In the decades after the Civil War, how did Americans see the world and their place in it? Kendall Johnson argues that Henry James appealed to his readers’ sense of vision to dramatize the ambiguity of American citizenship in scenes of tense encounter with Europeans. By reviving the eighteenth-century debates over beauty, sublimity, and the picturesque, James weaves into his narratives the national politics of emancipation, immigration, and Indian Removal. For James, visual experience is crucial to the American communal identity, a position that challenged prominent anthropologists as they defined concepts of race and culture in ways that continue to shape how we see the world today. To demonstrate the cultural stereotypes that James reworked, the book includes twenty-two illustrations from periodicals of the nineteenth century. This study reaches startling new conclusions not just about James, but about the way America defined itself through the arts in the nineteenth century.

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HENRY JAMES AND THE VISUAL

BY

KENDALL JOHNSON

Swarthmore College
Dedicated to my parents,
Frances and Karl Johnson.
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Acknowledgments

While I studied at the University of Pennsylvania, the stars must have aligned. My stellar dissertation committee guided me through the professional waters with great care. Eric Cheyfitz was my advisor and mentor. His social consciousness and vision continue to expand my sense of academic purpose. Nancy Bentley steered me through the fathoms of culture’s nineteenth-century legacy in ways that made me feel smart. Christopher Looby taught me to read nineteenth-century periodicals and to theorize genre with rigor, affording insights that shaped my chapters’ arguments. Along the way, I benefited from the advice of Herman Beavers, Margreta de Grazia, Farah Jasmine Griffin, Elisa New, Vicki Mahaffey, and Jean-Michel Rabaté. In the past few years, Elaine Freedgood generously read my work and encouraged me to finish the book. Much inspiration derives from the energizing conversations with my fellow graduate students at Penn, including Giselle Anatol, Hester Blum, Yoonmee Chang, Jeanine DeLombard, Leigh Edwards, Will Fisher, Rhonda Frederick, Angel González García, Leticia Hernández-Linares, Adam Hotek, Mark Rifkin, Martha Schoolman, Gregory Wolmart, Sue Sun Yom, and Liza Yukins.

My colleagues at Swarthmore College have made the past five years both exciting and wonderfully fulfilling. Betsy Bolton, Chuck James, Nora Johnson, Phil Weinstein, Patti White, and Craig Williamson welcomed me warmly into the department. Peter Schmidt read versions of my work and offered sage advice. With her extensive knowledge of language, Nathalie Anderson solved my riddle of Du Maurier’s “cowve.” Long conversations with Carolyn Lesjak about life and letters are always refreshing, as are Baki Mani’s humor and intellectual enthusiasm. Edmund Campos has been a discerning reader, a wise confidant, and a dear friend.

I have greatly appreciated the encouragement from many in the wider scholarly community. Ross Posnock’s interest in my project was instrumental to its publication. Eric Haralson frequently boosted my confidence
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with his wit and keen intellect. At the Henry James Today conference in Paris 2002, masterfully organized by Pierre Walker and Greg Zacharias, I first met Martha Banta, Mark Eaton, David McWhirter, and Sharon Oster. They are part of a dedicated and supportive community of James scholars whose work has taught me much. Along the way Bethany Schneider, John Shields, Gus Stadler, Scott Manning Stevens, and Tina Zwarg read my work and offered much appreciated advice.

At Cambridge University Press, I am grateful to the editor Ray Ryan, who shepherded me through the review process with patient advice, and to Maartje Scheltens, whose keen eye shepherds my manuscript into print. Thank you to Audrey Cotterell, who is a wonderful copy-editor. This is a much better book for the compellingly constructive feedback from two anonymous readers at the Press.

For the illustrations, I appreciate the help of John Pollock at the University of Pennsylvania’s Van Pelt Library, Phil Lapsansky and Charlene Peacock at The Library Company of Philadelphia, and Peggy Seiden at Swarthmore College’s McCabe Library. I am also grateful to Swarthmore College for the James Michener Fellowship that provided me a year-long sabbatical that enabled me to finish writing the manuscript. Thank you also to Connie Hungerford, the art historian and Swarthmore’s Provost, who provided the subvention which put the pictures in this book. At earlier stages, I much appreciated the editorial expertise of Frances Kerr at American Literature and Susan Griffin at The Henry James Review, where versions of chapters 2 and 4 first appeared.

The one problem with Philadelphia is that it is not near enough to my sisters Christine and Stephanie, my brothers-in-law Sean and René, and four nephews. Nevertheless, Grace’s warmth, vivacity, and wit makes Philadelphia feel like home. This book is dedicated to my parents, Frances and Karl, whose pride in my scholarly endeavors is backed by an affirming love.
Abbreviations


FAK  “Frances Anne Kemble,” in *Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers, English Writers* (New York:
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