concept of "voice" is linked to the author's practice of re-reading and re-evaluating his own work, to externalized thought processes, to Freud's theories of unconscious impulses and to Lacan's theory of the elusive "invocating drive" at work in the process of authorship. In Chapter Nineteen, Mexican literary scholar Victor G. Rivas Lopez takes a different approach to "voice" in James and re-evaluates the author's vision of phenomenological transmission through language, providing a reflection on "the existential nature of speech in the dynamism of interpersonal expression, social communication and cultural tradition" in the author's work. Through the prism of philosophical aesthetics and theories related to utterance, tone and speech acts, Rivas Lopez provides contextualized insight into many of James's most controversial remarks in his 1905 work, *The Question of Our Speech*, regarding historical changes to American idiom. In the following chapter, Korean scholar Kyung Ah Kim takes a closer look at William James's theories of philosophy and psychology to better understand their direct influence on Henry James's narrative techniques and phenomenological impulses, while drawing a parallel to very recent advances in neuropsychology and clinical cognitive science. By focusing on the works of William James and on three novels of his brother's Late Phase (*The Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl*), Kim demonstrates how many theories of the James brothers have been transposed into recent discoveries in neuroscience, including 'embodied experience' and the function of 'mirror neurons.'

In the next three chapters, attention turns to uncovering the deeper political and sociological dimensions of James's art. Thus in Chapter Twenty-One, Canadian scholar Ivana Čikeš addresses James's rhetoric of collective memory and its inherent political commentary in his controversial travel piece *The American Scene* (1907) and in his autobiography *A Small Boy and Others* (1913)—in which James's memories of himself and of his brother are very much memories of a distant American life, and a by-gone America. Čikeš's analysis, a contemporary reworking of both William

James's theories on collective and individual memory and of theories on "social memory" by early twentieth-century French philosopher Maurice Halbwachs, shows how we can glimpse James's political views of America through his representation and reconstruction of personal memories. The following chapter by Japanese Jamesian scholar Keiko Beppu then seeks to redefine James's notion of "aesthetic adventure" in art, life and society. Beppu focuses on how the protagonists in *Roderick Hudson* and especially *The Princess Casamassima*, two ill-fated upcoming artists, become mouthpieces for James and deliver a 'political' message on how art trumps politics and how the "claims of art and of social duties" driving the characters are relevant to today's world, where too often destruction comes first, with the preservation of artistic or cultural legacy a mere afterthought. This is followed by Algerian scholar Selma Mokrani's in-depth look at James's perspective on empire politics. By carefully applying theories by Frederic Jameson, Amy Kaplan and other politico-literary critics, Mokrani shows how James used art objects and museum politics to counter a supposed absence of direct political commentary and to reify empire consciousness. The rendering of empire in James thus emerges from a practice of irony that supposes that global realities are cut off from individual perception and consciousness, and shows how the author instead symbolically and obliquely used individual conflicts in his novel to reflect larger political concerns.

In the next three chapters of Part Three, James's works of fiction are re-evaluated for today's readers through the prism of the above-mentioned "polymorphously directional fields" (Zwinger 2) of Queer Theory. To start things off, Korean Jamesian scholar Joewon Yoon re-evaluates James's tendency to thwart traditional happily-ending marriage plots within his works as an effort to undermine the "representational normalization of heterosexual romance's aspirations to marriage." Through this prism, Yoon demonstrates how novels such as *The Portrait of a Lady* or *The Wings of the Dove* play with themes of male castration and female empowerment, thereby attacking heteronormative plotlines and the male phallic authority usually found within them. In Chapter Twenty-Five, American literary scholar Kathleen Lawrence then takes a similar approach to two late works by James: his 1900 story "The Abasement of the Northmores" and his 1903 biographical study *William Wetmore Story and His Friends*, in which she points to cases of what Kevin Ohi has called "queer transmitting" and/or of her own notion of "queer supplanting," which imply an overturning of heteronormativity and an imagined reversal of the "reigning heteronormative culture" of the time. Lawrence uncovers common tropes (among them the destruction of letters containing sensitive information) and

a remarkable intermingling of James's own personal preoccupations (a homosexual attraction to a young sculptor, fear of exposure) with those regarding Story as he prepared his biography, both symbolically rendered in the short story James was writing at the same time. In the following chapter, French literary scholar and translator Thomas Constantinesco picks up on Ohi's notion of 'queer transmitting' and delivers a very close analysis of James's 1900 story "Maud-Evelyn," already discussed by Rachel Bryan in Chapter Three as a key tie between James and Elizabeth Bowen. For Constantinesco, the ghostly premise and plot-line of the short story unearth unexpected desires of transmission in Victorian England. From this perspective, patriarchal heteronormativity is clearly undermined through devices that include gender-bending, covert homosocial exchanges between characters, and transmission through both material fetichism and dispossession.

In the last chapters of this volume, the relevance and popularity of James among today's authors and readers is even more directly addressed through three different perspectives on James and his continued impact. This begins with a chapter by American scholar Korey Garibaldi, who demonstrates how many of today's growing racist and xenophobic tendencies could re-contextualize many of Henry James's more opaque entanglements with race and immigration. Rather than focusing on more explicit comments by James in *The American Scene*, Garibaldi looks back to his early novel *The Europeans* (1878) and to James's depiction of wealthy New England society's mistreatment of the racially ambiguous 'morganatic' (that is—of unequal rank) Baroness Eugenie Münster and her brother Felix. As Garibaldi explains, if the reason James excluded this novel from his New York Edition thirty years later may have been its harsh representation of Anglo-Saxon paranoia, white supremacy, racism and exclusion, those very themes are now remarkably relevant and would speak volumes to today's readers. Then, in Chapter Twenty-Eight, American novelist and Jamesian scholar Paula Marantz Cohen, author of ten novels including *What Alice Knew* (2010), part of the popular recent trend of fictionalized novels about Henry James, shares her personal reasons for feeling such affinity for James. Cohen employs a self-reflexive approach to discussing James that she coins "life-application criticism," for she brings in her own experience as a novelist as well as her forty years of Jamesian scholarship to bridge the gap between literature and life and to demonstrate how readers' and writers' self-reflective interaction with the author may explain James's current resurgence. In the final chapter, Canadian professor and literary scholar Michael Nowlin takes a closer look at James's popularity (or lack of popularity) throughout his century-long legacy and in today's world, seeking to define what James's ideal reader was then and is now. Nowlin's

study provides an overview of how James quickly came to be seen as a "writer's writer," how twentieth-century writers and critics furthered that rather elitist status, and how that label has carried over to today's students and first-time readers of James, as a stigma rather than an accolade. If James's heritage has thus far survived this double-edged trend that dates back to his own lifetime, are we safe in the assumption that the transmission of his works to future generations will continue, and if so in what form?

As this volume shows, Henry James's wide-ranging impact and ongoing heritage is undeniable. Though fraught with paradox, contradiction, ambiguity and elusiveness—and not without controversy—James's legacy has for a century fascinated scholars, writers and thinkers of every ilk worldwide, while the transmission of that heritage has been as complex and hard to pin down as James's own staging of problematic transmission to his readers and between his characters. As we step into the second century of Jamesian studies, we may wonder what new forms that heritage will take, but it seems quite evident that James's monumental impact and legacy will carry on.

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PART ONE

UNDER JAMES'S INFLUENCE

CHAPTER ONE

BURNS THE FIRE: MURIEL SPARK'S "ASPERN PAPERS"

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In 1959—two years before the publication of *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* that would put her at the forefront of postwar British novelists—Muriel Spark wrote a story that explores the very Jamesian question of the vicissitudes and contingencies of literary celebrity. Entitled "The Fathers' Daughters," it contrasts the contemporary status of two male novelists who share the habit of compositional perfectionism, but who are very different in their desire for critical and popular acclaim. The elder, Henry Castlemaine, is a canonical writer whose circulation is in sharp decline; the younger, Kenneth Hope, is at the height of his fame but is utterly indifferent to it. Set in Nice and focalized through Castlemaine's daughter, Dora—whose pecuniary anxieties he dismisses repeatedly as "vulgar"—the old man is fond of observing that "the young men today have no interest in life." Dora understands that "what he meant [...] was that his young disciples, his admirers, had all gone, they were grown old and preoccupied, and had not been replaced" (202). Kenneth Hope, who is also at Nice, is besieged by admirers but, as Dora reflects, "[H]e won't speak to anyone" (204). She wishes that the two men would strike up a friendship, but a Jamesian reader will understand why this is unlikely: firmly in the realist tradition, Hope's novels, according to Dora, "open windows in the mind that have been bricked-up for a hundred years," but their subject would be regarded by her father as banal. Hope's great novel, *The Inventors,* "is about the inventors of patent gadgets, what lives they lead, how their minds apply themselves to invention and to love, and you would think, while you were reading [this novel], that the place they live in was dominated by inventors" (204). Given that Hope is the obverse of the biographical Henry James, it is tempting to speculate that the subject of *The Inventors* is precisely that which is

ostentatiously unspecified in *The Ambassadors*: the entrepreneurial spirit of some version of Woollett, Massachusetts, including the specificities of a certain, convenient little domestic article—its development, its technical superiority, its marketing, its runaway success. Dora is sufficiently astute to take the measure of difference:

> [H]er father had done great work too, and deserved a revival. His name was revered, his books were not greatly spoken of, they were not read. He would not understand the fame of Kenneth Hope. Father's novels were about the individual consciences of men and women, no one could do the individual conscience like Father. (204)

Dora's role in the story's rather contrived plot is to deliver a disciple to her father, in the person of Ben Donadieu. Described by Castlemaine as a "born disciple" (210), Ben is Dora's colleague at grammar school in London. He is an aspiring literary critic, and his engagement to Kenneth Hope's daughter, Carmelita, goes awry when Hope refuses to offer any assistance to his critical project on Hope's novels: "Oh God, Carmelita," he says, "it would be easier to write the bloody essay myself. [...] I don't want any disciples, Carmelita. They give me the creeps" (208). At the same time, Ben expresses the belief that "Castlemaine's due for a revival" (209), and in a conclusion that represents the afterlife of "The Aspern Papers"—whereby Ben plays a more successful version of the narrator of that tale to Dora's Tita Bordereau—he marries a woman sixteen years his senior, he finds his life's work and Castlemaine finds his disciple. Dora marries because Ben "is keen to revive [her father's] work," and so, she believes, "there's something of *destiny*" (210) in the engagement. Maintaining her customary narrative distance, Spark offers no commentary on the self-abnegating, instrumental role that Dora plays in homosocial literary economy: if this story may be understood as a feminist allegory about the function of women as objects of exchange, or as the glue that cements patriarchal bonds in that commerce, its political point is entirely tacit. Also tacit is the Jamesian inflection of the story's concluding sentence, oddly reminiscent of Maggie Verver's parting from her father, albeit in a diametrically opposed register of sacrifice: "She looked at him and he looked at her, shrewd in their love for each other" (210).

Thirty years later, Spark wrote a sequel in which the Jamesian imprint is much stronger: in "Open to the Public," Dora and Ben have divorced, but not before Ben had written a biography of Henry Castlemaine, which in turn launched a revival of his work. The novels were republished; they were filmed and televised, and when he died, Henry Castlemaine "was once again at the height of his fame" (213). What remains of their project, after their