

the real thing henry james

The Real Thing Henry James: Exploring Authenticity in Art and Life

the real thing henry james is a phrase that immediately brings to mind the intricate dance between appearance and reality, a theme masterfully explored in Henry James's celebrated short story, "The Real Thing." This piece, first published in 1892, delves deep into the tensions between social class, representation, and artistic authenticity, making it a timeless study in human nature and creative expression. For readers and literary enthusiasts alike, understanding the nuances of "The Real Thing" by Henry James offers a fascinating glimpse into the complexities of truth and imitation within art.

Understanding "The Real Thing" by Henry James

Henry James's story centers around an artist and his encounter with a wealthy couple who believe they are the perfect models for his work. The narrative is rich with irony and subtle commentary on the relationship between reality and perception in the realm of art. The artist, tasked with creating authentic illustrations, finds himself grappling with the paradox of "the real thing" – the actual aristocrats – who paradoxically fail to embody the genuine qualities his art demands.

Plot Overview and Key Characters

The story follows an unnamed illustrator who is approached by Mr. and Mrs. Monarch, a refined couple from high society. They offer themselves as models for his illustrations, confident that their true social status makes them ideal subjects. However, the artist soon discovers that their mannerisms and attitudes are ill-suited for the roles he needs to portray. Their rigidity and self-importance clash with the flexibility and adaptability required for artistic representation.

In contrast, the artist's assistants, who come from humbler backgrounds, prove to be more effective models despite lacking the Monarchs' aristocratic credentials. This ironic twist highlights James's exploration of what it truly means to be "real" in art and life.

Thematic Depth in Henry James's "The Real Thing"

One of the reasons "The Real Thing" remains relevant is its rich thematic content, which touches on identity, class, and the nature of art itself.

Henry James uses his story to question societal assumptions and challenge the idea that outward appearances and social status automatically confer authenticity.

Class and Authenticity

At the heart of the story lies a critique of the rigid class distinctions prevalent in the late 19th century. The Monarchs' confidence in their suitability as models stems from their social standing, yet this very pride blinds them to the demands of artistic truth. James suggests that authenticity is not a matter of birthright but of genuine expression and adaptability. The story subtly critiques the aristocracy's inability to transcend their societal roles, making a broader statement about social mobility and the performative nature of class.

Artistic Representation and the Illusion of Reality

Henry James's exploration of art in "The Real Thing" is particularly insightful. The artist's struggle to capture the "real" essence of his subjects highlights the tension between reality and representation. The story plays with the idea that art is not a straightforward mirror of life but an interpretation that requires flexibility and imagination. The Monarchs, though "real" in the social sense, fail to become convincing artistic subjects because they cannot adapt to the needs of the artwork.

Literary Techniques and Style in "The Real Thing"

Henry James is renowned for his sophisticated narrative style, and "The Real Thing" is no exception. His use of irony, detailed characterization, and narrative perspective all contribute to the story's lasting impact.

Irony and Narrative Voice

The story's irony is subtle but pervasive. The Monarchs, who see themselves as the epitome of authenticity, are ironically the least convincing in the artist's eyes. The narrator's voice is both sympathetic and critical, offering readers a nuanced perspective that encourages reflection on the nature of authenticity. This layered narrative invites readers to question their own assumptions about social roles and artistic value.

Symbolism and Imagery

James employs symbolism to deepen the thematic resonance of the story. For instance, the Monarchs can be seen as symbols of rigid social structures, while the artist's assistants represent adaptability and the fluidity of identity. Imagery related to art and creation pervades the text, reinforcing the central conflict between appearance and essence.

Why "The Real Thing" by Henry James Matters Today

More than a century after its publication, "The Real Thing" continues to speak to contemporary audiences. Its exploration of authenticity, social performance, and artistic truth resonates in an age dominated by questions of identity and representation.

Relevance to Modern Discussions on Authenticity

In today's world, where social media and digital personas blur the lines between reality and performance, Henry James's story offers a prescient commentary on the challenges of being "real." The idea that authenticity is not tied to external status but to internal truth and adaptability remains powerful. Readers can draw parallels between the Monarchs' inflexibility and modern struggles with self-presentation and authenticity.

Insights for Artists and Creatives

For artists and creators, "The Real Thing" provides valuable insights into the relationship between subject and representation. The story reminds us that genuine artistic expression requires more than just replicating reality; it demands interpretation, empathy, and sometimes, the willingness to embrace the unexpected. This lesson is crucial for anyone engaged in creative work, whether in visual art, writing, or performance.

Exploring "The Real Thing" in Academic and Literary Circles

Henry James's story is a staple in literature courses and critical studies, often analyzed for its rich thematic complexity and stylistic mastery. Scholars have examined the interplay of social commentary and artistic philosophy within the text, making it a fertile ground for discussion.

Critical Interpretations

Many critics view "The Real Thing" as a meta-narrative about the act of creation itself. The story is seen as Henry James's meditation on the challenges artists face when trying to capture the essence of their subjects. Some interpretations focus on the story's implicit critique of social hierarchy, while others emphasize its exploration of illusion and reality.

Teaching "The Real Thing"

Educators often use the story to introduce students to themes of class, identity, and narrative technique. Its accessible yet layered storytelling makes it ideal for discussions about literary realism and the role of the artist. By engaging with the story, students can develop critical thinking skills and a deeper appreciation for the complexities of representation.

Tips for Reading and Appreciating "The Real Thing"

To fully enjoy and understand Henry James's "The Real Thing," consider these reading strategies:

- **Pay attention to characterization:** Notice how James uses subtle details to reveal the true nature of the Monarchs and the artist's assistants.
- **Reflect on the narrator's perspective:** The story is filtered through the artist's eyes, offering a biased but insightful viewpoint.
- **Consider the social context:** Understanding the class dynamics of the late 19th century enhances appreciation of the story's themes.
- **Think about the symbolism:** Look for recurring images and motifs that deepen the story's meaning.

Approaching the story with an open mind and curiosity about its layered meanings will enrich your reading experience.

Henry James's "The Real Thing" remains a compelling exploration of what it means to be authentic, both in art and in life. Its enduring relevance and intricate storytelling continue to captivate readers, inviting us all to question the nature of reality behind the masks we wear.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'The Real Thing' by Henry James about?

'The Real Thing' is a short story by Henry James that explores themes of art, reality, and representation through the experiences of an artist who hires a wealthy couple to pose as models, only to find their authenticity limiting his creative process.

Who are the main characters in Henry James's 'The Real Thing'?

The main characters are the artist-narrator, the Monarchs (the wealthy couple who pose as models), and two other professional models who contrast with the Monarchs in the story.

What is the central conflict in 'The Real Thing' by Henry James?

The central conflict revolves around the artist's struggle between using the Monarchs, who are the 'real thing' as aristocratic models, and the professional models who, despite not being aristocrats, better suit his artistic needs.

What themes are explored in Henry James's 'The Real Thing'?

The story explores themes such as the nature of reality versus representation, the role of authenticity in art, social class, and the complexities of artistic creation.

How does Henry James portray the concept of 'the real thing' in the story?

Henry James uses irony to show that the 'real thing' (the Monarchs) is not necessarily the best fit for artistic representation, suggesting that authenticity in life does not always translate to effectiveness in art.

Why is 'The Real Thing' considered an important work in Henry James's literature?

'The Real Thing' is regarded as a significant work because it deeply examines the relationship between art and reality, showcasing James's skill in psychological insight and his critique of social conventions.

Additional Resources

The Real Thing Henry James: A Critical Examination of Authenticity and Artifice

the real thing henry james is a phrase that resonates deeply within the realms of literary criticism and narrative inquiry. It refers not only to a specific short story penned by the American-British author Henry James but also encapsulates broader themes of authenticity, representation, and the complex interplay between reality and artifice. This article delves into an analytical exploration of "The Real Thing" by Henry James, unpacking its thematic richness, narrative technique, and its enduring relevance in discussions about the nature of truth and the artist's role.

Understanding "The Real Thing" by Henry James

Published in 1892, "The Real Thing" is one of Henry James's most studied short stories, often cited for its incisive examination of social class, identity, and the nature of representation within art. The narrative centers on an artist who employs a once-aristocratic couple as models for his work. The irony of the story lies in the fact that although these models embody "the real thing" in terms of social status and authenticity, their very presence and demeanor ultimately prove unsuitable for the artist's purpose.

This story challenges conventional notions about authenticity. James probes the question: what does it truly mean to represent "the real thing" in art? Is it a matter of social authenticity, or does artistic representation require a more nuanced, interpretive approach? The story's central tension arises from the disparity between the couple's authentic backgrounds and their inability to effectively function as artistic models.

Thematic Exploration: Authenticity vs. Representation

At the heart of "The Real Thing henry james" lies the exploration of authenticity. The story juxtaposes the aristocratic couple, identified as "the real thing," with professional models who, despite their lack of noble lineage, better fulfill the artist's needs. This contrast foregrounds a key theme: authenticity in art does not necessarily align with literal reality.

James critiques the social hierarchies of his time by illustrating how the couple, clinging to their aristocratic identity, fails to adapt to the demands of artistic representation. Their rigidity and self-importance hinder the creative process, while the more flexible, adaptable models—though socially "less real"—embody the artist's vision more effectively. This dynamic reflects James's broader commentary on social class and the fluidity

of identity.

Narrative Technique and Style

Henry James's narrative style in "The Real Thing" is characterized by subtle irony and psychological depth. The story is narrated by the artist himself, whose introspective and often ambivalent voice guides the reader through the unfolding drama. This first-person narrative allows an intimate glimpse into the artist's internal struggle between his respect for the couple's social standing and his practical frustrations in using them as models.

James's use of detailed description and nuanced dialogue enhances the story's themes. The meticulous portrayal of the couple's demeanor and the artist's observations underscore the tension between appearance and reality. The story's structure, moving from initial enthusiasm to eventual disillusionment, mirrors the artist's evolving perception and deepens the thematic complexity.

Contextualizing "The Real Thing" within Henry James's Oeuvre

Henry James's work frequently grapples with issues of perception, identity, and the limits of language and representation. "The Real Thing" fits squarely within this intellectual tradition, offering a microcosm of James's preoccupation with the intersections of social reality and artistic creation.

Comparative Analysis with Other Jamesian Works

When compared to other James stories such as "The Turn of the Screw" or "Daisy Miller," "The Real Thing" reveals a consistent concern with the ambiguity of truth and the unreliability of appearances. While "The Turn of the Screw" explores psychological and supernatural ambiguity, "The Real Thing" interrogates social and artistic authenticity.

In both "The Real Thing" and "Daisy Miller," James examines the clash between social classes and the misunderstandings that arise from these tensions. However, "The Real Thing" focuses more acutely on the artist's perspective, making it a particularly rich text for discussions about art theory and aesthetics.

Relevance in Modern Literary Criticism

Modern critics often highlight "The Real Thing" by Henry James as a seminal text for understanding the complexities of representation and authenticity in literature and art. The story anticipates contemporary debates in postmodernism about the constructed nature of reality and the role of the artist as mediator between truth and illusion.

Moreover, the story's portrayal of social class dynamics continues to resonate in discussions about privilege, identity politics, and the performativity of social roles. The tension between "real" identity and performative appearance invites readers to question the criteria by which authenticity is judged both in art and society.

Key Features and Literary Devices in "The Real Thing"

- **Irony:** The primary literary device driving the story's impact, irony highlights the discrepancy between the couple's social authenticity and their ineffectiveness as models.
- **Symbolism:** The aristocratic couple symbolizes the rigid social structures of the Victorian era, while the professional models represent adaptability and artistic utility.
- **First-person Narration:** Offers an intimate perspective on the artistic process and internal conflict.
- **Subtle Social Critique:** Embedded within the narrative, James critiques entrenched class prejudices and assumptions about authenticity.
- **Psychological Realism:** The story's portrayal of characters' inner lives and motivations reflects James's mastery of psychological complexity.

Pros and Cons of James's Approach in "The Real Thing"

- **Pros:**
 - Provides a nuanced exploration of authenticity beyond surface appearances.
 - Engages readers in reflective questions about art, class, and identity.

- Employs sophisticated narrative techniques that enrich thematic depth.

- **Cons:**

- The story's subtlety and irony may be challenging for casual readers seeking straightforward narratives.
- Its focus on Victorian social context might limit immediate accessibility for contemporary audiences unfamiliar with that era.

The Enduring Legacy of "The Real Thing henry james"

Over a century since its publication, "The Real Thing" remains a vital text for scholars and readers interested in the complexities of artistic representation and social identity. Its themes continue to inspire adaptations, critical essays, and debates within literary circles. Whether approached as a meditation on art or a critique of social stratification, the story's exploration of what constitutes "the real thing" invites ongoing reflection.

In an age where questions about authenticity—whether in digital media, branding, or cultural identity—are ever more pressing, Henry James's insight into the paradoxes of the "real" retains profound significance. Through its layered narrative and thematic intricacies, "The Real Thing" challenges readers to reconsider their assumptions about truth, art, and the elusive nature of reality itself.

[The Real Thing Henry James](#)

the real thing henry james: *Beschreibungs-Kunst* Gabriele Rippl, 2005 *Beschreibungs-Kunst* untersucht literarische Beschreibungstechniken wie Ekphrasis und Pikturalismus in sogenannten Ikontexten der anglo-amerikanischen AutorInnen Henry James, Ezra Pound, T. E. Hulme, H. D., D. H. Lawrence, Sylvia Plath, A. S. Byatt und Charles Simic. Den zwischen 1880 und 2000 entstandenen Romanen, Erzählungen und Gedichten liegt eine intermediale Poetik zugrunde, die Text und Bild zusammenbringt. Wenn es um die Bestimmung der spezifischen Eigenarten unterschiedlicher Medien und die Analyse ihres Zusammenspiels geht, erhalten solche literarischen Texte, die ihre eigene Medialität reflektieren, eine besondere Relevanz. Sie tragen in besonderem Maße dazu bei, den Ort der Literatur und die Rolle der Schrift in unserer Gesellschaft auszuloten.

Zu diesen Texten gehören die in Beschreibungs-Kunst untersuchten Beispiele, die auf vielfältige Weise mit ihrem medial Anderen, den Bildern, interagieren.

the real thing henry james: The Real Thing Miles Orvell, 2014-08-25 In this classic study of the relationship between technology and culture, Miles Orvell demonstrates that the roots of contemporary popular culture reach back to the Victorian era, when mechanical replications of familiar objects reigned supreme and realism dominated artistic representation. Reacting against this genteel culture of imitation, a number of artists and intellectuals at the turn of the century were inspired by the machine to create more authentic works of art that were themselves real things. The resulting tension between a culture of imitation and a culture of authenticity, argues Orvell, has become a defining category in our culture. The twenty-fifth anniversary edition includes a new preface by the author, looking back on the late twentieth century and assessing tensions between imitation and authenticity in the context of our digital age. Considering material culture, photography, and literature, the book touches on influential figures such as writers Walt Whitman, Henry James, John Dos Passos, and James Agee; photographers Alfred Stieglitz, Walker Evans, and Margaret Bourke-White; and architect-designers Gustav Stickley and Frank Lloyd Wright.

the real thing henry james: The Real Thing Henry James, 2023-10-01 The Real Thing by Henry James: Immerse yourself in the captivating world of Henry James as he explores the intricacies of human relationships, the complexities of art, and the blurred boundaries between reality and illusion in this thought-provoking collection of stories. Key points: Psychological Depth: Experience James' masterful portrayal of complex characters and their internal struggles, as he delves into the depths of human emotions, desires, and the nuanced dynamics of interpersonal relationships, offering readers a profound exploration of the human psyche. Art and Authenticity: Delve into James' examination of the nature of art and the quest for authenticity, as he raises questions about the true essence of artistic expression, the power of perception, and the elusive nature of truth, inviting readers to ponder the blurred lines between reality and artifice. Elegant Prose: Appreciate James' exquisite prose and meticulous attention to detail as he paints vivid scenes, creates richly textured narratives, and infuses his stories with a sense of subtle tension and emotional resonance, immersing readers in a world of subtle nuances and profound observations. The Real Thing by Henry James: The Real Thing, a collection of short stories by Henry James, offers a masterclass in psychological nuance and delicate storytelling. Known for his keen observations of human behavior, James delves into the complexities of relationships, social conventions, and the pursuit of authenticity. Through subtle narratives and finely drawn characters, he examines the blurred boundaries between reality and illusion, challenging readers to question their perceptions of truth and the masks people wear. With his elegant prose and intricate exploration of human emotions, James crafts tales that resonate deeply, inviting readers to contemplate the nature of identity and the intricate webs woven within our lives. The Real Thing is a testament to James's unparalleled literary craftsmanship and his ability to illuminate the subtlest shades of the human experience.

the real thing henry james: The Real Thing Terry Eagleton, 2024-01-01 A clear-sighted and entertaining defence of literary realism, and an account of its key practitioners Realist fiction is one of the most enduring artforms history has ever witnessed. By describing the intricate inner life of its characters, or widening its focus to set their experience in context, it can evoke the reader's sympathies as few other forms can. Yet it is also by and large a product of the middle classes: boldly individualist and fascinated by money, property, marriage, and inheritance. Can such realism survive in the postmodern age? Acclaimed critic Terry Eagleton explores realism's complex history, practice, and politics. Spanning several centuries, and including writers such as George Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, and Iris Murdoch, Eagleton offers a witty, entertaining defence of a form which offers both panoramic scope and individual nuance in an increasingly fragmented world.

the real thing henry james: Companion to Literature Abby H. P. Werlock, 2009 Praise for the previous edition: Booklist/RBB Twenty Best Bets for Student Researchers RUSA/ALA Outstanding Reference Source ... useful ... Recommended for public libraries and undergraduates.

the real thing henry james: Oscar Wilde Edouard Roditi, 1986 Edouard Roditi's critical study of Oscar Wilde, originally published in 1947 in New Directions' Makers of Modern Literature Series, was a pioneering attempt to evaluate a literary reputation long distorted by the journalistic appetite for scandal. Relegating biography to a back seat, Roditi addressed the importance of Wilde's ingenious, imaginative, and dialectical thought in his own time and showed how his poetry, novels, plays, and critical writings were a key influence in the shift of English and American literature away from established and aging Romanticism toward Modernism. For this first paperbound edition of his perceptive and erudite study of Wilde, Roditi has added three additional chapters touching on new material about Wilde as well as the new public attitudes about homosexuality that have evolved since the book was first published. An American long resident in Paris, Edouard Roditi is an internationally known linguist, scholar, art critic, and author and translator of a considerable number of works of fiction and poetry, criticism and biography. A collection of his witty and exotic short stories, *The Delights of Turkey*, is available under the New Directions imprint.

the real thing henry james: Photography Mary Warner Marien, 2006 Each of the eight chapters takes a period of up to forty years and examines the medium through the lenses of art, science, social science, travel, war, fashion, the mass media and individual practitioners.-Back Cover.

the real thing henry james: *"The Real Thing" als Spiegelung von Henry James' Ästhetik* Jessica Draper, 2006-10-27 Studienarbeit aus dem Jahr 2003 im Fachbereich Amerikanistik - Literatur, Note: 1,3, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Veranstaltung: Hauptseminar: Henry James, Sprache: Deutsch, Abstract: Die Bewegung des Ästhetizismus im England des ausgehenden 19. Jahrhunderts verdankt ihren Auftrieb verschiedensten Strömungen und Umständen jener Zeit. Die Bevölkerung des Viktorianismus, geprägt durch die Kolonialmacht Großbritanniens, Industrialisierung und Verstädterung erfuhr einen Umbruch des Denkens und einen durch verschiedenste Theorien begünstigten Glaubensverlust. Die Gesellschaft in dieser Epoche war verwirrt und ohne Halt, denn durch Darwins Beweis einer natürlichen Auslese und einer Abstammung des Menschen, war der sichere Glaube daran, Gott habe alles erschaffen, praktisch widerlegt. Durch den Umsturz aller Religionen verloren auch deren Glaubenssätze und moralische Forderungen an Einfluss. Auch die verschiedensten Theorien der Psychologie und der Philosophie begünstigten die moralische und spirituelle Krise dieser Zeit. Für das Proletariat, das gegen die argen Arbeitsbedingungen ankämpfte und für sich das Wahlrecht forderte, blieb durch den absurden Sozialdarwinismus kein Platz. Die Ästheten sahen sich als Gegenbewegung zum gängigen Kunstbegriff dieser Zeit, der durch sein Streben nach Wahrheit in Ausdruck und Darstellung definiert werden könnte. Der viktorianische Künstler sollte die Realität widerspiegeln, allerdings hierbei auf die zeitgemäßen moralischen, ethischen und religiösen Vorstellungen Rücksicht nehmen. Gegen diese Vorgaben rebellierte die kreativ Schaffenden der Bewegung des Britischen Ästhetizismus. Sie protestierten gegen die strengen sexuellen Moralvorstellungen, wollten schockieren, gegen die Etikette verstoßen, die Eigenheiten des Wahrnehmungsvermögens modifizieren, die eben dieses viktorianische Publikum charakterisierte. Der Begriff des Ästhetizismus ist schwer zu definieren, da sich unter dem Dach dieses Namens eine Fülle von Freigeistern miteinander verbunden sahen. Laut Kant soll das Ästhetische als ein gesonderter Bereich von Erfahrungen verstanden werden, Pater jedoch sieht das Ziel des ästhetischen Schülers darin, die Fähigkeit zu erlangen, Schönheit auf einfachstem Wege darstellen zu können.

the real thing henry james: **The Real Thing** Henry James, 2017-04-23 How is this book unique? Font adjustments & biography included Unabridged (100% Original content) Illustrated About The Real Thing by Henry James The Real Thing is a story by Henry James. This story, often read as a parable, plays with the reality-illusion dichotomy that fascinated James, especially in the later stages of his career. Plot Summary: The narrator, an unnamed illustrator and aspiring painter, hires a faded genteel couple, the Monarchs, as models, after they have lost most of their money and must find some line of work. They are the real thing in that they perfectly represent the aristocratic type, but they prove inflexible for the painter's work. He comes to rely much more on

two lower-class subjects who are nevertheless more capable, Oronte, an Italian, and Miss Churm, a lower-class Englishwoman. The illustrator finally has to get rid of the Monarchs, especially after his friend and fellow artist Jack Hawley criticizes the work in which the Monarchs are represented. Hawley says that the pair has hurt the narrator's art, perhaps permanently. In the final line of the story the narrator says he is content to have paid the price--for the memory.

the real thing henry james: The Real Thing Henry James, 2011-04-01 This perfectly wrought little tale of a painter struggling with his muse brings together a number of the most important themes that renowned American writer Henry James returned to again and again in his work -- the difficulty of artistic expression, the meaning of truth, and conflict between socioeconomic classes.

the real thing henry james: A Comprehensive Summary and Analysis of The Real Thing and Other Tales by Henry James Henry James, 2025-01-02 Henry James's "The Real Thing and Other Tales" is a collection of short stories that masterfully explore themes of art, authenticity, social class, and the complexities of human relationships. Through his signature intricate prose and psychological insight, James invites readers into the lives of artists, writers, and members of the upper class, revealing the delicate balance between appearance and reality. This summary will delve into the core narratives of "The Real Thing," "Sir Dominick Ferrand," "Nona Vincent," "The Chaperon," and "Greville Fane," highlighting their unique contributions to James's overall vision.

the real thing henry james: The Real Real Thing Wendy Steiner, 2010-11 A masterly performance by a penetrating, inquisitive mind, *Vie Real Real Thing* is that rarest of books, one whose provocations will inspire readers to take a new---and nuanced---look at the world around them. --Book Jacket.

the real thing henry james: The Real Thing Christina Slade, 2002 Television has been demonized as the cause of the moral decay of our society. Its content is derided as vapid. However, what we watch on television is often philosophically complex. This book examines news, cartoons such as South Park, advertisements, and soap operas and identifies complex moral dilemmas and arguments in them. It argues that we should apply analytical and philosophical skills directly to what we watch and shows how it can be done. In the final chapter, the way in which the news has been overtaken by the private lives of public figures is traced to a breakdown of the public-private divide.

the real thing henry james: The Play Within the Play Gerhard Fischer, Bernhard Greiner, 2007 The thirty chapters of this innovative international study are all devoted to the topic of the play within the play. The authors explore the wide range of aesthetic, literary-theoretical and philosophical issues associated with this rhetorical device, not only in terms of its original meta-theatrical setting - from the baroque idea of a *theatrum mundi* onward to contemporary examples of postmodern self-referential dramaturgy - but also with regard to a variety of different generic applications, e.g. in narrative fiction, musical theatre and film. The authors, internationally recognized specialists in their respective fields, draw on recent debates in such areas as postcolonial studies, game and systems theories, media and performance studies, to analyze the specific qualities and characteristics of the play within the play: as ultimate affirmation of the 'self' (the 'Hamlet paradigm'), as a self-reflective agency of meta-theatrical discourse, and as a vehicle of intermedial and intercultural transformation. The challenging study, with its underlying premise of play as a key feature of cultural anthropology and human creativity, breaks new ground by placing the play within the play at the centre of a number of intersecting scholarly discourses on areas of topical concern to scholars in the humanities.

the real thing henry james: Virtual Modernism Katherine Biers, 2013-10-01 In *Virtual Modernism*, Katherine Biers offers a fresh view of the emergence of American literary modernism from the eruption of popular culture in the early twentieth century. Employing dynamic readings of the works of Stephen Crane, Henry James, James Weldon Johnson, Djuna Barnes, and Gertrude Stein, she argues that American modernist writers developed a "poetics of the virtual" in response to the rise of mass communications technologies before World War I. These authors' modernist formal experimentation was provoked by the immediate, individualistic pleasures and thrills of mass culture. But they also retained a faith in the representational power of language—and the worth of

common experience—more characteristic of realism and naturalism. In competition with new media experiences such as movies and recorded music, they simultaneously rejected and embraced modernity. Biers establishes the virtual poetics of these five writers as part of a larger “virtual turn” in the United States, when a fascination with the writings of Henri Bergson, William James, and vitalist philosophy—and the idea of virtual experience—swept the nation. Virtual Modernism contends that a turn to the virtual experience of language was a way for each of these authors to carve out a value for the literary, both with and against the growth of mass entertainments. This technologically inspired reengagement with experience was formative for American modernism. Situated at the crossing points of literary criticism, philosophy, media studies, and history, Virtual Modernism provides an examination of Progressive Era preoccupations with the cognitive and corporeal effects of new media technologies that traces an important genealogy of present-day concerns with virtuality.

the real thing henry james: The American Short Story Handbook James Nagel, 2015-02-23 This is a concise yet comprehensive treatment of the American short story that includes an historical overview of the topic as well as discussion of notable American authors and individual stories, from Benjamin Franklin’s “The Speech of Miss Polly Baker” in 1747 to “The Joy Luck Club”. Includes a selection of writers chosen not only for their contributions of individual stories but for bodies of work that advanced the boundaries of short fiction, including Washington Irving, Sarah Orne Jewett, Stephen Crane, Jamaica Kincaid, and Tim O’Brien Addresses the ways in which American oral storytelling and other narrative traditions were integral to the formation and flourishing of the short story genre Written in accessible and engaging prose for students at all levels by a renowned literary scholar to illuminate an important genre that has received short shrift in scholarly literature of the last century Includes a glossary defining the most common terms used in literary history and in critical discussions of fiction, and a bibliography of works for further study

the real thing henry james: The Real Thing and Other Tales Henry James, 2021-01-28 The Real Thing and Other Tales Henry James

the real thing henry james: Toward a Sound Ecology Jeff Todd Titon, 2020-08-25 How does sound ecology—an acoustic connective tissue among communities—also become a basis for a healthy economy and a just community? Jeff Todd Titon's lived experiences shed light on the power of song, the ecology of musical cultures, and even cultural sustainability and resilience. In *Toward a Sound Ecology*, Titon's collected essays address his growing concerns with people making music, holistic ecological approaches to music, and sacred transformations of sound. Titon also demonstrates how to conduct socially responsible fieldwork and compose engaging and accessible ethnography that speaks to a diverse readership. *Toward a Sound Ecology* is an anthology of Titon's key writings, which are situated chronologically within three particular areas of interest: fieldwork, cultural and musical sustainability, and sound ecology. According to Titon—a foundational figure in folklore and ethnomusicology—a re-orientation away from a world of texts and objects and toward a world of sound connections will reveal the basis of a universal kinship.

the real thing henry james: *Figurenwissen* Lilith Jappe, Olav Krämer, Fabian Lampart, 2012-03-30 Der Sammelband liefert einen Beitrag zum Forschungsgebiet ‚Literatur und Wissen‘ und knüpft zugleich an die jüngere narratologische Diskussion zu literarischen Figuren an. Er präsentiert eine Reihe von Fallstudien, die Figurendarstellungen in fiktionalen narrativen Texten aus verschiedenen Nationalliteraturen und Epochen (vom 14. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert) analysieren. Die allen Einzelstudien übergeordnete Frage ist die nach den Funktionen des Wissens bei der Produktion und Rezeption literarischer Figuren: Untersucht wird, wie historische Formationen anthropologischen Wissens in literarische Figurenkonzeptionen eingegangen sind, wie Autoren die narrative Figurengestaltung zur Vermittlung von Wissen über Geschichte und Gesellschaft nutzen und welche Wissensstrukturen in die Rezeption literarischer Figurendarstellungen involviert sind. Die literaturwissenschaftlichen Untersuchungen werden ergänzt durch Beiträge aus Geschichtswissenschaft, Linguistik und Philosophie, die sich mit Figuren- bzw. Personendarstellungen außerhalb der Literatur und mit den Konzepten der Person und der

personalen Identität befassen.

the real thing henry james: *Literatur, Wissenschaft und Wissen seit der Epochenschwelle um 1800* Thomas Klinkert, Monika Neuhofer, 2008-12-10 Trotz der um 1800 gewonnenen Autonomie kommt es in der Literatur seither immer wieder zu poetologisch relevanten Auseinandersetzungen mit dem fremden System Wissenschaft. Dieses Phänomen wird hier aus komparatistischer Perspektive und unter Berücksichtigung folgender Fragestellungen betrachtet: Systemtheoretisch: Welchen Autonomiestatus besitzt ein System, wenn es sich durch nicht bloß punktuelle Anleihen mit einem anderen System vernetzt? Darstellungsästhetisch: Welche Folgen haben die Bezugnahmen auf Wissenschaft für literarische Darstellungsformen und Schreibweisen? Epistemologisch: Vermittelt Literatur ein ihr eigenes Wissen? Wenn ja, worin besteht dieses Wissen und wodurch unterscheidet es sich von nicht-literarischem Wissen?

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