

# Introduction

One welcomes the opportunity to present a chronology such as this, offering as it does a format for an intense articulation of James's biographical experiences, which are presented amid the detailed unfolding of his imaginative writing, and set in the larger context of historical developments that impinged on his life. The range of his experiences with other human beings is immense. The intensity of his efforts to honor them and himself is constantly evident, and his endless efforts to express his joyful and tragic experiences compel repeated admiration. More mundanely, we become witnesses of his day-to-day struggles with financial necessity, and of his insistence on partaking of the abundant pleasures of life, both while enduring penury and after being rewarded.

James was a prolific as well as an intensely committed writer, who created not only many novels, tales, and plays, but also travel writings reflecting his experiences especially in the United States, Britain, France, and Italy, and also published studies of novelists, poets, playwrights, painters, sculptors, and scholars, and in addition wrote autobiographies and many letters. He was especially influential not only because of the artistic excellence of his novels and tales, but also because of his discussions of the art of writing fiction in the prefaces to his works gathered in the New York Edition (1907–09), which initiated many ensuing critical and scholarly studies of the art, which extend to the present day.

In one of the first of these studies, *The Craft of Fiction* (1921), his friend Percy Lubbock called James the first real scholar of the art of writing fiction, who overcame the long-standing indifference of critical writing to the theory of fictional art. Using James's terms "pictorial" as distinguished from "dramatic" presentation, and emphasizing the importance of "point of view" and "organic form" in James's late, great novels, Lubbock furthered the extensive subsequent appreciation of James's artistry, and recognition of the importance of theoretical understanding in the appreciation of all fiction.