

Preface

WITH THE EXCEPTION of the introduction and the essay on Sarah Orne Jewett, none of the essays in this book were written to be parts of a larger whole. Instead, most of what follows was written for various occasions—invitations to participate in a conference or contribute to an anthology of critical essays, or the desire to set straight my thoughts on some book or writer I had recently discussed with students. But several years ago I began to feel, in retrospect, that there might be enough common concern among these projects to investigate the possibility of gathering them into a book. As Emerson wrote, it's often not till you reach port that all those zigs and zags turn out to have been a plotted course, though the metaphor presumes that you're not the pilot. Helen Tartar, then Humanities editor at Stanford University Press, found my proposal feasible but asked me to write an introduction laying out the common concerns among the components. Norris Pope, Helen's successor, has ably concluded her work with my manuscript. The manuscript was read with sympathy, generosity, and intelligence by Tom Ferraro from the English Department at Duke University and Jay Fliegelman from the English Department at Stanford University. Among other remarks, Jay observed that the manuscript as it then stood included discussions of authors from the colonial period through the 1950s but neglected 1860–1920. He proposed a new chapter, an invitation I accepted gladly because I had for some time wanted to write about Sarah Orne Jewett, about *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, I thought, but really about *Deephaven*, as it turned out.

Carolyn Brown, production editor at Stanford University Press, was extremely helpful, full of good cheer and good ideas, and adept at helping me understand the process of making a book out of a manuscript in the twenty-first century. Cynthia Lindlof was the best copyeditor I've ever encountered: her care for my manuscript—the quality and degree of her attention—was amazing.

The time span between the first written and the last written of these chapters is twenty-six years. When I proposed this book to Helen, I confessed that I didn't think that I could rewrite the already-done work, or that, if I could, it would get better. As a result, though I have done some spackling, sanding, and retrofitting, tone, style, method, and emphasis shift and jump quite a bit. Although each chapter pursues an argument, the book as a whole, it must be said, has motifs and obsessions where there might have been a thesis. A medley, perhaps. There's some repetitiousness, particularly in passages where I tried to work out each time what I thought mourning really was. I regret that relevant scholarship and criticism published since the original versions appeared are not discussed or cited.

Because these essays were written over that stretch of time, the list of those who read them and helped me with their comments would also be long, and I would inevitably leave out several whose help had been important. So I will simply thank *all* who have helped me with this work, singling out Mike Cartmell, Peter Homans, Greg Jay, Julia Stern, and Bryce Traister for contemporary thanks because they read and commented vigorously on the most recent parts. I presented an earlier version of the essay on Jewett at the University of Arizona in the spring of 2005: the questions and comments from the audience, especially a question from Eric Hayot, were quite helpful in the transition to the current version. Kay Royal did some prescient delving for me in Harvard University's Houghton Library at a time when I was unable to travel there myself. The staff of the Houghton Library were subsequently quite helpful in preparing for me a photostatic copy of Sarah Orne Jewett's manuscript diary, and thanks are due to the Houghton Library for permission to quote from the diary. Thanks, too, to the National Gallery of Art for permission to use Edward Hopper's *Cape Cod Evening* on the cover of this book. Poems by Emily Dickinson, "Rehearsal to ourselves" (J379), "To fill a gap" (J546), and "Renunciation is a piercing virtue" (J745), are reprinted by permission of the publishers and the Trustees of Amherst College from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Thomas H. Johnson, ed., Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, copyright © 1951, 1955, 1979, 1983 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Earlier versions of some of the essays included in this volume were previously published. My thanks to the following for permission to republish:

Bucknell Review, for "Who Speaks in Whitman's Poems?" which appeared in *Bucknell Review* 18 (1983): 121-43.

Cambridge University Press, for "Jefferson's Prospect," which appeared in *Prospects: An Annual Journal of American Cultural Studies* 10 (1985): 315-52.

Louisiana State University Press, for “Early American Antigone,” which appeared in Joseph Kronick and Bainard Cowan, eds., *Theorizing American Literature: Hegel, the Sign, and History* (Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 125–62.

Oxford University Press, for “Jazz Fractures: F. Scott Fitzgerald and Epochal Representation,” which appeared in *American Literary History* 12 (Fall 2000): 359–82.

Trustees of Boston University, for “Thoreau and the Wrecks on Cape Cod,” which appeared in *Studies in Romanticism* 20 (Spring 1981): 3–20.

University of Virginia Press, for “Fitzgerald, Kerouac, and the Problem of Inherited Mourning,” which appeared in Peter Homans, ed., *Symbolic Loss: The Ambiguity of Mourning and Memory at Century's End* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 43–61.