

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-12145-3 - Enacting History in Henry James: Narrative, Power, and Ethics

Edited by Gert Buelens

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Many critics have seen the writing of Henry James as resistant to questions of power, history, and ethics. The Jamesian mode of writing, it has been claimed, actively works against an understanding of the way truth and history circulate in his texts. In this collection of essays, leading scholars of James analyse the strategies he used to address these crucial issues. *Enacting history in Henry James* proposes a new performative paradigm for reading James's work. It claims that because the reader can never know the truth in any verifiable sense, the type of knowledge available in his fiction is never of a cognitive kind. Rather, the Jamesian text promises an experiential type of knowledge, one that is attained by participating in the power games and moral dramas that unfold within the text. This collection argues that to read James is to enact the history that is staged by the narrative, so that, ultimately, James's texts require not just an emotional responsiveness, but also an ethical assumption of responsibility for the act of reading. By placing James's work in a fresh theoretical context, this book throws new light on this most enigmatic of writers.

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EDITED BY

GERT BUELENS

*University of Ghent*



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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,  
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521121453](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521121453)

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First published 1997  
This digitally printed version 2009

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Enacting history in Henry James: narrative, power, and ethics /  
edited by Gert Buelens.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 57089 1 (hardback)

1. James, Henry, 1843–1916 – Knowledge – History.

2. Literature and history – United States – History.

3. Power (Social sciences) in literature. 4. James, Henry, 1843–1916 – Technique.

5. Reader-response criticism. 6. Ethics in literature. 7. Narration (Rhetoric).

8. Fiction – Technique.

I. Buelens, Gert.

PS2127.H5B84 1997

813'.4–dc21 96-54615 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-57089-3 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-12145-3 Paperback

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*Voor mama en papa*

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## *Acknowledgments*

The editor would like to acknowledge the advice, help, and support received at various stages of this project from Ian F. A. Bell, William Boelhower, Lieve Bracke, Nicola Bradbury, Ortwin de Graef, Bart Eeckhout, Evelyne Ender, Alfred Habegger, Richard A. Hocks, David McWhirter, Christelle Méplon, Adrian Poole, John Carlos Rowe, Werner Sollors, Tony Tanner, and Kristiaan Versluys, as well as from the anonymous readers appointed by Cambridge University Press. At the Press itself, Josie Dixon, Ray Ryan, and Kevin Taylor played an invaluable part.

Quotation from unpublished letters in Alfred Habegger's essay is by the kind permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University. An earlier version of J. Hillis Miller's essay was delivered as the Routledge lecture and first appeared in *Textual Practice*, 9 (1995), 243–67 (© J. Hillis Miller).

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## Abbreviations

- AB*     *The Ambassadors*, New York Edition, 24 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1907–9), vols. XXI, XXII.
- AD*     *The Altar of the Dead, The Beast in the Jungle, The Birthplace, and Other Tales*, New York Edition, 24 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1907–9), vol. XVII.
- AM*     *The American*, New York Edition, 24 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1907–9), vol. II.
- AN*     *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces*, ed. Richard P. Blackmur (New York: Scribner's, 1934).
- AP*     *The Aspern Papers, The Turn of the Screw, The Liar, The Two Faces*, New York Edition, 24 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1907–9), vol. XXII.
- AU*     *Henry James, Autobiography*, ed. Frederick W. Dupee (Princeton University Press, 1983).
- CN*     *The Complete Notebooks of Henry James*, ed. Leon Edel and Lyall H. Powers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
- CT*     *The Complete Tales of Henry James*, ed. Leon Edel, 12 vols. (Philadelphia: Lippincott; London: Hart-Davis, 1962–4).
- CTW-I*   *Collected Travel Writings: Great Britain and America*, ed. Richard Howard (New York: Library of America, 1993).
- CTW-II*   *Collected Travel Writings: The Continent*, ed. Richard Howard (New York: Library of America, 1993).
- DM*     *Daisy Miller, Pandora, The Patagonia, and Other Tales*, New York Edition, 24 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1907–9), vol. XVIII.
- GB*     *The Golden Bowl*, New York Edition, 24 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1907–9), vols. XXIII, XXIV.
- HJL*     *Henry James Letters*, ed. Leon Edel, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap-Harvard University Press, 1974–84).

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LC-I	<i>Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers, English Writers</i> , ed. Leon Edel with the assistance of Mark Wilson (New York: Library of America, 1984).
LC-II	<i>Literary Criticism: French Writers, Other European Writers, the Prefaces to the New York Edition</i> , ed. Leon Edel with the assistance of Mark Wilson (New York: Library of America, 1984).
MTD	'Mr. Tennyson's Drama', <i>Galaxy</i> , 20 (1875), 393–402.
NS	<i>Notes of a Son and Brother</i> (New York: Scribner's, 1914).
PL	<i>The Portrait of a Lady</i> , New York Edition, 24 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1907–9), vols. III, IV.
RH	<i>Roderick Hudson</i> , New York Edition, 24 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1907–9), vol. I.
SB	<i>A Small Boy and Others</i> (New York: Scribner's, 1913).
T	<i>The Tales of Henry James</i> , ed. Maqbool Aziz, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973–84).
WD	<i>The Wings of the Dove</i> , New York Edition, 24 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1907–9), vols. XIX, XX.
WWS	<i>William Wetmore Story and His Friends: From Letters, Diaries and Recollections</i> , 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1903).