

The Museum, the Flâneur, and the Book: The Exhibitionary

Complex in the Work of Henry James

by

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ABSTRACT

The Victorian era was the age of museum development in the United States. In the wake of these institutions, another important figure of the nineteenth century emerged—the flâneur. The flâneur represents the city, and provided new mechanisms of seeing to the public. The flâneur taught citizens how to gaze with a panoptic eye. The increasing importance of cultural institutions contributed to a new means of presenting power and interacting with the viewing public. Tony Bennett's exhibitionary complex theory, argues that nineteenth-century museums were institutions of power that educated, civilized, and through surveillance, encourage self-regulation of crowds. The flâneur's presence in the nineteenth century informed the public about modes of seeing and self-regulation—which in turn helped establish Bennett's theory inside the museum. The popular writing and literature of the time provides an opportunity to examine the extent of the exhibitionary complex and the flâneur. One of the most prominent nineteenth-century authors, Henry James, not only utilizes museums in his work, but he often uses them in just the manner Bennett puts forth in his theory. This is significant because the ideas about museums in James's work shaped the minds of an expanding

literary public in the United States, and further educated, civilized, and regulated readers. James also represents the flâneur in his writing, which speaks to broader cultural implications of the both exhibitionary complex on the outside world, and the effects of broader cultural influences on the museum. Beyond the impact of James's work, in the late nineteenth century American culture increasingly became centered around the printed word. The central position of books in American culture at the end of the nineteenth century allowed books and libraries to appropriate the exhibitionary complex and become tools of power in their own right. The book and the library relate to the museum as part of a larger cultural environment, which emerged as a result of modernity and a response to the ever-changing nineteenth-century world.

DEDICATION

To my parents—for their life-long encouragement and for teaching me to give nothing less than my best.

To my husband—for his unfailing support and humor.

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INTRODUCTION:

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the expansion of cultural institutions in Western society in the form of museums, fairs, expositions, emerging markets, and increased literacy. Joel Orosz, in his book *Curators and Culture: The Museum Movement in America, 1740–1870*, credits “a small, loosely connected group of men” for pioneering the early era of museums in the United States. Orosz argues that on the whole, the history of museums in the United States remains widely misrepresented and takes aim at the notion that early museums focused on entertainment. He refutes the two common criticisms of early American museums, which he calls the “professional criticism” and the “democratic criticism.”¹

The professional criticism asserts that prior to 1870, museums in the United States “consisted of spectacular or bizarre objects” void of any educational merit, simply in place for public enjoyment.² Orosz disputes this charge by saying that there were numerous museums prior to 1870 with scholarly aims

¹ Joel J. Orosz, *Curators and Culture: the Museum Movement in America, 1740–1870*, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1990), 1.

² *Ibid.*, 1–2.

and exhibitions (like the Peale Museum and the Colombian Museum).³ The democratic criticism accuses museums of operating as institutions “run by the elite for the elite” prior to the 1870s. However, Orosz points out that American museums have roots in egalitarian, democratic culture, and met the needs of the public and scholars alike, creating institutions aimed at both education and research, and in the process satisfying elites and the public. This synthesis of education and research, according to Orosz, “determined the form of American museums ever since.”⁴

Larry Levine, in his book *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* offers evidence of this synthesis, arguing that in the first half of the nineteenth century, American museums were comprised of collections of both curiosities and art. For example, the Charles Wilson Peale’s museum, opened in 1786 in Philadelphia, represented a “serious museum” at the time, but “was not above publicizing his new Mammoth Room by dressing his handyman in American Indian garb and parading him through the streets on a white horse

³ Ibid., 256.

⁴ Ibid.

preceded by a trumpeter.”⁵ Peale’s museum featured a variety of stuffed and mounted wildlife, “a collection of minerals, fossils, and shells, ethnographic exhibits focusing especially on the clothing and utensils of Northern American Indians,” portraits of a variety of famous individuals, both political and scientific, live animals, a botanical exhibit, “electrical and technological equipment including a model of a perpetual-motion machine, and such curiosities as a mounted five-legged, double-tailed cow giving milk to a two-headed calf.”⁶

Peale’s collection was typical of the era. The Columbian Museum, opened in 1791 (under a different name), showcased wax figures of politicians and a large collection of paintings, combined with live animals.⁷ Early in the nineteenth century the museum added sculpture and miniature painting collections. Museums like Peale’s and the Columbian Museum spread across America, in cities like Syracuse, Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati, south to Lexington and west to St. Louis. These museums offered diverse permanent exhibits, as well as opportunities to

⁵ Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 147.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 147–9.

experience culture outside the exhibit hall, through lecture series, “sensational scientific demonstrations, and enticing performances of music and drama such as Signor Hellene, the one-man band, who appeared in Peale’s museum simultaneous playing the viola, Turkish cymbals, tenor drum, Pandean pipes, and Chinese balls.”⁸

Levine points out that Boston’s Gallery of Fine Arts exhibited a hundred and eleven engravings by Hogarth, and followed up a year later with a performance by “two dwarfs called ‘The Lilliputian Songsters,’ who sang tunes ‘modern, fashionable, and patriotic’ and were worth seeing because of ‘their intelligence and genteel deportment.’”⁹ In other words, the American museum and its programs at the start of the nineteenth century was an eclectic mix of art, natural history, and curio.

As the century progressed, a shift from mingling art and curiosity, to a focus on art as a more valuable cultural product took place.¹⁰ This shift resulted in failures of museums like Peale’s, that offered art and curiosity at once. The art moved

⁸ Ibid., 149.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

into a special space, isolated from curiosity—but this did not mark the end of the curiosity museum. While the two remained separated, the curiosity museum continued to enjoy success in the United States. For example, P. T. Barnum’s second American Museum in New York City enjoyed almost four million visitors in the two and a half years it was open (before fire destroyed the building). By proportion, his museum’s ticket sales exceeded those of Disneyland when comparing population figures from Barnum’s era to the 1960s and 1970s.¹¹

According to Levine, fear of the mob and desire to maintain social order was a driving force of the separation of art and curio. Interestingly, Levine argues that religious leaders and religious language played a role in the broad desire to use culture to control the masses, citing Reverend Frederick W. Sawyer’s writing in 1860, “If we want to drive far from us, vice and crime—if we want to outbid the wine-cup and the gaming-table, we must adorn. . . . We must adorn our parks and gardens; adorn our churches and public edifices. We must have

¹¹ Louise L. Stevenson, *The Victorian Homefront: American Thought and Culture, 1860–1880* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 50.

something to claim the attention, to mould the taste, to cultivate.'" ¹²

Levine argues that these changes in attitude to art as a tool to cultivate the public taste appeared in museums as well. ¹³ To illustrate, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, established by the Massachusetts legislature in 1870, was fully open to the public by 1876. The original goal of the museum was, typical to the era, to be a popular museum, open to the public, free of charge, as often as possible. The museum's collection was "a combination of art and artifact, originals and reproductions." This collection was appropriate for the museum's goal of "collecting material for the education of a nation in art.'" ¹⁴ Even the mayor of Boston called the museum "the crown of our educational system" and hoped it would be frequented by "all classes of people.'" ¹⁵ As the twentieth century dawned, the museum shifted to displaying things like original Greek sculpture and works of art. Struggles within the museum occurred, and a

¹² Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 150.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 152.

division of goals emerged—to educate or display beautiful pieces? Ultimately, in this case, aesthetics beat education. Instead of teaching visitors about different types of art, the museum's focus turned to building a collection of important works to display—the idea being that the public would learn taste by observing these works. The museum, which previously enjoyed “large and diverse crowds” on free admission Sundays, changed locations and became a less public institution, focused on displaying fine pieces rather than overtly attempting to educate the public.¹⁶ The predicament of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts offers important context about the workings of museums in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The creation of the Smithsonian Institution in 1846 provides another example of the struggle concerning the edification of the visitor. The first secretary of the institution, Joseph Henry, wanted the Smithsonian's purpose to be “not education, but creation, its goal was not merely to spread knowledge but to add to it.”¹⁷ Henry tried to resist making the Smithsonian a museum, gallery, or library during his tenure.

¹⁶ Ibid., 153–4.

¹⁷ Ibid., 156.

However, after he died in 1878, the Smithsonian began forming into the national institution we know today.¹⁸

As American museums shifted from mingling curiosity and art, the focus in the mid-nineteenth century moved to conscious efforts aimed at the education of the public. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as the aforementioned struggles within museums about educating the public versus presenting objects designed to develop good taste in the public emerged, a bifurcation of culture occurred simultaneously with expanding public visitation of museums. In this environment of high culture and low culture's separation, distinctions between classes became more evident. The aforementioned efforts to allow public access to museums was an attempt to civilize the common man, through exposure to good taste. This atmosphere of cultural bifurcation and emerging modernity generated an environment in which the museum took on the role described in Bennett's exhibitionary complex.¹⁹

Tony Bennett's exhibitionary complex theory, building on Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*,

¹⁸ Ibid., 157.

¹⁹ Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," in *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995), 59.

argues that nineteenth-century museums acted as a machine, engaging in a dialogue, which manifested power to the public. The exhibitionary complex was a modern process that served to educate, civilize, and through surveillance, encourage self-regulation of crowds. This important piece provides the basis for examining the nineteenth-century museum.

The Victorian era was the age of institutions in the United States. Cities large and small established libraries and parks in the nineteenth century. These institutions formed the center of local communities, and “set long-lasting precedents for public institutions.”²⁰ In the wake of these institutions, another important figure of the nineteenth century emerged—the flâneur. The flâneur is an individual who wanders around the modern city, taking in the sites, chronicling the whole of everyday life from a detached vantage point. Analyzed by Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin, the flâneur represents new ways of seeing the city. The flâneur taught citizens how to gaze with a panoptic eye.²¹ His presence in the nineteenth century informed the public about modes of seeing and self-regulation—which in turn

²⁰ Stevenson, *The Victorian Homefront*, 49.

²¹ Griselda Pollock, *Encounters in the Feminist Museum: Time, Space, and the Archive* (London: Routledge, 2007), 151.

helped establish the procedures of Bennett's theory inside the museum.

Diaries, journals, and documents from the era provide historians with a view of Bennett's theory in action. However, the popular writing and literature of the time provides a particularly rich source of material to examine the extent of the exhibitionary complex and the flâneur. One of the most prominent nineteenth-century authors, Henry James, not only utilizes museums in his work, but he often uses them in just the manner Bennett puts forth in his theory. This is important because ideas about museums, in James's work, shaped the minds of an expanding literary public in the United States and further educated, civilized, and regulated his readers. James also represents the flâneur in his writing, which speaks to broader cultural implications of the both exhibitionary complex on the outside world, and the effects of larger cultural movements on the museum.

This study will separate the exhibitionary complex into three parts: surveillance, education, and the civilizing process, and discuss the occurrence and importance of these three in the work of James, followed by an analysis of James's use of the figure of the flâneur.

In the late nineteenth century American culture increasingly became centered around the printed word. The central position of books in American culture at the end of the nineteenth century allowed books and libraries to appropriate the exhibitionary complex and become tools of power in their own right. The final section of this work addresses the ways in which the book and the library relate to the museum and the exhibitionary complex as part of a larger cultural environment, which emerged as a result of modernity and a response to the ever-changing nineteenth-century world.

Chapter 1: THE EXHIBITIONARY COMPLEX

Tony Bennett's chapter, *The Exhibitionary Complex*, in his book *The Birth of the Museum*, is widely regarded as the seminal work on the nineteenth-century museum. Bennett uses Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, as a basis for understanding the role and impact of the nineteenth century museum (including art, natural history, and science museums, exhibitions, arcades, dioramas and panoramas, as well as department stores).²²

Foucault suggested that as punishment became institutionalized and isolated in prisons (versus public executions and other public displays of punishment), other forms of power and knowledge became institutionalized in a variety of forms, including schools, hospitals, and asylums.²³

Bennett argues that Foucault neglected another side of this process—as forms of punishment were removed from public display, museums moved displays, exhibits, and objects from the private setting and into the public view, bringing new forms of power and knowledge with them.²⁴ He argues that

²² Bennett, Tony, "The Exhibitionary Complex," in *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995), 59.

²³ *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

“Institutions, then, not of confinement but of exhibition,” emerged, “forming a complex of disciplinary and power relations.”²⁵ The exhibitionary complex marked a new form of displaying a new type of power—one that engages with the public through pleasure—which emerged from the movement of bodies and objects from private display to public display.²⁶ In this new public role, these items “through the representations to which they were subjected,” emerged as “vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power (but of a different type) throughout society.”²⁷

Bennett argues that the emergence of museums parallels the development of prisons; in other words, Foucault’s “carceral archipelago” and the exhibitionary complex emerged at roughly the same time. This is where the similarities end between the two types of power, however, as Foucault’s “carceral archipelago” imposed power upon individuals through punishment, while the exhibitionary complex produced a self-administered disciplinary system through the civilizing pleasures

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 60–1.

²⁷ Ibid., 60–1.

of the exhibition.²⁸ Bennett states that though they are parallel, they “run in opposing directions.”²⁹

Bennett’s take on the development of the modern museum argues that the visitor is transformed into a self-regulating citizen through the experience of the institution itself, in a process of internalizing the norms and values of the museum setting. The exhibition offered “object lessons in power” to the visitor. The exhibitionary complex employed new techniques, or technologies, in order to maintain order in the public. Through exhibition, order becomes an issue “of culture—a question of winning hearts and minds as well as the disciplining and training of bodies.”³⁰ Instead of exposing the public to demonstrations of power and discipline, the museum by the acts of organizing, selecting, and arranging exhibits also expressed power and discipline.

This notion of power is central to Bennett’s exhibitionary complex. Institutions in the exhibitionary complex provided knowledge and experience to the public, allowing them to self-

²⁸ Ibid., 61.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 62–3.

regulate, “to become, in seeing themselves from the side of power, both the subjects and objects of knowledge, knowing power and what power knows, and known themselves as (ideally) known by power, interiorizing its gaze as a principle of self-surveillance and, hence, self-regulation.”³¹ This allowed people “to identify with power,” placing the visitor on the same plane as power, providing a spot inside the mechanism of power.³² The museum afforded a chance for the viewing public to develop their own self-regulation, their own gaze, their own way of seeing—this, combined with the ability to be the “subjects, rather than the objects of knowledge,” created a civilized public.³³

Expanded Visitorship:

The effects of the exhibitionary complex contributed to and benefitted from the public’s increasing ability to visit museums during the nineteenth century. For instance, Britain had fifty public museums in 1860, and expanded to two hundred by

³¹ Ibid., 62–3.

³² Ibid., 67.

³³ Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 63.

1900.³⁴ This explosion of public museums allowed for the effects of the exhibitionary complex on the public to be far-reaching.

Not only did the number of museums expand during this period, but museums invited a wider audience to attend. At its start the British Museum had extremely limited and selective visitation. Concerned with the possibility that the general public would cause problems if allowed to enter in large numbers (the common lament of large cities in response to the changes brought on by modernity), the museum only admitted visitors in groups of fifteen and held no public days. Furthermore, the museum required individuals to submit credentials before admission.³⁵ As museums embraced the notion of public education, new museums with a broader visitorship emerged, like the South Kensington Museum in Britain. This museum emerged as a public museum, controlled by the state, under the direction of the Board of Education. The South Kensington Museum “was officially dedicated to the service of an extended and undifferentiated public with opening hours and an admissions policy designed to maximize its accessibility to the

³⁴ Ibid., 72.

³⁵ Ibid., 70.

working classes."³⁶ The museum saw incredible response from the public, with over fifteen million visitors between the years of 1857 and 1883. Of those, 6.5 million visited during the evening hours, when working class individuals came home from their jobs.³⁷ The South Kensington Museum represents the new museum of the mid-to late-nineteenth century, open up for public viewing, and "conceived as an instrument of public education."³⁸

Larry Levine offers corresponding examples of expanding visitorship in the United States. As mentioned in the introduction, The Boston Museum of Fine Arts, established by the Massachusetts legislature in 1870, was fully open to the public by 1876. The goal of the museum originally was to be a popular museum, open to the public, free of charge, as often as possible. Though the museum's goals changed over time, the desire of the Massachusetts government to establish a public museum shows the exhibitionary complex at work in the United States. The fact that the museum moved locations and offered fewer free days

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 71.

diminishes the potential for the exhibitionary complex only in numbers—the more public days, the higher number of individuals involved in the process.³⁹ However, it is important to note that because the goals of the institution no longer included overtly educating the public, this does not mean the education component of the exhibitionary complex changes. The self-regulating, educating, and civilizing process occurs apart from the expressed goals of the museum. It is the museum's control of bodies and internalizing the norms of the institution and modes of seeing that implicitly enacts changes in visitors.

As museums and other institutions opened their doors to the public, concerns over behavior in cultural institutions and spaces appeared rife in the second half of the nineteenth century. For example, in 1891 the Metropolitan Museum of Art, opening its doors to the public for the first time on Sunday afternoons, "braced itself to greet a crowd of twelve thousand that was younger, more working class in its composition, and less used to the decorum of art museums than the Metropolitan's usual run of visitors."⁴⁰ Even Central Park was a place of

³⁹ Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 151.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 182.

concern—Superintendent Frederick Law Olmsted expressed complaints about people taking flowers and plants, letting animals graze in the park, and gather firewood.⁴¹ Joseph Henry complained in 1859 that certain individuals attending the Smithsonian's lecture series did so "as a mere pastime, or assemble in the lecture room as a convenient place of resort, and by their whispering annoy those who sit near them."⁴²

Regulating the audience became a goal of many public institutions. Levine states that "the arbiter of culture turned their attention to establishing appropriate means of receiving culture. The authority that they first established over theatres, actors, orchestras, musicians, art museums, they now extended to the audience. Their general success in disciplining and training audiences constitutes one of those cultural transformations that have been almost totally ignored by historians."⁴³

The Metropolitan Museum of Art's public days, originally feared by the museum's directors, proved to be a successful endeavor. To prepare for the common man, the museum banned

⁴¹ Ibid., 183.

⁴² Ibid., 184.

⁴³ Ibid., 184.

cameras, and umbrellas and canes were checked at the door, for fear of damage to pieces of art.⁴⁴ Mark Twain ridiculed these precautions, and a famous anecdote has it that during a visit to the museum, he was requested to leave his cane in the cloakroom, to which he responded: “Leave my cane! Leave my cane! Then how do you expect me to poke holes through the oil paintings?”⁴⁵ The entire staff, including the curators and the director, was in the galleries every Sunday to answer questions and keep order. “By the close of its first year of Sunday attendance, the Metropolitan Museum of Art reported that Sunday visitors, who numbered some 30 percent of all visitors, had, through a rigorous policy of protection and education, become ‘respectable, law-abiding, and intelligent.’”⁴⁶

The expansion of museums and visitorship in the nineteenth century served to increase the influence and impact of the exhibitionary complex. In turn, the goals of the complex influenced the viewing public. In the words of Bennett, the exhibitionary complex allowed for “the transfer of significant

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 185.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 185.

quantities of cultural and scientific property from private into public ownership where they were housed within institutions administered by the state for the benefit of an extended general public."⁴⁷ Through educating, encouraging self-regulation, and sharing the public's role in power structures, the civilized individual remained the outcome of these institutions.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 73.

Chapter 2: EXHIBITION AND THE WORK OF HENRY JAMES

Bennett's work provides a key framework for analyzing and examining the nineteenth-century museum. It stands as the preeminent work on the formation and role of the nineteenth-century museum. However, in recent years the exhibitionary complex has started to move beyond the nineteenth century museum realm. In the last ten years, the theory has been examined in a variety of contexts, from Phoenix's Heard Museum, to early twentieth century city planning.⁴⁸ One area that requires further exploration, is the presence of the exhibitionary complex in nineteenth-century literature. Elizabeth Festa, in her dissertation "Precious Specimens: Public Museums, Popular Culture, and American Literary Modernism," explores the intersection between literature and modernity, utilizing exhibition as a literary tool. This work does not employ the exhibitionary complex as a framework, but examines specific types of museums and modes of display in the work of American

⁴⁸ Gregg Malkoff, "The Heard Museum and the Exhibitionary Complex" (Master's thesis, Arizona State University, 2002) and Marco Amati and Robert Freestone, "The Exhibitionary Complex and Early Twentieth Century Town Planning," Paper Presented at the IPHS Conference, Istanbul, Turkey, July 2010.

authors.⁴⁹ Barbara Black's excellent book, *On Exhibit: Victorians and Their Museums*, discusses the meeting place of literature and the museum, "in order to illuminate nineteenth century British culture and the texts that generated it, and in turn, were generated by it."⁵⁰ Apart from these two works, much discussion has not emerged on the congruence of the exhibitionary complex and nineteenth-century literature.

The papers, diaries, and primary sources from museums and individuals alive during the transformative nineteenth century provide a means of proving Bennett's theory and its effectiveness in characterizing museums of the era. However, the novels, short stories, and travel writing of authors in the second half of the nineteenth century provide a rich source material and legitimate opportunity to examine museums and apply Bennett's theories. These works provide "a distinctive venue for archiving culture."⁵¹

⁴⁹ Elizabeth A. Festa, "Precious Specimens: Public Museums, Popular Culture, and American Literary Modernism," (PhD Diss., Vanderbilt University, December 2007), ProQuest (AAT 3312206), xiv.

⁵⁰ Barbara J. Black, *On Exhibit: Victorians and their Museums*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 4.

⁵¹ Festa, "Precious Specimens," xiv.

The work of the American author Henry James presents a deluge of preserved cultural information from the nineteenth century, particularly focusing on museums. Called “the most heavily professionalized of post-Civil War writers” in the United States, Henry James left behind a massive catalogue of work, produced in the second half of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth.⁵²

Aside from the breadth of James’s work, he remains a heavily influential author today. James’s novels, stories, and essays continue to be published today (notably by the Library of America). To date, at least one hundred and twenty-five film and television adaptations of his pieces exist.⁵³ His work addresses important issues about power, wealth, class, and nationalism. James also provides insight into human thought, gender, and human relationships.⁵⁴

⁵² Richard H. Brodhead, *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth Century America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 116.

⁵³ Jay Parini, “The Afterlife of Henry James,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 6, 2011, accessed March 22, 2011, http://chronicle.com/article/The-Afterlife-of-Henry-James/126556/?sid=cr&utm_source=cr&utm_medium=en.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Many authors have studied James's work, in a variety of ways. The majority of this work is literary criticism, biography, and his role in the professionalization of the author. However, Adeline R. Tintner's book, *The Museum World of Henry James* examines similar material as this study, but with a very different framework. Tintner's book primarily consists of a discussion of the specific works of art present in James's work, and provides literary criticism as to their uses and relationships to characters. Her work offers excellent information on where to look for the exhibitionary complex within James's work, but does not address museums in relation to Bennett's work.⁵⁵ Little work has been done on the presence of the exhibitionary complex and nineteenth century literature.

Another of Tintner's books, *Henry James's Legacy: The Afterlife of His Figure and Fiction* notes the enduring impact of James on modern society. She argues that there is no "sign that James is releasing his grip on the popular imagination." In fact, Tintner points out that even today, James's visual impact can be seen on Barnes and Noble's shopping bags and advertisements for Banana Republic. James's words are used to sell cars, and his

⁵⁵ Adeline R. Tintner, *The Museum World of Henry James*, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986).

image appears on the cover of the *New York Times Book Review* reprint of his travel writing (the caricaturing of James dates all the way back to the start of the twentieth century). In present day, the image of James's face still holds weight and influence over individuals.⁵⁶

His own contemporaries paid homage to James as well, and Tintner states that in these tributes mark the most obvious traces of his legacy. Ernest Dowson, Joseph Conrad, and Thomas Hardy each rewrote pieces by James.⁵⁷ James's impact led to the emergence of the "Jamesian novel," a genre which reached the height of its prevalence before and after the Second World War.⁵⁸ James also spawned the "Jamesian short story," present as recently as 1997, according to Tintner.⁵⁹ Tintner also argues that James "invented," or "at least perfected," the international

⁵⁶ Adeline Tintner, *Henry James's Legacy: The Afterlife of His Figure and Fiction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), 2–4.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 433.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 435.

novel, a genre which continues to appear in American and British literature.⁶⁰

The breadth and lasting impact of his work makes James a natural choice for examining the ways in which individuals interacted with nineteenth century institutions. However, James's affiliation with the *Atlantic* magazine makes the connection between Bennett and James clear. James began publishing in the *Atlantic* in 1865, and almost all of his novels appeared in the magazine as serials.⁶¹ The magazine "supplied the chief base for the new high-literary professional writer who emerged in the United States after the Civil War."⁶² The *Atlantic* stood in opposition to dime novels and much of the "sentimental" fiction of the time, calling for "art and learning as the proper route to moral salvation and the achievement of a more refined sensibility."⁶³ James's loyal association with the

⁶⁰ Ibid., 437.

⁶¹ Ibid., 80.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Janice A. Radway, "Learned and Literary Print Cultures in an Age of Professionalization and Diversification," in *A History of the Book in America, Volume IV, Print in motion: The expansion of publishing and reading in the United States, 1880-1940*, ed. Carl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 213.

magazine aligns him with high-literature and affiliated James with the magazine's core values, which echo Bennett's exhibitionary complex.

The *Atlantic's* goal of using art to produce better individuals is evident in James's writing on literature as well. James himself laments, "The sort of taste that used to be called 'good' has nothing to do with the matter: we are so demonstrably in presence of millions for whom taste is but an obscure, confused, immediate instinct."⁶⁴ James's concerns about the taste of the masses echoes the role of the nineteenth-century museum: to step in and civilize the public by educating them in taste and behavior. James's work provides a natural source for examining Bennett's theories in the literature of the nineteenth century.

Apart from James's lasting influence on the literary world, the incredible breadth of his work, and his associations with the *Atlantic*, the prevalence of key terms associated with the exhibitionary complex in his work provide further justification for a study of the role of museums in James's catalogue. While

⁶⁴ Henry James, *Literary Criticism, Volume I: Essays on Literature, American Writers, English Writers*, ed. Leon Edel (New York: Library of America, 1984), 101.

determining his literary impact and professional associations required more standard research methods, assessing the suitability of James's work with regards to these key terms required searching a large sample of James's writing. A pioneer in the digital history field, Dan Cohen's work offered a framework for completing this task. As part of a grant from Google, Cohen utilized Google Books to perform text mining (looking for key words within a piece or large sample) on Victorian literature. Employing Google's vast library of sources, Cohen searched for terms like revolution and science, in order to chart trends throughout the Victorian era.⁶⁵

Following Cohen's model, the most effective means of text mining James's work was a search of *The Complete Works of Henry James*, published for the Amazon Kindle.⁶⁶ This collection, comprised of fifty-nine of James's short stories, novels, and travel writing, provides an adequate representative sample of his work. Using the search feature on the Kindle, it was possible to generate an average per piece usage of key terms indicative of

⁶⁵ Dan Cohen, "Searching for the Victorians," *Dan Cohen's Digital Humanities Blog*, October 4, 2010, <http://www.dancohen.org/2010/10/04/searching-for-the-victorians/>.

⁶⁶ Henry James, *The Complete Works of Henry James*, Amazon Kindle Edition, 2009.

the exhibitionary complex. The words museum, gallery, exhibit/exhibition, display, and exposition represented discussion of settings in which characters interacted with display museums settings, meriting a search for evidence and treatment of the exhibitionary complex. The words park and garden, were searched as well, to provide information about the discussion of other large public institutions in James's work, which are often discussed in the same context as museums. James's work yielded remarkable results. For example, of those fifty-nine pieces, he mentions museums 151 times, an average of 2.56 times per work. The word exhibit/exhibition is used 337 times, averaging 5.71 times per piece. These numbers show James's work merited further investigation, but they take on a new importance when placed in the context of William Dean Howells's work. Howells, who served as an editor of the *Atlantic*, represents James's closest contemporary in the nineteenth century.⁶⁷ A search of *Works of William Dean Howells*, a collection of seventy-nine of Howells's works on the Amazon Kindle yielded important data establishing James as not only an

⁶⁷ Sarah Wadsworth, *In the Company of Books: Literature and its "Classes" in Nineteenth Century America* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 77.

appropriate, but an ideal source to look for the influence of the exhibitionary complex.⁶⁸

Figures 1, 2, and 3 depict the information collected from these searches—the big picture of which is that both James and Howells incorporate larger cultural institutions, displays, and museums into their work. Data shows that James and Howells discuss public places like parks and gardens with similar occurrence (although they do appear more often in James on the whole). Though a small representation of overall trends, the data here illustrates the presence of exhibitionary themes and places in nineteenth-century literature. However, when the word museums and exhibit/exhibition are examined, it is clear that James's work provides a richer source for this study. James discusses museums 2.56 times per piece to Howells's 1.75. The words exhibit and exhibition mark the largest change between the two, with James using the terms an average of 5.7 times per piece to Howells's 1.43 (Figures 2 and 3 provide a graphic representation of the variety in use of these two terms). This difference is noteworthy. Obviously, Bennett's exhibitionary complex is concerned with the public's reaction to exhibits and

⁶⁸ William Dean Howells, *Works of William Dean Howells* (Golgotha Press, Amazon Kindle Edition, 2010).

display—so the much more prevalent use of this term in James’s work offers definitive proof that his work contains substantive discussion of nineteenth-century exhibition, more so than his peers.

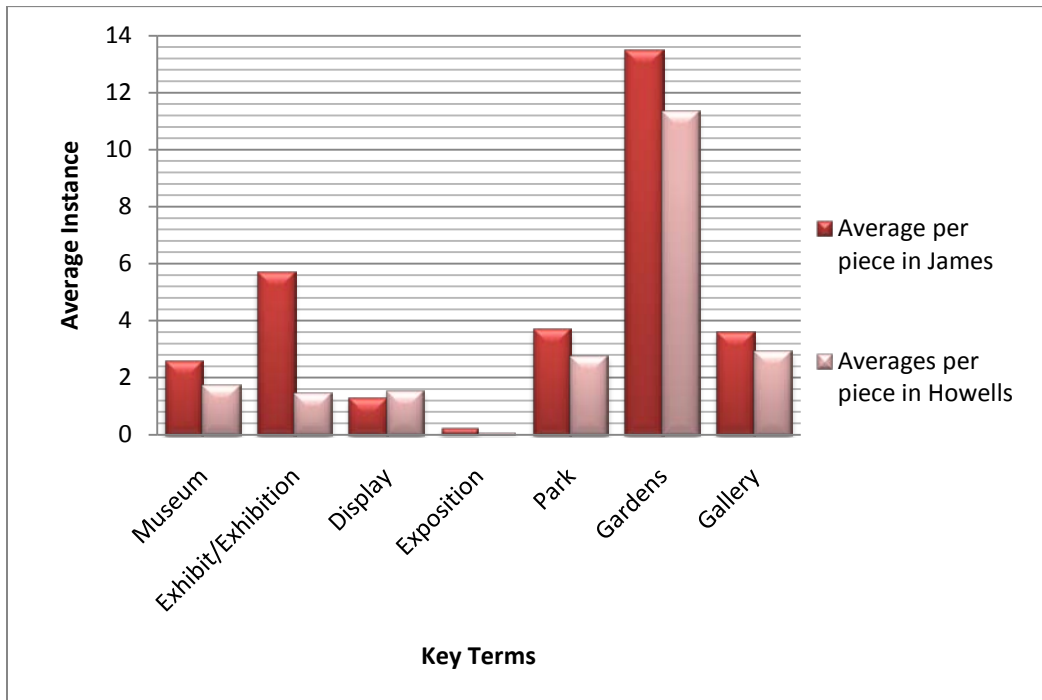


Figure 1: The average instance of key terms in works of Henry James and William Dean Howells.



Figure 2: Word Cloud depicting the prevalence of key terms in the work of Henry James. Created using www.wordle.net.

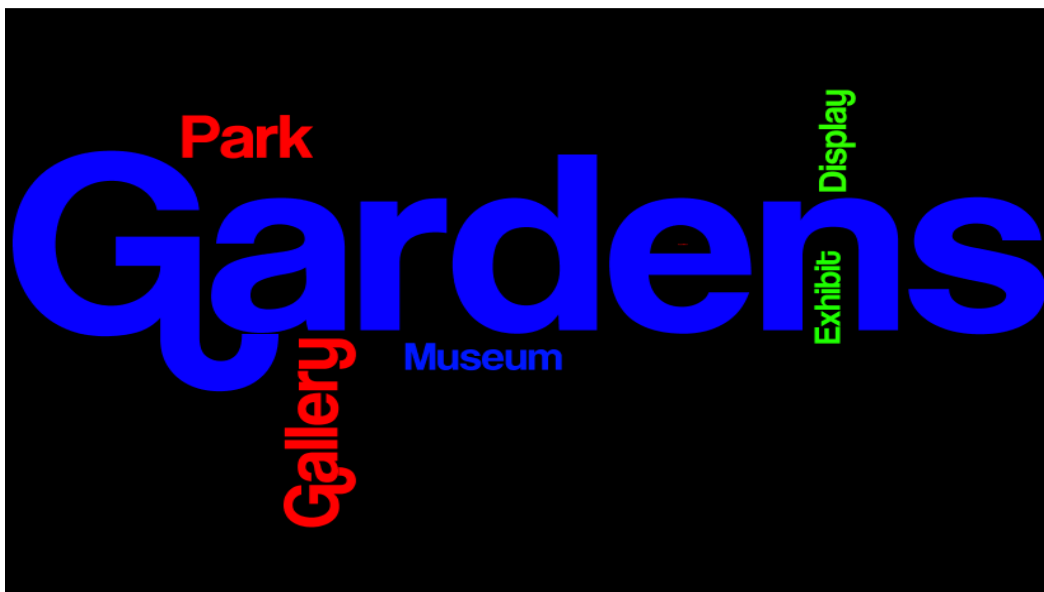


Figure 3: Word Cloud depicting the prevalence of key terms in the work of William Dean Howells. Created using www.wordle.net.

Of those uses of the word exhibition, 106 are in the context of a museum, gallery, or exposition. The other instances are equally important, and represent characters exhibiting certain qualities, feelings, appearances, or deal with showcasing other types of works. James's choice to use the words exhibit or exhibition so often outside the museum setting shows that notions of display seeped out of the museum and into novels and everyday life. The text mining of James's (and Howells's) work provides a basis for undergoing a study of the exhibitionary complex in nineteenth-century literature, and affirms James as a worthwhile source to look for the existence and ramifications of Bennett's theory.

Text mining of James's work shows that museums, both formal and informal, feature in almost all of his pieces, in a variety of fashions and quite prominently. The museum served James by "providing analogues for the plot, aiding in characterization, conveying a sense of the visitable and palpable past, and serving as sites for education in the broadest sense of the word."⁶⁹ Not only does James use the museum in his writing, he frequently presents the museum acting in precisely the same

⁶⁹ Festa, *Precious Specimens*, 112.

manner that Bennett's theory puts forth. His museums serve to educate and civilize, while characters often describe acts of surveillance and surveying the spectacle. Bennett's notion of the nineteenth-century museum is supported by James's writing, thus furthering Bennett's theories and extending the work of the museums past the viewing public to the reading public.

Vantage Points, Surveillance, and Self-Regulation:

During the late nineteenth century, the ability to see and be seen emerged as an important aspect of cities, department stores, and museums.⁷⁰ In Bennett's eyes, Foucault's argument that institutions of punishment "merely perfected the individualizing and normalizing technologies" inherent in surveillance, which in turn imbued the social order with an emerging "political economy of power," is too limited and one sided.⁷¹ Bennett states that the "new forms of spectacle" generated by nineteenth-century exhibitions resulted in new ways of communicating power with the general public, which were "more complex and nuanced" than Foucault's.⁷² Foucault's

⁷⁰ Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 61, 65, 69.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 61.

mechanism of seeing is only in the eye of the panoptic viewer. Power is situated with this individual, who holds the ability to see—people being watched are the subjects of power, and because of the threat imposed by the panoptic viewer, they behave.⁷³ This is self-regulation fueled by fear. According to Bennett, this does not work in the museum setting. As a public institution, the self-regulation occurring through in the museum is a result of the ability to see and be seen. It is not regulation through fear, but through bodily interaction and internalizing principles of the museum—through enjoyment instead. Through the complicated transfer of power in watching displays and being on display, museumgoers developed a sense of self-regulation.⁷⁴

As previously discussed, power was shared with the public in the form of organized exhibits. The flipside to this notion of power is the increasing opportunity given to the public in the form of surveillance over others. For example, the international exhibits of the time “sought to make the whole world, past and

⁷³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 200–3.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 69.

present, metonymically available . . . and from their towers, to lay it before a controlling vision."⁷⁵

The actual construction of the buildings played a role in encouraging surveillance and ultimately self-regulation. Builders incorporated vantage points within the museum offering a panoramic view of the public below. For example, the Crystal Palace, part of the Great Exposition in London in 1851, built in "vantage points from which everyone could be seen."⁷⁶ The Eiffel Tower, built for Paris Exposition in 1889, provides the ultimate vantage point, a place to see and be seen.⁷⁷ Through the ability to view and examine the behavior of others, by making the public see itself, the crowd transforms into "the ultimate spectacle."⁷⁸ In this moment of watching the spectacle of the crowd, through the shifting of "subject and object positions," the public internalizes "the ideal and ordered view of itself," and gains both the knowledge and ability to regulate itself.⁷⁹ This

⁷⁵ Ibid., 66.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 65.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 84.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 68.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 69.

notion of “democratizing the eye of power” inherent in the spectacle of the museum crowd is essential to Bennett’s argument that the exhibitionary complex not only produces a self-regulating public, but that through this process, they also emerge as civilized individuals.

Many of James’s characters describe looking down on a view or scene in daily life from a vantage point, either in a museum or out. There is a duality to these instances in James’s work, however. In many examples, the beholder’s view of a scene reflects Foucault’s panoptic eye, while the individuals on view reflect Bennett’s notion of seeing and being seen. As a technical note, the examples selected throughout this work are representative samples from James’s work. Many more examples exist, but given the scope and space of this piece, the few mentioned here characterize much more in James’s work.

In some cases, Foucault’s panoptic form of surveillance provides knowledge to James’s characters. In *The Wings of the Dove*, the view out Kate Croy’s window prompts serious thinking on her part, and allows her to come to the realization that much of what she knows about the world is false.⁸⁰ In that same novel,

⁸⁰ Henry James, “The Wings of the Dove,” *Novels 1901–1902*, (New York: The Library of America, 2006) 234–5.

Mrs. Stringham's silent observation of her young friend Milly Theale taking in the view from the top of a cliff offers a moment of clarity—watching Milly helps Mrs. Stringham know how to behave around her, and brings on new understandings of Milly's character.⁸¹ Mrs. Stringham, the viewer in this case, gains knowledge—while Milly, is unaware of the fact that she is on display. Because there is no interaction between the two sides, the power in both of these examples lies with the beholder.

Bennett's theory emerges when James's characters are depicted as being on display themselves. A prime example occurs in *The Tragic Muse*, where the Dormer family, sitting in the Palais de l'Industrie in Paris, provides another display to the rest of the visitors of the museum. James notes "on their green bench, they were almost as much on exhibition as if they had been hung on the line."⁸² The Dormers are on display amongst other visitors, offering them the ability to see and be seen, and thus participate in the process of self-regulation.

The duality of surveillance in James's work is primarily evident in his characters interaction with a panoramic vantage

⁸¹ Ibid., 299.

⁸² Henry James, "The Tragic Muse," *Novels 1886–1890*, (New York: The Library of America, 1989), 704.

point. The main characters of James's story "An International Episode," two young Englishmen experiencing New York City for the first time, describe observing individuals out on their balconies. James describes their view, by stating that they were able to see individuals "taking the evening air upon balconies and high flights of doorsteps . . . they saw young ladies in white dresses—charming looking persons—seated in graceful attitudes on the chocolate-coloured steps."⁸³ This scene illustrates the Foucauldian power of the viewing eye in making characterizations of individuals.

Later in that same piece, the two Englishmen find themselves in a hotel in Newport, Rhode Island. The hotel is equipped with a large terrace, overlooking the town. From the terrace, James says, the young men "enjoyed, as they supposed, a glimpse of American society, which was distributed over the measureless expanse in a variety of sedentary attitudes, and appeared to consist largely of pretty young girls, dressed as if for a *fête champêtre*, swaying to and fro in rocking-chairs, fanning themselves with large straw fans, and enjoying

⁸³ Henry James, "An International Episode," *The Complete Stories, 1874–1884*, (The Library of America, 1996), 329.

an enviable exemption from social cares."⁸⁴ James's assertion that this view of the city allows the men a peek at American society as whole, and characterizing it as a careless young lady fanning herself in a rocking chair illustrates is again Foucault's panoptic at work. These gentlemen gain the power to see and judge as a part of their view.

Furthermore, in James's short story "Travelling Companions," about a young American man (Mr. Brooke) who meets and falls in love with a fellow American traveler (Charlotte Evans) on a trip to Italy, Mr. Brooke describes the view from the top of the Milan Cathedral. He details the view of the mountains, the snow-capped peaks and the Lombard flats, and concludes, "This prospect offers a great emotion to the Northern traveler. A vague, delicious impulse of conquest stirs in the heart. From his dizzy vantage-point, as he looks down at her, beautiful, historic, exposed, he embraces the whole land in the far-reaching range of his desire."⁸⁵ The American traveler looking down with a desire to conquer the land below clearly holds the power in this scene.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 341.

⁸⁵ Henry James, "Travelling Companions," *Complete Stories 1864–1874*, (The Library of America, 1999), 502.

This type of observation of the picturesque is common in James's work. While some viewed James's use of scenery as "Eurocentric elitism," Kendall Johnson argues that it is a much more meaningful event in James's work. He states that the character's pause to take in a picturesque view represents their desire to make sense of a changing landscape in the face of modernity (much like the flâneur in James's work, discussed here later on). The beautiful scene counters the effects of American industrialization, and marks "moments when the pride of his characters balances precariously on their management of insecurities regarding how to recognize, classify, and, ultimately, respect national identity in the international marketplace."⁸⁶

Mr. Brooke then moves down to the balustrade of the church to take in a view of the city of Milan. He proclaims the city to possess "a peculiar charm of temperate gayety," and observes the "common life of the streets," and the "lazy, dowdy, Italian beauties" appearing in the balconies. He goes on to describe "Beautiful, slim young officers . . . glorious with their clanking swords, their brown moustaches, and their legs of azure." Mr. Brooke is then struck by the "various ladies of Milan .

⁸⁶ Kendall Johnson, *Henry James and the Visual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9.

. . . elegant, romantic, provoking.”⁸⁷ The panoramic view of the city allows Mr. Brooke to soak in the behavior and manner of Milan, and the power to proclaim the officers “beautiful,” the women “lazy,” and the ladies “elegant.” Once again, the viewer here is Foucault’s, but the objects of view here, the citizens of Milan and the women of Newport previously mentioned, are indicative of Bennett’s more democratic mechanism. These subjects on the ground are in the mix of the city—being watched and seeing others, all participating in subtle negotiations of self-regulation.

These examples from James, apart from showing the power of surveillance, draw out an important theme in James’s work—sexual politics and gender. Jay Parini notes an important question in James’s work—“What does it mean to be a woman in a world where men control everything?”⁸⁸ James’s treatment of women in the previous examples, as eroticized spectacles, is representative of the changes in gender relations emerging in the nineteenth century.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 503–4.

⁸⁸ Parini, “The Afterlife of Henry James.”

Maureen Montgomery, in her book *Displaying Women: Spectacles of Leisure in Edith Wharton's New York* asserts that "From the 1880s on, the 'mediation' of high society" changed forever the relationship between wealthy individuals' private lives and the "commercial world."⁸⁹ The comings and goings of the wealthy occupied space in newspapers and helped sell commodity, but at the same time opening them up to publicity and vulnerability.⁹⁰ At the same time, leisure practices changed for women, moving away from activities in private settings (reading, music, travel, visiting artists) to more public forms of entertainment in "heterosocial settings," for example, restaurants, theatres, operas, and museums.⁹¹ Because leisure moved into these public heterosocial environments, women became spectacle. Montgomery notes, "Women had to work hard at displaying leisure and making sure that the display was noticed, particularly as newspaper scrutiny upped the ante."⁹²

⁸⁹ Maureen E. Montgomery, *Displaying Women: Spectacles of Leisure in Edith Wharton's New York* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 9.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 11.

⁹² Ibid.

Changes in the forms of leisure allowed women access to cities and affirmed the female place in public spaces. A prime example is restaurant dining. Women particularly began dining out, especially in order to be viewed by the public.⁹³ The Waldorf-Astoria hotel's restaurant had a long corridor with couches that allowed spectators to view diners as they entered the restaurant. Furthermore, the restaurant had glass walls, so patrons were on full display while they enjoyed a meal. Henry James called the Waldorf-Astoria, "'a conception of publicity as the vital medium organized with the authority with which the American genius for organization . . . alone could organize it.'"⁹⁴

James, himself noticed the emergence of women in public space, when commenting on a fancy dinner in a New York home he remarked "that the women were not merely dressed for a formal dinner; instead their outfits suggested something more, which is why he felt only 'a great court-function' would have 'met the strain.'" He observes that should these women attend a court function, proper men would have to be provided there—

⁹³ Ibid., 33.

⁹⁴ Henry James, "The American Scene," in *Collected Travel Writings: Great Britain and America*, (New York: The Library of America, 1993), 443.

"The men would have been out of place. It was the women who were aristocrats."⁹⁵ Heading to a private dinner dressed for public display illustrates further the weakening of boundaries between home and public.

Montgomery's discussion of the opera house fits the scenes in James's work as well. She notes that behavior in environments of spectacle like the opera house (or, in Bennett's case, the museum) operates like "brothel behavior." The venue provides men the opportunity to stare at women, within the safety of a place intended for viewing. Binoculars in theatres particularly encouraged this form of ogling. Women had the challenge of pretending not to know they were being seen, for any acknowledgement of the male gaze might be taken to represent the old theatre stigma of prostitution. That being said, a major reason for attending public events and institutions was to be seen (by both genders—women were seen by other women as well as men). This display of women generated substantial sexual tension, which may explain "its thematization in both the art and fiction of the times." Montgomery notes that "The nuances of spectacle and display and their embeddedness in

⁹⁵ Ibid., 66.

gender and class codes have been brilliantly captured by Henry James and Edith Wharton."⁹⁶

The blurring of boundaries between public/private is evident in the previously cited examples of surveillance. Here, James's characters often take an eroticized view of women carrying out private acts: on their balconies, sitting on porches, etc. These formerly private acts become public displays and subject to the gaze of men, as changes in leisure and mediatization obscure the lines between public action and private action. This transformation from private to public is embodied in the character of Miriam Rooth, in *The Tragic Muse*. At the start of the novel, Miriam is a shy, quiet aspiring young actress, primarily giving performances in private homes.⁹⁷ As the novel progresses, Miriam's public persona grows. She becomes a famous actress in London, on posters and seen by audiences night after night. In short, Miriam moves from a young lady with private pursuits to becoming a spectacle herself.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Ibid., 128.

⁹⁷ James, "The Tragic Muse," 789, 797.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 1177.

The surveillance and display of women marks an interesting connection to the exhibitionary complex. The newly public role of formerly private “objects and bodies” allows for the exchange of power in the exhibitionary complex to work. The presence of a similar theme in James’s work marks an important discovery—James is utilizing the same types of delicate power relations in his novels that Bennett sees in the exhibitionary complex.⁹⁹

James’s observation of private or mundane activities as public displays informed participants in the exhibitionary complex. Outside the museum, women emerged as spectacles, both to each other and men. These modes of seeing are internalized and emerge inside the museum, and regulate the way visitors look at displays. James’s use of the spectacle of women in such a way allows his readers to internalize this information as well, and lends credence to Bennett’s notions of the nineteenth century museum by promoting and noting a process of self-regulation.

Civilizing and Educating:

By showing the public their role in society through exhibitions, and by becoming self-regulating individuals via

⁹⁹ Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 60–1.

participating in surveillance, generating a civilized and educated public surfaces as the next effect of the exhibitionary complex. The emergence of museums and exhibitions in the nineteenth century contributed to the “formation of the modern state and are fundamental to its conception as . . . a set of educative and civilizing agencies.”¹⁰⁰ Through the act of visiting a museum and the aforementioned exchanges of power, Bennett argues that the exhibitionary complex generated “new instruments for the moral and cultural regulation of the working class.”¹⁰¹ The museum united the working class and the middle class, and provided an environment through which the working class learned from the “improving influence” of the middle class.¹⁰² Apart from the general education on culture, and the perhaps undetected education in power, the visitors of museums also gained lessons in behavior.

Barbara Black expands on Bennett’s theory, arguing “Museums aspired not only to display art to the public but also to

¹⁰⁰Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 66.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 73–4.

teach that public how to receive art.”¹⁰³ The nineteenth-century museum educated visitors on appropriate interactions with display, mapped out the order of their viewing, and “instructed the public on how to behave, disciplining and regulating its thoughts.”¹⁰⁴ However, as previously mentioned, these conscious efforts at education merely scratched the surface of the instructive power of the museum—the real education took place apart from any attempts at it, rather, the presence of the museum itself served to transform visitors.

These lessons on behavior, combined with carefully chosen and organized display, culminated in the formation of “a community, or collectivity, of the tasteful.”¹⁰⁵ The nineteenth-century museum offered a new method of communicating power. Through the interactions and opportunities of the museum, the public was civilized, educated, and self-regulated.

The edification of museumgoers is a central theme in both Bennett and James. According to Barbara Black, James uses the

¹⁰³ Black, *On Exhibit*, 104.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

museum "as the site of education for the American."¹⁰⁶ In "Travelling Companions," Mr. Brooke reports that while visiting galleries, libraries, and churches in Milan, "There had been moments in Germany when I fancied myself a clever man; but it now seemed to me that for the first time I really *felt* my intellect. Imagination, panting and exhausted, withdrew from the game; and Observation stepped into her place, trembling and glowing with open-eyed desire."¹⁰⁷ Mr. Brooke also considers himself "a wiser man" after "long mornings at the Museum" in his Italian travels.¹⁰⁸ This act of gaining knowledge through observation in nineteenth-century institutions is a clear personification of Bennett's theory.

Mr. Brooke goes on to describe his traveling partner, Ms. Evans, as she takes in the sculptures and structures at the top of the Milan Cathedral. He states, "Her movements, her glance, her voice, were full of intelligent pleasure," (it is also at this moment that Mr. Brooke determines his partner to be "more than pretty

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 108.

¹⁰⁷ James, "Travelling Companions," 499.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 538.

enough").¹⁰⁹ In this moment, Ms. Evans has begun the process of learning how to take in art, and perfecting her gaze, which in turn makes her more appealing to her partner.

On a trip to the Chapel of Giotto in Padua, Mr. Brooke notes that before entering the chapel, he felt "so ill-informed as to fancy that to talk about Giotto was to make more or less a fool of one's self," but after entering the temple, a transformation occurs. "The exhibition suggested to my friend and me more wise reflections than we had the skill to utter."¹¹⁰ Ms. Evan notes that from the exhibit, "we ought to learn from all this to be *real*; real even as Giotto is real; to discriminate between genuine and fictitious sentiment; between the substantial and the trivial; between the essential and the superfluous; sentiment and sentimentality."¹¹¹ This transformation at the hands of an exhibit furthers the museum as a teacher of not only taste, but of character.

James also characterizes his intelligent characters as museumgoers. For instance, James describes Bessie Alden, the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 501.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 528.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 529.

main female character in "An International Episode," as "very cultivated," educated, and "thoughtful."¹¹² This is significant because she is the only individual in the story advocating visits to museums and cultural sites, like the Tower of London and the National Gallery. By describing her intelligence up front, and illustrating her desire to visit museums in London, James makes a clear connection between the two.¹¹³

James orchestrates important chance meetings in museums. In *The Wings of the Dove*, Milly meets Kate and Martin at the National Gallery in London, and it is here that both women realize their acquaintance with the man. This reunion spurs a new knowledge for Martin—that his relationship with Kate has to change.¹¹⁴ In *The Tragic Muse*, Nick Dormer becomes reacquainted with his school friend Gabriel Nash, in the Palais de l'Industrie. Later in the novel, Nash is a driving force behind Nick's choice to become an artist.¹¹⁵

The educating of individuals in James's work serves to make them better citizens, particularly citizens of the world.

¹¹² James, "An International Episode," 354.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 365, 393.

¹¹⁴ James, "The Wings of the Dove," 410, 420–1.

¹¹⁵ James, "The Tragic Muse," 717.

However, it is worth noting that the characters in James's work that do not enjoy museums, or do not visit museums, sharply contrast with the museumgoers.

In James's short story "The Pupil," young Morgan and his tutor Pemberton frequent "all the museums" in Paris, and St. Mark's Basilica in Venice. James portrays these characters as the only educated, or intelligent, individuals in the story. Often, these trips to the museum are a means of escaping the rest of Morgan's family, the Moreens, as well as a time for discussion and reflection.¹¹⁶ In fact, the Moreens are outright criminals, hiring Pemberton and promising him a wage, then refusing to pay. Pemberton stays on as a tutor, due to his devotion to the intelligent, kind Morgan. James, as Pemberton, describes the Moreens as "adventurers not merely because they didn't pay their debts, because they lived on society, but because their whole view of life, dim and confused and instinctive, like that of clever colour-blind animals, was speculative and rapacious and mean. . . . They were adventurers because they were abject snobs."¹¹⁷ The dutiful, intelligent, honest Pemberton and Morgan

¹¹⁶ Henry James, "The Pupil," *The Complete Stories, 1884–1891*, (The Library of America, 1999), 725, 726, 743, 753.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 729.

are the educated, civilized visitors of museums, while the rest of the Moreens remain criminals and snobs.

Again, James uses the aforementioned Bessie Alden to drive this point home in "An International Episode." Bessie, the intelligent, museum-going character, is a stark contrast to her traveling partner, Mrs. Westgate. When Mrs. Westgate suspects the aristocratic Lord Lambeth is in love with Bessie, she tells the young lady to encourage his advances. When Bessie seems indifferent and wishes to remain good friends with Lord Lambeth, Mrs. Westgate pushes further, saying she would like to "frighten" Lord Lambeth's family, by furthering the relationship between a lower class Bessie and the aristocrat. The uncivilized behavior of Mrs. Westgate, compared to the moral Bessie furthers James's association of good character with a desire to visit museums.¹¹⁸

Furthering this contrast between civilized museum visitors and non-visitors is James's portrayal of Charlotte Evans's father, Mr. Evans, in "Travelling Companions." Mr. Evans, who dislikes the observation of art, museums, churches, and galleries, is described by Mr. Brooke as "an excellent representative

¹¹⁸ James, "An International Episode," 380.

American. Without taste, without culture or polish . . .”¹¹⁹ Mr. Brooke does admit to liking Mr. Evans, who has some “substance in character, keenness in perception, and intensity in will, which effectually redeemed him from vulgarity.”¹²⁰ Mr. Evans is still a decent person, but in avoiding institutions of culture, he lacks taste and refinement, and therefore civility—he is merely not vulgar.

Conclusions

James’s writing offers examples of the various pieces of the exhibitionary complex. James’s work depicts the museum as an institution capable of producing a more educated individual, and allows a vantage point for taking in the landscape of a city, in the vein of both Bennett and Foucault. Finally, James uses the characters visiting museums as stark counterpoints to the characters that are not members of the viewing public. Through these means, James promotes Bennett’s exhibitionary complex as a whole, therefore presenting these ideas to readers, who internalize Bennett via James’s notions of the nineteenth-century museum. By presenting the exhibitionary complex to his

¹¹⁹ James, “Travelling Companions,” 518.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 518.

readers, James allows it to continue to function, ingraining the power of the museum deeper into society.

CHAPTER 3: James as Flâneur

The notion of the flâneur, while not precisely a part of the exhibitionary complex, travels hand-in-hand with Bennett's theory in the nineteenth century. The attitudes, observations, and gaze of the flâneur follow the visitor into the museum. It is part of a broader cultural phenomenon in the nineteenth century that informs the way visitors approach the museum, and certainly helped evolve the processes of the exhibitionary complex. As the public read and internalized the notions of the flâneur, their own mechanism of viewing altered in subtle ways. As they moved into the museum, these new ways of seeing came as well.

The Flâneur Develops:

The word flâneur is a French term, commonly used to mean an individual walking through a city, observing ordinary life, without a set agenda. Baudelaire use the term to "characterize the posture toward experience that a 'painter of modern life' must assume."¹²¹ Flânerie is "an urban art form." It is an act of leisure, the pastime of dandies, most notably

¹²¹ Dana Brand, *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 6.

Baudelaire.¹²² It is more than a stroll about town—the flâneur “relished the kaleidoscope of urban public life and had created from it a new aesthetic, perceiving a novel kind of beauty in streets, factories, and urban blight.”¹²³

Walter Benjamin, who studied the flâneur in his unfinished *Arcades Project*, noted that the term (during Baudelaire’s time) often described a group of journalists and authors who used the serial section of Paris newspapers, called feuilletons, and books called physiologies to describe life in cities from the vantage point of an individual walking with a panoramic eye.¹²⁴ Benjamin argues that in the 1830s, the flâneur’s tone changed to that of a reviewer—using “the same elegant, detached, and leisurely tone they used in their theatrical and literary reviews.”¹²⁵ This difference in tone categorized flâneurs as journalists and authors.

¹²² Beatrice Hanssen, “Introduction: Physiognomy of a Flâneur: Walter Benjamin’s Peregrinations through Paris in Search of a New Imaginary,” in *Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, ed. Beatrice Hanssen (New York: Continuum, 2006), 3.

¹²³ Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx and the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 5.

¹²⁴ Brand, *The Spectator and the City*, 6.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

Benjamin goes on to assert that the role of the flâneur in nineteenth-century society characterized city life, and provided reassurance to readers of their work. The flâneur's observations neutralized the fear of the masses and clarified social relationships.¹²⁶ Benjamin takes issues, somewhat, with Baudelaire's flâneur, who seems open to completely random experiences. Benjamin argues that "the flâneur reduces the city to a panorama or diorama, a scale model, in which everything is, in effect, brought indoors, transformed into a legible, accessible, and nonthreatening version of itself, encompassed by the comforting arc of the flâneur's sensibility."¹²⁷ Benjamin's flâneur exists to group experiences as images, detaching his audience from modern urban life, and offering a feeling of safety. The flâneur gives his audience a sense of hope in the face of overwhelming changes brought on by modernity. The observations in the flâneur's writing provide a sort of guide, by offering a lens through which to view the city, generating images that are "collected and stored in a great warehouse of memory," separate from actual life experience. This method of viewing the

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 7.

city certainly influenced readers and by adopting these notions, changed the way individuals saw the world. This notion of seeing translated into the gaze in the museum setting, and informed visitors' notions of self-regulation. A visit to the museum offered an opportunity to exercise the public's new ideas about seeing, thanks to the flâneur. Not only did the mechanism of viewing inform museumgoers and city-dwellers, it appeared in much of the fiction of the nineteenth century.¹²⁸

Dana Brand, in his book *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*, acknowledges the importance of studying the flâneur "as a concrete historical phenomenon" which influenced "cultural products" (novels and museums, for example) of nineteenth-century life. Brand agrees with Benjamin's characterization of the role of the flâneur, but brings important new evidence that the flâneur was not limited to the European continent, per Benjamin's notions, but that he existed in England and emerged in the United States in the 1830s.¹²⁹ Brand argues that assumptions that the United States did not achieve modernity prior to the Civil War are incorrect,

¹²⁸ Ibid., 8.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 9.

and this is one reason for the lacking discussion of the flâneur in the context of American history. Additionally, Brand notes that though Benjamin did not originate this notion, he is complicit in spreading the idea, stating modernity developed “suddenly, and in response to specific material innovations of the nineteenth century that altered, and expressed invisible alteration in, the nature of commercial and social life.”¹³⁰ Benjamin’s discussion of the flâneur as a “local and historically limited phenomenon” specific to 1830s Paris, prevented much discussion about the flâneur in the United States.¹³¹ Brand’s central argument is that the “historical account of the development of the flâneur and the concept of modernity associated with him are incorrect.”¹³² Brand asserts modernity developed much more gradually than Benjamin and others argue, and the tradition of the flâneur emerged from a long process of developing open public spaces.¹³³

¹³⁰ Ibid., 12.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., 12–3.

¹³³ Ibid., 13.

Modernity was present in England long before the start of the nineteenth century, and Brand puts forth that a fully formed flâneur is present in England at the start of the eighteenth century.¹³⁴ Brand's flâneur originated with the "culture of spectacle that developed in London during its first period of extraordinary growth, in the sixteenth century," marking a similar cultural environment to that of France.¹³⁵ In Brand's view, the flâneur represents England as well as France, and through the English tradition the flâneur made his way to America.¹³⁶

A variety of cultural artifacts signaled the development of the flâneur in England. Panorama books, emerging in England at the start of the seventeenth century, represent a genre preceding the tradition of the flâneur, setting up cities as "divisible in the legible types, as something that can be read and grasped in its entirety."¹³⁷ Around the same time, character books emerged, offering a hybrid of the Theophrastian character

¹³⁴ Ibid., 14.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 13.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 17.

and surveys of London, generating a representation of the city.¹³⁸ The publication of periodicals increased near the end of the seventeenth century, generating “a new urban spectatorial genre, consisting of panoramic tours of London, present in installments by a detached wanderer.”¹³⁹ The flâneur’s development in London mirrors that of panoramic shows in the city. Emerging in the seventeenth century, the two traditions solidified into their common form in the eighteenth century, and the 1830s represent the height of popularity for both. Walter Benjamin also noted the connection between the flâneur and the spectacle of the panoramic, and indeed they “appear to have been complicit historical processes. It is not only their history and strategies that are parallel. They have in common the fact that they were both *believed*.”¹⁴⁰

The flâneur declined in popularity and prevalence in the mid-nineteenth century. However, the observational mode of the flâneur held a pivotal role in the first piece published by Charles

¹³⁸ Ibid., 23.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 27.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 52.

Dickens.¹⁴¹ Indeed, the flâneur continued to have an audience in the growing “commercial culture” of Great Britain. During this decline, the flâneur emerged as an important figure in the United States.¹⁴²

Americans had access to pieces of British literature promoting the flâneur tradition, and the majority of the American reading public enjoyed an acquaintance with major European cities, and with the traditional view of them by the flâneur.¹⁴³ Travel essays detailing large cities in Europe marked the initial American forays into the world of the flâneur.¹⁴⁴ The behavior of the flâneur in the United States is similar to that of the European—to observe, “interpreting and appreciating a world in which he does not play a part.”¹⁴⁵

In the United States, the flâneur’s connection to exhibition is evident. The most often written about place in New York, in the majority of books on the subject published in the 1840 and

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 46.

¹⁴² Ibid., 63.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 66.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 66–7.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 67.

1850s was P. T. Barnum's American Museum. Brand acknowledges the connections between the flâneur and the museum, stating "These panoramic spaces, containing the entire multiplicity of the world and presenting it as a spectacle to be consumed, appeared to spectatorial narrators [sic] to be the most representative spaces in their respective cities, the one true metaphor for the whole."¹⁴⁶ The museum as a metaphor for the whole prompted the view of the city as an exhibit. New York itself played the museum, seen by the flâneur as a spectacle, through a panoramic lens.¹⁴⁷ According to Brand, the American flâneur presented the images of cities much in the same way as their European counterparts, but stood for a different message. The American flâneur encompassed the promise of the changes brought by modernity, and the American role in the new "industrial civilization."¹⁴⁸

The importance of the flâneur in offering a lesson in panoramic viewing during the nineteenth century and its impact on the museum proves a broader cultural field in which the flâneur influenced the exhibitionary complex, and vice versa.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 75.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 76.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 78.

These two quintessentially nineteenth century traditions are both present in the work of Henry James. Evidence of the flâneur's presence in the United States is important to this study, as it proves the likelihood that James encountered the flâneur well before he began his writing career. This discovery allows for a strong argument that James embodied the flâneur in much of his travel writing, and occasionally in his fiction as well. James's knowledge of the flâneur type surely influenced his writing, and particularly the way he treated cities. It is not a far stretch to argue that the internalization of the behavior of the flâneur in turn influenced and changed the way he wrote about museums as well. The presence of both the exhibitionary complex and the flâneur in James's work furthers his place as an important and representative author of the nineteenth century, and his writing leaves behind important observations and information about cultural institutions during his lifetime.

Henry James, the Flâneur:

Susan Buck-Morss, in her essay on Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project* notes that an economy based on capitalism forced the flâneur to sell his written observations. She states, "To put it plainly, the flâneur in capitalist society is a fictional

type: in fact, he is a type who writes fiction.”¹⁴⁹ Henry James’s writing embodies this authorial view of the flâneur. Primarily, James acts as the flâneur in his travel writing, but his novels also depict his characters taking on the role.

John Kimmey, in his book *Henry James and London: The City in His Fiction* points out that “No major novelist of the nineteenth century wrote more about cities than Henry James.” Kimmey notes that James “was in effect ‘the leading literary connoisseur of cities’ in the Victorian age,” but little writing about James and the city has been undertaken. James’s travel writing also serves to characterize cities, through careful observation and description.¹⁵⁰

The word cloud below shows the prevalence of different cities in James’s work. Again, a search of the Kindle version of *The Complete Works of Henry James* generated these numbers (see figures 4 and 5). Of the major cities he discusses, Paris and London appear the most often. Out of the fifty-nine novels and

¹⁴⁹ Susan Buck-Morss, “The Flâneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore: The Politics of Loitering,” in *Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, ed. Beatrice Hanssen (New York: Continuum, 2006), 43.

¹⁵⁰ John Kimmey, *Henry James and London: The City in His Fiction* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 1.

stories in this collection, Paris is mentioned an average of 13.59 per piece. London appears 13.37 times per story or novel. New York and Rome follow next, with 10.53 and 8.73 average discussions, respectively. Boston (average 6.05), Florence (average 4.93), Venice (average 4.42), and Newport (average 1.14) round out the group of most-discussed cities. Overall, James mentions the name of one of these eight cities over sixty-three times per story or novel.¹⁵¹

A Kindle search of *Works of William Dean Howells* (figure 5), shows that James's average use of city names per piece is actually lower than Howells's (who averages 76.55 references to cities per piece).¹⁵² Figure 5 offers data about their use of various cities, with wide variation—James spends more time on European cities, Howells's discussion is primarily American. Though the data from this comparison seems to disprove Kimmey's assertion that James wrote more about cities than any other nineteenth-century author, it does not take into account the nature of these instances. James's work spends considerable time describing and characterizing cities, particularly in his travel writing. The prevalence of cities in both James's and Howells's

¹⁵¹ James, *The Complete Works*.

¹⁵² Howells, *Works of William Dean Howells*.

work speaks to broader ideas about the use of cities in nineteenth-century writing. As the flâneur emerged, authors spent more time talking about cities.

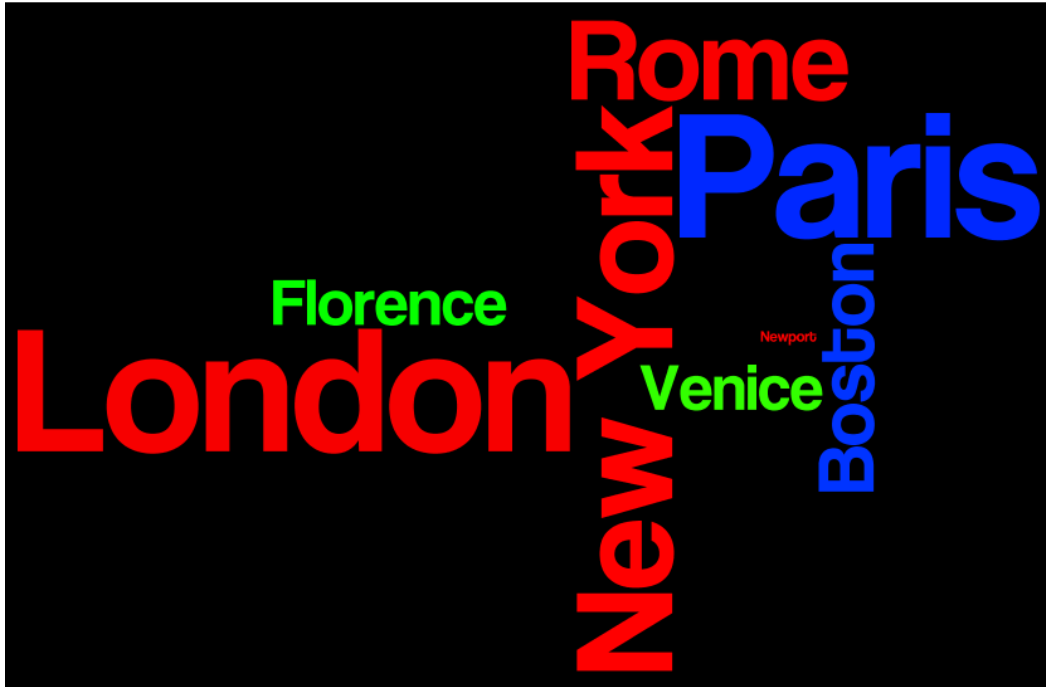


Figure 4: Word cloud depicting the prevalence of certain cities in the work of Henry James. Created using www.wordle.net.

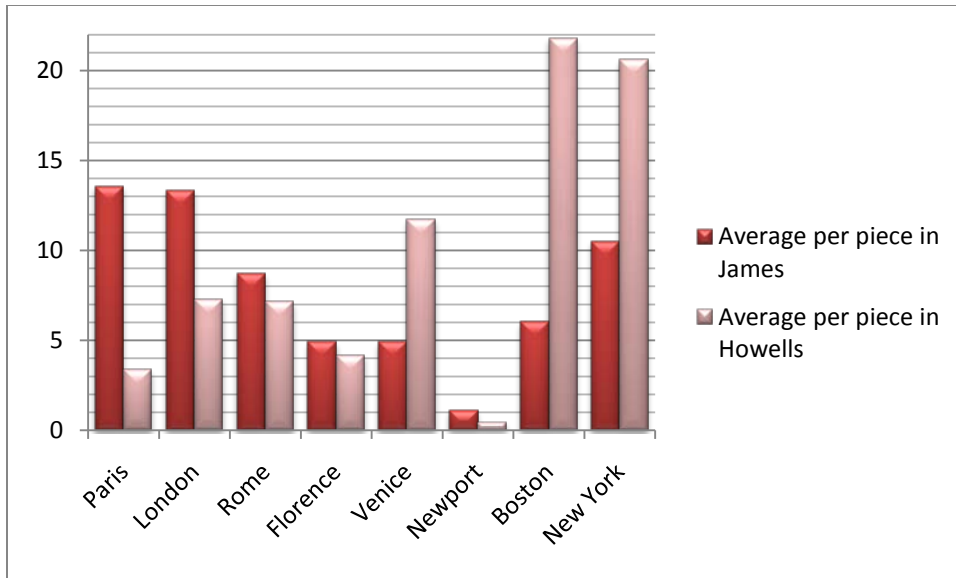


Figure 5: The average instances of certain cities per piece in the work of Henry James and William Dean Howells.

The prevalence of the city in James's writing offers evidence to suggest that the figure of the flâneur at least influenced his work. The attention in his pieces, in terms of real estate, shows a hearty discussion of cities. Cecelia Aijmer and Gert Buelens, in their chapter, "The Sense of the Past: History and Historical Criticism," characterize James's focus on the city as a "historical document," chronicling "the onrush of modernity, the openness of the self, knowledge, and representation," through James's early fiction to his later travel writing.¹⁵³ These

¹⁵³ Cecelia Aijmer and Gert Buelens, "The Sense of the Past: History and Historical Criticism," in *Palgrave Advances in Henry James Studies*, ed. Peter Rawlings (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 198.

themes, particularly modernity, speak to the tradition of the flâneur. The narrator of James's work has continuously been referred to as an observer, "almost disembodied, being, completely detached" from the world of James's characters. In a sense, this allows the disconnected narrator to act as the flâneur, providing James's readers the images of the novel.¹⁵⁴

Most of the time in James's fiction the city plays a prop to the plot and relationship of the characters. Only in one of his pieces, according to Kimmey, does James "treat London directly as a world in the sense of Balzac and Dickens, introducing a variety of classes, districts, and urban types as they do in novel after novel."¹⁵⁵ More often than not, the city provides the necessary backdrop for action. That being said, James offers several poignant examples of character's interactions with the city.

The Wings of the Dove stands as a representative example of the flâneur in James's fiction. The novel speaks to issues of power, relationships, class, and the meeting of Europe and America. Walking plays a central role in *The Wings of the Dove*,

¹⁵⁴ Susan M. Griffin, *The Historical Eye: The Texture of the Visual in Late James* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 3.

¹⁵⁵ Kimmey, *Henry James and London*, 2.

about a rich young American with an unnamed terminal disease experiencing Europe for the first time. The primary male character in the book, Martin Densher, in love with Kate Croy, but courting the dying American Milly Theale (for her substantial wealth), frequently takes afternoon walks in the beginning of the novel. He wanders over to Kensington Garden, where James notes "once that ground was reached his behaviour was noticeably wanting in point." Densher meanders around, "seemingly at random" through the area, until he can meet Kate. Although eventually Densher's walking has a final point, James's description of Densher's walk contains the tell-tale signs of a flâneur. His random wandering, the "vagueness" of his goals, the appearance of "a person with nothing to do."¹⁵⁶ Once Densher meets Kate, however, the wandering continues. Walking around the gardens and surrounding areas promotes allows Densher and Kate to further their relationship, framed by the city of London and Kensington Gardens.¹⁵⁷

The most powerful example of the flâneur in *The Wings of the Dove*, however, is the walk Milly Theale takes after her first

¹⁵⁶ Henry James. "The Wings of the Dove," 247.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 249.

visit to the doctor in England. Her physician tells her the best course of action for Milly is simply to live her life. As a young woman of means, Milly has never been allowed to move through a city alone, without the watchful eye of a guardian or adult. She decides that the first step in living her life is to wander about London. She soaks in the city as she walks, noticing "Wonderments" like "people with grimy children and costermongers' carts," in alleys and neighborhoods "she hoped were slums." Milly wanders for hours, finally reaching Regent's Park, where she points out "benches smutty and sheep; here were idle lads at games of ball, with their cries mild in the thick air; here were wanderers anxious and tired like herself."¹⁵⁸ For the always sheltered Milly, this walk about town alone marks a significant moment of freedom, and allows her to reach several realizations about her life once she reflects in Regent's Park.

Feminist scholars have taken issue with the notion of a female flâneur, or flâneuse. Janet Wolff argues that, "There is no question of inventing the *flâneuse*: the essential point is that such a character was rendered impossible by the sexual divisions

¹⁵⁸ James, "The Wings of the Dove," 379–80.

of the nineteenth century.”¹⁵⁹ Yet Wolff defines the flâneur as an individual with the “freedom to move about the city, observing and being observed,”—a description which certainly fits Milly Theale in this instance.¹⁶⁰ Granted, Milly was not supposed to walk around the city alone, but the fact that James provides such a powerful example of the flâneuse, offers a small refutation to Wolff’s argument that the literature of modernity ignored women’s lives.¹⁶¹ This is a topic that merits more investigation in James’s work, but it furthers the argument the the flâneur (and perhaps flâneuse) played an important role for James.

James’s treatment of the city in his fiction differs from the Romantic writers of the early eighteenth century. While authors like Wordsworth and Blake considered the city “a blight on mankind, a kind of hell on earth, a place of ‘weakness and woe’ where individuals and society together lost their identity” James offers the city as a refuge and a meeting place. James’s city offers reassurance, just as Benjamin’s flâneur, that there is hope

¹⁵⁹ Janet Wolff, “The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity,” *Theory, Culture, and Society* 2:37 (1985), 45. DOI: 10.1177/0263276485002003005.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

in the midst of the modern city (although it must be noted that James's hope does focus on upper-class white members of society). James does compare urban and country life, but "he does not find all the vices in the one and all the virtues in the other." James's flâneur approach to the city, both as a setting and through his characters flânerie, does not promote a bias against urbanity, a theme so common in the work of other Victorian authors.¹⁶²

William Boelhower in his essay "The Landscape of Democratic Sovereignty: Whitman and James go Awalking" in *Modern American Landscapes*, connects James to the flâneur, noting "how clear sighted the novelist's American observations were but also how shrewd he was in adopting a topological approach," and goes so far as to say that James's travel book, *The American Scene* "foreshadows the brilliant meditations on Paris by Walter Benjamin."¹⁶³ Complimenting Brand's timeline for the flâneur's emergence in America, Boelhower's essay proves that he was alive and well in the United States in the nineteenth

¹⁶² Ibid., 4.

¹⁶³ William Boelhower, "The Landscape of Democratic Sovereignty: Whitman and James Go Awalking," in *Modern American Landscapes*, ed. Mick Gidley and Robert Lawson-Peebles (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1995), 59.

century, in the work of “topoanalysts” like Henry James and one of his predecessors, Walt Whitman (whom Boelhower argues has been “fond of ‘venturing’” since 1855).¹⁶⁴ James characterizes himself as a “habitual observer, the preoccupied painter, the pedestrian prowler” in the preface to *The Princess Casamassima*.¹⁶⁵

In his travel writing, James takes on the role of the flâneur, walking through, describing, characterizing, and offering up observations on the cities and towns he visited. He transforms the urban landscapes of cities into a textual map; his goal is merely to experience. Often times, James’s travel writing appears with illustrations of various scenes, further aligning his flânerie with Benjamin’s idea of collecting images. His vignettes on sites, cities, and towns are brief snapshots of place. They also speak with the disconnected tone of the flâneur—that of the visitor, the panoptic observer.

James’s largest travel works are *English Hours*, *The American Scene*, *A Little Tour in France*, and *Italian Hours*. Each volume is comprised of small stories, often previously published

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Henry James, *The Art of the Novel*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1934), 77.

as standalone pieces, gathered into one work per country. Of these works, *English Hours*, *A Little Tour in France*, and *Italian Hours* are very similar in tone and action. James visits important cultural sites, in both small towns and large cities, and provides commentary on everyday life in such places, the quality of various inns and restaurants, and the worthiness of famous sites. James acts as the flâneur, providing detached images for his readers, and offering modes of seeing (for many American readers) distant places.

First published as a volume in 1900, accompanied by illustrations by Joseph Pennell, *A Little Tour in France* generally offers observations on small towns and villages in France.¹⁶⁶ The consummate flâneur, James advises readers “However late in the evening I may arrive at a place, I never go to bed without my impression.” Much of his observations include local women (motivations for which were discussed in the previous chapter), noting the “white caps of women,” and their “faded blouses,” as they work in the fields.¹⁶⁷ He also observes the living conditions

¹⁶⁶ Henry James, “A Little Tour in France,” in *Collected Travel Writings: The Continent* (New York: The Library of America, 1993), 3–5.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 20, 51.

of towns, for example in Bourges, "the streets, narrow, tortuous, and dirty, have very wide cobble-stones; the houses for the most part are shabby, without local colour."¹⁶⁸

The Italian Hours (1909, also illustrated by Joseph Pennell), offers observation of much larger cities than *A Little Tour in France*. Here, James examines the favorite scenes of his novels—Venice, Florence, Rome. Generally, James characterizes cities and sites much in the same way as his French tour, capturing in Venice, "the life of her people and the strangeness of her constitution become a perpetual comedy, or at least a perpetual drama."¹⁶⁹ The chapter on the neighborhoods of Rome provides the best example of *flânerie* in *Italian Hours*. James devotes considerable space to the images and observations gathered by walking around Roman neighborhoods, specifically addressing the everyday. At the Chigi Palace, he sees "The mouldy grey houses on the steep crooked street . . . the haggard and tattered peasantry staring at you with hungry-heavy eyes."¹⁷⁰ Here, James, as the *flâneur*, trains his audience

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 103.

¹⁶⁹ Henry James, "Italian Hours," in *Collected Travel Writings: The Continent* (New York: The Library of America, 1993), 311.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 450.

to look away from the beautiful historic site to the surrounding portions of the city, taking in the modern urban life surrounding it.

English Hours (1905, again illustrated by Joseph Pennell) combines James's visits to larger British cities, as well as smaller country towns. James "delights in the spectacle" of London train stations, noting that "I think that nowhere so much as in London do people wear—to the eye of the observer—definite signs of the sort of people they may be."¹⁷¹ In Chester, James points out the opportunities for seeing afforded by crooked British streets, for Americans the "infinite effect gives a wholly novel zest to the use of his eyes."¹⁷² James's strolls in the Row in Chester provided him an image of the national customs and manners, that "as you pass with the bustling current from shop to shop, you feel local custom and tradition."¹⁷³ *A Little Tour in France*, *Italian Hours*, and *English Hours* all provide examples of James's flânerie, and

¹⁷¹ Henry James, "English Hours," in *Collected Travel Writings: Great Britain and America*, (New York: The Library of America, 1993), 39.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 60.

shed light on the everyday urban life of Europe for James's readers.

Likely the most discussed and analyzed of James's travelogues, *The American Scene* (1907) stands apart from James's work on Great Britain, France, and Italy. *The American Scene* chronicles James's return to the United States in 1904 after an absence of more than twenty years. This work, while written in the style of the flâneur moves beyond observation to include a great deal of social criticism. He obtains his image of America much in the same way as his European travels, however, James provides harsh criticism of immigrant communities and exploding growth.¹⁷⁴ It seems that the changes in a place so familiar to James some twenty years earlier forced him past the role of unattached observer, and into the realm of vested commentator.

Apart from his flâneur-style writing, much of James's travel writing includes museum visits. The trained eye of a museum connoisseur like James provides an example of proper museum visitorship to his readers. Furthermore, Benjamin's notion of the flâneur as a collector of images echoes the

¹⁷⁴ Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 171 and James, "The American Scene," 486.

collection of pieces for the museum.¹⁷⁵ The means of organization and display of both types of images allowed for the nuanced displays of power and changes in behavior of both readers of the flâneur and visitors to the nineteenth-century museum. In the wake of the ever-growing power of print (discussed in the following chapter), James's writing served to inform an eager public about modes of seeing, both inside the museum and out. Readers, consciously or not, were changed through the exposure to James's (and likely others') mechanisms of viewing the city. This exposure and subsequent change occurred outside the museum, but speaks to a broader cultural movement occurring in the nineteenth century. The impact of the flâneur and James's museum visits added to the repertoire of the public eye, and visitors brought all of these new ideas and technologies of seeing into the museum. In turn, the changes brought upon by James helped form the exhibitonary complex, by providing the public a base of knowledge for viewing, which they practiced in the form of self-regulation in the museum.

¹⁷⁵ Brand, *The Spectator and the City*, 7.

Chapter 4: THE EXHIBITIONARY COMPLEX AND LITERACY

The flâneur impacted his audience through the written word. Reading his descriptions of modern city life (an act of seeing itself) imparted the aforementioned new technologies of seeing to his audience. As the nineteenth century progressed, reading, like media and women's leisure in the nineteenth century, blurred the lines between public and private activities. According to Kate Flint, author of "The Victorian Novel and its Readers," reading is both "a shared experience, and a highly private one."¹⁷⁶ Readers share experiences and often formed book clubs during the nineteenth century, but the complex practice of reading often occurs alone. On a large scale, it is difficult for historians to know what thought processes or feelings emerged during the process of reading, apart from utilizing individual diaries and journals. This notion makes measuring the effect of the exhibitionary complex and James's work on readers difficult as well. However, we can know with some certainty what people read, the availability and power of books, as well as the impact of the formation of the library as an institution similar to the museum. In the words of Cathy Davidson, author of

¹⁷⁶ Kate Flint, "The Victorian Novel and its Readers," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. Dierdre David (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 30–1.

Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America, "the fact that thousands (or, in more recent times, millions) of readers may read the same text also has impact on public culture."¹⁷⁷

The exhibitionary process is a mechanism of internalization and opportunity. The internalization of certain behaviors and cues (picked up inside the museum and out, as we have seen) changes individuals and the way they behave in museums and society. The museum itself affords the visitor the opportunity to exhibit these internalized behaviors and take in more, resulting in the changed individual, the controlled civilian. The presence of Bennett's theory in James's writing signifies more than showing the depth of the exhibitionary complex. James's work served to further the ideals of the exhibitionary complex through reinforcing the role of museums to his readers. By putting his characters on display and allowing readers to learn from their behavior and experiences, he ingrains the exhibitionary complex deeper into nineteenth-century society. The presence of these ideas in books is important because of the wider readership and availability of such works. Additionally, between 1840 and 1880,

¹⁷⁷ Cathy N Davison, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 43.

an increase in respect for authors (as both professionals and personalities) potentially added more weight to their words.¹⁷⁸ Further proving Bennett's theory, and extending its application, is the idea that civilizing, educating, and regulating of the public through museums is also evident in ideas about promoting literacy and the institution of the library.

Print media dominated the nineteenth century. As cities expanded, their streets exploded with words—"signs, cards, posters, newspapers, and bills." These new forms of reading altered the landscape of American literacy, and from them "a new kind of public was born."¹⁷⁹ In the mid-1840s, the market for books exploded and readership increased, creating "the largest reading audience anyone had ever seen."¹⁸⁰ In addition to the expanding readership, the methods of distributing books

¹⁷⁸ Susan S. Williams, "Authors and Literary Authorship," in *A History of the Book in America, Volume III: The Industrial Book 1840-1880*, ed. Scott D. Casper, Jeffrey D. Groves, Scott W. Nissenbaum, and Michael Winship, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007) 99, 105.

¹⁷⁹ David M. Henkin, *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 7.

¹⁸⁰ John William Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States: Volume I: The Creation of an Industry 1630-1865*, (New York: R.R. Bowker Co., 1972), 207.

improved significantly. By the middle of the nineteenth century, "a national book distribution system was at work in the United States."¹⁸¹

The book business in America benefitted from the emergence systems allowing better access to information, products, and credit. New ways of disseminating information allowed publishers to regulate supply and demand more effectively. Distribution networks facilitated the movement of actual books to consumers. Credit allowed consumers to purchase goods and keep the book business afloat.¹⁸² During this period, new methods of production made manufacturing books easier, and cheaper as well.¹⁸³ These essential developments in the second half of the nineteenth century further served to expand readership in the United States.

¹⁸¹ Michael Winship, "The National Book Trade System: Distribution and the Trade," in *A History of the Book in America, Volume III: The Industrial Book 1840-1880*, ed. Scott D. Casper, Jeffrey D. Groves, Scott W. Nissenbaum, and Michael Winship, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007) 118.

¹⁸² Winship, "The National Book Trade System," 120.

¹⁸³ Michael Winship, "Manufacturing and Book Production," in *A History of the Book in America, Volume III: The Industrial Book 1840-1880*, ed. Scott D. Casper, Jeffrey D. Groves, Scott W. Nissenbaum, and Michael Winship, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007) 40.

Books reached consumers in a variety of ways. For the first half of the nineteenth century, jobbers bought books and sold them to local sellers, and publishers often sold to stores or directly to customers.¹⁸⁴ However, as the century progressed, a new system of distribution took hold. Rather than make several trips a year to the publishing centers in the United States, retail bookstores placed orders with traveling salesmen. This allowed for booksellers to purchase a variety of titles quickly, easily, and without the added expense of travel.¹⁸⁵ The ease of this process no doubt contributed to the fact that the public demanded current literature. A study conducted in 1877 by *Publisher's Weekly* concluded "nine out of ten inquiries at the bookstores concerned books of the current year."¹⁸⁶

Likely as a result of the improved manufacturing and distribution system, more bookstores opened in the United States as well. In 1859, *The American Publisher's Circular and Literary Gazette* conducted a survey of bookstores and

¹⁸⁴ Tebbel, *History of Book Publishing Volume I*, 229.

¹⁸⁵ Winship, "National Book Trade System," 127.

¹⁸⁶ Donald Henry Sheehan, *This Was Publishing: A Chronicle of the Book Trade in the Gilded Age*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1952), 31.

discovered two thousand stores in 843 cities and towns, averaging one bookstore for every fifteen-thousand people. By 1914, the *American Booktrade Manual* counted 3,501 bookstores.¹⁸⁷ Despite the increase in such establishments, rural areas still faced limited access to dedicated bookstores. However “there is limited evidence that access to printed material was impossible for those who desired it.”¹⁸⁸

Books also reached readers via serialization in magazines, followed by publication as a multi-volume set usually when the magazine run of a novel was one quarter from the end.¹⁸⁹ The literary magazines publishing serialized novels were extremely powerful during the nineteenth century. Magazines served as a “mediator” between the publishing industry and the public, affirming the quality of different texts, novels, and stories. Henry James’s normal avenue of publication, the *Atlantic Monthly*, marked the highest authority, and “the Atlantic-group magazines had greater authority over American literature than any other

¹⁸⁷ Sheehan, *This Was Publishing*, 189.

¹⁸⁸ Winship, “National Book Trade System,” 128–9.

¹⁸⁹ Simon Eliot, “The Business of Victorian Publishing,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. Dierdre David (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 49.

institution did" during the late nineteenth century.¹⁹⁰ The power of the *Atlantic* furthers the impact of James's work (and in turn, serves to engrain the exhibitionary complex into the public psyche). However, serial publication changed the way publishers printed and authors wrote. In order to obtain serialization, extremely common at the time, authors had to write for the magazine space, cutting works into short climactic stories with suspenseful installment endings, requiring a different pace to the story. On the other hand, novels tended to be longer, in order to fill the three volume requirements of publishers.¹⁹¹

The United States also imported and exported books. Michael Winship, in "The Transatlantic Book Trade and Anglo-American Literary Culture in the Nineteenth Century" offers evidence that Great Britain (James's home for much of the late nineteenth century) provided the vast majority of imported books to the United States, followed by Germany and France. Americans exported books to Canada, Britain, China, and South America. Interestingly, France provided the majority of imported books to Great Britain, but later in the nineteenth century the

¹⁹⁰ Nancy Glazener, *Reading for Realism*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 5.

¹⁹¹ Kate Flint, "The Victorian Novel and its Readers," 23.

United States emerged as a frontrunner in exporting to Britain. This international trade suggests the mixing of ideas across the Atlantic, and allows for greater influence and availability of an author's work.¹⁹² The movement across the sea of the European flâneur, thus expanding his influence to the growing population of readers in the United States marked an important effect of this mingling of ideas.¹⁹³

Increasing literacy in the United States remains perhaps the most important impact of the increased availability and lower cost of books. By the year 1880, illiteracy affected only 9 percent of the nation's native-born white population. It is important to note that while the incredible expansion of literacy and availability allowed more individuals to access printed material, the reading public remained primarily white. However, by 1880, "Rudimentary education and literacy . . . were widespread, although there was a large but decreasing racial divide."¹⁹⁴ In the

¹⁹² Michael Winship, "The Transatlantic Book Trade and Anglo-American Literary Culture in the Nineteenth Century," in *Reciprocal Influences: Literary Production, Distribution, and Consumption in America* eds. Steven Fink and Susan S. Williams (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), 100.

¹⁹³ Brand, *The Spectator and the City*, 63.

¹⁹⁴ Carl F. Kaestle, "Seeing the Sites: Readers, Publishers, and Local Print Cultures in 1880," in *A History of the Book in*

second half of the nineteenth century, the middle class “defined itself through what scholars have described as an ‘ideology of literacy’ that would, ideally, be available to all Americans.” This ideology of literacy, which argued that literacy “was essential to moral self-improvement and democratized citizenship,” is a clear extension of the exhibitionary complex.¹⁹⁵ Bennett’s notion of the role of museums applies not only to literature itself, but to the movement to encourage reading.

The widespread distribution, ease in printing, and changes in literacy brought about change in the role of print in the United States. Carl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway argue that by 1880, the United States transformed into a “culture of print.”¹⁹⁶ They state that the era between 1880 and 1940 represented a time of

America, Volume IV, Print in motion: The expansion of publishing and reading in the United States, 1880-1940, ed. Carl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 28–9.

¹⁹⁵ Scott D. Casper, Jeffrey D. Groves, Scott W. Nissenbaum, and Michael Winship, *A History of the Book in America, Volume III: The Industrial Book 1840-1880*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007) 279.

¹⁹⁶ Carl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway, “A Framework for the History of Publishing and reading in the United States, 1880–1940, in *A History of the Book in America, Volume 4, Print in motion: The expansion of publishing and reading in the United States, 1880-1940*, ed. Carl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 15.

“proliferating, ubiquitous, nearly inescapable print.”¹⁹⁷ Kaestle and Radway state that “The culture of print became so important during this period that virtually anyone with an idea, point of view, aim, desire, or intention had to engage within its precincts.”¹⁹⁸ In the late nineteenth century, print became not only available, but necessary. As a result of this change, “print was a key technology of power during this period.”¹⁹⁹ Thus, in the late nineteenth-century culture of print, books possess a power similar to exhibitions. They situate the reader in the organized display of a story or novel, and convey the same edifying and civilizing information. Furthermore, the ability to observe the behavior of characters and the panorama of the story allows the reader to internalize lessons and become self-regulating.

Victorian fiction emerged as a unique genre in the wake of the book’s new power. Dierdre David, in the introduction to *The*

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹⁹⁸ Carl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway, “Epilogue,” in *A History of the Book in America, Volume IV, Print in motion: The expansion of publishing and reading in the United States, 1880-1940*, ed. Carl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2009), 535.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 19.

Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel, compares Victorian fiction to the Great Exhibition, as a means of providing knowledge about the world, in order to “learn something about things, places, and people, formerly unknown.”²⁰⁰ In her estimation, books and museums are doing the same kind of work. The readership for novels exploded during this period, partially due to the previously mentioned ease in obtaining books, but the growth of cities and book advertising also added to the growth.²⁰¹ Nearly all of the forty-five best-sellers between 1860 and 1880 were novels.²⁰² By 1860, most middle-class families owned books, and a study of the Ohio frontier during the antebellum area yielded that more than half of families owned books, and 81 percent of those had three or more.²⁰³

Books appeared in nearly all Victorian parlors, and Victorians regularly read outside their homes, “and wherever they had free time: in railroad waiting rooms, on trains, on

²⁰⁰ Dierdre David, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. Dierdre David (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 6.

²⁰¹ Kate Flint, “The Victorian Novel and its Readers,” 19.

²⁰² Stevenson, *The Victorian Homefront*, 35.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 30.

benches and in gazebos in their backyards or in parks, and reclining on the grass or sitting on rocks during picnics.”²⁰⁴

Louise Stevenson argues that reading was such an essential part of Victorian life, it was not often written about in dairies—reading was too common to mention.²⁰⁵

The emergence of lending libraries played a significant role in the increase in the reading audience. The second half of the nineteenth century not only marked an expansion of the book publishing industry, it also represented the growth of the lending library in the United States. The public library and the museum share a variety of commonalities. Both institutions struggled with public taste. The museum’s famous question, to educate or entertain, plagued the library as well. In the 1870s, librarians lamented the fact that novels made up 75 percent of their circulation.²⁰⁶ Libraries grappled with their perceived public duty to provide appropriate educative and cultural pieces to their

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 23, 25.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 25.

²⁰⁶ Wayne A. Wigand, “The American Public Library: Construction of a Community Reading Institution,” in *A History of the Book in America, Volume IV, Print in motion: The expansion of publishing and reading in the United States, 1880-1940*, ed. Carl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2009), 432.

visitors, and the inherent obligation of a public institution to provide items desired by their visitors.²⁰⁷ Public libraries addressed this issue in a variety of ways, but it mirrors very much the debates about the role of the museum. Additionally, because libraries acquired books while museums acquired artifacts, these concerns about taste and education manifested themselves in this process.

A public library displays books on shelves, much in the same way museums display artifacts. The library also represents a venue for surveillance, for seeing and being seen (in fact, libraries at the time were constructed to facilitate viewing).²⁰⁸ While visitors can take parts of the displays in a library home, they had first to navigate the classification systems in place, much like Bennett's nineteenth century museums. A visitor to the library learned to move in its space, and learned their place in the increasingly classified and organized displays of books. A measure of self-regulation exists in the library as well. Individuals selected books from within the display, and a number of outside cultural forces informed their choices. The relationship between the library, the museum, and the book is a circular one.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 438.

Through the process of reading, individuals internalized new modes of thinking, informing their behavior and actions. The public then took these new changes into the museum, where they underwent a civilizing process, through which they became self-regulating. The library also afforded opportunities for civilizing and self-regulation. However, at the library citizens checked out more books, allowing the process to perpetuate. The notion of the book and the library as extensions of Bennett's exhibitionary complex requires and merits much more development. Yet, it seems logical that given the power of books and the similarities between libraries and museums, Bennett's theory reaches well beyond the museum-space and into the broader culture of the nineteenth century.

CONCLUSION

This study ends at the nexus of the exhibitionary complex, the flâneur, and the institution of the book. The presence of the exhibitionary complex and the flâneur, two characteristically nineteenth century institutions, in James's work has extremely broad implications. First, James's flânerie reinforces Dana Brand's argument that the flâneur played a significant role in American culture in the nineteenth century. It also connects to the larger cultural environment, in that James's flâneur served to influence the reading public by providing new modes of seeing, and new ways of self-regulating. The flâneur operates in the written word. The process of reading, internalizing, and subtly changing as a result of this interaction (unconscious to the reader) is the legacy of the flâneur. This process provides a model for the ways in which the exhibitionary complex, as a part of James's work, acted on his readers and a basis for the argument that the book itself acts as a mechanism for the same type of changes offered by the exhibitionary complex.

During the time Henry James wrote, books and print transformed into exhibitions in their own right. Therefore, the changes leading to the culture of print in the United States allow Bennett's exhibitionary complex to work on three levels. First, as

Bennett intended it to explain the operation of power in nineteenth-century museums. Secondly, the exhibitionary complex can be applied to the culture of print emerging in nineteenth-century America. The book and the library possess the same ability to share power and present it to the reading public. Finally, Bennett's exhibitionary theory works in both of the aforementioned ways in the work of Henry James. James utilizes actual museums in his work, presenting the same ideals and values as Bennett's nineteenth-century museum. However, on a larger scale, James's work in turn educates and encourages self-regulation, and ultimately a more civilized public in presenting his (and Bennett's) ideas about museums to a culture in which books hold the power of the exhibitionary complex as well.

This study of James's work raises several further questions. The presence and role of the flâneuse marks an important area of further study. Also, the connection between museums and place in James requires further investigation—his museums are often in Europe, offering the question of how Europe serves to civilize and regulate individuals. The idea of taste is also central to furthering this discussion. How James (and others) viewed taste, and the ability of individuals to learn

taste (versus being born with it) would add a significant dimension to the presence of the exhibitionary complex in his work.

The effects of the flâneur and the intersections between museums, libraries, and books offer evidence that the exhibitionary complex moved well beyond the walls of the museum. The larger cultural environment in the nineteenth century allowed for institutions and forms to act on each other in a broader landscape. As the exhibitionary complex impacted visitors, so did books, libraries, and the flâneur. This study merely scratches the surface at understanding the connections and influence of nineteenth-century institutions on one another, and many questions remain unanswered. The application of the exhibitionary complex on the book and the library require further investigation. Additionally, evaluating the presence of the exhibitionary complex and the flâneur in the work of more authors would yield more data, and give a broader picture of these forces at work (William Dean Howells and Edith Wharton, for example). The major question remains—how far did the exhibitionary complex go? How many institutions can it be applied to? How much impact did it have on the public? As this study shows, Bennett's theory applies to a much broader range

of nineteenth century institutions than just the museum. The far-reaching impact of its influence remains to be determined, but the presence of the exhibitionary complex in Henry James's work offers another layer of evidence that Bennett's work accurately reflected changes in modern society.

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