

Gender and Publicity in Henry James's "The Papers"

Rawlings, Peter
Institute of Languages and Cultures, Kyushu University

<https://doi.org/10.15017/6504>

出版情報：言語文化論究. 11, pp.97-108, 2000-03-01. 九州大学言語文化部
バージョン：
権利関係：

Gender and Publicity in Henry James's "The Papers"

Celia. Here comes Monsieur Le Beau.

Rosamond. With his mouth full of news.

Celia. Which he will put on us, as pigeons feed their young.

Rosamond. Then shall we be news-cramm'd.

Celia. All the better; we shall be more marketable.

(As You Like It I ii 91-97)

Peter Rawlings

"The Papers" (1903) is one of Henry James's most neglected short stories. I want to suggest that it cannot be understood in isolation from relevant aspects of English and American newspaper history, and that it needs to be interpreted as a richly ambivalent intervention in feverish debates about the state of culture in late nineteenth-century Britain and America, especially in relation to gender and feminization.

Journalists and the intrigues of the press figure in a good many of James's novels and stories: Henrietta Stackpole (*The Portrait of a Lady*) is redeemed only by an ultimate ability to acknowledge a division between the "private" and the "public" which her odious counterpart, Matthias Pardon in *The Bostonians*, lacks utterly. For this "thoroughly modern young man" (108)

everything and every one were everyone's business. All things, with him, referred themselves to print, and print meant simply infinite reporting, a promptitude of announcement, abusive when necessary, or even when not, about his fellow citizens (107).

The narrator in "Flickerbridge," a short story included in the same volume as "The Papers" (*The Better Sort*, 1903), rails against

an age of prodigious machinery, all organised to a single end. That end is publicity – a publicity as ferocious as the appetite of a cannibal (439).

Throughout his fiction – and especially in *The Bostonians* (1886), *The Reverberator* (1888), 'The Private Life' (1893), and *The Sacred Fount* (1901) – James appears to vilify the press and its sordid preoccupations. By the 1890's, James's notebooks locate the general expansion of publicity on a site of the universal decline of culture and civilization: he wrote of "the great modern collapse of all the forms and 'supersitions' and respects, good and bad, and restraints and mysteries

the decadences and vulgairities and confusions and masculinizations and feminizations – the materializations and abdications and intrusions, and Americanizations, the lost sense, the brutalized manner – the publicity,

the newspapers, the general revolution, the failure of fastidiousness (120).

James's cultural anxieties, and his potent ambivalences in their presence, are at the centre of "The Papers," a story which is set in the "dense duration of a London winter, cheered, if cheered it could be called, with lurid electric, with fierce 'incandescent' flares and glares" (542). This metaphorical registering of publicity in a gas-light vanquishing world imbricates all things modern in James's aetiology of the condition of contemporary journalism. Maud Blandy, like her forebear Matthias Pardon, is a "product of the age." She "drank beer . . . and smoked cigarettes," transgressing gender boundaries and expunging history, culture, and tradition in the process:

It was as if a past had been wasted on her and a future were not to be fitted; she was really herself, so far at least as her great preoccupation went, an edition, an "extra-special," coming out at the loud hours and living its life, amid the roar of vehicles, the hustle of pavements, the shriek of newsboys, according to the quantity of shock to be proclaimed and distributed (543).

Mortimer Marshall, a sublime distillation of modern mediocrity, is a wealthy playwright of little note who craves for publicity, and for Maud Blandy "as the partner of his flat" who could sit, "like one of those big domestic siphons . . . on the sideboard," "the interviewer at home" (580); he has a voguish "bathroom," a newfangled "refrigerator" and, in a play on "press" and its salacious affiliations, "machines for stretching his trousers," of which he has "nine, and in constant use" (579-80).

The story revolves around the two journalists, Howard Bight and Maud Blandy. Maud is less successful than Howard, and envies his ability to capitalize on trivial information in the form of lucrative articles. Howard has been in pursuit of Sir A.B.C. Beadel-Muffet, K.C.B., M.P., a prominent politician whose fame is entirely a function of publicity. Beadel-Muffet has become "universal and ubiquitous" and "on every page of every public print every day in every year" is "as inveterate a feature of each issue" as "the tariffed advertisements." In a shrewd anticipation of the self-generative essence of publicity, "one half of his chronicle appeared to consist of official contradiction of the other half" (546). "Fame," in ancient Rome, arose from public actions "for the . . . good of the state," whereas by the early 1900's, "the conditions of modern celebrity" had made it a goal in itself (Baudy 488). In Beadel-Muffet, James dramatizes the decadent appropriations of this once classical ideal. His is "an artful imitation of the voice of fame:"

The fame was all voice . . . the items that made the sum were individually of the last vulgarity, but the accumulation was a triumph . . . of industry and vigilance. It was after all not true that a man had done nothing who for ten years had so fed, so dyked and directed and distributed the fitful sources of publicity (547).

It seems, and Maud spends much of the story speculating about this as her marriage is one of its contingencies, that Howard's journalistic interest in Beadel-Muffet has driven him

into disappearance and suicide given that a wealthy Mrs Chorney refuses to marry him unless the publicity abates. His disappearance — in a tale whose exploration of the metaphysics of absence and presence, silence and utterance is intense — stimulates a press interest over which neither Beadel-Muffet (until the end), hence his apparent suicide, or the journalists can exercise any kind of control. In bewilderment, Howard ponders over how "one is to mention that he wants not to be mentioned" (560): "We've all in fact been turned on — to turn everything off, and that's exactly the job that makes the biggest noise. It appears everywhere" that he

desires to cease to appear *anywhere*; and then it appears that this desiring to cease to appear is observed to conduce directly to his more tremendously appearing, or certainly, and in the most striking manner, to his not, in the least disappearing. The workshop of silence roars like the zoo at dinner-time (581).

In the midst of all this, Mortimer Marshall is desperate for publicity, but his interview with Maud remains unpublished until Howard, out-manoeuvring Maud, initiates a receptive environment for Marshall by writing up an account of their lunch together, this being

journalism of the intensest essence; a column concocted of nothing, an omelette made, as it were, without even the breakage of the egg or two that might have been expected to be the price [Maud] was lost in wonder of seeing how, without matter, without thought, without an excuse, without a fact . . . he had managed to be as resonant as if he had beaten a drum on the platform of a booth (577).

On view is James's disquiet over the menace embodied by women to what he believed should be the masculine preserves of writing and culture. Howard Bight earlier interjects, on Mortimer Marshall's failure to achieve publicity, "Oh well . . . if he can't manage to smash a pane of glass somewhere — !" (565).

That word of Bight's about smashing a window-pane had lingered with her; it had made her afterwards wonder . . . if there weren't some brittle surface in range of her own elbow. She had to face back on the consciousness of how her elbow, in spite of her type, lacked practical point (566)

There is a contact here with James's essay "The Future of the Novel" (1899). In that essay, what Sara Blair has recently interpreted as "the Anglo-American anxiety of cultural exhaustion" (77) is identified as a consequence of what are inextricably intertwined: democratization, popular education, and a growing readership of women and children, the women being infantilized by association. The starkly expressed fear is of the "revolution taking place in the position and outlook of women:"

we may very well yet see the female elbow itself kept in increasing activity by the play of the pen, smash with final resonance the window all this time most superstitiously closed . . . when women do obtain a free

hand they will not repay their long debt to the precautionary attitude of men by unlimited consideration for the delicacy of the latter (57-58).

James has returned to a problem and solution fully posited for the first time in *The Bostonians* (1886). For Basil Ransome

The whole generation is womanized; the masculine tone is passing out of the world; it's a feminine, a nervous, hysterical, chattering, canting age . . . which if we don't soon look out, will usher in the reign of mediocrity (290).

Arguably, James's strident attacks on emasculation and the incontinence of feminine utterance are forms of self-defence within the context of his main business, the novel, largely written and read by women, and his possible same-sex orientation. James's criticism of the press has an equivalent purpose, new journalism being routinely implicated in what was configured as an age of moral degeneration and diminishing "masculinity" (for which, we can read "heterosexual desire"). G. M. Young ventriloquized for many when he asserted that

Fundamentally, what failed in the late Victorian age, and its flash Edwardian epilogue, was the Victorian public, once so alert, so masculine . . . the English mind sank towards that easily excited, easily satisfied, state of barbarism and childhood which press and politics for their own ends fostered, and on which in turn they fed (187).

In *The Bostonians*, Verena Tarrant's (torrent and rant) outpourings on the rights of women are silenced by Ransome's marrying her. As Olive Chancellor had earlier foreboded, "there are gentlemen in plenty who would be glad to stop your mouth by kissing you!" (119) The allusion is to Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, where a similarly vociferous Beatrice eventually loses her struggle against matrimonial confinement, and where the heroine of the play, Hero, is celebrated for her generally wordless disposition. Hero's suitor endorses "silence" as the "perfectest heralt of joy" whereas Beatrice's injunction, mobilizing the alternatives for women surveyed in *The Bostonians* and "The Papers," is to "Speak, cousin, or (if you cannot) stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither" (II I 306, 310-11). In play and novel, Marriage is a "reward" for the silence it imposes, and on which it depends. A kindred obfuscation attends the trope of marriage in "The Papers."

James turns up the volume of the press in his story to validate the reactionary moves towards retreat, marriage and the vaguely literary. Howard isolates himself from a world over which he has achieved a certain mastery; Maud's is an escape from failure. The trajectory of the tale, however, is much less direct than this reading allows. The mannish demeanour of Maud — she is described as a "young bachelor" (544) and denies her own sex: "I ain't a woman . . . I wish I were" (562) — is part of the fabric of a text that draws complex threads from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. What James imports from the play is the gender turbulence of its cross-dressing and submerged same-sex desires. Hugh Stevens (*Henry James and Sexuality*) has argued that "The Papers" can be situated in the homosexual panic generated by Oscar Wilde's trial and, specifically, in the

Cleveland Street Scandal of 1889–90, involving liaisons between members of the aristocracy and a number of telegraph boys in a brothel run by Charles Hammond in the West End of London (147).

Bizarre misunderstandings, however, weaken Stevens' reading of the story. Quite wrongly, he argues that Maud and Howard, are anxious to "get themselves mentioned" (148) in a press concerned only with a rival Beadel-Muffet and his doings; overlooked completely is that they are journalists parasitic, themselves, on a politician whose celebrity they have nevertheless fabricated.

At issue is a relationship Stevens and other critics have neglected to examine: that between Howard Bight and the disappearing politician. At one point, Maud proposes that as he was a "rising young journalist," he had "pgged" Beadel-Muffet on, to which the reply is "Dear no, I panted in the rear" (560). Telling indeed is David Howard's view, on which he fails to elaborate, that this story is "brilliantly obscene" (52). The central enigma is what it is that Howard knows about why Beadel-Muffet has fled and, further, what, if anything, Mrs Chorner (who, Maud and Howard speculate, plans to marry Beadel-Muffet if the publicity subsides) has told Maud about the situation. This Mrs Chorner sub-plot, with its stale residues of the circulating libraries, is largely an invention of the journalists, and it has the function of protecting Howard from prurient interrogation. In considering the question of Beadel-Muffet's motive for his absconding and desiring silence, Howard tells Maud that "if it's only bad enough . . . you'll want to save him," adding "I believe you'd really invent a way" (563).

This element of the story entails a collision between two discourses: fiction, with its concealing, defensive tendencies, and a journalism whose imperatives are those of exposure and attack. Mobilized as part of this dialectic are the resources of Shakespeare. From this point on, Maud becomes a writer-manqué, a plotter and plot-anticipator, an observer of and speculator on, in the Shakespearean tradition, the play-within-the play. The popular press, of course, had grown "in content and style, from an old popular literature" (Williams 198), and "a popular literature based on news" was a recent "form of a long series of manifestations, beginning with the folk tale" (Hughes, 269). Only a year after "The Papers," Henry Boynton observed that "the journalistic use of the word 'story'" indicated "the ease of transition" between fact and fiction (13). As a version of the power of the press over its subjects, Maud's and Howard's conjectures transpose into shaping anticipations of the plot, thus blurring the boundary between reality and fantasy. What James bears out, rendering problematic an attack hinging on the binary division between journalism and literature, is David Phillips contention that the "daily newspaper" is, for the writer with literary ambitions, "the first great school of practical experience" (Marcosson 219). Again, the tradition is Shakespeare's as James exploits a reflexive mode so that he can pose questions of realism, textual authority, and the autonomy of characters and people. To Howard, Mrs Chorner "seems a figure of fable" (586) and he concludes that "luckily" they had "invented her" (637). This romance, later grounded in murky realities by Mrs Chorner's own belated

appetite for publicity, conceals the truth; what that is, however, remains obscure. Howard's relief at realising that Mrs Chorner does not know what is "behind" (a word he repeats three-times) supports the view that his relationship with Beadel-Muffet is part of the issue: "Then she hasn't known . . . of what was behind. Behind any game of mine. Behind everything?" (629-30). At the close of the tale, Howard is still more than eager to seize on this fiction as a form of self-protection. "There's always, remember, Mrs. Chorner," offers Maud, to which Howard replies

"Oh yes, Mrs Chorner; we luckily invented her."

"Well, if she drove him to his death — ?"

Bight, with a laugh, caught at it. "Is that it? Did she drive him?"

It pulled her up, and, though she smiled, they stood again, a little, as on their guard (637-8).

At one level, Howard marries Maud as a "dyke" against the press and the publicity projected as pursuing and endangering him once Beadel-Muffet's death is announced; the effect of this development on Howard is at odds with the reader's estimation of a cause the vagaries of which excite terror as James constructs a metropolitan melodrama of the "roused Strand, all equipped . . . with mob and . . . constables:"

He showed to [Maud], at these strange moments, as blood-stained and literally hunted; the yell of the hawkers, repeated and echoing around them, was like a cry for his life (611).

Displaced here is a horror in Frankfurt soon evoked and later revoked, revealed and concealed, a horror in which Howard's blood mingles with Beadel-Muffet's:

It was a fact, none the less, that she had in her eyes, all the while, and too strangely for speech, the vision of the scene in the little German city: the smashed door, the exposed horror, the wondering, insensible group, the English gentleman, in the disordered room, driven to bay among the scattered personal objects that only too floridly announced and emblazoned him (612).

James might well be drawing on *The Warden*: such is the power of Fleet Street, Trollope wrote, that

Some great men . . . retire to rest feared and honoured by all his countrymen . . . he rises in the morning degraded, mean, and miserable; an object of men's scorn, anxious only to retire as quickly as maybe to some German obscurity (169).

Registered in "The Papers," certainly at this juncture, is the monstrous texture of publicity and the press, of the destructive consequences of "new journalism," that James went on to specify in his "The Question of our Speech":

From the mere noisy vision of their ubiquitous page, bristling with rude effigies and images, with vociferous "headings," with letterings, with black eruptions of print, that we seem to measure by feet rather than by inches

that affect as positively as the roar of a myriad faced monster — as the grimaces, the shouts, shrieks and yells, ranging over the whol gamut of ugliness, irrelevance, dissolution, of a mighty maniac who has broken loose and is running amuch through spheres alike of sense and sound. So it is, surely, that our wonderful daily press most vividly reads us the lesson of values, of just proportion and appreciation (54).

Maud, Rosalind-like, is transformed for marriage towards the end, and an early token of this is her feminine attention towards a fugitive Howard now momentarily passive and dependent. As in Shakespeare, same-sex desire is to be sublimated in a marriage predicated on gender confusion. Howard's initial proposal to Maud, which is suspended over much of the story, takes place in Richmond Park, a Forest of Arden brought down to date, and it is there that James explicitly resorts to the intricate codes of *As You Like It*:

He turned a little, to rest on his elbows, and, cycling suburban young man as he was, he might have been, outstretched under his tree, melancholy Jacques looking off into a forest glade, even as sailor-hatted Maud, in — for elegance — a new cotton blouse and a long-limbed angular attitude, might have prosefully suggested the mannish Rosalind (572).

Accentuated in this description — that "mannish," those elbows again, and the "long-limbed angular attitude" — is a phallic erotic economy. Needless to say, this is an aspect that Adeline Tintner does not explore when she remarks merely on the artistic "challenge" of mapping one of Shakespeare's "most enchanting fantasies" on to the "world of London journalism" (170). The central question is surely that of why James, in re-writing the plot, substitutes the melancholic Jacques, the only principal character to avoid one of the four marriages that end *As You Like It*, for Orlando.

This substitution is far from capricious, its being reinforced by other adoptions, gratuitous if not pursued, of his character traits: "with the life we lead and the age we live in, there's *always* something the matter with me — there can't help being: some rage, some disgust, some fresh amazement" (597). That "age we live in" can be read as a reference to Jacques much circulated soliloquy on the "seven ages of man:"

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts (II I 140-143).

If "exits and entrances" are allowed their sexual range, and the stage its conventional associations with prostitution, these lines not only relate to the malleability of self-produced personalities and celebrities in an age of publicity, but act as a gloss ("And one man in his time plays many parts") on the fluid nature of sexual boundaries and desires. Aggregated, too, are fiction, journalism, the production of personal identity, acting, and all forms of sexual activity as areas of performance. Jacques escapes from the fecundity of heterosexual marriage in the forest to the "religious life" recently adopted by the Duke in place of his "pompous

court" (V iv 180-1). "Melancholia" is the stock form of expression for unrequited, unrealizable, male same-sex desire in Shakespeare; Antonio ("In sooth, I know not why I am so sad;" I i 1) and his love for Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice*, together with many of the sonnets addressed to men, are classic examples of this. Against the background of his affair with Beadel-Muffet, the over-laying of Jacques identity heightens Howard's predicament in a heterosexual world and, obliquely, challenges the logic of the prospective marriage with which the story ends.

Publicity, for James and the new journalism of his time, was ever consanguineous with sex; and the act of "interviewing" – with its unveiling discourses, or intercourses – had sexual connotations, as exhibited in Morton Marshall's designs on Maud. A selection of headlines from the Joseph Pulitzer's *New York Herald* in the 1890's (Jones 415) demonstrates the extent to which the press, scandal, and sex were bedfellows, "thriving," in ways unintended, perhaps when Walter Bagehot coined the phrase, "on convulsions" (71):

All For a Woman's Love
Love and Cold Poison
A Bride but Not a Wife
Victims of his Passion
Little Lotte's Lovers

That James was an avid reader of such papers is confirmed by his use of the reports of divorce proceedings in *What Maisie Knew*, a text also much taken up with the relationship between quasi-journalistic observation and (carnal) knowledge. In his Shakespearean recursions, James attempted imaginatively to reach an idealized, pre-industrial world that knew little of publicity and the press; and Maud-Rosamond invokes an age before the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act when audiences could revel in the over-determined sexuality of the character of a woman, Rosamond, played by a boy concealing himself as a man in order to woo Orlando, a man.

There has been much speculation about Henry James's sexual orientation, but the issue is not just sex but that of its metaphorical extensions. New Journalism, especially in its American varieties, flourished on scandal. Scandal and homosexuality were synonymous at the turn of the century and the position of "The Papers" within that environment, then, is logical enough. James's aesthetic commitment was to a narrative engagement with the limits of utterance, the function of secrecy, silence, and absence, and the imperatives of all forms of delay. Whereas William James was constantly urging his brother to "say it out for God's sake . . . and have done with it," Henry's mode was ever that expressed in a letter to Hugh Walpole: "How can you say I do anything so foul and abject as to 'state'? (2:245)" For James, sex was cognate with a post-lapsarian realm of plenitude and revelation, a world of naked truth and comfortless, even death-delivering, knowledge. The "exposed horror" (612) of "The Papers" can be related to the apocalyptic "chaos" encountered by a Maisie (*What Maisie Knew*) whose narrator resorts to *King Lear* for its articulation: "There was literally an instant in which Maisie fully saw – saw madness and desolation, saw ruin and darkness

and death" (187). Deferral, postponement, and the preservation of secrecy, the prophylaxis of foreplay, are the means by which James struggles to prevent the horror of moments like this in *The Wings of the Dove*: "There it was now, all of it, at last, and this at least there was no postponing" (379).

The press was a threat to James's ontology, one he also located in the broader domains of mass culture and commercial popularity. But James's equivocations on all these fronts are abundantly manifest. He craved the popularity he condemned, coveting yet scorning a wider readership; and there is evidence that his private life and sexual proclivities were subject to a similar competition. Peter Conn's belief that "The Papers" images James's direct "dissent from the consciousness of the new century" is much too simplistic in that it ignores the corresponding energy which he also invested in it (22). These cross-currents are typified in Maud. She is attracted by and yet recoils from Howard's journalistic mastery and, at the tale's conclusion, they both renounce the papers for a literary life of a kind. The material of their art, however, has been gathered in a Fleet Street which is also the embryo of James's story, notwithstanding the ostensible condemnation of all it represents. The aesthetic fissure of James's entire *corpus* can be detected in the conflict between the "sinuosities and convolutions" of style, for which one contemporary reviewer berated "The Papers" (Anonymous 9), and the journalistic world on which it preys. Much of the vigour of James's tale arises from its acknowledgement of synergies in the deep structure of journalism and fiction; their common anchorage, that is, in sensation, anecdotal experience, and relentless, voyeuristic, observation. James's disavowal of the press, like Beadel-Muffet's efforts to silence it by absenting himself, is acutely disingenuous.

By the time of James's "The Papers," the commodification of Shakespeare, especially in America, indeed his mass production, was well under way. "The Birthplace," another story in *The Better Sort*, trades in the ironies involved in high culture's confrontation with the democratic appropriation of Shakespeare. These ironies also inform "The Papers" in that James, in an authentic Shakespearean move, derives and adapts a plot from *As You Like It* as an element of his critique of that mass culture to which Shakespeare has now become subject. Beadel-Muffet's publicity stunt, with its specious manipulation of life and death, leaves Maud and Howard abject in the consciousness of his ruling, "immortal, the night" (636). Strychacz has maintained that in "The Papers" "publicity assumes the character of an autotelic force, functioning beyond the control of individual agents" (141), but this is to ignore the fact that finally, Beadel-Muffet, and in ways which have become only too familiar in the later twentieth-century, has succeeded in diverting politics into the stage-usiness of stars and celebrities. "No one governs," Joseph Heller has said, "everyone performs" (Schickel 18).

The distraction of news was the essential means by which Beadel-Muffet rigged his reputation. With Shakespeare, similarly, as he was converted (quite literally) into Hollywood material, the mass-fabrication of a personality drew the teeth of his textual engagements with gender, politics, and the impoverishing illusions of life. "The journalist," Stead had

argued, “may regard himself as but the keeper of a peep-show,” but his is “the duty of a watchman” (663-4). In “The Papers,” the watchman” has become a chronically rabid “watchdog” (586), and there is much talk of the need to “muzzle” it (591). Effectively, that muzzling is performed by Beadel-Muffet: he presides over an operation whereby investigation, revelation, and analysis mutate into the spectacle of vacuous sensationalism.

James’s only essay on Shakespeare is his late introduction (1907) to *The Tempest*. Written only four years after “The Papers,” the essay reveals a continuing fixation on the relationship between the private and the public, and the artist and his work, as James vacillates between condemning an impulse to intrude nevertheless found to be irresistible. The parameters are those of “The Papers” as James, if inadvertently, discloses aspects of his own reportorial inclinations. The inaccessibility of a Shakespeare thought of as being the very archetype of impersonality is at the centre of the essay; nevertheless, media-like, it gives siege to the bard.

James is mesmerized by the extent to which this “artist,” this “monster and magician of a thousand masks” conceals the man: “the man everywhere, in Shakespeare’s work, is effectually locked up and imprisoned in the artist” (453). For one critic whom James had recently been reading (Halliwell-Phillips), Shakespeare the man — whom our little slateful of gathered and numbered items, heaven knows, does amply account for, since there is nothing in him to explain” — sits “in front of the tapestry” of his plays “while the undetermined figure, on the other hand . . . the figure who supremely interests us, remains as unseen of us as our Ariel, on the enchanted island, remains of the bewildered visitors” (458). Halliwell-Phillips is content with a little-known-man, and a poet everywhere dispersed in his works. James’s fascination, journalistic in its proportions, and from which he cannot escape, is with the relation between the two, given the undeniable power of the latter. What controls the structure of James’s argument is an opposition between a residual idealism, whose legacy is the leaving of the poet in his mysterious peace, and a modern, papery interest in the man. On the idealist side, he understands the mechanisms whereby Shakespeare’s “career” is construed as a “transcendent adventure . . . of the mind of man,” and he nervously welcomes the wonder thereby released. But he also anticipates and fears the “criticism of the future:”

The figured tapestry, the long arras that hides him, is always there, with its immensity of surface and its proportionate underside. May it not then be but a question, for the fulness of time, of the finer weapon, the sharper point, the stronger arm, the more extended lunge? (462)

Henry James’s novels and tales are heavily inflected with erotic anxieties about the forms of exposure which surface in “The Papers.” Simultaneously, James dreaded and yearned for the disclosures of bio-criticism; hence his approach to Shakespeare in this essay; and hence, too, a Beadel-Muffet trapped in the interstices of presence and absence, publicity and privacy, and even life and death.

Works cited

- Anon. Review of "The Papers." *Springfield (Mass.) Republican*. March 15, 1903.
- Braudy, Leo. *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Blair, Sara. *Henry James and the Writing of Race and Nation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Boynton, Henry Walcott. *Journalism and Literature and Other Essays*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904.
- Howard, David. "Henry James and 'The Papers'" *Henry James: Fiction as History*. Ed Ian F. A. Bell. London: Vision, 1984.
- Gale, Robert L. *Plots and Characters in the Fiction of Henry James*. Boston: MIT Press, 1972.
- Hughes, Helen McGill. "News and the Human Interest Story." *Contributions to Urban Sociology*. Eds. E. W. Burgess and D. J. Brogue. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1964.
- James, Henry. *The Better Sort*. London: Methuen and Co., 1903.
- *The Bostonians*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1886.
- *Complete Stories*. New York: Library of America, 1997.
- "Flickerbridge." *Complete Stories*. 4:421-440.
- "The Future of the Novel" (1899). *The House of Fiction*: 48-59.
- Henry James to Hugh Walpole. May 19, 1912. *The Letters of Henry James* 2:245.
- *The House of Fiction: Essays on the Novel by Henry James*. Ed. Leon Edel. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957.
- "Introduction" to *The Tempest. Americans on Shakespeare, 1776-1914*. Ed. Peter Rawlings: 449-462.
- *The Letters of Henry James*. 2 vols. Ed. Percy Lubbock. London: Macmillan and Co., 1920.
- *The Notebooks of Henry James*. Ed. F.O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1947.
- "The Papers" (1903). *Complete Stories*. 4: 542-638.
- "The Private Life" (1892). *The Private Life*. London: James R. Osgood, McIlvaine and Co., 1893.
- *The Portrait of a Lady*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1881.
- "The Question of our Speech" (1905). *Henry James on Culture*. Ed. Pierre A. Walker: 42-57.
- *The Reverberator*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1888.
- *The Sacred Fount*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901.
- *What Maisie Knew*. London: William Heinemann, 1897.
- *The Wings of the Dove* (1902). Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965.
- Jones, Robert W. *Journalism in the United States*. New York: Dutton, 1947.

- Rawlings, Peter. Ed. *Americans on Shakespeare, 1776–1914*. New York and London: Ashgate, 1999.
- Schickel, Richard. *Common Fame: The Culture of Celebrity*. London: Michael Joseph, 1985.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.
- Stead, W. T. “The Future of Journalism.” *Contemporary Review* 49 (1886): 663–679.
- “Government by Journalism.” *Contemporary Review* 49 (1886): 653–662.
- Stevens, Hugh. *Henry James and Sexuality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Trollope, Anthony. *The Warden* (1855). London: George G. Harrap and Co., 1925.
- Walker, Pierre A. *Henry James on Culture: Collected Essays on Politics and the American Scene*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.