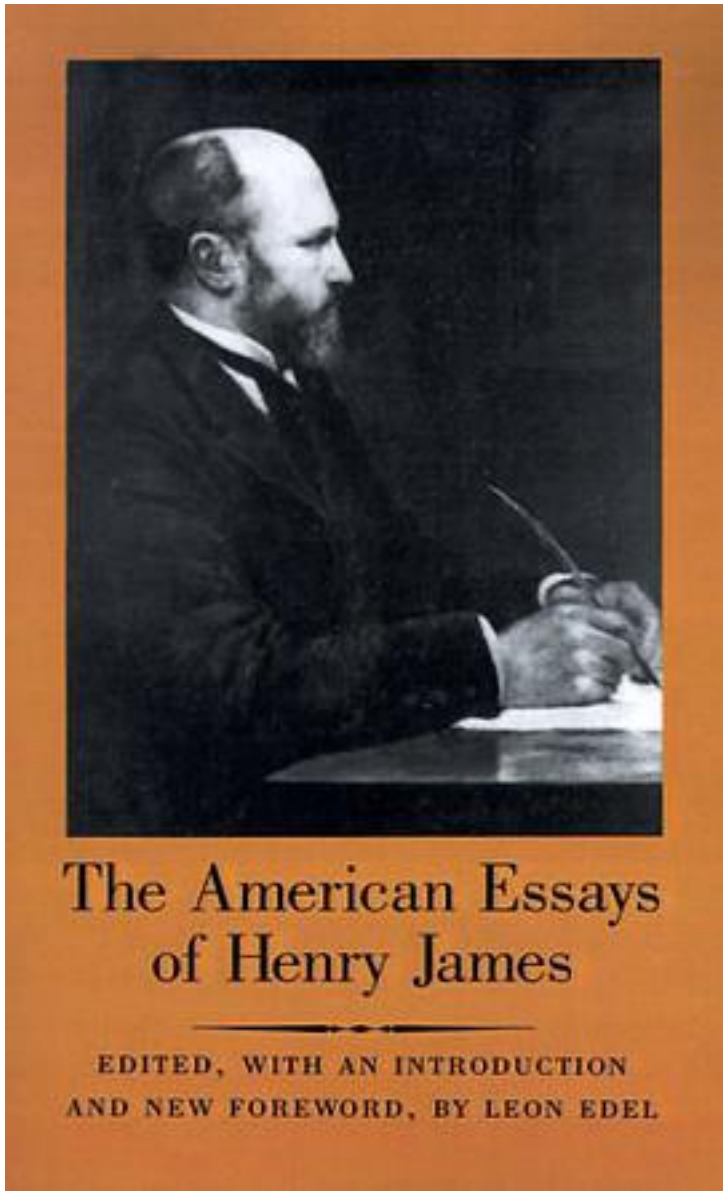


The American Essays of Henry James



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出版者:

出版时间:1990-1

装帧:

isbn:9780691014715

'No one, among American writers, was more contemporary or had a more powerful grasp of American history and American myth,' writes Leon Edel of Henry James. This collection of James' essays on American letters, together with some of his miscellaneous writings on other American subjects, is a pivotal document in the reassessment of James as less cloistered - and more American - than previously supposed. James is relaxed and informal as he writes of Emerson, Hawthorne, Lowell, Godkin, Norton, and Howells: he is fondly recalling - but also criticizing - the cultural orthodoxy in which he was reared. "The American Essays" remarkably prefigures current efforts to revise and challenge the aesthetic idealism of the Emersonian tradition.

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