



# “You Will Be Surprised that Fiction Has Become an Art”: The Language of Craft and the Legacy of Henry James

*Mary Stewart Atwell*

## INTRODUCTION

In June 1890, J. M. Barrie, best known as the author of *Peter Pan*, published a piece called “Brought Back from Elysium” in the *Contemporary Review*. Though it purports to be a play, it is in fact a parody of a range of literary schools, including the Realist, the Romancist, and the “Elsmerian” Representatives of each of these schools, along with a Stylist and an American, arrange for an interview with the ghosts of Tobias Smollett, Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, and William Makepeace Thackeray. The reader might assume that the living writers have invited the ghosts in order to learn from them, but in fact, their project is just the opposite. As the Elsmerian informs the ghosts, “Since your days a great change has come over fiction [...] and it struck us that you might care to know how we moderns regard you” (Barrie 1890, p. 848).

---

M. S. Atwell (✉)  
Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, VA, USA

Barrie's writers regard them, in effect, as naïve bumblers. The writers assume that the ghosts will be "surprised to hear that fiction has become an art" (ibid., p. 848), so intensely engaged with theory that "there is not a living man in this room [...] who has not written as many articles and essays about how novels should be written as would stock a library" (ibid., p. 850). The ghosts, on the other hand, are humbly aware that they know nothing of this new art; Scott admits that "I was only a child. [...] I thought little about how novels should be written" (ibid., p. 849), while Smollett exclaims: "What novels you who think so much about the art must write nowadays!" (ibid., pp. 853–854). Only Thackeray dares to defy the new masters, remarking "perhaps if you thought and wrote less about your styles and methods and the aim of fiction, and, in short, forgot yourself now and again in your stories, you might get along better with your work. Think it over" (ibid., p. 854).

Informed by studies of the institutionalization of creative writing in the American university, including D. G. Myers's *The Elephants Teach* (1996) and Mark McGurl's massive *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing* (2009), we might assume that the new masters of Barrie's play write about fiction in order to share the mysteries of technique with the uninitiated, or in other words, to teach. Certainly, the publication history of the writer Barrie labels as the "American" (Henry James) would suggest that he had such an intention. The prefaces that James wrote for the New York editions of his novels were later collected as *The Art of the Novel*, and many of the principles outlined in these essays have had a demonstrable effect on the way fiction writing is taught today.

However, one does not have to read far into James's critical oeuvre to be certain that he would be dismayed, if not horrified, to see his work put to such use. Far from intending to produce a guide for would-be writers, his purpose in explicating the art was to initiate cultivated readers into the secrets of his own technique, thus producing better readers for his own fiction. In this essay, I will juxtapose James's careful delineation of his own technique with another tradition, running from Walter Besant's less-known "Art of Fiction" to the fiction handbooks produced by Percy Lubbock, Joseph Warren Beach, Caroline Gordon, and others. Contrary to James's purposes, these handbooks combine his technical principles with Besant's cheerfully democratic view that nearly anyone could learn to write fiction. This evolution is largely unexplored in the limited scholarship on the history of creative writing, as are its effects.

While acknowledging James’s influence on the ways in which writing is taught, the studies by Myers and McGurl largely sidestep the implications of basing a universally applicable “craft of fiction” on one man’s idiosyncratic practice. The fact that James was explicitly hostile to the concept of a teachable art only adds a new layer to the question of what we say about how we write.

### WHAT IS A “PROFESSIONAL” WRITER?

The central precept of Henry James’s essay “The Art of Fiction,” written in response to Walter Besant’s essay of the same name, is that no prescriptive rules whatsoever can be set for the writer. In terms of subject matter, this argument presents a subtle rejoinder to those who would attempt to restrict the freedom of the writer, believing that art, in James’s words, means “picking a bouquet for Mrs. Grundy” (James 1884, p. 515). However, along with preserving the writer’s right to his *donnée*, James’s version of the art precludes the possibility of establishing a set of principles by which aspiring writers might be guided in their attempts.

Both Besant and James were advocates of professionalization, but in their use of the word “professional,” the two men mean something very different. In his “Art of Fiction,” Besant laments the fact that writers “hold no annual exhibitions, dinners, or conversazioni [...] have no President or Academy; and [...] do not themselves seem desirous of being treated as followers of a special Art” (Besant 1884, p. 6). The same year he published his essay, he sought to remedy this failure of initiative through the founding and promotion of the Society of Authors. Here, Besant was the inheritor of the mantle of Edward Bulwer-Lytton, who tried and failed more than once to establish a professional organization for writers.

James was also a member of the Society of Authors, though perhaps a less-than-enthusiastic one. The same year he was inducted (1888) he wrote to Robert Louis Stevenson in regard to a dinner that the Society had given for American authors, commenting that “I belong to it, and so do you, I think, but I don’t know what it is” (James 1980, p. 240). If James did not know what the Society of Authors was, it was not due to a lack of effort to elucidate their mission. Its three stated aims were “(1) the maintenance, definition, and defense of literary property, (2) the consolidation and amendment of the laws of domestic copyright, and (3) the promotion of international copyright” (Hepburn 1968, p. 42), and the members spent much of their time on issues of legal rights to the

written word, even traveling to Berne to represent the English delegation of the 1886 International Conference on Copyright (Bonham-Carter 1978, p. 128).

When James said that he doesn't know what the Society is, he was likely expressing his dismissive attitude toward its particular definition of professionalism. In an 1895 letter to Edmund Gosse, James writes:

The fact is that authorship is guilty of a great mistake, a gross want of tact, in formulating & publishing its claim to be a "profession". Let other trades call it so—& let it take no notice. That's enough. It ought to have of the professions only a professional thoroughness. But *never* to have that, & to cry on the housetops that it *is* the grocer & the shoemaker is to bring on itself a ridicule of which it will simply die. (James quoted in Salmon 2010, p. 106)

As Richard Salmon argues, the term "professional" "carries at least two distinct connotations" in the letter (ibid., p. 106). James dislikes the kind of professionalism, represented by the Society, that would conflate the writer's profession with that of the grocer and the shoemaker.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, he "wishes to retain a notion of 'professional thoroughness,' absent, he claims, from the works of the self-declared professionals, that escapes reduction to purely economic motives" (ibid., p. 107). As McGurl argues in *The Novel Art*, in his work from this period James was establishing a way of talking about what McGurl calls the "art novel," a novel with a concern for aesthetics new to the English literary scene.

However, the art-novel as practiced by James does not, as McGurl claims, facilitate "brotherhood" among literary artists (McGurl 2001, p. 15). In fact, its aim is very much in opposition to the professional organizations of the period, seeking not to democratize the practice and marketing of fiction writing, but to establish it as a fine art above the understanding of all but a select few. For James, who lived on the proceeds from his fiction his entire adult life, changing the conversation to aesthetics was a convenient way of separating himself from the middle-class writers who catered to the novel-hungry masses. In this context, "art" becomes another way of saying genius: that which is inaccessible to the public at large; that which cannot be acquired through effort and discipline, but only appreciated after the fact.

Besant opens his 1884 essay "The Art of Fiction" by stating the following three propositions:

1. That Fiction is an Art in every way worthy to be called the sister and the equal of the Arts of Painting, Sculpture, Music, and Poetry; that is to say, her field is as boundless, her possibilities as vast, her excellences as worthy of admiration, as may be claimed for any of her sister Arts.
2. That it is an Art which, like them, is governed and directed by general laws; and that these laws may be laid down and taught with as much precision and exactness as the laws of harmony, perspective, and proportion.
3. That, like the other Fine Arts, Fiction is so far removed from the mere mechanical arts, that no laws or rules whatever can teach it to those who have not already been endowed with the natural and necessary gifts (Besant 1884, pp. 3–4).

The inconsistency in Besant’s essay, which James identifies and uses to advance his own argument, is suggested in the puzzling juxtaposition between the second and the third propositions. If fiction can be taught only to those with natural ability, why compose an essay offering advice on the practice of fiction to a general audience? Did Besant believe that only those with the “necessary gifts” would read his work? In fact, as the development of his argument suggests, Besant did not insist very strongly on his third proposition, and may even, by the close of the essay, have disregarded it entirely. In the Appendix, he speaks of the letters he received “every week [...] from young beginners asking for counsel and guidance” (ibid., p. 46). It seems unlikely that every one of the young beginners to whom Besant responded was blessed with natural gifts; indeed, some would question whether Besant himself could boast of these endowments. In content, his essay is couched as a series of practical tips directed less at the creation of fine art than the production of marketable work. In this sense, Besant positions fiction as one of the “mechanical arts,” or in other words, a craft.

While Besant’s rules and pointers in his “Art of Fiction” are too numerous to discuss in full, a few selections will suffice for the whole. He suggests that the public prefers (and one assumes, would rather pay for) happy fiction over depressing fiction:

Let him [the writer] remember that in story-telling, as in alms-giving, a cheerful countenance works wonders, and a hearty manner greatly helps the teller and pleases the listener. One would not have the novelist make

continual effort at being comic; but let him not tell his story with eyes full of sadness, a face of woe and a shaking voice. (*ibid.*, p. 37)

In a discussion of how detail may contribute to the theme or mood of a scene, Besant also recommends what in the twentieth century would come to be known as the “pathetic fallacy,” noting that “the weather, the wind and the rain, with some writers, have been made to emphasize a mood or passion of a heroine” (*ibid.*, p. 15). He advises that young novelists go to the British Museum and pay attention to what sorts of paintings people like; that they carry a notebook to jot down observations; and that they write every day to exercise their technique: “I earnestly recommend those who desire to study this Art to begin by daily practice in the description of things, even common things, that they have observed, by reporting conversations, and by word portraits of their friends” (*ibid.*, p. 23). Underlying these suggestions is Besant’s conviction that the most important rule of fiction writing is to “never go beyond your own experience” (*ibid.*, p. 18), and by implication, that the writer’s experience will be sufficient to the task.

Although Besant’s rules, in their specificity and idiosyncrasy, might provide easy fodder for criticism, James eschews this temptation, pleasantly asserting that, “there is something very encouraging in his [Besant’s] having put into form certain of his ideas on the mystery of story-telling” (James 1884, p. 287). However, as the development of his argument will show, James agrees with very little of Besant’s vision of that “mystery,” and as he draws out his objections, he calls attention to the contradiction at the heart of Besant’s “The Art of Fiction.” If only a writer of genius can succeed, might he not, in his superior judgment, find an exception to any prescriptively determined rules of fiction proposed by Besant? And if these rules do admit of exceptions, what is the use of calling them rules, or of talking about them at all?

It is the general principle of James’s artistic outlook that, when it comes to fiction, no general principles can be maintained. He writes that Besant is mistaken:

in attempting to say so definitely beforehand what sort of affair the good novel will be. [...] The only obligation to which in advance we may hold a novel [...] is that it be interesting. [...] The ways in which it is at liberty to accomplish this result (of interesting us) strike me as innumerable and such

as can only suffer from being marked out, or fenced in, by prescription. (ibid., p. 292)

Thus, by agreeing with Besant's first proposition, that fiction is a fine art, James counters his second, that it is teachable. In James's view, "the form [of a novel] [...] is to be appreciated after the fact" (ibid., p. 508), a position that effectively dismisses any discussion of the art of fiction by its practitioners. Though he commends Besant for his lessons to young writers, and agrees to offer "some comprehensive remarks [...] to the ingenuous student," the content of those remarks is so very comprehensive that one imagines that they would be of little help:

I should remind him first of the magnificence of the form that is open to him, which offers to sight so few restrictions and such innumerable opportunities [...] This freedom is a splendid privilege, and the first lesson of the young novelist is to learn to be worthy of it. "Enjoy it as it deserves," I should say to him; "take possession of it, explore it to its utmost extent, reveal it, rejoice in it". (ibid., p. 520)

James maintains the position that art should not be limited by prescription throughout his career, no doubt expressing a sincere desire that English writers enjoy the same freedom that he had witnessed among Flaubert's circle during his time in France. This insistence that questions of morality exist quite apart from questions of artistry is presumably the reason why McGurl claims that James is "working [...] with precedents set in France by Gustave Flaubert" when he endeavors "to claim the Anglo-American novel from the domain of popular entertainment and to argue for its potential as what he called 'fine art'" (McGurl 2001, p. 2). Although James's defiance of Mrs. Grundy might well have been influenced by Continental writers of his acquaintance, "The Art of Fiction" puts forward a decidedly English anxiety about what was happening to the great quantities of novels published every year: "It must be admitted that good novels are somewhat compromised by bad ones, and that the field, at large, suffers discredit from overcrowding" (James 1884, p. 291). By elevating his sort of fiction to a fine art, James could separate his own novels from that deluge of "bad ones," and from their writers and readers as well.

In his 1900 *New York Times* essay titled "The Future of the Novel," his anxiety about readership is still more evident. James echoes earlier critics

who inveighed against the sensation novel, as he watches in horror the increase of readers attracted by “the flare of railway bookstalls”:

The flood at present swells and swells, threatening the whole field of letters [...] with submersion. It plays, in what may be called the passive consciousness of many persons, a part that directly marches with the rapid increase of the multitude able to possess itself in one way and another of the book. The book, in the Anglo-Saxon world, is everywhere, and it is in the form of the voluminous prose fable that we see it penetrate easiest and furthest. Penetration appears really to be directly aided by mere mass and bulk. There is an immense public, if public be the name, inarticulate but immensely absorbent, for which, at its hours of ease, the printed volume has no other association. (James 1900)

With its vision of a teeming unrestrained reading public, this passage brings to mind James’s racist observations of black and immigrant culture in *The American Scene* and reveals the latent classism at the core of his interest in promoting fiction as a fine art. This public, like that invoked by the critics of sensational fiction, is also gendered, a willing vessel for its massive, bulky penetrator. Interestingly, James maintained this suspicion about a too-broad and too-feminine readership for the novel despite the fact that he would have benefited from a greater demand for his own fiction. One would assume that though the desire to support himself from his work was important, his desire to establish fiction as an endeavor above questions of money and popularity was more important still.<sup>2</sup>

### ART AS MYSTERY

We can see now why Besant’s promotion of an “art of fiction” was attractive to James, and the methods Besant promulgated so much less appealing. Though Besant refers to fiction as a fine art existing apart from the “mere mechanical arts,” his emphasis on the specifics of literary construction and his eagerness to help aspiring authors, suggests that he held a much more egalitarian view. Not everyone could write good fiction, perhaps, but there were enough people out there with basic ability to make the writing and publication of a handbook worthwhile.

In his “Art of Fiction,” James cordially but firmly disagrees. He calls the art of fiction not a craft but a “mystery,” and though this word can, in an archaic sense, connote a guild or trade organization, it can also, in its more familiar meaning, indicate something that cannot be understood



by the uninitiated. If art is a mystery, above the comprehension of all but a select few, then, as James implied, it is both useless and presumptuous to set out rules for its practice. He maintains this position throughout his career in both public and in private writings. In 1899, he writes to Mary Ward that she is wrong in attributing to him a belief in:

but *one general* "hard and fast rule of presentation" I [...] rather resent, frankly, you attributing to me a judgment so imbecile. I hold that there are five million such "rules" (or as many as there [are] subjects in all the world—I fear the subjects are *not* 5,000,000!) only each of them imposed, artistically, by the particular case—involved in the writer's responsibility to it; and each *then*—and then only—"hard and fast" with an immitigable hardness and fastness [...] acquit me, please, *please*, of anything so abject as putting forth something at once specific and *a priori*. (James 1980, pp. 109–110)

In a quotation from Paul Bourget, Leon Edel records James expressing a similar view: "we agreed that the laws imposed upon novelists by aesthetics resolve themselves into this: to give a personal impression of life" (Edel 1972, p. 89). Finally, in "The Future of the Novel," James writes that, "the form of the novel that is stupid on the general question of its freedom is the single form that may, a priori, be unhesitatingly pronounced wrong" (James 1900).

As we have seen, this refusal of prior standards for the novel, justified on moral and on aesthetic grounds, will stymie any attempt at instruction. Instead of the practical and practicable art of fiction that the opening of his essay seems to promise, we are left, finally, with James's inspiring but vague injunction, "try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost!" (James 1884, p. 510).<sup>3</sup>

## THE WRITER AND THE PAINTER

Though many writers, then and now, have used the words "craft" and "art" interchangeably, James's preference for "art" was no arbitrary choice. As discussed, he sought to link fiction with the fine arts, particularly visual art, with its long tradition of cultural prestige. However, he also wanted to use the language of aesthetics to elevate fiction above associations with trade and with the sort of practical pedagogy espoused by Besant. Of the works I examine in this essay, which follow James in

discussing technique in terms of subtlety and complexity, most make a notable return to the language of craftsmanship.

I will begin with Robert Louis Stevenson's "A Humble Remonstrance," written in 1884 in response to James's and Besant's thoughts on "the art of fiction." Next, I will turn to James's prefaces, which set out his views on technique with more comprehensiveness than his previous remarks, while continuing to set tight parameters around the field of fiction. Products of a later era, Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction*, Joseph Warren Beach's *The Method of Henry James*, and early classics of the writer's workshop by E. M. Forster and Caroline Gordon, take certain elements from James's approach and others from the tradition of Bulwer-Lytton and Besant. Describing fiction as a fine art analogous and comparable to music and the visual arts, they also contradict James's opinions in several particulars, all with the goal of making the lessons they impart more accessible to readers.

Stevenson had been highly influenced and even inspired by James, and yet he firmly disagreed with him on the question of whether the "art of fiction" was comprehensible in its finer points by the lay public. As if his purpose was not clear enough from his title, "A Humble Remonstrance," Stevenson announces in the opening paragraphs his intention to quarrel with both writers on several key issues. The first has to do with the phrase "the art of fiction," which Stevenson suggests should more properly be named the art of fictitious narrative in prose (Stevenson 1884, p. 140). But Stevenson also seeks to offer advice to a person he calls "the obtrusive student" (*ibid.*, p. 146), with advice differing markedly from both the practical tips presented by Besant and others, and James's vague "Ah, you must do it as you can!" (James 1884, p. 293)

If Stevenson leans to one side of the debate, it is clearly to James's. They were long-time friends, and Stevenson's opinion of James's abilities as compared with Besant's is evident in the first paragraph, where he speaks of "two men certainly of very different calibre [...] Mr. James the very type of the deliberate artist, Mr. Besant the impersonation of good nature" (*ibid.*, p. 139). However, Stevenson argues, the "deliberate artist" is mistaken when he denies the possibility of prescriptive technical standards for the novel. Stevenson is prepared to offer such standards, which are, in contrast to those of his fellow debaters, both specific enough to be useful and comprehensive enough to be broadly applicable:

Let him [the writer] choose a motive, whether it be of character or passion; carefully construct his plot so that every incident is an illustration of that motive and every property employed shall bear to it a near relation of congruity and contrast; avoid a sub-plot, unless as in Shakespeare, the sub-plot be a reversion or complement of the main intrigue; suffer not his style to flag below the level of the argument; pitch the key of conversation, not with the thought of how men talk in parlours, but with a single eye to the degree of passion he may be called upon to express; and allow neither himself in the narrative nor any character in the course of the dialogue, to utter one sentence that is not part and parcel of the business of the story or the discussion of the problem involved. (ibid., p. 147)

“A Humble Remonstrance” is not intended to be a literary handbook, but Stevenson is intent to demonstrate that it is possible to give a young writer good and useful advice. The extent to which he differs from James on this point can be seen in their disparate use of the comparison of writing to visual art. The metaphor would have been familiar to James’s readers, and James elaborates it in his objection to puritanical strictures that would prescribe certain content, and in doing so prohibit the novelist from truly describing the world as he sees it:

It is still expected, though perhaps people are ashamed to say it, that a production which is after all only a “make believe”... shall be in some degree apologetic –shall renounce the pretension of attempting really to compete with life [...] The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it *does* compete with life. When it ceases to compete as the canvas of a painter competes, it will have arrived at a very strange pass. It is not expected of the picture that it will make itself humble in order to be forgiven; and the analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the novelist is, so far as I am able to see, complete. Their inspiration is the same, their process (allowing for the different quality of the vehicle) is the same, their success is the same. They may learn from each other, they may explain and sustain each other. (James 1884, p. 504)

More than a hundred years after the founding of the Royal Academy, there could be little doubt that painting was a fine art, and James wished to claim for fiction the same respect and freedom of subject matter accorded to the painter. However, he later admits that the metaphor is not complete after all, as “the painter *is* able to teach the rudiments of his practice. [...] If there are exact sciences there are also exact arts,

and the grammar of painting is so much more definite that it makes the difference" (*ibid.*, p. 508).

One may wonder, however, about the sources of James's evidence for his assertion that the grammar of painting is "so much more definite" Could it not be rather that the "grammar" of fiction had not yet been formulated in a way that was comprehensible to the student? Stevenson does not object specifically to James's declaration that painting is a more exact art than fiction, but his differing perspective on this issue can be seen in his comparison of their methods of argumentation in these complementary essays. He writes that James:

spoke of the finished picture and his work when done; I, of the brushes, the palette, and the north light. He uttered his views in the tone and for the ear of good society; I, with the emphasis and technicalities of the obtrusive student. But the point [...] is not merely to amuse the public, but to offer helpful advice to the young writer. (*ibid.*, pp. 266–267)

We can imagine James protesting that he had no aim of amusing the public, but Stevenson's point is still well-argued. With his return to the pictorial metaphor, Stevenson subtly responds to James's belief that there is no way to talk of "the brushes, the palette, and the north light" in fiction, and therefore no substantive way of helping the young writer in addressing such aesthetic questions. Though Stevenson rejects the phrase "the art of fiction," he is the only one of the three writers to propose a set of principles that can be compared to the instruction that a painter might give his pupil. If fiction is a fine art, as James claims, it may be taught accordingly, and Stevenson advances the discussion of how this teaching might proceed.

We would not want to go too far, however, in extolling Stevenson's desire to make the art of fiction available to the aspiring writer. Stephen Arata argues that Stevenson's investment in romance was in part a reaction to a realism he saw as the language of Besant-esque professionalism, and that he disdained the move to professionalize as "inseparable from the middle classes, that fatuous rabble that he preferred to jest at rather than join" (Arata 2005, p. 196). When compared to James, Stevenson's vision of the path to literary artistry looks accessible indeed, but this is not by any stretch of the imagination Besant's "great army of men and women constantly engaged in writing" (Stevenson quoted in Bonham-Carter 1978, p. 138). Still, the effort to articulate a technical discourse

that would resemble the grammar of painting represented a significant step forward.

## THE PREFACES

Leon Edel tells us that in preparing his complete work to be printed as the New York Edition, James "seems to have had an image of himself as the 'American Balzac'" (324). The edition was the monument by which he would be known to history, and he intended that he should be known as the great and representative novelist of his time. However, in writing the prefaces to the novels and tales he made a decision that was, in a sense, more ambitious: He would explain to his readers exactly what he had done and why he had done it. James makes it clear that his intent was to provide a guide to the understanding of his work, to justify his worth to an insufficiently appreciative public. The prefaces were, in his words, "the history of the growth of one's imagination" (James 1934, p. 47). However, along with charting his development as an artist, the prefaces also address James's concerns about the role of the writer in society.

First, James uses the prefaces to reinforce the conception of the professional writer introduced in essays like "The Art of Fiction." In an earlier era, writers like George Lewes employed homely metaphors of building and workmanship to represent the writer as an artisan, learning his trade and pursuing it in a practical spirit. These metaphors would be taken up again in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Jamesian disciples like Percy Lubbock. James, however, clearly aware of the craftsman trope, gives it a new twist. Discussing the construction of *The Portrait of a Lady*, he remarks that he intended the work to have:

a structure reared with an "architectural" competence. [...] I would leave no pretext for saying that anything is out of line, scale or perspective. I would build large—in fine embossed vaults and painted arches [...] and yet never let it appear that the chequered pavement, the ground under the reader's feet, fails to stretch at every point to the base of the walls. (ibid., p. 52)

Far from a lowly workman, James figures himself as the architect who conceives and executes his plan on a grand scale, constructing a cathedral-like edifice. He is also the illusionist, employing sleight of hand to keep the reader from noticing that the ground under his feet is not quite solid.

Previously, I discussed James's ambivalent attitude toward Besant's brand of professionalism, which threatened to associate the writer with "the grocer & the shoemaker." In the prefaces, he evokes a professional thoroughness while simultaneously making it clear that the elevated writer is no common laborer.

As in "The Art of Fiction," James's conception of the professional writer is made distinct from other professionals in other fields partly because he does not have to learn his trade in the usual way, through training and hard work. James reminds us often that he does not have to follow the Besant method of taking notes and developing observational skills to find material for fiction. In the preface to *The Princess Cassamassima*, he explains that he did not need to do research to write about a society of anarchists; all he had to do was walk around the parts of London that his character would frequent:

I recall pulling no wires, knocking at no closed doors, applying for no "authentic" information; but I recall also on the other hand the practice of never missing an opportunity to add a drop, however small, to the bucket of my impressions. [...] To haunt the great city and by this habit to penetrate it, imaginatively, in as many places as possible—that was to be informed. (ibid., p. 77)

This ability to invent without research is essential not only to James, but to all writers. If you don't have it, you simply don't have what it takes, and you won't be able to recognize a great subject even if it drops in your lap: "if you haven't, for fiction, the root of the matter in you, haven't the sense of life and the penetrating imagination, you are a fool in the very presence of the revealed and assured" (ibid., p. 78).

Secondly, James takes advantage of this opportunity to air his grievances with the publishing industry. In *The Method of Henry James*, Beach tells us that James accommodated himself happily to the demands of serial publication, even "rejoic[ing] in it as an opportunity for the exhibition of one's finest skill" (Beach 1954, p. 34). However, James's praise of his editor Henry Harland in his remarks on "The Death of the Lion" suggests, on the contrary, that he could only trust the "artistic intelligence" of an editor who agreed not to set any limits at all.

James repeatedly returns to his dislike for the exigencies of the word count, complaining that editors' insistence that stories fall between six and eight thousand words has prevented the *nouvelle*, a successful and

widely used form in other languages, from flourishing in English. In his account of the writing of "The Middle Years," James compares himself in his efforts to abide by the word count to "a warden of the insane engaged in a critical moment in making fast an inmate's straitjacket" (James 1934, p. 232). In this, he presents a marked contrast to fellow author Anthony Trollope who, according to his *Autobiography*, found the limitations imposed by publication so salutary that he kept himself to a word count even when he was not obligated to do so. Only in his remarks on *The Ambassadors* does James change his tune, speaking of his intent to "exploit and enjoy these often rather rude jolts" of the serial breaks (ibid., p. 317). Certainly, though, this is a qualified and somewhat ironic enjoyment. Constraints imposed from without, James tells us, can "operate as a tax on ingenuity – that ingenuity of the expert craftsman which likes to be taxed very much to the same tune to which a well-bred horse likes to be saddled" (ibid., p. 295).

If editors and publishers thought of James as a well-bred horse, he could hope for suitable approbation from only one area: his readers. As I have mentioned, his most obvious and significant intention in the prefaces is to cultivate a judicious appreciation of his own work. James, confident that his fiction marked a departure from previous methods, makes the most of his opportunities to take aim at the novels of the past, perhaps most famously in the passage on "large loose baggy monsters, with their queer elements of the accidental and the arbitrary" (ibid., p. 84). In his insistence on judicious economy over looseness of construction, James sounds undeniably Flaubertian. He shows a "preference for [...] the 'neat' evocation [...] with fewest attendant vaguenesses and cheapnesses, fewest loose ends dangling," and repudiates again "the baseness of the *arbitrary* stroke" (ibid., pp. 256, 89).

### THE DEEPLY WONDERING AND THE REALLY SENTIENT

James uses this exploration of his methods to enforce distinctions not only between kinds of novels, but also kinds of people. He tells the reader that "we" are most affected by those characters whose center of consciousness is a sensitive instrument:

The figures in any picture, the agents in any drama, are interesting only in proportion as they feel their respective situations. [...] But there are degrees of feeling – the muffled, the faint, the just sufficient, the barely

intelligent [...] and the acute, the intense, the complete, in a word – the power to be finely aware and richly responsible. It is those moved in this latter fashion who “get most” out of all that happens to them and who in so doing enable us, as readers of their record [...] also to get most. [...] We care, our curiosity and sympathy care, comparatively little for what happens to the stupid, the coarse and the blind; care for it, and for the effects of it, at the most as helping to precipitate what happens to the more deeply wondering, to the really sentient. (ibid., p. 62)

The class implications are not only unmistakable but also are underlined by the comment in the preface to *The Princess Cassamassima*, that the “meaner conditions, the lower manners and types, the general sordid struggle [...] the ignorance, the misery and the vice” that form the background of Hyacinth Robinson’s conversion to anarchism are unimportant in themselves, and only worth noting in the effect they have on the “finely aware and richly responsible” center of consciousness (ibid., p. 62).<sup>4</sup>

The analysis of the center of consciousness also establishes a precedence of genders. In the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, James writes of his audacity in deciding to make Isabel Archer his central character. In Shakespeare, he explains, a character like Portia “matters to Antonio, and to Shylock, and to the Prince of Morocco,” but Shakespeare never asks her to carry the weight of being the audience’s sole interest. Even George Eliot, whose passage on the “frail vessels” of human affection James quotes here, never asks her “Hettys and Maggies and Rosamonds and Gwendolens” to be the center of the narrative.<sup>5</sup> These characters “have their inadequacy eked out with comic relief and underplots” (ibid., pp. 49–50). James, on the other hand, will invest the entirety of the novel in Isabel Archer, braving the “deep difficulty” of making her consistently interesting to the reader (ibid., p. 50). By insisting on the boldness of asking a reader to care about a young woman’s consciousness, James argues implicitly that the default center of consciousness is male, and that he must apologize for—while also celebrating—his decision to go against the grain.

## THE PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

This insistence on the preeminence of the center of consciousness, the attribution of mental superiority to a class-dependent sensibility, and the condescending remarks about the psychological capacity of young



women would be troubling (certainly to modern readers) in a guide to writing fiction, but it's important to remember that James had no intention of producing such a guide. He never meant the prefaces to be published together and probably would not have been thrilled with Richard Blackmur's decision to name the 1934 edition *The Art of the Novel*. The prefaces read very differently as a descriptive account of one man's experience than as a prescriptive take on how fiction should be written.

Ironically, a metaphor from the prefaces inspired the title of one of the first fiction anthologies to be used in university writing programs—*The House of Fiction*, written by Caroline Gordon and James Tate and published in 1950. This apparent coincidence of aims between James and the twentieth-century American writing program may be one reason why McGurl assumes that James would have been in sympathy with modern teachers of creative writing. A closer look at the way the phrase "the house of fiction" is used in the prefaces will suggest otherwise.

"The house of fiction," James writes, "has in short not one window, but a million; every one of which has been pierced, or is still pierceable, in its vast front, by the need of the individual vision and by the pressure of the individual will." At each of these windows stands a writer. "He and his neighbours are watching the same show, but one seeing more where the other sees less, one seeing black where the other sees white. [...] And so on" (*ibid.*, p. 46). Presumably, each of these inhabitants could, like James, write an account of their practice if they chose to do so, describing the singular view from their particular room.

Gordon and Tate, on the other hand, are concerned not with writers as individuals but in the "certain 'constants' or secrets of technique which [...] appear in the works of all the masters of the craft [...] [and] which have been handed down from master to master throughout the ages." They are less interested in the fact that the house of fiction has many windows than in the fact that it has many rooms, allowing students to explore "the basic techniques in systematic fashion" (Gordon and Tate 1960, p. ix). Though Gordon was a devout Jamesian, here she spins the Master's words for her own ends, adapting them to a purpose it is unlikely he would have approved.

It is easy to imagine James dismissing Gordon and Tate's "basic techniques in systematic fashion," but possibly he might have looked with more favor on two earlier books which made use of the prefaces: Beach's *The Method of Henry James* (1918) and Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction*

(1921). Both Beach and Lubbock were earnest admirers of James, and both sought to translate the prefaces into a language that would be more readable for non-scholars. In his introduction, Beach comments that:

deeply interesting as they are, few but professional students would have the hardihood and pertinacity to make their way through these explanatory reviews. [...] It remains for the student to collect and set in order these scattered considerations, to view them in connection with the stories themselves, and, from the whole, to put together some connected account of the aims and method of our author. (Beach 1954, p. 2)

Ironically, these “professional students” setting out to complete the Master’s project of explaining themselves to the public, ended in establishing a vocabulary of technique that made his idiosyncratic practice newly accessible to aspiring writers.

Lubbock’s book is probably the better known, perhaps due to a title which announces its subject as technique in general, rather than James’s technique in particular. Lubbock frequently laments the “long indifference to [...] questions of theory,” which leaves “a reader of novels [...] amazed by the chaos in which the art is still pursued” (Lubbock 1955, p. 197). There is no “received nomenclature” to which critics may refer, “no connected argument, no definition of terms, no formulation of claims, not so much as any ground really cleared and prepared for discussion” (Lubbock 1955, pp. 22, 272). Lubbock aims to reform this perpetual casualness, and James is the “begetter of all our studies. [...] Others [...] had opened the way but the novel in its wayward exuberance had hardly been held to any serious account of its practice till it was called to confront the most magisterial of its makers” (ibid., p. viii). In “The Art of Fiction,” James expresses his regret that “the English novel was not what the French call *discutable*” (James 1884, p. 502); Lubbock and Beach give James the credit for beginning that discussion that he was unwilling to claim for himself.

In terms of method, both Lubbock and Beach follow the principles laid out in the prefaces, though in a considerably more lucid and organized manner. Predictably, Lubbock argues that the novel has experienced a progressive movement from a focus on plot to a focus on character, and he echoes James in his view that the essence of characterization lies in an exploration of the center of consciousness—or, to use Lubbock and Beach’s term, “point of view.” More explicit than James himself, Lubbock

states that "the whole intricate method, in the craft of fiction, I take to be governed by the question of point of view—the question of the relation in which the narrator stands to the story" (Lubbock 1955, p. 251). In his discussion of structure, though Lubbock mentions James's distinction between "drama" and "picture," he also introduces a pair of terms that will wear considerably better. In a passage on *Madame Bovary*, Lubbock remarks that, "I speak of his [Flaubert's] 'telling' the story, but of course he has no idea of doing that and no more; the art of fiction does not begin until the novelist thinks of his story as matter to be *shown*, to be so exhibited that it will tell itself" (ibid., p. 62). "Showing" a story is allied with James's "scenic" or "dramatic" method, and James is the exemplary scenic novelist. In Beach's words,

Thackeray, or Balzac [...] are always *telling* the reader what happened instead of showing them the scene, telling them what to think of the characters rather than letting the reader judge for himself or letting the characters do the telling about one another. I like to distinguish between novelists that *tell* and those that *show*; and when I say that James was a dramatic story-teller, I mean that he was one of those that show through *scenes*. [...] I find the essence of the dramatic, in fiction, in the confinement of the story, like a stage-play, to the "here and now," that is to the particular place and time in which the dialogue is occurring or the characters' ruminations are being carried on. (Beach 1954, p. lxxx)<sup>6</sup>

Lubbock and Beach are drawing here on the distaste expressed in the preface to *The Ambassadors* for "the seated mass of explanation after the fact, the inserted block of merely referential narrative" (James 1884, p. 321). At its most refined, this preference for scene leads to the conversations in James's late novels in which the characters discuss at great length everything the reader might possibly need to know. While these scenes may not be "dramatic" in the familiar use of the term, Beach recognizes that James's method contains the potential for drama by keeping the reader in a "particular place and time" (Beach 1954, p. lxxx).

As Beach's reference to Thackeray and Balzac indicates, the emphasis on "showing" is a mark of James's technical advantage over the novelists of the past. For these critics, James is a *sui generis* scholar of the novel while earlier novelists are simply concerned with telling a story, "taken up to such an extent with their material and their attitude towards it, as to have comparatively little attention left for the niceties of the art in the

disposition of it” (Beach 1954, p. 1). This is a familiar argument, parodied in Barrie’s “Brought Back from Elysium,” and both Lubbock and Beach return to it often. Like James, they scorn the practice of an omniscient implied author commenting on the action. In connection with this offense, Beach mentions everyone from Fielding to Eliot and Meredith, and Lubbock at times makes these novelists sound almost Homeric in their lack of awareness of the technical advantage of choosing a point of view, speaking of “the old, immemorial, unguarded, unsuspecting way of telling a story, where the author [...] imposes no limitation upon his freedom to tell what he pleases and to regard his matter from a point of view that is solely his own” (Lubbock 1955, p. 263). The worst villain in this regard, however, is not James’s bogeyman Trollope, but Thackeray. “Among the great,” he is the only writer

who seems to find a positively willful pleasure in damaging his own story by open maltreatment of this kind; there are times when Thackeray will even boast of his own independence, insisting [...] on his own freedom to say what he pleases about his men and women and to make them behave as he will. (ibid., p. 88)

One can hear Lubbock’s frustration with Thackeray’s habit of referring to his characters as “puppets,” when to Lubbock they are “men and women” with the capacity for independent thought and action. James’s insistence on the scene, though a technical advance in its own right, is also valuable for precluding this kind of treatment.

Though Lubbock and Beach draw heavily on James’s conceptual framework as discussed in the prefaces, each also departs from him in significant ways. Beach is unapologetic about separating out the elements of fiction, giving his chapters titles including “Picture,” “Point of View,” and “Dialogue.” Neither takes the time to deplore the concept of literature as a trade, indicating either that talking about money doesn’t interest them or that they are reconciled to the idea that both novels and guides to the writing of novels are subject to capitalist exchange. Most significantly, while telling us the terms “craft” and “art” are really “one and the same [...] with no real working distinction to be drawn between them” (ibid., p. v), Lubbock announces in the title his own preference for “craft.” In discussing why readers and writers need to understand technique, he turns to the old metaphor of the craftsman, which sounds very different here than James’s vision of an architect building cathedrals:

Nobody can work in material of which the properties are unfamiliar, and a reader who tries to get possession of a book with nothing but his appreciation of the life and the ideas and the story in it is like a man who builds a wall without knowing the capacities of wood and clay and stone. Many different substances, as distinct to the practised eye as stone and wood, go to the making of a novel, and it is necessary to see them for what they are. (ibid., p. 20)

Here, both writer and reader are builders in stone and wood, each complicit in the project of constructing the wall. Lubbock underscores in his own preface that learning the craft of fiction is "homely" work that "holds you fast to the matter in hand, to the thing that has been made and the manner of its making" (ibid., p. v). After James's attempts to establish "the manner of its making" as an exalted pursuit, it is fair to say that he probably would not have cared for Lubbock's return to the humble language of craftsmanship.

Though Lubbock and Beach may not be orthodox Jamesians in every respect, James is still their "only begetter," the reason for their studies and the example that endorses their conclusions. Now that writers like James are composing more complex novels, Lubbock argues that we must train ourselves to be the "cunning," technically informed reader that James wishes for in the prefaces (ibid., p. 253). Lubbock hopes that future readers and critics will follow his example in *The Craft of Fiction* in analyzing the technical properties of the novel:

I can imagine that by examining and comparing in detail the workmanship of many novels by many hands a critic might arrive at a number of inductions in regard to the relative properties of the scene, the incident dramatized, the incident pictured, the panoramic impression and the rest; there is scope for a large enquiry, the results of which are greatly needed by a critic of fiction, not to speak of the writers of it. (ibid., p. 267)

This passage is significant for two reasons. First, it envisions a vibrant discourse on fictional discourse, one that would in fact begin to take shape in the decades after the publication of *The Craft of Fiction*. Second, it suggests that craft is indeed teachable. In the last phrase, indicating that analysis of technique is useful to writers as well as readers, this most devoted of the Master's students gives an entirely different face to his project in codifying and explicating the prefaces.

## “HISTORY DEVELOPS, ART STANDS STILL”

As McGurl demonstrates in *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing*, in the decades after the publication of the works by Lubbock and Beach, most of the teaching of craft took place in the context of the university. In this contemporary context, James’s distaste for the associations of writing with trade has been effectively sidelined: The majority of teachers of writing make their livings in the classroom, viewing the proceeds from their fiction as a welcome, if inconsistent, supplement to their salary. However, the question of what we mean by the craft of fiction, and where our conceptions of craft can and should come from, is still very much a matter of discussion.

With McGurl’s focus on institutionalization in the United States, he never mentions what is surely a significant moment in the incorporation of the craft of fiction into an academic setting: E. M. Forster’s Clark Lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge, later collected as *Aspects of the Novel*. After the near-exclusive focus on James in the works by Lubbock and Beach, Forster’s catholicity of reference and freedom from conventional wisdom are striking. He is just as willing to discuss Arnold Bennett’s *The Old Wives’ Tale* as *The Ambassadors* and values plot just as much as character. Though his famous distinction between flat and round characters is often taken to imply the superiority of characters with psychological depth, he himself mentions Dickens as a counter-example, commenting that “his immense success with types suggests that there may be more in flatness than the severer critics admit” (Forster 1927, p. 72). All in all, Forster seems remarkably liberated from the pressure to throw his lot in either with the geniuses and literary artists or with the humble craftsmen. The explanation for this cheerful refusal to join one party or the other can be found in his first lecture, when Forster asks his students to imagine the English writers he will go on to discuss:

not as floating down that stream which bears all its sons away...but as seated together in a room, a circular room, a sort of British Museum reading-room—all writing their novels simultaneously. They do not, as they sit there, think “I live under Queen Victoria, I under Anne, I carry on the tradition of Trollope, I am reacting against Aldous Huxley.” The fact that their pens are in their hands is far more vivid to them. (ibid., p. 9)

This imagined scene of novelists working in the same space, untroubled by the passage of time, will allow Forster to make technical comparisons

between James and Samuel Richardson, H. G. Wells and Dickens, Sterne and Woolf, and to conclude that the craft of fiction does not change—in fact, is impervious to change. “All through history,” Forster tells us, “writers while writing have felt more or less the same. They have entered a common state which it is convenient to call inspiration, and having regard to that state, we may say that History develops, Art stands still” (ibid., p. 21).

Though later writers of literary handbooks have sometimes disagreed with Forster about the methods by which character is constructed, the notion that the principles of craft are ahistorical has become nearly universal. In early standards of the workshop like *Understanding Fiction*, by Robert Penn Warren and Cleanth Brooks, and in contemporary favorites like Janet Burroway’s *Writing Fiction*, “rules of art” are expressed in declarative statements. The writers are careful to grant that their principles admit exceptions and that every fiction writer must, to paraphrase James, “do it as she can,” but these variations are always credited to the writer’s individual artistic vision, never to historical contingency. This assumption that technique exists apart from social forces makes the literary-historical amnesia suffered by the late-Victorian writers in Barrie’s “Brought Back from Elysium” a constant of our discourse, and may have several ill effects. If technique is eternal, there is no reason for writers of handbooks and teachers of creative writing to refer to anything written outside our borders or before 1950. For students of creative writing, an approach that relies so much on the contemporary and the easily accessible may leave the impression that texts requiring more of an investment from the reader have nothing to teach.

In addition, the lack of curiosity about where and how our notions of craft came to be may impoverish our cultural conversation about fiction. We have seen the way that James’s own classism, racism, and sexism influenced his formulations of concepts like characterization and point of view. In a series of posts on the website of the literary journal *Pleiades*, the novelist and critic Matthew Salesses asserts that the very notion of “‘Pure Craft’ is a Lie”:

The writers of color in [a] workshop where the craft values are white, or the LGBT writers in a workshop where craft values are straight and cis, or women writers in a workshop where the craft values are male, end up in the position [...] where they are told that they need to “know the rules

before they can break them,” but the rules are never only “just craft,” because the rules are cultural. (Salesses 2015)

The discussion of the ideological and cultural underpinnings of the craft of fiction is just beginning, and both students and teachers of writing may fear that the end result will be the decline of a common language. If we cannot agree on what makes a character come alive on the page, how can a diverse community of writers and readers talk about technique at all? However, a more hopeful possibility is that these conversations will enrich our understanding of how race, gender, sexuality, and class privilege have shaped creative writing, not shutting down the discourse, but expanding it by making room for different perspectives.

James’s insistence that fiction was an art was undeniably valuable in opening the field for a complex discussion of its construction. By asserting that technique was both complex and accessible, writers like Stevenson, Lubbock, and Forster then took the first step toward establishing a rich and productive conversation about how fiction is made. The next step will involve a new awareness of the influence of culture, context, and subject position on what we say about how we write.

## NOTES

1. Salmon points out that James also used the Society as a resource, requesting Besant’s advice on periodical publication and hiring the agent A. P. Watt to represent him in the late 1880s. His simultaneous acceptance of and disdain for professional organizations certainly implies that “James’s relationship with Besant’s model of literary professionalism was [...] more ambivalent than the coded distancing of [James’s] ‘The Art of Fiction’ might suggest” (Salmon 2010, p. 108).
2. James may at times have exaggerated his need for money, but his poverty seemed real enough to his friend Edith Wharton, who writes in *A Backward Glance* of the “anxious frugality” on display at Lamb House: “in his daily life he was haunted by the spectre of impoverishment, and the dreary pudding or pie of which a quarter or a half had been consumed at dinner appeared on the table the next day with its ravages unrepaired” (Wharton 1934, pp. 243–244). Wharton also relates an anecdote about a visit to James when he had her suitcases brought to the house on a wheelbarrow, commenting that “he had bought the barrow with the earnings of his last book and hoped that the earnings on the next book would enable him to have the barrow painted” (Powers 1990, p. 18). In the last years of James’s life, Wharton arranged for some of her own profits from Scribner



to be diverted into an unusually generous advance for *The Ivory Tower* (Edel 1972, pp. 476–477).

3. Given that this is perhaps the best-known line from “The Art of Fiction,” it is curious to note that James seems to have borrowed his phrasing from Besant’s specific and concrete suggestion that the aspiring writer carry a notebook to jot down his impressions: “There are places where the production of a notebook would be embarrassing – say, at a dinner-party, or a street fight; yet the man who begins to observe will speedily be able to remember everything that he sees and hears until he can find an opportunity to note it down, so that nothing is lost” (Besant 1884, p. 21). The phrase “nothing is lost,” like “art of fiction,” seemingly meant something different to James than it did to Besant.
4. While arguing that only a character with a certain gentility of soul can make an effective center of consciousness, James also frequently figures secondary characters as domestic help. In the preface to *The Princess Cassamassima*, he states that “my sense of a really expressed character is that it shall have originally so tasted of the ordeal of service as to feel no disposition to yield again to the strain.” In his remarks on *The Portrait of a Lady*, he states that the characters appeared to him “like the group of attendants and entertainers who come down by train when people in the country give a party” (James 1934, p. 53). These remarks highlight the preoccupation with class underlying James’s criticism as well as his fiction, and remind us that the characters with the intelligence and capacity for response to claim an independent existence are a rarity, even in his fiction.
5. Interestingly, James makes no mention of Eliot’s “Dorotheas.” The omission may strike the reader as significant, given James’s well-known admiration for Eliot early in his career, and the fact that Dorothea Brooke undoubtedly occupies the position of the preeminent center of consciousness in *Middlemarch*.
6. The chronology here is rather confusing. Though *The Method of Henry James* was published three years before *The Craft of Fiction*, the remarks quoted here are found in Beach’s Introduction, included in a 1954 reissue of *The Method*. Since the distinction between ‘showing’ and ‘telling’ does not occur in the 1918 edition, we can assume that Beach was influenced by Lubbock’s terminology.

## REFERENCES

- Arata, Stephen. 2005. The Sedulous Ape: Atavism, Professionalism, and Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde*. In *Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishing.

- Barrie, J.M. 1890. Brought Back from Elysium. *Contemporary Review* 57: 846–854.
- Beach, Joseph Warren. 1954. *The Method of Henry James*. Philadelphia: Albert Saifer.
- Besant, Walter. 1884. The Art of Fiction. In *Walter Besant and Henry James: The Art of Fiction*. Boston: Cupples and Herd.
- Bonham-Carter, Victor. 1978. *Authors by Profession*. Los Altos, CA: William Kaufmann Inc.
- Brooks, Cleanth, and Robert Penn Warren. 1943. *Understanding Fiction*. New York: F.S. Crofts & Co.
- Burroway, Janet. 2000. *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft*, 5th ed. New York: Longman.
- Edel, Leon. 1972. *Henry James: The Master, 1901–1916*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company.
- Forster, E.M. 1927. *Aspects of the Novel*. New York: Harcourt.
- Gordon, Caroline, and Allen Tate. 1960. *The House of Fiction: An Anthology of the Short Story with Commentary*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Hepburn, James. 1968. *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*. London: Oxford University Press.
- James, Henry. 1884. The Art of Fiction. *Longman's Magazine* 4 (23): 502–521.
- . 1900. The Future of the Novel. *The New York Times*, August 11: BR13.
- . 1934. *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- . 1980. *Henry James: Letters*, ed. Leon Edel. Cambridge: The Belknap Press.
- Lubbock, Percy. 1955. *The Craft of Fiction*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- McGurl, Mark. 2001. *The Novel Art: Elevations of American Fiction After Henry James*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 2009. *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Myers, D.G. 1996. *The Elephants Teach: Creative Writing Since 1880*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Powers, Lyall (ed.). 1990. *Henry James and Edith Wharton: Letters: 1900–1915*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Salesses, Matthew. 2015. 'Pure Craft' Is a Lie (Part 3). *Pleiades: Literature in Context*. <http://www.pleiadesmag.com/pure-craft-is-a-lie-part-3/> Accessed on 10 September 2019.
- Salmon, Richard. 2010. Authorship. In *Henry James in Context*, ed. David McWhirter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stevenson, R.L. 1884. A Humble Remonstrance. *Longman's Magazine* 5 (26): 139–147.
- Wharton, Edith. 1934. *A Backward Glance*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

