

Vision and cognition: A scene from Henry James

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This paper begins with pointing to the major shift in the conceptualization of vision and cognition in the course of the nineteenth century caused by the so-called 'visual turn', the discovery, invention and application of new optical insights and gadgets. This shift caused a transformation of the material look of the world, but also of the way perception and thinking were modelled at the time. The paper discusses the consequences for narrative, namely the development of complex 'point of view' techniques and finally gives a reading of a scene from Henry James's *Wings of the Dove*. The reading asks how vision and cognition involved and triggered by the passage can be described with the means of cognitive approaches to literature.