

**Postgraduate Student Conference 2014, Literature & Culture Colloquium
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“Henry James’s Prefaces to *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Golden Bowl* through the Lens of Walter Benjamin’s ‘The Author as Producer’”

This paper aims to discuss Henry James’s *Prefaces* to *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904) through the theoretic scope of Walter Benjamin’s 1934 essay “The Author as Producer,” given that both *Prefaces* discuss, in a meta-narrative gesture, James’s views on writing and on the final product of his labour. It will be argued that James’s meditations on style as expressed in the *Prefaces* can be fruitfully affiliated with Benjamin’s analysis of the author-as-producer. Apart from James’s widely accepted “friction with the market” and his awareness of writing as a commercial activity, the relation between authorship and production within the capitalist condition will be shown as by and large shaping and determining James’s reflection on his artistic means.