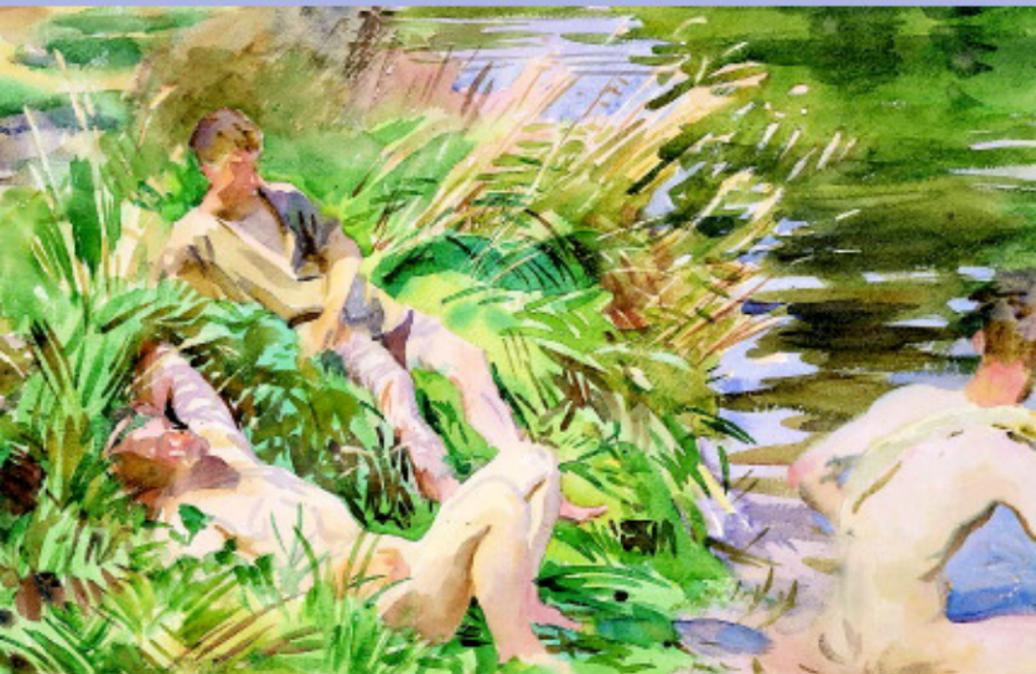


Eric Haralson

Henry James and Queer Modernity



CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE

more information - www.cambridge.org/9780521813945

This page intentionally left blank

HENRY JAMES AND QUEER MODERNITY

In *Henry James and Queer Modernity*, Eric Haralson examines far-reaching changes in gender politics and the emergence of modern male homosexuality as depicted in the writings of Henry James and three authors who were greatly influenced by him: Willa Cather, Gertrude Stein, and Ernest Hemingway. Haralson places emphasis on American masculinity as portrayed in fiction between 1875 and 1935, but the book also treats events in England, such as the Oscar Wilde trials, that had a major effect on American literature. He traces James's engagement with sexual politics from his first novels of the 1870s to his "major phase" at the turn of the century. The second section of this study measures James's extraordinary impact on Cather's representation of "queer" characters, Stein's theories of writing and authorship as a mode of resistance to modern sexual regulation, and Hemingway's very self-constitution as a manly American author.

ERIC HARALSON is Associate Professor of English at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He has published articles in such journals as *American Literature* and *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, and has contributed to *The Cambridge Companion to Henry James* (1998). He is also the editor of the two-volume *Encyclopedia of American Poetry* (1998, 2001).

CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Editor

Ross Posnock, *New York University*

Founding editor

Albert Gelpi, *Stanford University*

Advisory board

Sacvan Bercovitch, *Harvard University*

Ronald Bush, *St. John's College, Oxford University*

Wai Chee Dimock, *Yale University*

Albert Gelpi, *Stanford University*

Gordon Hutner, *University of Kentucky*

Walter Benn Michaels, *University of Illinois, Chicago*

Kenneth Warren, *University of Chicago*

Recent books in this series

- 132 WILLIAM R. HAWDLEY *Marriage, Violence, and the Nation in the American Literary West*
- 131 WILLIAM SOLOMON *Literature, Amusement and Technology in the Great Depression*
- 130 PAUL DOWNES *Democracy, Revolution and Monarchism in Early Modern American Literature*
- 129 ANDREW TAYLOR *Henry James and the Father Question*
- 128 GREGG D. CRANE *Race, Citizenship, and Law in American Literature*
- 127 PETER GIBIAN *Oliver Wendell Holmes and the Culture of Conversation*
- 126 PHILLIP BARRISH *American Literary Realism, Critical Theory and Intellectual Prestige 1880–1995*
- 125 RACHEL BLAU DUPLESSIS *Genders, Races and Religious Cultures in Modern American Poetry, 1908–1934*
- 124 KEVIN J. HAYES *Poe and the Printed Word*
- 123 JEFFREY A. HAMMOND *The American Puritan Elegy: A Literary and Cultural Study*
- 122 CAROLINE DORESKEI *Writing America Black: Race Rhetoric and the Public Sphere*
- 121 ERIC WERTHEIMER *Imagined Empires: Incas, Aztecs, and the New World of American Literature, 1771–1876*
- 120 EMILY MILLER BUDICK *Blacks and Jews in Literary Dialogue*
- 119 MICK GIDLEY *Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian, Inc.*
- 118 WILSON MOSES *Afrocentrism, Antimodernism, and Utopia*
- 117 LINDON BARRETT *Blackness and Value: Seeing Double*
- 116 LAWRENCE HOWE *Mark Twain and the Novel: The Double-Cross of Authority*
- 115 JANET CASEY *Dos Passos and the Ideology of the Feminine*

HENRY JAMES AND QUEER MODERNITY

ERIC HARALSON



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521813945

© Eric Haralson 2003

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provision of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published in print format 2003

ISBN-13 978-0-511-05850-9 eBook (Adobe Reader)

ISBN-10 0-511-05850-0 eBook (Adobe Reader)

ISBN-13 978-0-521-81394-5 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-81394-8 hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

From a love letter written by James Strachey, the famous translator of Sigmund Freud, to Rupert Brooke, the modern “Apollo” and doomed poet of World War One

January 7th, 1909, Hampstead, London

[Like you,] I also read Henry James. But it’s fairly gloomy living here with a lot of people who don’t in the least know what I’m thinking about, & who [would] hate me if they did . . . It [would] be some relief if I could talk to you about . . . things that I really care about. Shall I ever? . . . Somehow when I’m with you, there’s always a damned awkwardness. I, at least, so often don’t say what I mean . . . [T]hen I have ghastly moments sometimes, when it all seems to be explained by your . . . wishing most of the time that I weren’t there . . . I’m sure it’s all my fault; but I don’t see how. Can’t you help?

I [had] no notion all this was coming when I said that I also read Henry James. Shall I burn it?

Friends and Apostles: The Correspondence of Rupert Brooke and James Strachey, 1905–1914, ed. Keith Hale (1998)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	page viii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xii
Introduction	I
1 Indiscreet anatomies and protogay aesthetes in <i>Roderick Hudson</i> and <i>The Europeans</i>	27
2 The elusive queerness of “queer comrades”: <i>The Tragic Muse</i> and “The Author of ‘Beltraffio’ ”	54
3 <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> , or: The Dispossessed Hearts of Little Gentlemen	79
4 Masculinity “changed and queer” in <i>The Ambassadors</i>	102
5 Gratifying “the eternal boy in us all”: Willa Cather, Henry James, and Oscar Wilde	134
6 “The other half is the man”: the queer modern triangle of Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, and Henry James	173
Coda: “Nobody is alike Henry James.” Stein, James, and queer futurity	205
<i>Notes</i>	214
<i>Bibliography</i>	243
<i>Index</i>	259

Acknowledgments

This book considers how five American authors, and a few of their British counterparts, contended with new models of categorizing identity, especially gender and sexual identity, in the crucial period of cultural history that extends from the mid-1870s to the mid-1930s. I have been particularly interested in studying the strategies of resistance to such categorization found in their works – the often subtle ways in which they sought to combat evolving patterns of discrimination towards “deviance” or to turn new regimes of “difference” to the advantage of *their* differences, writing also on behalf of others marked out as “queer” or self-identifying against prevailing norms. Here it is my pleasant task to identify and categorize the many debts I have accrued during the course of this project, to distinguish among the persons, of various complex and engaging identities, without whose help and comradeship this book would not have been possible.

Although Columbia graduate school is now distant enough for nostalgia to have set in, very present to my mind is the invaluable guidance of my dissertation director, Jonathan Arac, the epitome of professionalism, intellectual endeavor, and warm collegiality. I was also fortunate to have as dissertation readers Robert A. Ferguson and Andrew Delbanco, whose prestige as scholars and teachers of American literature does not need my further testimonial, but I am glad to give it anyway. I am also happy to remember the steadfast support of Karl Kroeber, who was a constant source of mental agitation and buoyant humor. My memory of these fine mentors is aided by the circumstance that they continue to take an interest in my career and to nurture my development.

“Out there” in the field at large, David Leverenz, Leland Person, and Michael Moon did me the timely favor of believing in the potential of my work almost before I did, and they, too, still guide the way in their exemplary scholarship and professional generosity. Although attempting to be chronological, I see I have already broached the category of “Jamesians,” so without trying to restrict my fellow Jamesians to that label (we try to be

widely curious, like the author we study), I want to thank a few more of them. In cases where I have committed an unwitting theft of their ideas, they themselves are to blame for having such seductive insights in the first place. I refer to, and express my gratitude to, Wendy Graham, Christopher Lane, Jonathan Levin, and David McWhirter (a special thanks to him for strategizing with me during the trials of seeking a publisher).

For providing me with opportunities to try out portions of the book's argument in the agora, my thanks (again) to Lee Person (Midwest Modern Language Association) and David McWhirter (Chicago MLA); to yet further outstanding Jamesians, Michael Anesko (Chicago MLA) and Sheila Teahan (Twentieth-Century Literature Conference, Louisville); and to Joseph Bristow (UCLA Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library). For helping in various ways to get my scholarship into print, I am grateful to Sara Blair, Wai Chee Dimock, Susan M. Griffin (editor of the excellent "new" *Henry James Review*), Joseph Litvak, Peggy McCormack, Gary Scharnhorst, and Tom Wortham. Under the heading of general moral support and refreshing dialogue, I am happy to thank Rick Bozorth, Gert Buelens (yet another exemplar of the species "Jamesian"), Jerry Rosco, Melissa Solomon, and Jonathan Veitch. A very special thanks to my dear friend Jennifer Fleischer, for setting me the example of superior scholarly productivity, as well as for many hours of pretenure coaching and counseling.

Among my colleagues at Stony Brook, I express my appreciation to Bruce Bashford for unstinting help and enlightenment on the topic of Oscar Wilde; to Adrienne Munich for far-ranging exchanges on the Victorians and moderns (and occasional jokes at their expense); and to Joaquin Martinez-Pizarro for many welcome contributions to my reading list. Paul Dolan, who knows the James brothers inside out, offered useful leads on research directions. My new Americanist colleague Susan Scheckel provided thoughtful encouragement of my ideas, as did my long-time Americanist colleague David Sheehan. And while I am still in the category of "Americanists," a particularly warm thanks to Stacey Olster, who has helped my work in countless ways, not least by shepherding my "case" through the tenure process. I have enjoyed good administrative support, including leave time to finish the manuscript, and wish to thank Nancy Tomes, Pamela Thompson, and my current chair and valued colleague, Peter Manning. Our superb staff persons in the English Department, Clare Logan, Martha Smith, Carol DeMangin, and Janet Cea, continue to foster my work and brighten my workday. I would also like to thank the many participants in my graduate seminars over the past seven years – the talented rising

generation in our profession – for teaching me so much about my research topics and compelling me to test, refine, and often revise my thinking.

This brings me to the most challenging category of all – that of my exceptional mentors – because each person listed here deserves separate praise. To begin with Martha Banta, I can only hope to be as prolific and as consistently interesting (sacred Jamesian word) on Henry James and so much else in American literature as she has been in her distinguished career. Thinking of our many conferences together, and our purely social “larks” in New York and Los Angeles, I cannot imagine a better friend or a more thought-provoking dinner companion. Richard Dellamora and I struck up our friendship in convention-land as well, the “alternative” Whitman gathering at Penn almost a decade ago: I thank him for his sponsorship of my work, for the inspiring example of his own, and for many enlarging conversations on James, Wilde, and their milieux. My debt of gratitude to Jonathan Freedman is especially large, encompassing his generous support as editor of the *Cambridge Companion to Henry James*, his careful help with the manuscript of this book, his own stellar scholarly contributions, and his bountiful sense of “fun” (Jamesians tend to put this word in quotation marks). In all things Jamesian, Hawthornean, and Forsterian, Robert K. Martin has been an intellectual *provocateur par excellence*; we, too, have cultivated the habit of conference socializing, to the point where the MLA is not the MLA without his good company and witty, thoughtful commentary. Last in this category, but only alphabetically so, is John Carlos Rowe, who embodies many of my own professional aspirations, being an unsurpassed Jamesian, a wide-ranging Americanist who is helping to redefine and broaden what “Americanist” means, a politically committed teacher and scholar, and a democratic spirit who distinctively blends and balances the modes of dialogue, critique, and camaraderie.

For Cambridge University Press, the editor of the series in which this book appears, Ross Posnock, does not require me to burnish *his* Jamesian credentials, but I am pleased to testify to his additional virtues of patient kindness and unfailing guidance and support. Ray Ryan has been especially thoughtful and instructive, and I have appreciated the prompt expertness and pleasant reassurances of Rachel DeWachter, Nikki Burton, Jayne Aldhouse and Karl Howe. Kevin Broccoli helped me immensely with indexing, and Hilary Hammond supplied both meticulous copyediting and good cheer. My gratitude to the press designer for making such a handsome book, and a special thanks to Dr. H. Barbara Weinstein, Curator of the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for permitting me to use Sargent’s superb watercolor, *Tommies Bathing*, for the jacket design.

Closer to home, Ann Sullivan helped me to keep body and soul together during the critical last stages of the project. Gretchen Knapp read the introduction and the James chapters, and offered many constructive suggestions for clarifying the organization and improving the prose; her assistance was vital to finishing the book. Although he is not a local presence, but rather half way around the world, my oldest friend in the world, Patrick Cheung, is always an intimate presence; my thanks to him for all the encouragement, love, and laughs along the way. Finally, this book owes everything to the beloved sustainers of my life: my parents and best champions, Kathryn Griswold Haralson and the late Howard Haralson; my second set of parents and boosters, Janice Notkin and the late Dr. Jerome Notkin; my wonderful siblings, Scott, Becky, and Kathy, and their equally wonderful families; and the dearest and deepest in my heart, Susan Notkin, Sara Haralson, and Lucas Haralson. I am delighted to dedicate this book to the most supportive spouse in academic history (the trial was long and thorough), and to our two beautiful children, who represent what James would call “the fine seed of the future.”

Abbreviations

- A* *The Ambassadors* (1903), ed. S. P. Rosenbaum, New York: W. W. Norton, 1964.
- AB* “The Author of ‘Beltraffio’” (1884/5), in Leon Edel (ed.), *The Complete Tales of Henry James*, vol. v, Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1962–5. (Text is taken from *Stories Revived*, London 1885, and thus substantially follows the original form in *English Illustrated Magazine*, June–July 1884.)
- ABT* *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, in *Writings 1903–1932*, ed. Catherine R. Stimpson and Harriet Chessman, New York: Library of America, 1998.
- AM* *The American* (1877), ed. James W. Tuttleton, New York: W. W. Norton, 1978.
- AS* *The American Scene* (1907), ed. W. H. Auden, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946.
- AU* *Autobiography* (1913/14), ed. Frederick W. Dupee, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- CH* Roger Gard (ed.), *Henry James: The Critical Heritage*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968.
- CR* Kevin J. Hayes (ed.), *Henry James: The Contemporary Reviews*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- CS* *Collected Stories*, New York: Vintage Classics, 1992. (Contains “Flavia and her Artists” and “Paul’s Case,” both 1905.)
- DG* *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985. (Text is taken from the revised and expanded book version published by Ward, Lock & Co., 1891.)

- DS *Dear Sammy: Letters from Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas*, ed. Samuel M. Steward, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.
- EA *Everybody's Autobiography*, Cambridge, MA: Exact Change, 1994.
- EN *Willa Cather: Early Novels and Stories*, ed. Sharon O'Brien, New York: Library of America, 1987. (Contains *O Pioneers!*, *The Song of the Lark*, *My Ántonia*, and *One of Ours*.)
- EU *The Europeans* (1878), Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985. (Text based on the original edition published by Macmillan, 1878.)
- FA *Four in America*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947. (Contains the essay "Henry James.")
- GHA *Green Hills of Africa*, New York: Scribner's, 1935.
- GL Byrne R. S. Fone (ed.), *The Columbia Anthology of Gay Literature: Readings from Western Antiquity to the Present Day*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
- L I, II, III, IV *Henry James: Letters*, volume I, 1843–1875, ed. Leon Edel, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974; volume II, 1875–1883, 1975; volume III, 1883–1895, 1980; volume IV, 1895–1916, 1984.
- LC 1 *Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers, English Writers*, ed. Leon Edel, New York: Library of America, 1984.
- LC 2 *Literary Criticism: French Writers, other European Writers, the Prefaces to the New York Edition*, ed. Leon Edel, New York: Library of America, 1984.
- LL *Henry James: A Life in Letters*, ed. Philip Horne, Harmondsworth: Viking/Penguin, 1999.
- MF *A Moveable Feast*, New York: Scribner's, 1964.
- MOA *The Making of Americans: Being a History of a Family's Progress*, Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1995.
- N *The Notebooks of Henry James*, ed. F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock, New York: George Braziller, 1955.
- PC *The Princess Casamassima* (1886), Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986 (text is taken from the first edition, published by Macmillan & Co., 1886).

- PH* *The Professor's House*, New York: Vintage Classics, 1990.
- RH* *Roderick Hudson* (1875), Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981. (Text is taken from the first revised text, published by Macmillan & Co., 1879.)
- SA* *Letters of Sherwood Anderson*, ed. Howard Mumford Jones and Walter B. Rideout, Boston: Little, Brown, 1953.
- SAM* *Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs: A Critical Edition*, ed. Ray Lewis White, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1969.
- SAR* *The Sun Also Rises*, New York: Scribner's, 1926/1954.
- SL* *Ernest Hemingway, Selected Letters, 1917–1961*, ed. Carlos Baker, New York: Scribner's, 1981.
- SP* *Willa Cather: Stories, Poems, and Other Writings*, ed. Sharon O'Brien, New York: Library of America, 1992.
- T* *The Torrents of Spring: A Romantic Novel in Honor of the Passing of a Great Race*, New York: Scribner/Simon & Schuster, 1998.
- THJ* *Tales of Henry James*, ed. Christof Wegelin, New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1984.
- TL* *Three Lives: Stories of the Good Anna, Melanctha and the Gentle Lena*, New York: Dover, 1994.
- TM* *The Tragic Muse* (1890), Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978 (text follows the first edition of 1890).
- TS* *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), in *The Turn of the Screw and Other Short Novels*, New York: New American Library, 1962 (text follows first American appearance in book form in *The Two Magics*, Macmillan, 1898).
- WO* *Winesburg, Ohio*, New York: Viking, 1969.
- WP* I, 2 William M. Curtin (ed.), *The World and the Parish*, volume I, *Willa Cather's Articles and Reviews, 1893–1902*; volume II, *Willa Cather's Articles and Reviews, 1893–1902*, Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1970.

Introduction

So much of life is queer, if we but dare feel its queerness.

(Sherwood Anderson, *Memoirs*)

As the most politically charged term in my title, with respect to both literary criticism and the *realpolitik* of contemporary culture, “queer” deserves primary attention among my definitional tasks, before I can begin to examine the questions that underlie this study. Although it is hard to generalize about a field as diverse and proliferating as queer studies, especially one that programmatically prides itself on constant self-querying and self-renovation, the current mood in this subdiscipline seems introspective, even uneasy, after a long decade of evolution. Originally, the conceptual terminology of “queerness” (or “queer”) drew its analytical and political force from the very quality that made it so appealing, as well, to Victorian and modernist authors and readers: a fluency or an indeterminacy of signification that was felt to be at once powerful and elusive. In *Saint Foucault*, for instance, David Halperin suggests that both the intellectual value and the subversive potential of *queer* depended on its being defined as indefinite, its referentiality mobile and contingent rather than fixed: “Queer is by definition *whatever* is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. *There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers*. It is an identity without an essence . . . describing a horizon of possibility whose precise extent and heterogeneous scope cannot in principle be delimited in advance.”¹ One impetus of this challenging anti-definition (challenging in every sense) was clearly the desire to push against the damaging epistemological operations whereby the modern sex/gender system conflated identities with essences and fastened down referentiality in order to categorize, weed out, and punish those who were “at odds.” The work of Judith Butler has put perhaps the strongest stamp on contemporary theorizings of sexual discourse, discussing the attempted reclamation (or “discursive resignification”) of *queer* from its history of abuse and the strategic exploitation of its contingency

to turn a vicious stigma into a “term of affiliation” for purposes of lesbian advocacy or antihomophobic critique.² Butler, like Halperin, conceives of the discursive transience of *queer* in the most radical possible fashion, suggesting that the politically necessary fictions of stable identity that the word names or inspires will have to adapt as oncoming generations of speakers and writers trope *queerness* into new shapes or possibly even out of existence.

Yet the democratic ebullience and liberating effects of such thinking – already conditional in Halperin’s formulations³ – have recently been qualified by warning sounds from some of the ablest practitioners of queer reading. Marilee Lindemann, whose work on Willa Cather informs my chapter on Cather’s formative triangular relationship with her precursors Henry James and Oscar Wilde, observes that in academic literary criticism, “the assault on heteronormativity . . . has come to seem not revolutionary but routine,” to the point where embracing the term *queer* for its subversive flexibility has become “not merely generous or pragmatic but evasive and risky.”⁴ Marjorie Garber concedes the need for a word to describe “transgressive self-invention,” but wonders (*pace* Butler’s more hopeful view) whether the lessons exemplified in Wilde’s rhetorical strategies might not be forgotten, causing *queer* to reify as “yet another essentialized identity or political faction.”⁵ Leo Bersani moves in a different direction entirely, suggesting that no matter who is performing the queer reading, or how it is performed, the practical effect on the established order may be puny at best.⁶

I want to advance as a fundamental principle in approaching the conceptual task, and then in undertaking queer readings of my five main authors – James, Cather, Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, and Sherwood Anderson – that the critical posture recommended by the latter author, as expressed in the epigraph above, will be not merely useful but methodologically vital. Feeling or reading the “queerness” in life, in literature, in the very diction of *queer* – where *queer* itself is not limited to but manifestly includes matters of sexuality – is substantially a factor of *daring* to feel or see or read queerness. What differentiates the work of these American authors from most of their predecessors is their alert receptivity to this queerness, to the strange combinations that modern life casts up: a receptivity – sometimes despite powerful internal resistance, and sometimes even through the screen of homophobic prejudice – to modernity itself. “Queer” is so interwoven with the modern, and the modern with the queer (though neither is simply reducible to or synonymous with the other), that one’s reading practice must be equally receptive.

This is not to say that one should succumb to what Rita Felski describes – and well resists – as “an over-arching meta-theory of modernity”

that grants interpretative superiority to present-day perspectives. Rather, the critical project must be to track “the mobile and shifting meanings of the modern as a category of cultural consciousness” by seeking to recover, as much as possible, the representations of modernity sanctioned by the historical objects being surveyed. This effort seems especially acute in addressing the span of years under consideration here – from 1875, when James published *Roderick Hudson* and began writing *The American*, to the mid-1930s, the period of Stein’s *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and *Four in America*, with its important chapter on James. This sixty-year swath of cultural history witnessed a heightened preoccupation with “narratives of innovation and decline,” as well as the self-conscious mobilization of “the modern” as a master trope by which Anglo-American society sought to understand itself. In Felski’s helpful summation, “‘modernity’ thus refers not simply to a substantive range of sociohistorical phenomena – capitalism, bureaucracy, technological development, and so on – but above all to particular (though often contradictory) experiences of temporality and historical consciousness.”⁷

For Henry James, the struggle to articulate a modern manhood – apart from the normative script of a fixed national identity, a vulgarizing, homogenizing career in business and commerce, a middle-class philistinism and puritanical asceticism in the reception of beauty, and crucially, a mature life of heterosexual performance as suitor, spouse, physical partner, and paterfamilias – resulted in his valorizing the character of the disaffiliated aesthete. To what degree this modern aesthete’s difference from other men may be attributed to “queerness” in the emergent sense of “homosexuality” shall be discussed later. What is striking and symptomatic about the work of all the authors I will examine, starting with James, is that while they simultaneously fostered the association between “queer” and “homosexual,” they also sought to contain, constrain, and rhetorically manage the implications of that linkage: in effect, to mean only so much, or to mean it only so distinctly, in the way of sexual meanings. The “queerness” of their texts always opens on to a larger field of difference(s). Lindemann, for example, has noted that the recurrent word *queer* in Cather is a marker not only of “sexual ambiguity” but also of ethnic difference or corporeal distortion;⁸ sometimes just the vague community impression that a young man “don’t seem to fit in right,” as in the case of Claude Wheeler in *One of Ours*, is enough to brand him *queer*, though the sexual implications of his difference must be patiently extracted from context (*EN* 1050).

James himself dramatizes the broader spirit of Anderson’s above-quoted remark in the so-called Lambinet scene of *The Ambassadors*, which

culminates in Lambert Strether's acceptance of the novel's sexual intrigue; the unfolding, quasimystical events of his fateful day of discovery strike this well-read man as being "as queer as fiction" (*A* 308). This reflexive gesture of James's text makes for meaningful fun, suggesting that a realist fictional practice inevitably blurs the line that only seems to set the novelistic genre apart *as* fiction. Whatever is "queer" in literature seeps into the queerness of modern social reality, just as whatever is "queer" in reality may turn up in literature. In pointing to this coincidence or interpermeability of zones of queernesses, James instructs his readers that they, too, should be prepared for startling recognitions such as Strether's: for the exposure of a potent secret or "a *lie* in the charming affair" that constitutes the public surface of social life, and more particularly, for the revelation of a "deep truth of . . . intimacy" precisely where they (like Strether) have labored not to notice or acknowledge it – in other words, where they have not dared to feel it (*A* 311, 313).

Oh, *prefer?* oh yes – queer word. I never use it myself. (Herman Melville, *Bartleby, the Scrivener*, 1853)

Despite this contiguity, in *The Ambassadors*, between the word *queer* and a form of intimacy (technically, adultery) in violation of community norms, especially the norms of American post-Puritanism, it is not immediately apparent how phenomena "as queer as fiction," or phenomena queer *in* fiction of the Victorian and modern periods, can be related to the discourse of sexuality, or homosexuality, as such. Indeed, Strether's mental phrasing seems almost to lead *away* from eroticized resonances by recalling the sheer abundance and diversity of "queer" things in Anglo-American literature from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, most of which have no evident connection to sexuality. Even a highly selective catalog suggests the term's extraordinary range of application and, partly as a result, its diffuse referentiality. For instance, Anglo-American prose as well as verse of this vintage regularly featured dwellings or places of business that were "queer" in atmosphere, furnishing, or architectural condition: queer shops, lodgings, castles, gables, looking glasses, smelling bottles, and so forth. Characters in fiction notoriously succumbed to "queer" states of affect or imagination – queer moods, fancies, ideas, or reminiscences – or fell into "queer" habits and forms of self-expression: queer grins, laughs, looks, noises; queer little dances, tunes, ditties; queer "ways of putting it." If manners or bodies or faces became "queer" *enough*, the persons exhibiting them were set down as queer fellows, chaps, or creatures, or sometimes evoked more colloquially as queer birds or queer fish. Extreme manifestations

aroused suspicion that a person might be “queer in the head” or possibly residing in “Queer Street,” that populous thoroughfare, running through the pages of especially English literature from Charles Dickens to Robert Louis Stevenson to Evelyn Waugh, where residents suffered from unspecified but unseemly “difficulties”; some of these unfortunates were probably “on the queer,” as well, or living by forgery and theft, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* clarifies.⁹

In works by other prominent authors the reader learns even more about the proliferation of “queer” possibilities. Sailors could be dangerously, even fatally “queer” toward one another (Herman Melville, *Billy Budd*, 1886–91); “single gentlemen lodgers” were “a queer lot” (Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent*, 1906/7); men apparently had to worry about women “turning ‘queer’” with age (Edith Wharton, *Ethan Frome*, 1911); genius, too, could be a “queer thing” (James Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1922); horses might think it “queer” to stop without a farmhouse near (Robert Frost, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” 1923); and female poets were *also* “a queer lot” (Amy Lowell, “The Sisters,” 1925).¹⁰ As these and other literary examples suggest, “queerness,” whether in persons or in things, often referred to an *internal* heterogeneity – perhaps a character who was a “queer mixture” of contraries (as in James’s own “Daisy Miller,” 1878) or a dry goods store that contained a “queer jumble” of wares (Anderson’s *Winesburg, Ohio*, 1919) – that simultaneously perplexed, attracted, alienated, and possibly mirrored the putatively normal outside observer (*THJ* 22; *WO* 196). At a minimum, it is safe to say that queer “happenings,” objects, and types abounded in Victorian and modern fiction, so that James’s Strether, whose adventures in alterity while abroad in Europe render him “changed and queer,” was far from alone in his impressions and sensations (*A* 317).

But again, what might this rampant queerness in literature written between the mid-1870s and the mid-1930s have to do with sexuality? Is it necessary that an author *intend* for a text to be queer in order for it to be read queerly? One premise of this book is that each of these instances, and others that will be drawn from the work of my five main authors, participates to some degree in the broad, complex cultural process – a process uneven, shadowy, and multiply sited – by which “queer” came to include “homosexual” among its meanings, first in urban subcultures in New York, Paris, London, and elsewhere, and increasingly in popular parlance and mainstream media. To adapt Butler’s theoretical terms, these textual instances constitute a formative (if inchoate) chapter in the strategic resignification of *queer* that would cohere as a political force in the 1980s. Clearly, some of these early examples can be more readily related than others (such as

Frost's pensive little pony) to the troping of *queer* into the vocabulary of sexual difference – the initially underground but ultimately very public discourse tradition in which *queer* (as well as *gay*) came to be “used . . . tactically” by men (and only somewhat less by women) to “position themselves and negotiate their relations with other men, gay and straight alike.”¹¹

As in the case of *The Ambassadors*, one often discerns this process in suggestive juxtapositions and contexts of usage, especially since the sexual shading of *queer* was bound to be muted and nuanced instead of self-advertising during this period. The claim is not that diction definitively establishes a character's homosexuality, nor that the examples in question necessarily signal the circulation of same-sex desire among the professional classes of London (near Stevenson's “Queer Street” in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*),¹² the sailors of the merchant marine (in Melville's *Billy Budd*), or among the denizens of men's boardinghouses (in Conrad's *Secret Agent*), but rather that the recurrent recourse to *queer* to evoke an uncanny emotion or a densely homosocial environment indicates the term's adaptability or inclination to its evolving sexual meaning. By the same token, although it is uncertain whether the idea of lesbianism, as such, underwrites Amy Lowell's reference to women poets as a “queer lot” (“The Sisters”), her inclusion of Sappho and Emily Dickinson in this deviant sorority marks her poem as a shaping force in itself in the emergence of the homosexual signifier. Even such unlikely seeming instances as Edith Wharton's may forecast the modern meaning of *queer* in a generally progressive spirit. When her character Ethan Frome, embodying a hapless masculinity, worries that women “turn queer” after menopause, the phrase does not mean “become lesbian,” and yet as can be seen in considering Hemingway's relations with Stein, Wharton does engage a cultural logic that would increasingly understand a woman's “change of life” as a potentially ominous virilization that might well reinforce lesbian tendencies (*SL* 736). To extrapolate from these diverse examples, then, it might be said that the quality of diffuseness or indeterminacy – of widely dispersed differences – that distinguished *queer* is precisely what recommended the term to writers or narratives preoccupied with the murky dynamics of modern sexualities.

Even to make these moderate claims, as they strike me, is already to invite skepticism from certain quarters. The politically motivated resignifying of *queer* has predictably (and profitably) agitated the academy, notwithstanding Bersani's argument that Butlerian exercises in reverse discourse are not only *not* revolutionary (“spectacles of politically impotent disrespect”) but are also easily reversed themselves (such “hyperbolic miming,” being “too closely imbricated” with the very norms it mimes, falls subject to

re-reappropriation by the dominant culture).¹³ Prestigious Jamesian scholars such as Alfred Habegger have hardly been reassured by this deflationary view. In fact, to Habegger's mind, the queer studies meaning of *queer* has so "overwhelm[ed]" the conventional Victorian sense of *queerness* – in his gloss, "an oddness . . . not felt to be desirable and . . . surpass[ing] harmless eccentricity" – that this older usage seems "obsolescent and . . . definitely unsmart," prompting a "defiant self-consciousness" in the speaker (particularly in the US) who wishes to employ it. As part of his own verbal recovery effort – a reading of James's *What Maisie Knew* as a *bildungsroman* of "the artist as queer moralist" – Habegger leans on the authority of the *OED* to argue that James could not have been thinking of "homosexual" when he wrote "queer": "James used the language of his time, not ours," and the earliest use of the word in its latter-day sense, according to the *OED*, occurred in 1922, or "six years after James's death."¹⁴

There are several problems with this resort to the dictionary, particularly in the case of such a loaded term, with such a complicated history, as *queer*. First, Habegger's formulation seems too complacent about "the language of [the] time," as if usage were governed by a unitary standard and no allowances needed to be made for variations owing to national setting (American versus British), the relative privacy or publicity of the text or utterance in question, or the lively, disparate, and often subcultural processes by which diction mutates and gathers new inflections. It is worth noting, for instance, that the *OED*'s 1922 source for *queer* as "homosexual" is a report on juvenile delinquency issued by the US Department of Labor, from which it can be inferred that the usage was already well established on the street. Indeed, the document seems to acknowledge this slang currency by placing *queer* in quotation marks: "a young man . . . 'queer' in sex tendency."¹⁵ A more useful approach to the challenge of dating usage is advanced by George Chauncey, who studies "the broad contours of lexical evolution," rather than "reconstructing a lineage of static meanings," and who finds that the use of *queer* as "essentially synonymous with 'homosexual'" (though not with "effeminate") was already common in New York "by the 1910s and 1920s."¹⁶ This usage had made it to the opposite coast of the United States by that time as well. In Sharon R. Ullman's *Sex Seen: The Emergence of Modern Sexuality in America*, one learns from court testimony in the Long Beach, California, homosexuality scandal of 1914 about the fancy "wardrobes among the 'queer' people" (which I will have reason to inventory shortly).¹⁷

The quasi-documentary gay rights novel *Strange Brother* (1931), by Blair Niles, pushes the dating of this specialized usage back even farther,

suggesting that *queer* as a term of opprobrium had found its way into American small-town vernacular even *before* 1910.¹⁸ But most remarkably, Hugh Stevens borrows from Douglass Shand-Tucci's work to show that *queer* had acquired "a more assertive shade of pink" as early as 1895, when a Boston professional man, by the Jamesian name of Wentworth, warned his gay friends to be cautious inasmuch as "queer things are looked at askance since Oscar's exposé" (referring to the contemporaneous Wilde trials).¹⁹ Thus, although the *OED* is probably correct in noting that this pink tincture to the word originated in the US, one cannot rely on its methods or sources for careful knowledge about the early, subterranean life of *queer*.

If approached as scripture in matters of linguistic history, the *OED* can be equally misleading on the use of *queer* as a noun substantive (as opposed to its adjectival form) to mean "a homosexual." W. H. Auden is credited with the first such usage, in a piece of writing from 1932, and yet a short story collection by the American writer Robert McAlmon makes it clear that this meaning was abroad in New York and in the expatriate circles of European capitals by the early 1920s. The postwar Berlin and Paris evoked in McAlmon's *Distinguished Air* (*Grim Fairy Tales*), published in 1925 but based on the author's experiences of 1922–3, clearly belong to the vertiginous cabaret scene associated with Auden and Christopher Isherwood ("To Christopher, Berlin meant boys")²⁰ and later with Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1944/5), in which, for instance, "lubricious anecdotes of Paris and Berlin" are the stock-in-trade of the novel's gay aesthete.²¹ McAlmon's personal reminiscence of Berlin, in particular, chimes as well with the city of transexual fantasia made familiar in Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* (1936): "along the Unter den Linden it was never possible to know whether it was a woman or a man in woman's clothes who accosted one."²² Seeking to capture the argot of this modern urban netherworld, *Distinguished Air* uses *queer* extensively to mean a sexual "invert" (or an "androgyné"), as when both "war-made queer[s]" and congenital ones, like the drag queen "Miss Knight," congregate in "queer cafés" (*GL* 634, 632).

If McAlmon had discovered that "a queer" meant "a homosexual," then so had many other migratory artists of the time. To speak only of American, English, or Irish figures, those in the know would have included Ezra Pound, James Joyce, and William Carlos Williams, all of whom praised McAlmon's *Distinguished Air*; the author's social friends, many of them "elaborately double-lived person[s]" themselves (*GL* 634), such as Djuna Barnes, Ronald Firbank, Mina Loy, Marsden Hartley, Man Ray, and H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), the lover of McAlmon's former wife, Bryher (Winifred Ellerman); and writers whose works were published by McAlmon's

Contact Editions Press, notably his intimate friend Hemingway and his later antagonist Stein. As with the adjectival *queer*, one may reasonably assume that the meaning of “a homosexual (usually male)” was going the rounds in bars, cafés, and drag balls well before 1932 (the *OED* dating) and even before McAlmon adopted it in fiction. Again, this conjecture draws support from the Long Beach trials of 1914, in which one of the accused testified to – and a Sacramento newspaper duly reported on – a flourishing “society of queers” in the greater Los Angeles area, estimated at between two thousand and five thousand men.²³ In any case, one can be certain that by the time Hemingway worried aloud, in a 1933 letter, that Stein’s *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* would recycle “some fag story” (probably started by McAlmon) that allegedly proved Hemingway to be “conclusively . . . very queer indeed,” his unequivocal usage was already more than a decade old, and very likely much older (*SL* 387). Moreover, to the extent that the word *queer* traveled along with wo/men like McAlmon’s “Miss Knight” (a.k.a. Charlie) – or as s/he says, “queer bitches like you and me” – in their peregrinations, this new meaning would have turned up, too, in the subcultures of “New York . . . [or] Paris, or London, or Madrid, or Singapore,” becoming “just that international” as a consequence of the cross-cultural mobility of modernity (*GL* 635, 639).

The larger point, of course, is that one can no more pin down the first instance in which *queer* meant “(a) homosexual” in Anglo-American discourse than one can say that “modernity” commenced on or around December 1910, as in Virginia Woolf’s famous formula, or, alternatively, that it began “in 1922 or thereabouts,” as in Cather’s estimation of just when the world “broke in two” in the aftermath of the so-called Great War (*SP* 812). The incremental, communal process whereby *queer* shaded into or acquired the meaning of “homosexual” possibly even antedated James; its very shadowy quality and multireferentiality constituted a latency that lent itself to the gradual elaboration of a signifying linkage. From this circumstance, however, it cannot be argued (against Habegger) that James definitively *did* refer to homosexuality when writing *The Tragic Muse*, with its “queer comrade” Gabriel Nash (*TM* 44); or *The Turn of the Screw*, with its “queer whisker[ed]” Peter Quint (*TS* 320); or *The Ambassadors*, which follows Strether from the “queer ignorance” of America to the “still queerer knowledge” of Europe and the “queer truth” about himself (*A* 277, 216); or yet again “The Jolly Corner,” where the transatlantic exchange is reversed and a Europeanized American of Strether’s age (Spencer Brydon) confronts the plural “queernesses” of New York in its “awful modern crush” (*THJ* 313, 315). Such a line of interpretation would have to contend, at a minimum,

with the fact that nearly all the examples of *queer* as “homosexual” adduced here – from 1895 to 1933, or in other words from the height of James’s career until well after his death – occur in specialized subcultures, in private communications (their very privacy encouraging Hemingway’s unrestrained use of “queer” and “fag,” questions of homophobia aside), in suppressed or withheld prose (as in the instance from Auden cited by the *OED*), or in fiction that was “all but unpublishable” (as William Carlos Williams said of McAlmon’s work) except in very limited, privately printed editions.²⁴

In a book not only published but favourably reviewed in 1909, Gertrude Stein contributed as well to this gradual literary project of modernizing and augmenting the meaning of “queer” by collocating it with homosexual motifs or characters. Perhaps more to the point, her *Three Lives* (composed 1905–6) can serve as an example of the transition in usage, since some instances of *queer* in the text seem Dickensian in vintage and others correspond with Stein’s more calculating, forward-looking use of the term in *The Making of Americans*. The protagonist of the segment entitled “The Good Anna,” for example, is coded as a figure of lesbian desire whose sexuality gets rerouted into a “strong natural feeling to love . . . a large mistress,” especially an employer who is evoked as “a woman other women loved” (*TL* 10, 27). When Stein refers to Anna’s “queer piercing german english,” the usage seems antiquated and innocuous; yet in the “queer discord” produced when Anna tricks out her “spinster body” with colorful clothes, the traditional sense of *queer* is simultaneously in effect and under renovation (*TL* 3, 18–19). Meanwhile, Stein’s narrative aside on “all the queer ways the passions have to show themselves all one” (*TL* 12) provides an inkling of the challenge she will mount to modern gender binaries and sexual conformity in her later works, as I shall show: “There are many ways of having queerness in many men and women” (*MOA* 194).

By extension of my general logic, then, one cannot cite an historical threshold *after* which “queer” invariably possessed a sexual signification. It is tempting to say that by the end of the 1920s the meaning “homosexual” achieves a sort of critical mass. In Radclyffe Hall’s novel *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) – an intermediate type of document inasmuch as it was published, then suppressed – one learns of the “queer antagonism” that a mother feels toward her daughter, the evolving transsexual Stephen Gordon, because Stephen resembles her father; the father, himself a “queer mixture,” recognizes Stephen’s deviance by reading Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, the pioneering sexologist who waged (in J. A. Symonds’s phrase) a “long warfare against . . . [homophobic] prejudice and ignorance.”²⁵ Compounding the

case, young Stephen has an inexplicably strong “queer feeling” toward a housemaid, who in turn calls her “a queer kid” and “a queer fish” – all five of these textual instances occurring within the first few chapters, and the list only grows as Stephen matures to assume a distinctly queer (modern sense) embodiment.²⁶ The latter colloquialism, “queer fish,” is especially interesting because E. M. Forster had already used it in reference to his gay figure Risley (modeled after Lytton Strachey) in *Maurice* (composed 1913–14; published 1971), and the character Anthony Blanche in Waugh’s *Brideshead*, whose social habits and diction belong to the early 1920s, exults in his appetite for certain young men, or his “taste for queer fish”: further examples of the queering of Victorian phraseology.²⁷ Yet when Sherwood Anderson in 1935, well after Forster and Hall, calls Hemingway a “queer bird” for perpetrating the masculine excesses of *Green Hills of Africa*, he is not consciously calling his fellow author a homosexual, though he may unwittingly point toward an anxiety about gayness that animates Hemingway’s manly breast-beating.²⁸ Even as late as the 1950s, Victorian and modern usages would still be uneasily cohabiting the same signifiatory space. *Queer* as “homosexual” had entered published fiction for good in Gore Vidal’s “Pages from an Abandoned Journal” (1956; *GL* 693), yet the scholar F. W. Dupee’s contemporary portrait of Henry James clung to the older meaning: “growing away” from American culture in the mid-1880s, Dupee wrote, James saw “his name become almost a byword for queerness.”²⁹

I feel so queer that I can’t talk. (Sherwood Anderson, “‘Queer,’” 1919)

It should be clear that Anderson is a significant litmus test of authorial intent here, since he gestures toward hospitality to a “queerness” of life that includes homosexuality and cross-dressing (as is richly evident from his *Memoirs*), and yet he casually employs a phrase like “queer bird” with no apparent inflection like that of his British counterparts, with their “queer fish.” One particularly tempting item, in this line of inquiry, is his *Winesburg, Ohio* tale emblazoned with the title “‘Queer.’” The fact that Anderson sets the word off in quotation marks (the only title so punctuated out of the twenty-one sketches) seems to focus both authorial interest and readerly curiosity on the definitional question: just what did it mean to be “queer,” or to be thought queer, or to feel oneself queer in small-town midwestern culture before 1920? By now, it should not be surprising to learn that Anderson’s interrogation yields an ambiguous answer, for while sexuality is surely adumbrated as an important context for understanding the tale’s “queer” youth and his violent efforts to shake both the shame

and the label of “queerness,” the task of piecing together clues falls almost entirely to the reader.

At one level, that is, the constant rages of Anderson’s protagonist in “Queer” seem sufficiently explained as a poor rural boy’s sense of social inferiority, his wish not to replicate the experience of a storekeeper–father who is too pathetic to realize how “queer” he is. If “queerness” thus shades into questions of gender performance – in this case, a deficiency of masculine self-respect – the usage does not seem to carry a specifically sexual valence, and when the aggrieved young man “hunt[s] out another queer one” to serve as an audience for his confessions – a mentally impaired farmhand – the adjective “queer” extends to encompass yet another type of difference (developmental disability) that is divorced from sexual discourse. On the other hand, it cannot be coincidental that the boy’s desperate bid to make himself “indistinguishable” from others (“I won’t be queer[!]”) involves an assault on another youth whom he idealizes and who is patently the soul-mate he seeks in his frustrated quest for “warmth and meaning” in life. His intense quarrel with “queerness” culminates in something distinctly like homosexual panic, a feeling of “struggling for release from hands that held him” even as his own hands are beating the other boy “half unconscious.” The real sadness in the affair, as the tale’s narrator confides, is that *both* youths suffer from the same “vague hungers and secret unnamable desires,” and yet their efforts at intimacy come to nothing but violence and self-violence (*WO* 190–201 *passim*).

With the phraseology of the closet in the air, the young man’s final boast that his aggression has validated his normal masculinity (“I showed him I ain’t so queer”) begs to be read as the urgent disavowal that betrays same-sex yearning, even as it throttles any hope of realizing such desire (*WO* 201). Applying Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s argument that shame – the signature trait of Anderson’s character – marks the psychical “place where the question of identity arises most originarily, and most relationally,” one might take the story as a study in miniature of “that long Babylonian exile known as queer childhood,” and might thus claim the “Queer” of the title as an early prototype of the “politically potent term” of our own era, which cleaves to developmental shame “as a near-inexhaustible source of transformational energy.”³⁰ Given its historical moment, however, the tale suggests that only the cycle of trauma will be inexhaustible, as Anderson’s young man flees to the big city, where his search for warmth and meaning is predictably foredoomed, and precisely (one is inclined to say) because of a failure to accept his “queerness” for the particular queerness it is.

Yet how does one reconcile this interpretation of the tale's political thrust with Anderson's persistent effort, as chapter 6 will further show, to sanitize the representation of fervent same-sex bonds and keep them safely under the sign of "mere" brotherhood or sisterly companionship? To select just a few examples of this telling pattern of insistence from his memoirs Anderson writes: "There was nothing of homosexuality in the feeling . . . Of that I am sure"; "love could grow as between man and man, a thing outside sex"; or again, "it [was] not a Lesbian love . . . [but] a love based on natural loneliness"; and so forth (*SAM* 150, 286, 473). Just what sort of "queerness" *is* being evoked, then, in the 1919 story entitled "'Queer'"? How much of it, if any, can be accounted for by the emergent meaning of "homosexuality"? With whom – the author? the reader? the author *and* the reader in concert? – does this judgment or this quantification rest?

It is more important and certainly more interesting than convicting Anderson of a "homophobic" resistance to his own implications to notice that his homophilia takes the form of a willingness to yield meaning-making to individual readers – to let *them* dare to feel the queerness, including the queerness that is gayness, in his writings, and perhaps even to instruct him in what his own stories might mean: "in the years since [*Winesburg, Ohio* was published] several such men have come to me . . . [and] having had time to think I could sympathize with . . . their plight" (*SAM* 340). What distinguishes Anderson – and, I will argue, Stein, the matured author Willa Cather, and even that notoriously opinionated "Master" Henry James – is a willingness to let queer meanings mean queerly. In this respect, they keep up the good tradition of Walt Whitman, whose well-known panic over early gay readings of *his* work, especially the *Calamus* poems, was balanced by an openness to the idea of relinquishing "his" meanings even to such a nagging "queer" reader as the English writer John Addington Symonds: "Is that what *Calamus* means? Because of me, or in spite of me, is that what it means? . . . He is right, no doubt, to ask the questions; I am just as much right if I do not answer them . . . Perhaps [*Calamus*] means more or less than what I thought myself – means different, perhaps I don't know what it all means – perhaps I never did know."³¹

One does not have to be queer to read queer. (James Creech, *Closet Writing/Gay Reading: The Case of Melville's Pierre*)

As Henry James himself might say, queer reading bristles with issues and conflicts. Although the same set of methodological questions might be posed concerning *any* author's life and work, and these questions will certainly arise in treating the other writers in this study, I want to take