The intellectual relationship between Henry James and his father, who was a philosopher and theologian, proved to be an influential resource for the novelist. Andrew Taylor explores how James's writing responds to James Senior's epistemological, thematic and narrative concerns, and relocates these concerns in a more secularised and cosmopolitan cultural milieu. Taylor examines the nature of both men's engagement with autobiographical strategies, issues of gender reform, and the language of religion. He argues for a reading of Henry James that is informed by an awareness of paternal inheritance. Taylor's study reveals the complex and at times antagonistic dialogue between the elder James and his peers, particularly Emerson and Whitman, in the vanguard of mid nineteenth-century American Romanticism. Through close readings of a wide range of novels and texts, he demonstrates how this dialogue anticipates James's own theories of fiction and selfhood.

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To my parents
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Note on the text and brief titles

I refer to the novelist as ‘Henry James’ and to his father as ‘James Senior’ or ‘the elder James’ throughout.

The following abbreviations are used throughout the book:

B  Henry James, The Bostonians (1886) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988)
EAE  Henry James, Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American and English Writers (New York: Library of America, 1984)
James  James Family Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University
Journals  Ralph Waldo Emerson, Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson, edited by Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes, 10 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909–14)
x  Note on the text and brief titles

