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978-1-107-03263-7 — The Sacred Fount
Henry James , Edited by T. J. Lustig
Frontmatter
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THE CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF THE
COMPLETE FICTION OF
HENRY JAMES

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ABBREVIATIONS

The Sacred Fount

- SFM* *The Sacred Fount* (London: Methuen and Co., 1901).
SFS *The Sacred Fount* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901).

Other Works by Henry James

- CLHJ* *The Complete Letters of Henry James*, 6 vols. to date, eds. Michael Anesko, Pierre A. Walker and Greg W. Zacharias (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2006–).
CN *The Complete Notebooks of Henry James*, eds. Leon Edel and Lyall H. Powers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
CT *The Complete Tales of Henry James*, ed. Leon Edel, 12 vols. (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1962–4).
CWAD1 *The Complete Writings of Henry James on Art and Drama*, vol. 1: *Art*, ed. Peter Collister (Cambridge University Press, 2016).
HJL *Henry James Letters*, ed. Leon Edel, 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1974–84).
LC1 *Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers, English Writers*, eds. Leon Edel and Mark Wilson (New York: Library of America, 1984).
LC2 *Literary Criticism: French Writers, Other European Writers, The Prefaces to the New York Edition*, eds. Leon Edel and Mark Wilson (New York: Library of America, 1984).
LHJ *The Letters of Henry James*, ed. Percy Lubbock, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1920).
LL *Henry James: A Life in Letters*, ed. Philip Horne (London: Allen Lane, 1999).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Secondary Works

Brewer *Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, ed. Susie Dent, 19th ed. (London: Chambers Harrap, 2012).

Edel 1 Leon Edel, *Henry James: The Untried Years, 1843–1870* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953).

Edel 4 Leon Edel, *Henry James: The Treacherous Years, 1895–1901* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1969).

Edel 5 Leon Edel, *Henry James: The Master, 1901–1916* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1972).

Gard Roger Gard (ed.), *Henry James: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968).

Gargano James W. Gargano, *Critical Essays on Henry James: The Late Novels* (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall and Co., 1987).

Hayes Kevin J. Hayes (ed.), *Henry James: The Contemporary Reviews*, American Critical Archives (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Lustig T. J. Lustig, ‘Mocking the Master: Early Responses to *The Sacred Fount*’, *Henry James Review* 38.1 (2017), 22–36.

Lyon John Lyon, ‘Introduction’, in Henry James, *The Sacred Fount*, ed. John Lyon (London: Penguin, 1994), vii–xxxiii.

Supino David J. Supino, *Henry James: A Bibliographical Catalogue of a Collection of Editions to 1921*, 2nd edn (Liverpool University Press, 2014).

GENERAL EDITORS' PREFACE

The Cambridge Edition of the *Complete Fiction of Henry James* (hereafter *CFHJ*) has been undertaken in the belief that there is a need for a full scholarly, informative, historical edition of his work, presenting the texts in carefully checked, accurate form, with detailed annotation and extensive introductions. James's texts exist in a number of forms, including manuscripts (though most are lost), serial texts and volumes of various sorts, often incorporating significant amounts of revision, most conspicuously the so-called *New York Edition* (hereafter *NYE*) published by Charles Scribner's Sons in New York and Macmillan & Co. in London (1907–9). Besides these there are also pirated editions, unfinished works published posthumously and other questionable forms. The *CFHJ* takes account of these complexities, within the framework of a textual policy which aims to be clear, orderly and consistent.

This edition aims to represent James's fictional career as it evolves, with a fresh and expanded sense of its changing contexts and an informed sense of his developing style, technique and concerns. Consequently it does not attempt to base its choices on the principle of the 'last lifetime edition', which in the case of Henry James is monumentally embodied in the twenty-four volumes of the *NYE*, the author's selection of nine longer novels (six of them in two volumes) and fifty-eight shorter novels and tales, and including eighteen specially composed Prefaces. The *CFHJ*, as a general rule, adopts rather the text of the first published book edition of a work, unless the intrinsic particularities and the publishing history of that work require an alternative choice, on the ground that emphasis on the first context in which it was written and read will permit an unprecedented fullness of attention to the transformations in James's writing over five decades, as well as the rich literary and social contexts of their original publication.

There are inevitably cases where determining 'the first published book edition' requires some care. If, for instance, James expresses a preference for the text of one particular early book edition over another, or if the first

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edition to be published is demonstrably inferior to a later impression or edition, or if authorial supervision of a particular early edition or impression can be established, then a case can be made for choosing a text other than the first published book edition. Volume Editors have exercised their judgment accordingly. They have made a full collation of authoritative versions including serial as well as volume publication in Britain and America, and specify which version serves as their copy text.

The *CFHJ*'s Introductions aim to be full and authoritative, detailing the histories of composition, publication (in magazine and book form), reception and authorial revision, and making economical reference to subsequent adaptation and transformation into other forms, including drama, film and opera. Editors have refrained from offering emphatic interpretations or mounting critical arguments of their own, though it is hoped the material they present will inform and stimulate new readings. Particular attention has been given to the social, political and cultural contexts of James's period, and especially those of the countries in which a specific work is set; details of James's personal exposure to relevant people and events, of the magazines and publishing houses where he published (editors, policies, politics, etc.), have provided valuable material. Introductions conclude with a Bibliography in support of the information supplied and the aspects of the text's production emphasized in the Introduction, including a list of contemporary reviews.

Each volume contains, in addition to a Chronology of James's life and literary career, a volume-specific Chronology, incorporating dates of composition, negotiation with publishers and editors, dispatch of instalments, stages of printing and initial reception history, as well as relevant comments by or to James appearing in letters or other forms.

Fullness and helpfulness of annotation is one of the main aims of the *CFHJ*. As James's world recedes into the past, more and more of its features need explanation to readers: both the physical, geographical and historical world of places and people, and the cultural world of beliefs, values, conventions, social practices and points of reference – to operas, plays, books, paintings – and indeed certain linguistic explanations have become increasingly necessary (especially regarding the presence of slang or linguistic innovation, both English and American). For such explanations, James's correspondence, criticism and other writings have been drawn on as a prime

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source of helpful comment, conveying his own experience and attitudes in a way that richly illuminates his fictional texts. Newspapers and magazines of the period, travel guides and the work of other writers also contribute, filling out the picture of the implied worlds beyond the text. Furthermore, the *CFHJ* sets out to provide the fullest possible details of James's allusions to poetry, the Bible and the plays of Shakespeare, as well as other literary and culturally significant works – offering suggestive but concise plot summaries when appropriate or quotation of the passages drawn on, so that the act of allusion is brought to life and the reader can trace something of James's allusive processes. Editors have abstained, on the other hand, from purely interpretative notes, speculation and personal comments: the notes always concern a point of information, even if that point has a critical bearing.

Appendices include sources and relevant contextual documents, including correspondence, entries from the Prefaces to the *NYE* and from the Notebooks, where appropriate. For the novels revised and published in the *NYE*, the whole Preface is printed in an Appendix; for tales revised and published in the *NYE*, the relevant extract from the Preface is reproduced. The Prefaces and Notebooks have also been collected in newly edited volumes of their own.



Most of James's fiction exists in a number of different textual states, most notably in the difference between initial publication (in periodical and volume form) and the revised versions of the novels and tales prepared near the end of his career for the *NYE*. (In the case of three late tales – 'Fordham Castle', 'Julia Bride' and 'The Jolly Corner' – first book publication was in the *NYE*.) Works excluded by James from the *NYE* were incorporated in the edition posthumously published in thirty-five volumes by Macmillan in 1921–3, but these were of course published without authorial revision. The textual differences affecting those works that *are* included in the *NYE* are predictably most extensive in the case of early works such as *Roderick Hudson* (1875), *The American* (1877), 'Daisy Miller' (1879) and *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881).

Readers may see for themselves the full extent of James's revisions, along with all other variants, both preceding and succeeding the texts printed here, in the lists of Textual Variants. These are normally presented in the

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following form. Each volume includes a comprehensive list of all substantive variants in the line of textual transmission leading up to the copy text ('Textual Variants i'), preceded by a brief commentary, in which editors address this stage of the textual history, drawing attention to the main features of the changes and dealing with questions such as house style. Variations in punctuation within a sentence (usually by the insertion or removal of commas, or changes in the use of colons and semi-colons) have not normally been considered substantive. Over end-of-sentence punctuation, however, particularly in the matter of changing full stops to exclamations or vice versa, Volume Editors have exercised their judgment. A second section ('Textual Variants ii') offers a comprehensive list of all substantive variants subsequent to copy text, and a brief commentary which summarizes the main issues raised by the changes made. The length of lists of variants and commentary inevitably varies greatly from case to case. In certain cases, for reasons explained in the volume concerned, there is a single list of 'Textual Variants'.

*

The *Complete Fiction of Henry James* consists of twenty-two novels (vols. 1–22), one hundred and thirteen tales (vols. 23–32) and two supplementary volumes (vols. 33 and 34) devoted respectively to the Prefaces that James wrote for the *NYE* and to his Notebooks. They appear in this edition in the order in which they were first published. The distinction between 'novels' and 'tales' is sometimes a crude one: between long fictions such as *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Golden Bowl* and short ones such as 'Benvolio' and 'The Beldonald Holbein', there lie many shorter novels and longer tales that are hard to categorize with confidence: well-known works such as *Washington Square* and *The Sacred Fount*, 'The Aspern Papers' and 'The Turn of the Screw'. We have deemed to be 'novels' those fictions which when they first took volume form were published as independent entities (with the single exception of *In the Cage*, which despite its relative brevity first appeared as a slim volume), and those to be 'tales' all which were not. The former include some of James's lesser-known works, such as *Watch and Ward*, *Confidence*, *The Other House*, *The Outcry* and the two unfinished at the time of his death, *The Sense of the Past* and *The Ivory Tower*.

GENERAL EDITORS' PREFACE

The division of James's tales into ten volumes has been ordered chronologically on the basis of first publication, according to the following principles:

- 1) The determining date of a story's publication is that of the first appearance of any part of it (as some straddle three issues of a magazine). Thus e.g. 'A London Life' (June–September 1888, *Scribner's Magazine*) before 'The Lesson of the Master' (July–August 1888, *Universal Review*).
- 2) Where two tales have the same start date, the priority is determined by which completes its publication earlier. Thus e.g. 'The Modern Warning' (originally entitled 'Two Countries', June 1888, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*) precedes 'A London Life' (June–September 1888, *Scribner's Magazine*).
- 3) Where two tales have the same start date and the same date of completion (often only taking one issue), the priority is determined by alphabetical order (of tale title). Thus e.g. 'De Grey: A Romance' (July 1868, *Atlantic Monthly*) precedes 'Osborne's Revenge' (July 1868, *Galaxy*).
- 4) Because it cannot usually be determined exactly *when* a magazine dated only 'June' actually appeared, 'June' is treated as preceding any particular date in June, including '1 June'. Thus 'The Private Life' (April 1892, *Atlantic Monthly*) precedes 'The Real Thing' (16 April 1892, *Black and White*); and principle 4 overrides principle 2, so that 'The Author of "Beltraffo"' (June–July 1884, *English Illustrated Magazine*) precedes 'Pandora' (1 and 8 June 1884, *New York Sun*).
- 5) Where tales have not been published in periodicals before being collected in book form, the precise date of book publication counts as first publication and determines their place in the order.
- 6) Where tales have not been published in periodicals before being collected in book form, and several tales appear in the same book, the order of tales in the book determines our ordering (even when their order of composition is known to have been different), as it is closer to the order in which original readers would preponderantly have read them.
- 7) In the single case where only a fragment of a tale survives and therefore was not published within James's lifetime, 'Hugh Merrow', the tale has been placed provisionally in accordance with the date of the only extant *Notebooks* entry, 11 September 1900.

★

GENERAL EDITORS' PREFACE

Emendations have been made sparingly and only to clearly erroneous readings. Where there is only one version of a work and it requires emendation, the original (erroneous) reading has been recorded in the List of Emendations. Where a later or earlier text has a reading that shows the copy text to be in error, this reading has been incorporated and the copy text's reading recorded in the apparatus. The fact that a later or earlier text has a reading that seems preferable to that of the copy text has not in itself provided sufficient grounds for emendation, although like all other variants, it has been recorded in the list of Textual Variants. Unusual and inconsistent spellings have not been altered, and only annotated in exceptional cases. Misprints and slipped letters have been corrected, and the corrections noted. Contractions have not been expanded, superscript has not been converted, and spelling and punctuation have not normally been changed.

James's writings were of course published on both sides of the Atlantic, and there are corresponding differences in spelling between British and American texts, in volume and serial form: 'colour/color', 'recognise/recognize', 'marvellous/marvelous' and so on. These differences have been preserved when they occur in the textual variants, but they have not been systematically recorded, being deemed to be matters of accident rather than substance. The form taken by inverted commas (single or double) also varies between texts, as does their placement (before or after commas, full stops etc.); being judged matters of accident, these have been regularized. Double quotation marks have been adopted for all the James texts published in this edition. When the text of the *NYE* is cited in the introduction, notes or textual apparatus, its distinctive typography has not been retained, and this also applies to the texts of the tales first published in the *NYE* and of the Prefaces: the contractions rendered there as e.g. 'is n't' and 'did n't' have here been normalized as single words, 'isn't' and 'didn't'. Editorial ellipses have been enclosed in square brackets but authorial ellipses have not.

The punctuation of the copy text adopted has also been preserved. There are considerable differences of punctuation between the different forms in which a particular work of James's appears. It is often hard to distinguish with certainty those which can be accounted for by differences in the house styles of particular publishers, British and American, and those which are

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matters of authorial choice. Whatever the agency behind such differences, there is a case for recognizing the difference of sense made by the presence or absence of a comma, by the change of an exclamation to a full stop and so on. Nevertheless, the scale of such differences is too great to make a comprehensive record feasible within the limits of a print edition. Volume Editors have therefore exercised their judgment over the most helpful way to inform readers of the nature of such differences.

References to money pose particular difficulties for modern readers, not only because the sums concerned have to be multiplied by an apparently ever-inflating figure to produce approximate modern equivalents, but because the quantity and quality of what could be bought and done with these sums (especially involving property or real estate) has also changed radically – and will very possibly continue to do so during the lifetime of this edition. We do, however, know that throughout James's own life the pound sterling was equal to \$4.85, and certain other figures can be established, such as that in 1875 the US dollar was equivalent to 5.19 French francs. For the calculation of particular sums in James's writings, Volume Editors have supplied readers with as much reliable information as they can command at the date of publication for this edition, but as time goes on readers will inevitably have to make adjustments.

Translations have been provided for all foreign words and phrases that appear in the text. Those which are common and uncontroversial (such as 'piazza', 'table d'hôte') are collected in a glossary at the end; those judged to be less than obvious in meaning, or dependent for their meaning on the specific context, are explained in an endnote.

The General Editors warmly acknowledge the gracious permission of Bay James, custodian of the James Estate, for the publication of material still in copyright; and the generous cooperation of Greg Zacharias and his associates at the Center for Henry James Studies at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, home of an indispensable parallel project, *The Complete Letters of Henry James*, published by the University of Nebraska Press. We thank David Supino for offering his sage advice whenever it was sought. Finally, we are deeply grateful for the guidance and support provided by our editors at Cambridge University Press, Linda Bree and Bethany Thomas, and Senior Content Manager, Victoria Parrin.

GENERAL CHRONOLOGY OF JAMES'S LIFE AND WRITINGS

Compiled by Philip Horne

- 1843 Henry James (HJ) is born on 15 April 1843 at 21 Washington Place in New York City, second of the five children of Henry James (1811–82), speculative theologian and social thinker, and his wife Mary Walsh Robertson James (1810–82). Siblings: William (1842–1910), psychologist, philosopher, Harvard professor; Garth Wilkinson ('Wilky', 1845–83); Robertson ('Bob', 1846–1910); Alice (1848–92), diarist.
- 1843–5 Taken to Paris and London by his parents; earliest memory (from age two) is of the Place Vendôme in Paris.
- 1845–7 Returns to United States. Childhood in Albany.
- 1847–55 Family settles in New York City; taught by tutors and in private schools.
- 1855–8 Family travels in Europe: Geneva, London, Paris, Boulogne-sur-Mer.
- 1858 Jameses reside in Newport, Rhode Island.
- 1859–60 James family travels: HJ at scientific school, then the Academy (later the University) in Geneva. Summer 1860: HJ learns German in Bonn.
- 1860–2 James family returns to Newport in September 1860. HJ makes friends with future critic Thomas Sargent Perry and artist John La Farge, fellow students at William Morris Hunt's art academy. From 1860, HJ 'was continually writing stories, mainly of a romantic kind' (Perry). In 1861 HJ injured his back helping extinguish a fire in Newport. Along with William James, exempted from service in Civil War, in which younger brothers fought, and Wilky was seriously wounded.
- 1862 Enters Harvard Law School for a term. Begins to send stories to magazines.

GENERAL CHRONOLOGY OF JAMES'S LIFE AND WRITINGS

- 1864 February: first short story of HJ's 113, 'A Tragedy of Error', published anonymously in *Continental Monthly*. May: Jameses move to 13 Ashburton Place, Boston. October: first of HJ's many reviews, of Nassau W. Senior's *Essays on Fiction*, published unsigned in *North American Review*.
- 1865 March: first signed tale, 'The Story of a Year', appears in *Atlantic Monthly*. HJ appears also as a critic in first number of the *Nation* (New York).
- 1866–8 Summer 1866: becomes friends with William Dean Howells, novelist, critic and influential editor. November 1866: James family moves to 20 Quincy Street, beside Harvard Yard. November 1867: meets Charles Dickens at home of James T. Fields, and 'tremble[s] [...] in every limb' (*Notes of a Son and Brother*). HJ continues reviewing and writing stories in Cambridge.
- 1869–70 On 27 February 1869 lands at Liverpool. Travels in England, meeting John Ruskin, William Morris, Charles Darwin and George Eliot; also Switzerland and Italy. 1870: death of his much-loved cousin Minny Temple.
- 1870–2 May 1870: reluctantly returns to Cambridge. August–December 1871: publishes first novel, *Watch and Ward*, in the *Atlantic Monthly*; January–March 1872: publishes art reviews in *Atlantic*.
- 1872–4 May 1872: HJ accompanies invalid sister Alice and aunt Catherine Walsh, 'Aunt Kate', to Europe. Writes travel pieces for the *Nation*. October 1872–September 1874: periods (without family) in Paris, Rome, Switzerland, Homburg, Italy again. Spring 1874: begins first long novel, *Roderick Hudson*, in Florence. September 1874: returns to the United States.
- 1875 First three books published: *A Passionate Pilgrim, and Other Tales* (January); *Transatlantic Sketches* (April); *Roderick Hudson* (November). Six months in New York City (111 East 25th Street); then three in Cambridge.
- 1875–6 11 November 1875: arrives at 29 Rue de Luxembourg as Paris correspondent for *New-York Tribune*. Begins *The American*. Meets Gustave Flaubert, Ivan Turgenev, Edmond de Goncourt, Alphonse Daudet, Guy de Maupassant and Émile Zola.

GENERAL CHRONOLOGY OF JAMES'S LIFE AND WRITINGS

- 1876–7 December 1876: moves to London, taking rooms at 3 Bolton Street, off Piccadilly. Visits to Paris, Florence, Rome. May 1877: *The American* published in Boston.
- 1878 February: *French Poets and Novelists* published, first collection of essays, first book published in London. May: revised version of *Watch and Ward* published in book form in Boston. June–July: 'Daisy Miller' appears in *Cornhill Magazine* and is quickly pirated by two American periodicals, establishing reputation in Britain and America. September: *The Europeans* published. Meets William Ewart Gladstone, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning.
- 1879 June: first English edition of *Roderick Hudson*, revised; October: *The Madonna of the Future and Other Tales*; December: *Confidence* (novel); *Hawthorne* (critical biography).
- 1880 April: *The Diary of a Man of Fifty and A Bundle of Letters*; Late winter 1880: travels to Italy; meets Constance Fenimore Woolson in Florence. December 1880: *Washington Square*.
- 1881–3 October 1881: returns to United States; travels between Cambridge, New York and Washington DC. November 1881: *The Portrait of a Lady*. January 1882: death of mother. May: returns to England till father dies in December 1882. February 1883: *The Siege of London*, *The Pension Beaurepas* and *The Point of View*; Summer 1883: returns to London; will not return to USA for twenty-one years. November 1883: Macmillan publish fourteen-volume collected edition of HJ's fiction. September 1883: *Daisy Miller: A Comedy*; December 1883: *Portraits of Places* (travel essays). November 1883: death of Wilky James.
- 1884 Sister Alice joins HJ in London, living nearby. September 1884: *A Little Tour in France* published; also HJ's important artistic statement 'The Art of Fiction'. October 1884: *Tales of Three Cities*. Becomes friends with Robert Louis Stevenson, Edmund Gosse. Writes to his friend Grace Norton: 'I shall never marry [...] I am both happy enough and miserable enough, as it is.'
- 1885–6 Publishes two serial novels: *The Bostonians* (*Century*, February 1885–February 1886); *The Princess Casamassima* (*Atlantic*, September 1885–October 1886). February 1885: collection of tales,

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- The Author of Beltraffio* [&c]; May 1885: *Stories Revived*, in three volumes.
- 1886–7 February 1886: *The Bostonians* published. 6 March: moves into flat, 34 De Vere Gardens, in Kensington, West London. October 1886: *The Princess Casamassima* published. December 1886–July 1887: visits Florence and Venice. Continues friendship with American novelist Constance Fenimore Woolson.
- 1888 *The Reverberator*, *The Aspern Papers* [&c] and *Partial Portraits* all published.
- 1889–90 1889: Collection of tales, *A London Life* [&c], published. 1890: *The Tragic Muse*. Temporarily abandons the novel form in favour of playwriting.
- 1890–1 Dramatizes *The American*, which has a short run in 1891. December: young friend and (informal) agent Wolcott Balestier dies of typhoid in Dresden.
- 1892 February: story collection, *The Real Thing and Other Tales*, published. March: death of Alice James in London.
- 1893 Volumes of tales published: March, *The Real Thing*; June, *The Private Life* [&c]; September, *The Wheel of Time* [&c]; also, June, *Picture and Text* (essays on illustration) and *Essays in London and Elsewhere* (critical and memorial essays).
- 1894 Deaths of Constance Fenimore Woolson (January) and Robert Louis Stevenson (December).
- 1895 5 January: première of *Guy Domville*, greeted by boos and applause. James abandons playwriting for years. Visits Ireland. Volumes of tales published: May, *Terminations*; June, *Embarrassments*. Takes up cycling.
- 1896–7 *The Other House* (1896), *The Spoils of Poynton* (1897), *What Maisie Knew* (1897). February 1897: starts dictating, due to wrist problems. September 1897: takes lease on Lamb House, Rye.
- 1898 May: has signed up with literary agent James Brand Pinker, who will act for him for the rest of his life. June: moves into Lamb House. August: *In the Cage* published. October: 'The Turn of the Screw' published (in *The Two Magics*); proves his most popular work since 'Daisy Miller'. Kent and Sussex

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- neighbours include Stephen Crane, Joseph Conrad, H. G. Wells and Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford).
- 1899 April: *The Awkward Age* published. August: buys the freehold of Lamb House.
- 1900 May: shaves off his beard. August: *The Soft Side* (tales). Friendship with Edith Wharton develops. Begins *The Sense of the Past*, but leaves it unfinished.
- 1901 February: *The Sacred Fount*.
- 1902–3 August 1902: *The Wings of the Dove* published. February 1903: *The Better Sort* (tales) published. September 1903: *The Ambassadors* published (completed mid-1901, before *The Wings of the Dove*, but delayed by serialization); also *William Wetmore Story and his Friends* (biography).
- 1904–5 August: James sails to USA for first time in twenty-one years. November: *The Golden Bowl* published. Visits New England, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, the South, St Louis, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Lectures on 'The Lesson of Balzac' and 'The Question of Our Speech'. Meets President Theodore Roosevelt. Elected to American Academy of Arts and Letters.
- 1905 July 1905: writes early chapters of *The American Scene*; simultaneously begins revising works for *New York Edition of the Novels and Tales of Henry James*. October: *English Hours* (travel essays) published.
- 1906–8 Selects, arranges, prefaces and has illustrations made for *New York Edition* (published 1907–9, twenty-four volumes). January 1907: *The American Scene* published. August 1907: hires new amanuensis, Theodora Bosanquet. 1908: *The High Bid* (play) produced at Edinburgh.
- 1909–11 October 1909: *Italian Hours* (travel essays) published. Health problems, aggravated by failure of the *New York Edition*. Death of Robertson ('Bob') James. Travels to United States. William James dies 26 August 1910. October 1910: *The Finer Grain* (tales). Returns to England August 1911. October: *The Outcry* (play converted into novel) published.
- 1911 In autumn, begins work on autobiography.

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- 1912 June: honorary doctorate at Oxford University. October: takes flat at 21 Carlyle Mansions, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea; suffers from shingles.
- 1913 March: *A Small Boy and Others* (first autobiographical book) published. Portrait painted by John Singer Sargent for seventieth birthday on 15 April.
- 1914 March: *Notes of a Son and Brother* (second autobiographical book) published. (The fragment of a third, *The Middle Years*, appears posthumously in 1917.) When World War One breaks out, becomes passionately engaged with the British cause, working with Belgian refugees, and later wounded soldiers. October: *Notes on Novelists* published. Begins *The Ivory Tower*; resumes work on *The Sense of the Past*, but is unable to complete either novel.
- 1915 Honorary president of the American Volunteer Motor Ambulance Corps. July: quarrels with H. G. Wells about purpose of art, declaring ‘It is art that *makes* life, makes interest, makes importance’; becomes a British citizen in protest against US neutrality, describing the decision to his nephew Harry (Henry James III) as ‘a simple act and offering of allegiance and devotion’ after his forty-year domicile. Writes essays about the War (collected in *Within the Rim*, 1919), and Preface to *Letters from America* (1916) by his dead friend Rupert Brooke. On 2 December suffers a stroke. First volumes of Uniform Edition of Tales published by Martin Secker, in fourteen vols. 1915–20.
- 1916 Awarded the Order of Merit. Dies on 28 February. Funeral in Chelsea Old Church; ashes smuggled back to America by sister-in-law and buried in the family plot in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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On 17 February 1894, the 50-year-old Henry James attended a function at 65 Rutland Gate, Knightsbridge, less than a mile away from his flat at 34 De Vere Gardens in Kensington. This London dinner, which took place in what James later described as an ‘immaculate & lovable house’,¹ was held by the literary hostess Blanche Alethea Crackanhorpe (1846–1928) and her husband, the barrister Montague Hughes Crackanhorpe (1832–1913). At some point during the evening, James encountered Stopford Brooke (1832–1916), the Irish-born man of letters and former cleric.² The novelist mentioned their conversation in his notebook: ‘[I]ast night, at Mrs. Crackanhorpe’s, Stopford Brooke suggested to me 2 little ideas.’³ The first of these ideas – that of a man ‘who has become afraid of himself when alone’ – never came to anything, though James reverted to it in his notebook on 16 May 1899 and 11 September 1900. The second idea, however, prompted immediate elaboration:

The notion of the young man who marries an older woman and who has the effect on her of making her younger and still younger, while he himself becomes her age. When he reaches the age that *she* was (on their marriage,)

¹ James to Grace Norton, 28 December 1896 (bMS Am 1094 (1008), Houghton Library, Harvard University; hereafter Harvard).

² On Stopford Brooke as a possible model for the narrator in *The Sacred Fount*, see note 30 (p. 190). Giorgio Melchiori has suggested that Brooke may have talked to James about Edwin John Ellis and William Butler Yeats’s edition of *The Works of William Blake* (1893): in Blake’s ‘The Mental Traveller’ (c.1803), a woman grows young while her male partner ages until he becomes a father; the father then grows younger while the daughter becomes older until she finds her own male partner, at which point the cycle repeats itself (see Giorgio Melchiori, ‘Cups of Gold for the Sacred Fount: Aspects of James’s Symbolism’, *Critical Quarterly* 7.4 (Winter 1965), 301–16; 309–10).

³ The text of quotations from James’s notebooks draws on that prepared by Philip Horne, to be published in the *Complete Fiction of Henry James*, vol. 34; hereafter CFHJ34. Page references for the same passages in *The Complete Notebooks of Henry James*, eds. Leon Edel and Lyall H. Powers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) (hereafter CN) are supplied for the reader’s convenience. CN, 87. The notebook entry was dated ‘Sunday, February 17th 1894’ but, as Edel and Powers point out, ‘Sunday was the 18th in February 1894’ (CN 87 n.). James probably dined at Rutland Gate on Saturday 17 February and wrote his notebook entry on the morning of Sunday 18 February, advancing the day of the week but not the date.

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she has gone back to the age that *he* was.—Mightn't this be altered (perhaps,) to the idea of cleverness and stupidity? A clever woman marries a deadly dull man, and loses & loses her wit as he shows more & more. Or the idea of a *liaison*, suspected, but of which there is no proof but this transfusion of some idiosyncrasy of one party to the being of the other—this exchange & conversion? The fact, the secret, of the *liaison* might be revealed in that way. The two things—the two elements—beauty & “mind,” might be correspondingly, concomitantly exhibited as in the history of two related couples—with the opposition, in each case, that wd. help the thing to be dramatic[.] (CN 88)

This is the first glimpse of a novel which, for one contemporary reviewer, was ‘wellnigh unbelievable in its irrelevance’ and, for another, ‘an example of hypochondriachal subtlety run mad’ – a novel which, for a subsequent generation of critics, became an instance of ‘unassailable mastery’ and even ‘the first authentic masterpiece of the “modern movement”’.⁴ Yet Stopford Brooke’s anecdote was not further developed until 15 February 1899, when James reminded himself:

of the little *conchetto* [...] of the young man who marries an old woman & becomes old while she becomes young. Keep my play on idea: the *liaison* that betrays itself by the *transfer* of qualities—qualities to be determined—from one to the other of the parties to it. They *exchange*. I see 2 couples. One is married—this is the *old-young* pair. I watch *their* process, & it gives me my light for the spectacle of the other (covert, obscure, unavowed pair,) who are *not* married. (CN 176)

The third and final notebook entry on *The Sacred Fount*, set down in Rome under the date of 16 May 1899, was telegraphic: the seventh item in a list of ‘anecdotes’ simply recalled the idea of ‘[t]he 2 couples (vide ante: Stopf. B.)’ (CN 184).⁵

⁴ Henry James: *The Contemporary Reviews*, ed. Kevin J. Hayes, American Critical Archives (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 338, 346; hereafter Hayes; R. P. Blackmur, ‘*The Sacred Fount*’, *Kenyon Review*, Old Series 4.3 (Autumn 1942), 328–52; 345; Leon Edel, *Henry James: The Master, 1901–16* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1972), p. 97; hereafter Edel 5.

⁵ Digitized images of the notebook entries can be found in the *Guide to Correspondence and Journals of Henry James Jr. and Other Family Papers, 1855–1916* (MS Am 1094), Houghton Library, Harvard University (Series IX, Diaries and Appointment Books of Henry James Jr. (2221a), vol. 3, Diary for 2 February 1889 to 3 November 1894, seq. 161–3; vol. 6, Diary for 26 October 1896 to 10 February 1909, seq. 72–3, 116), id.lib.harvard.edu/aleph/008734407/catalog, consulted 1 January 2019.

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After a four-month trip to France and Italy, James returned to Rye, Sussex, in June 1899. He did not immediately begin work on *The Sacred Fount* because his first commitment was to *The Sense of the Past*. In a letter of 2 January 1900 to his agent, James Brand Pinker, the novelist mentioned that he was ‘well started’ on this project, which was to be ‘thrilling!’ and ‘not “abstract”’.⁶ On 17 January, however, James told Pinker that he had ‘broken down’: the story had proved ‘diabolically, tormentingly, *difficult*.’ He would instead devote himself to ‘some more short tales’ and ‘the thing of which I sent you the Synopsis’ (probably *The Wings of the Dove*).⁷ On 22 February, James told Pinker that he was ‘doing half-a-dozen short stories—four of which are practically ready to send to you’ (LL 336). Three of these tales – ‘The Tone of Time,’ ‘The Story in It’ and ‘Flickerbridge’ – were shortly delivered; then, on 2 March, the novelist informed Pinker that he was ‘keeping back’ a tale entitled ‘The Sacred Fount’ because ‘I am not yet satisfied with it,’ promising the London agent that ‘you shall have it soon’ (LL 336).

In fact, more than four months elapsed before James completed *The Sacred Fount*. As it had been sketched in his notebooks, the tale was a ‘little *conchetto*’, a mere ‘anecdote’. But *The Sacred Fount* exceeded the confines of the short story at an early point and continued to expand beyond expectations. James might well have drafted a few chapters of his new novel in the first two months of 1900,⁸ but probably did not start work in earnest until he returned to Rye, Sussex, in late March after a two-week visit to London which, as he told the American journalist William Morton Fullerton on 22 March 1900, had caused the ‘fountain of homesickness’ to flow.⁹ Working in the morning either in the Green Room at Lamb House or, as the weather improved, in the Garden Room, the novelist dictated the new work to

⁶ Yale Collection of American Literature, MSS 830 (Box 2), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library; hereafter Yale.

⁷ *Henry James: A Life in Letters*, ed. Philip Horne (London: Allen Lane, 1999), p. 334; hereafter *LL*. The synopsis has previously been thought to be that of *The Ambassadors*, but Tamara Follini has shown that this is unlikely (see *CFH*17:XLII, n. 15).

⁸ In a letter of 15 March 1901, James told Mrs Ward that he had written 25,000 words of the novel ‘before I knew it’ (*Henry James Letters*, ed. Leon Edel, 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1974–84), 4:185–6; hereafter *HJL*). This statement might be taken to suggest that James completed as much as the first six chapters of *The Sacred Fount* (approximately 26,000 words) before telling Pinker he was keeping the work back.

⁹ bMS Am 1094.1 (81), Harvard.

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William MacAlpine, his amanuensis since February 1897. The craggy MacAlpine – ‘MacAppenine’, as Jonathan Sturges jokingly called him¹⁰ – typed the text directly rather than taking shorthand, and James revised this material later in the day.

On 7 June 1900 James promised to send two copies of *The Sacred Fount* to Pinker ‘at the earliest possible date’, predicting that it would be ‘upwards of 45,000 words’.¹¹ Five days later, the novelist informed his agent that the novel would shortly be completed but required some ‘inspired last touches’: he had ‘just received the (intended-to-be) final type-copy of the novel, with the exception of the last sixth, which I am intensely finishing, & *shall* have finished in a very few days’ (LL 338). A week later, however, James begged Pinker for ‘a little more patience’. He still hoped to complete the novel in ‘a very few days’ and certainly ‘within the month’. It had, however, been ‘a more protracted matter to *end* it – I mean finish and super-finish it – than I expected’. He was ‘close into port, and the protraction has been all to the advantage of the work’. But the novel would ‘make more nearly 55,000 (or even 60,000) words than 45,000’.¹² On the same day – 19 June 1900 – James wrote rather wearily to Jessie Allen. He had spent the summer in Rye and ‘drained the cup of monotony’; rather than corresponding with his friend, he had been ‘writing other things direfully forced upon me by the necessity of the moment’.¹³

Necessity pressed, but James did not complete *The Sacred Fount* in a ‘very few days’ or even ‘the month’. On 27 June, the novelist assured his agent that the novel ‘shall be soon in your hands’.¹⁴ On 8 July – in the midst of what he described as a ‘wintry summer’¹⁵ – James informed Pinker that he expected ‘to finish *The Sacred Fount* on Tuesday or Wednesday next’. At that point, he would ‘dispatch the final eight or ten thousand words without a day’s more delay to the typist’s’. The novel would now be of 70,000 rather than 60,000

¹⁰ James to Alice Howe (Gibbens) James, 31 January 1900 (bMS Am 1094.1 (134), Harvard).

¹¹ MSS 830 (Box 2), Yale.

¹² Quoted by Philip Horne in *Henry James and Revision: The New York Edition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 40, n. 45.

¹³ bMS Am 1504 (7), Harvard.

¹⁴ MSS 830 (Box 2), Yale.

¹⁵ James to Grace Norton (bMS Am 1094 (1013), Harvard).

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words but he felt sure that all ‘delays and delusions’ were now behind him.¹⁶ Two days later, on 10 July, James told Jonathan Sturges that he had ‘just finished’ *The Sacred Fount* after writing ‘70,000 words’ of a story ‘planned originally for 7000!’ (*HJL* 4:153). In fact, the novelist required a further 8,000 words and two weeks to complete the novel – a period during which the cool weather gave way to a heatwave. On 18 July 1900 – just as his young cousin Ellen (‘Bay’) Emmet was completing her portrait of James (‘the clerical gentleman in the sporting necktie’, as he later referred to it) – the novelist told his brother William that the previous day had been the ‘hottest [...] I’ve ever known in England—95°, + more, in shade.’¹⁷ On 25 July, hoping that Pinker was bearing up ‘under this temperature’ in his Arundel Street offices, James finally despatched a 327-page carbon duplicate copy of his latest production:

I send you at last, today, the complete Ms of *The Sacred Fount*—as to the interminable delay of which I won’t further expatiate. The reasons for this have been all the best, and in the interest of the work itself—intrinsically speaking. It makes exactly 77,794 words—say, more roughly, about *seventy-eight* thousand. (*HJL* 4:154)

The following day, bemoaning the heat as ‘a great + universal blight’, James sent his original typescript copy of *The Sacred Fount* to Pinker, retaining a second duplicate at Lamb House. The new work should have been written in a week or two but had taken more like twenty; it was more than ten times longer than its author originally intended. But there were points in its favour: the novel, as James had told Pinker on 25 July, was ‘controlled and directed’ throughout; it was also ‘calculated to minister to curiosity’. Turning then to the question of publication, the novelist rejected serialization as ‘impossible’. ‘What I should like’, he continued, ‘is almost any sum “down,” that is *respectable*, for the English and American use of the book for any period short of surrender of copyright: three, five, seven years—in short whatever you can best do’ (*HJL* 4:154–5).

Since the publication of Michael Anesko’s *Friction with the Market* in 1986, readers have become familiar with the idea that James ‘actively manipulated his position as a transatlantic writer in his negotiations with rival

¹⁶ MSS 830 (Box 2), Yale.

¹⁷ James to Ellen Emmet, 16 November 1900 (bMS Am 1094 (665), Harvard); James to William James, 18 July 1900 (bMS Am 1094 (2146), Harvard).

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sets of literary businessmen.¹⁸ Yet James's insistence on the need to sell *The Sacred Fount* for an up-front sum ('the "down"', he emphasized in his letter to Pinker, 'is important') suggests that, on this occasion, negotiations regarding publication were influenced by what were (at least in his own mind) compelling economic exigencies (*HJL* 4:154–5). Before moving to Rye in June 1898, James had signed a twenty-one-year lease on Lamb House for which he paid £70 per annum. When this property was offered for sale in mid-1899 at £2,000, the novelist took out a £1,200 mortgage, planning to cover the £800 deficit by means of his earnings. Through the second half of 1899 and into 1900 James accordingly worked, in the words of Leon Edel, as if 'pursued by the furies', producing four non-fiction pieces and eleven short stories.¹⁹ When in August 1900 several of these tales were published in book form as *The Soft Side*, James received an advance of £100. Nevertheless, by the time he delivered his manuscript, the novelist may still have been short of his objective. The need for 'almost any sum "down"' was understandable: James must have been aware that, unless it was serialized, a 78,000-word novel was unlikely to yield as much immediate income as eleven 7,000-word stories, each of which could be sold for £50.

In the event, however, James did reasonably well from *The Sacred Fount*. Edel suggests that it was the advances on this novel which finally earned the money needed to buy Lamb House (on 1 October 1900) while leaving 'margin in his bank' (Edel 4:320). In the Memorandum of Agreement between James and Methuen and Co. dated 30 July 1900 (see Figure 1), it was agreed that the novelist would receive £250 'on account of royalties and profits' with a payment of '20% on the published price of all sold up to 5000 copies' and 25% thereafter.²⁰ James returned the contract to Pinker on 1 August 1900²¹ and on 16 August acknowledged receipt of a cheque for £225 from his agent 'representing the amount received from Methuen and Co. on the agreement for *The Sacred Fount*, less your commission' (*HJL* 4:162). In the

¹⁸ Michael Anesko, 'Friction with the Market': *Henry James and the Profession of Authorship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. ix.

¹⁹ Leon Edel, *Henry James: The Treacherous Years, 1895–1901* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1969), p. 319; hereafter Edel 4.

²⁰ Contract with Methuen for *The Sacred Fount*. Quoted with the permission of Penguin Random House and the estate of Henry James.

²¹ See MSS 830 (Box 3), Yale.

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copies so sold. But it is agreed that before such sale is made, the Author shall have the opportunity of purchasing the books at such "remainder prices."

9. In the event of the Author's corrections to the said work exceeding an average of *25* ~~30~~ *shillings* per sheet of 16 pages, the amount of the excess shall be charged to the Author.

10. The Author will not write or publish or be concerned either directly or indirectly in writing or publishing any other book on the same subject of such a kind or published at such a price as may reasonably be regarded as likely to affect injuriously the sale of the said work, and he guarantees that the said work is in no way a violation of any copyright, and that it contains nothing of a libellous character, and he will hold harmless the said Methuen & Co. from all suits, claims, and proceedings which may be taken on the ground that the said work is such violation or contains anything libellous.

11. The Author agrees to revise the above work when necessary, and to supply any new matter that may be needful to keep it up to date.

12. The Author shall be entitled to receive on publication six presentation copies of the above book, and to purchase further copies for personal use at trade terms.

13. Accounts shall be made up to June 30th and December 31st in each year, and shall be rendered and paid in November and May.

14. That this agreement shall be for a term or terms of *seven* years from the date on which the book is first published and shall be terminable by either party by notice given *six* months before the expiration of such term or terms, but in the event of it being terminated by the said Henry James before the royalties which have become payable under this have amounted to the sum advanced on account of such royalties, the said Henry James agrees to pay to the said Methuen & Co. the difference and the said Henry James also agrees to purchase the sheet and stereotype plates at cost price. *H. J.*

15. The Author empowers the said Methuen & Co. to pay to his agent, James B. Parker of 11 Finsbury Square London E.C.2, all sums of money payable under this agreement, and declares that the said James B. Parker's receipt shall be good and valid discharge to all persons paying such sums. *H. J.*

April 1900

*per James B. Parker & Son
 for authorisations see under
 'The Golden Bowl'*

Henry James.

Figure 1 Memorandum of Agreement between Henry James and Methuen and Co. (30 July 1900), reproduced with the permission of Penguin Random House and the estate of Henry James.

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same letter, the novelist expressed pleasure that Pinker was now ‘in relation with the Scribners in respect to the American volume’ (*HJL* 4:162). Pinker shortly informed his client of the terms offered by the New York publisher, and James telegraphed his concurrence at 10 a.m. on Friday 24 August – ‘Completely satisfactory please conclude many thanks’ – confirming this in a letter later that day.²²

According to Anesko, Scribner’s initially proposed to offer James ‘an advance of \$1,000 [£200] on a 15% royalty’. But, with the purchase of Lamb House on his mind, the novelist ‘preferred to lease the American copyright’.²³ On 27 July, Pinker accordingly wrote to Scribner’s informing them that the terms which would be ‘most convenient’ to his client were ‘an immediate payment for the [...] American bookrights outright for a period of five years for the sum of £400’.²⁴ Expressing the ‘very great pleasure of adding a book’ by James ‘to our list of publications’, the firm accepted these terms in a letter to Pinker on 14 August 1900.²⁵ In the Memorandum of Agreement between James and Charles Scribner’s Sons dated 1 October 1900, it was agreed that the novelist would receive £400 ‘for the right to publish said work for FIVE (5) YEARS beginning with the date of publication’ and 20 per cent of the retail price subsequently.²⁶ The New York firm was as prompt in its payment as the London one. In a letter to Pinker on 7 October 1900, James acknowledged receipt of a cheque for £360, ‘representing the amount, w/o your commission, due to me from Ch. Scribner’s Sons for “The Sacred Fount”’.²⁷ It was, he added, ‘very convenient to me to receive the money, though I should not

²² MSS 830 (Box 3, 41 telegrams), Yale. For James’s letter of 24 August 1900 to Pinker, see MSS 830 (Box 3, autograph and typed letters 1898–1914), Yale.

²³ Michael Anesko, ‘Collected Editions and the Consolidation of Cultural Authority: The Case of Henry James’, *Book History* 12 (2009), 186–208; 206.

²⁴ Co101; 1786–2004 (Box 104, Folder 2), Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library; hereafter Princeton.

²⁵ Co101 (Box 881), Princeton.

²⁶ Co101 (Box 864, Folder 18), Princeton.

²⁷ MSS 830 (Box 3), Yale. Scribner’s appears to have paid out before receiving a signed contract, which Pinker did not return until 11 January 1901. The delay may have been caused by Pinker’s efforts to establish a date for simultaneous publication on both sides of the Atlantic: this, as he pointed out in a letter to Scribner’s on 24 August 1900, was ‘not quite clear’ (Co101 (Box 104, Folder 2), Princeton). On the publication date, see note 29 below.

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have been yet—for a little—unpleasantly pressed by it.²⁸ All in all, therefore, James earned £585 in advance payments on *The Sacred Fount*: £225 from Methuen after deduction of Pinker's £25 commission plus £360 from Scribner's, representing an advance of £400 less commission. This is almost certainly more than he would have gained had he been paid a percentage of sales. James had worried that his work on *The Sacred Fount* would be unprofitable, but in the event he earned as much from the novel as from an equivalent wordcount sold separately as stories.

On 22 January 1901, Queen Victoria died at the age of eighty-one. She had, as James told Oliver Wendell Holmes, 'held the nation warm under the fold of her big, hideous Scotch-plaid shawl' and been a 'sustaining symbol' for so long (*HJL* 4:184). Now, as the novelist wrote to Paul Bourget, a 'new era' had begun (*Edel* 5:85). Published in New York by Charles Scribner's Sons on or about Friday 8 February 1901,²⁹ less than a week after the Queen's state funeral, *The Sacred Fount* was one of the first novels of the 'new era'. The 319-page Scribner volume was bound, as Edel, Laurence and Rambeau report, 'in smooth silky biscuit cloth, lettering and single-rule panel in gilt on front cover, lettering and flame device plus single-rules at top and bottom in gilt on spine'.³⁰ The first impression, printed on 31 January 1901,

²⁸ MSS 830 (Box 3), Yale.

²⁹ The date of US publication given by Leon Edel, Dan H. Laurence and James Rambeau in *A Bibliography of Henry James*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 118 (hereafter *BHJ*) is 8 February (a Friday in 1901). It is also the date identified by Pinker in a letter to Scribner's of 11 January 1901: 'Messrs. Methuen suggest February 8th. as a date for publication, and I hope this will meet your arrangements' (Co101 (Box 104, Folder 2), Princeton). In a letter of 24 January 1901, Pinker told Scribner's that he assumed the 8 February date was satisfactory and provisionally confirmed that Methuen would publish on the same day in Britain (Co101 (Box 104, Folder 2), Princeton). However, Philip Horne has suggested 6 February as the date of US publication (see *LL* 337, n. 1) and this was the date on which Scribner's claimed copyright by depositing a copy of *The Sacred Fount* in the Library of Congress (Co101 (Box 104, Folder 2), Princeton). It is also possible to argue for a third date. Scribner's advertised the novel as being 'Ready February 9th.' in the *New-York Daily Tribune* of 27 January 1901 (5) and the *New York Sun* of 30 January 1901 (7), chroniclingamerica.loc.gov, consulted 1 January 2019. An announcement in the 'Books and Authors' section of the *New-York Daily Tribune* on 2 February 1901 (8) stated that *The Sacred Fount* 'will be published on February 9'. Scribner's also advertised the novel as being 'Ready To-day' in the *New-York Daily Tribune* on 9 February 1901 (8), chroniclingamerica.loc.gov, consulted 1 January 2019.

³⁰ *BHJ* 118–19.

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consisted of 3,000 copies priced at \$1.50. David J. Supino reports that the novel was also issued in a variant binding of ‘maroon vertical-rib-grain cloth’.³¹ A second impression consisting of 1,000 copies was printed on 25 February 1901 and later bound in batches. This impression was issued in two types of binding, one consisting of ‘tan smooth biscuit cloth’, the other of ‘dark blue vertical-rib-grain cloth’ (Supino 431, 434). Supino further records that Scribner’s brought out a third impression consisting of 275 copies in 1910 (see Supino 434).

The first British edition of *The Sacred Fount* (see Figure 2) was published in London on or about Friday 15 February 1901.³² Suffering from eczema at this time – ‘my face burns, burns, burns’ – James was nevertheless able to mark publication day by taking his niece Mary Margaret (‘Peggy’) to a matinée performance of *Twelfth Night* at Her Majesty’s Theatre.³³ The Methuen edition contained 316 pages of text and was bound, according to Edel, Laurence and Rambeau, ‘in lacquered crimson cloth, lettered in gilt within single-rule panel in blind and double-rule border and all-over flower and leaf ornaments in blind on front cover, lettered in gilt with author and title within single-rule panel in blind and single-rule border and all-over flower and leaf ornaments in blind on spine’ (*BHJ* 119). The first British edition of the novel consisted of 3,500 copies, priced at 6s. Later in 1901, as Supino reports, Methuen issued copies of the first impression as part of their Colonial Library series, bound in ‘greenish-blue diaper-grain cloth’ and also in paper wrappers (Supino 437). In 1911, Methuen issued further copies of the first impression bound in with a 32-page catalogue (the first edition had included a 48-page ‘Catalogue of Books and Announcements’, dated November 1900). Another issue of the first impression, again including copies of the 32-page catalogue, was produced in August 1911.

In Britain, a single pre-publication announcement (a news item rather than an advertisement) appeared in December 1900: ‘Mr Henry James is

³¹ David J. Supino, *Henry James: A Bibliographical Catalogue of a Collection of Editions to 1921*, 2nd edn (Liverpool University Press, 2014), p. 432; hereafter Supino.

³² Not, as Pinker had initially desired, on 8 February 1901 (see note 29 above).

³³ James to William James, 12 February 1901 (bMS Am 1094 (2156), Harvard). On the performance of *Twelfth Night*, see James’s letter of 12 February 1901 to Mary Margaret (Peggy) James (bMS Eng 1070 (18), Harvard).

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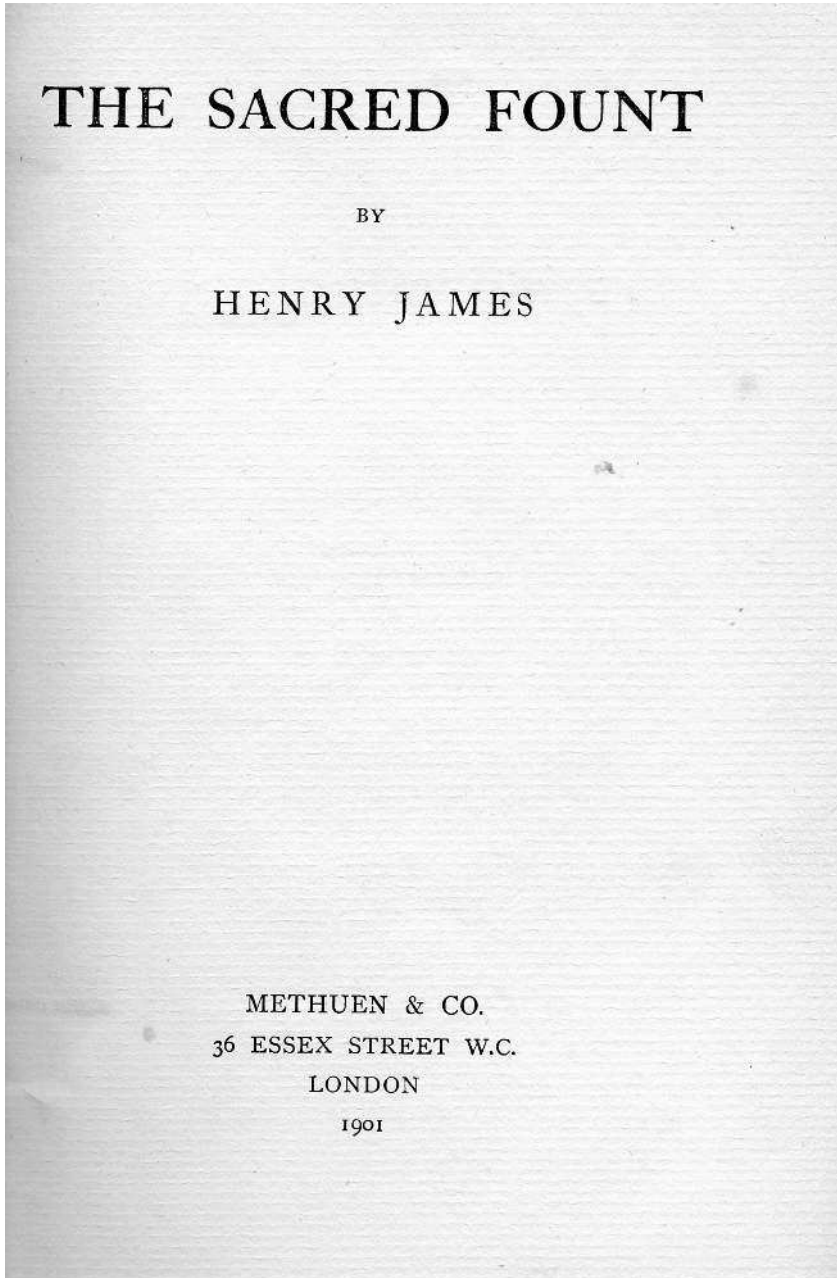


Figure 2 Title page of *The Sacred Fount*

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correcting the proofs of his new novel.³⁴ Actually, the novelist had begun work on 'a big bundle of proofs' on 5 November, returning 'a complete correct text' on 22 November.³⁵ There were further announcements in the *Academy* (16 February 1901), the *Saturday Review* (16 February) and the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (27 February). Methuen mounted a three-month advertising campaign for *The Sacred Fount*, placing a pre-publication advertisement in the *Athenæum* on 19 January 1901 and a publication day advert in *The Times* on 15 February. In the period between publication and the appearance of a review in *The Times* on 4 May, a further nine adverts appeared in this newspaper.³⁶ Publication week advertisements appeared in the *Academy* and the *Saturday Review* on 16 February. Entering the second week after publication, Methuen stepped up its campaign with adverts in the *Athenæum*, the *Saturday Review* and the *Speaker* on 23 February. Advertisements subsequently appeared in the *Academy* (2 March), the *Athenæum* (9 and 16 March), the *Saturday Review* and the *Speaker* (both 30 March). The campaign concluded with adverts in the *Athenæum* and the *Speaker* on 13 April.

In the US, Scribner's advertising campaign was as focussed on New York as Methuen's was on London. Imminent publication of *The Sacred Fount* was announced in the *New York Times* on 26 January. Scribner's pre-publication advertisement appeared in the *New-York Daily Tribune* on 27 January with an announcement following on 2 February. Scribner's advertisement appeared once more in the *New York Sun* on 30 January and the *Chicago Tribune* also featured an announcement on 9 February. A reworked advertisement using text taken from the 26 January *New York Times* announcement was placed in the *New-York Daily Tribune* on 9 February. A third Scribner's advert appeared in the *New-York Daily Tribune* on 16 February. Scribner's advertisement in the *Atlantic Monthly* for February 1901 repeated the first sentence from their 9 February advert in the *New-York Daily Tribune* but included an additional sentence describing

³⁴ 'Literary Notes', *Western Daily Press* (28 December 1900), 2.

³⁵ James to James Brand Pinker (MSS 830 (Box 3), Yale). On 12 November 1900, James wrote to Howard Sturgis: he was going through the proofs of *The Sacred Fount* 'in every spare instant, inch by inch' (bMS Am 1094 (1192), Harvard).

³⁶ Advertisements in *The Times* appeared on 5, 8, 13, 25 and 28 March and on 1, 10, 15 and 19 April.

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The Sacred Fount as ‘a masterpiece of an absolutely unprecedented order.’ Bliss Perry – at that time editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* – raised an eyebrow at this, asking Charles Scribner on 20 February 1901 whether the advert contained ‘a “weaselled” sentence.’³⁷

The Sacred Fount did not sell out the print run of 3,500 in Britain: Methuen still held printed sheets of the first impression in 1911. Edel, Laurence and Rambeau suggest that the novel had ‘the poorest sale of all of the James titles published by Methuen’ and matters were scarcely better in the US (*BHJ* 119). In Richmond, Virginia, Meyer’s bookshop offered the novel at 90¢ to those who attended a ‘Specially Attractive Saturday Book Day’ in March 1901.³⁸ In January 1902, Kann’s department store in Washington DC discounted *The Sacred Fount* to 50¢ in an advert placed between offers on ‘muslin underwear’ and ‘toilet goods.’³⁹ In early 1903, the novel was offered at a ‘clean-up price’ of 35¢ in Buffalo, New York.⁴⁰ Scribner’s seems to have reacted to poor sales of *The Sacred Fount* with some ingenuity. On 16 February 1901, only a week after publication in the US, the firm advertised a ‘second edition’ of the novel in the *New-York Daily Tribune* and the *New York Sun*.⁴¹ This was really a second impression of 1,000 copies, and the advert was probably designed to create an appearance of popularity for a work that was selling slowly.⁴² The issue of a second impression does, however, suggest that Scribner’s expected to shift the first. The appearance of a third impression in 1910 implies that Scribner’s had by this time sold out the second impression, in which case they would have made \$6,000 on the novel in about ten years (before deducting their publication costs and James’s advance). Yet Anesko suggests that Scribner’s ‘never recouped its money on *The Sacred Fount*’ and the same is likely to have been true in Britain.⁴³ If Methuen’s print run had sold out, they would have made £1,050 on the novel, a sum which would also need to be set against costs and the advance. But the fact

³⁷ C0101 (Box 864, Folder 18), Princeton.

³⁸ *Richmond Dispatch* (16 March 1901), 3.

³⁹ *Evening Star* [Washington, DC] (31 January 1902), 5.

⁴⁰ *Courier* [Buffalo, NY] (15 February 1903), 12.

⁴¹ References to a ‘second edition’ were repeated in Scribner’s advertisements in the *Sun* [New York] on 21 February 1901 and the *New-York Daily Tribune* on 2 March 1901.

⁴² I am grateful to David J. Supino for advice on this point.

⁴³ Anesko, ‘Collected Editions’, 206.

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that sheets of the first impression remained unbound and unsold for a decade suggests that British sales fell well short of this figure.

In commercial terms, *The Sacred Fount* was by no means a complete failure. James's relationship with Scribner's was destined to continue and, as Maureen Duffy notes, Algernon Methuen demonstrated a 'continuing belief in James in spite of poor sales'.⁴⁴ Of course, Methuen could prop up a low-volume prestige list with bread-and-butter sales of such popular novelists as Marie Corelli (*The Sorrows of Satan*, 1895). But Algernon Methuen actively fostered the relationship with his author even after James contracted with Constable for *The Wings of the Dove*.⁴⁵ On 8 October 1900 – the day before the novelist signed the agreement with Constable – Methuen wrote to Pinker asking whether his client was 'inclined' to publish a 'long novel' with the firm.⁴⁶ James was inclined, and Methuen duly brought out *The Ambassadors*, paying their author £300 on account – £50 more than he received for *The Sacred Fount*. After the publication of *The Sacred Fount*, as Roger Gard points out, James's growing reputation as a 'fine old master' produced 'a slight, but favourable' effect on his sales.⁴⁷ When Methuen brought out *The Golden Bowl* in 1904, the novel went into a third edition – a distinct improvement on the fortunes of *The Sacred Fount*.

* * *

Perhaps the most influential account of the biographical background to *The Sacred Fount* is given in Leon Edel's biography. The period covered by *The Treacherous Years* (1969) – that is to say, from 1895 to 1901 – was one in which, according to Edel, James suffered a 'spiritual illness'. This began with 'a kind of "nervous breakdown"' following the opening night of *Guy Domville* on 5 January 1895 (Edel 4:10). The novelist turned away from the stage, and – in *The Other House* (1896), *The Spoils of Poynton* (1897), *What Maisie Knew* (1897) and *The Awkward Age* (1899) – returned to the novel as

⁴⁴ Maureen Duffy, *A Thousand Capricious Chances: A History of the Methuen List, 1889–1989* (London: Methuen, 1989), p. 36.

⁴⁵ For further discussion of Methuen's reaction to the Constable deal, see p. lxiv below.

⁴⁶ BMS Am 2540 (1), Harvard.

⁴⁷ Roger Gard (ed.), *Henry James: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 555; hereafter Gard.

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a literary form (he had not published a full-length fiction since *The Tragic Muse* in 1890). Edel argues that these works, as well as ‘The Turn of the Screw’ (1898) and ‘In the Cage’ (1898), were instances of ‘regression’ (Edel 4:102). Returning to childhood memories, James began to explore the lives of children or young adults and to investigate ‘the ways in which the imagination endows reality with realities of its own’ (Edel 4:9). *The Sacred Fount* was the culmination of a ‘personal healing process’ which enabled the novelist to write *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904) (Edel 4:250).

Edel’s notion of the ‘spiritual illness’ of the 1890s rests in part on the account of James’s childhood experiences in the first volume of his biography, *The Untried Years* (1953). Here, Edel argued that the relationships observed by the narrator of *The Sacred Fount* had their origin in the experiences of the young Henry James. His father was ‘strong, robust, manly, yet weak and feminine’, his mother ‘strong, firm, but irrational and contradictory’.⁴⁸ In the marriage of his parents James witnessed a ‘reversal of parental roles’ (Edel 1:52) which, in Edel’s view, influenced the depiction of Ralph Touchett’s ‘motherly’ father and ‘paternal’ mother in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) (Ch. 5). In marriage, it seemed, the female of the species was less vulnerable than the male. The husband derived support from the wife but might also find himself in a situation of ‘stultifying dependency’ (Edel 1:55). Edel argued that James played with permutations on this scenario in works ranging from *Roderick Hudson* (1875) to *The Ambassadors* (1903). The theme was most fully developed in *The Sacred Fount* but had been visible much earlier. In ‘De Grey: A Romance’ (1868), the prospect of marriage proves, as Edel points out, ‘fatal for the man’; in ‘Longstaff’s Marriage’ (1878), impending marriage is again a sentence of death for the title character (Edel 1:56).

Edel’s psychobiographical approach is also evident in ‘Bliss and Bale’, the final section of his introduction to the Grove Press edition of *The Sacred Fount* (published, like *The Untried Years*, in 1953) as well as in a second edition of the novel (published by Rupert Hart-Davis in 1959). In the introduction to the Grove Press edition, the sense on James’s part that sex might

⁴⁸ Leon Edel, *Henry James: The Untried Years, 1843–1870* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953), p. 52; hereafter Edel 1.

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be a ‘depleting force’ was said to stem from the ‘primary scene’ of James’s childhood, in which the mother seemed strong and the father weak.⁴⁹ This introduction and the first volume of the biography must have been written almost concurrently: in both, Edel mentions Ralph Touchett’s motherly father and fatherly mother; in both, Edel identifies a perception on the part of the young James that the husband might be doomed to ‘stultifying dependency’ in marriage.⁵⁰ And in the first volume of the biography, Edel cites two further early instances of the sacred fount theme: ‘A Tragedy of Error’ (1864) and ‘Osborne’s Revenge’ (1868).⁵¹ In two editions and a biography, then, Edel presented *The Sacred Fount* as a defining work. In 1969, the novel lent its title to the concluding section of *The Treacherous Years* but it had from the early 1950s been central to Edel’s conception of James’s imaginative development.

Edel’s description of the artistic and personal crisis suffered by James during the 1890s might benefit from modification in a number of ways. It could be pointed out, for example, that in professional terms, the difficulties experienced by the novelist had begun some time before the failure of *Guy Domville*. In late January 1895, James told William Dean Howells that he had ‘fallen upon evil days’ – not in that month of crisis but for ‘a long time past’ (*HJL* 3:511). Periodical publication of longer works was an option ‘practically closed’ and the novelist was limited to ‘the little *book* [...] independent of any antecedent appearance’ (*HJL* 3:512–13). The ‘treacherous’ years might therefore be seen as part of a more extended period during which James responded to changing market conditions. In personal terms, too, the crisis may be said to have antedated *Guy Domville*: it would, for example, be equally plausible to date the start of the ‘breakdown’ to January 1894, when Constance Fenimore Woolson died in Venice. Nor is it clear that *The Sacred Fount* represents, as Edel claims, the ‘last stage’ of James’s “‘self-therapy’” (Edel 4:328). Edel himself suggests that ‘The Beast in the Jungle’ (1903) contained an acknowledgment that James ‘had behaved with Miss Woolson like one of his vampire-people

⁴⁹ Leon Edel, ‘An Introductory Essay’, in *The Sacred Fount*, ed. Leon Edel (New York: Grove Press, 1953), v–xxxii; xxv–xxvi.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, xvii.

⁵¹ One might add to Edel’s examples: ‘The Story of a Year’ (1865), ‘My Friend Bingham’ (1867), ‘Poor Richard’ (1867), ‘Master Eustace’ (1871) and ‘Guest’s Confession’ (1872) also feature relationships in which one partner appears to gain at the expense of another.

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in *The Sacred Fount* (Edel 5:143). If it makes sense to think of the novelist undertaking ‘self-therapy’, the process continued well after 1901.

Edel’s account of *The Sacred Fount* is not without its problems: indeed, the novel’s very centrality to Edel’s biographical project may overstate its importance. Yet Edel certainly enables one to see why Stopford Brooke’s anecdote seemed so suggestive to James at the Crackanthorpes’s on that February night in 1894. From his first notebook entry, the novelist’s idea was to counterpose an initial relationship in which one partner became older while another grew younger with a second relationship in which one partner grew more clever while the other became increasingly dull. For James, the addition of a second ‘exchange or conversion’ enhanced the ‘dramatic’ quality of his idea (CN 88). Edel suggests that a similar multiplication of exchanges also characterized the life of the novelist. As a boy, James had seen energy flow from one of his parents to the other: as a young man, he appears to have detected a second such pattern in his sibling relationships. In a letter of 26 October 1869, James informed his father that he had ‘invented for my comfort a theory that this degenerescence of mine is the result of Alice & Willy getting better & locating some of their diseases on me’.⁵² Similar transferences could be observed outside the immediate family. When his cousin Mary (‘Minny’) Temple died in March 1870, James wrote to his brother (the source of his ‘degenerescence’ not six months earlier) about ‘the gradual change & reversal’ of his and Minny’s situation: ‘I slowly crawling from weakness & inaction & suffering into strength & health & hope: she sinking out of brightness & youth into decline & death’ (CLHJ 1855–72 2:342–3). Edel argues that a tale such as ‘Longstaff’s Marriage’ (1878) – a story which he identifies as a precursor to *The Sacred Fount* – was in part a response to the death of Minny (see Edel 1:328–35). In the last section of his introduction to the 1953 edition, Edel even suggests that the 1870 letter to William anticipates *The Sacred Fount* and that James had – in his twenties – converted Minny into ‘a May Server figure’.⁵³

The idea that Minny Temple was a model for Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and Milly Theale in *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) is well

⁵² *The Complete Letters of Henry James, 1855–1872*, eds. Michael Anesko, Pierre A. Walker and Greg W. Zacharias (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 2:161–2; hereafter CLHJ.

⁵³ Edel, ‘An Introductory Essay’, xxviii.

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known. But the notion that May Server resembles Minny Temple is more surprising: after all, the former has been a wife and a mother while the latter died, unmarried and childless, at the age of twenty-four. May is at most, one might think, a vision of what Minny might have become had she lived. But youth – or the loss of it – is indeed central to *The Sacred Fount*, and there can be little doubt that the figure of Minny Temple informed the young James's conception of youth. In his March 1870 letter to his older brother, James referred to his 'invalidism' and the consequent sensation of being 'in rather indirect relation' to all those things which Minny Temple most vividly represented: 'her own sex [...] but even more *Youth*' (CLHJ 1855–72 2:342). Youth – and the loss of it – was again on the novelist's mind in the 1890s. On 27 December 1892 – months short of his fiftieth birthday – he sketched an idea for a story about a man in love with his younger self, putting into the mouth of this character a line which may well have been invested with personal significance: "The most beautiful word in the language?—Youth!" (CN 76). In his twenties, James had seen Minny Temple's youth dwindle while his own health improved; in such stories as 'De Grey' and 'Osborne's Revenge', relationships were – or seemed to be – vampiric. In his fifties, the novelist would again see people he knew being depleted by those with whom they were intimate. In a letter of 27 February 1901 to Henrietta Reubell – a letter which accompanied the gift of his recently published novel – James suggested that Elizabeth Cameron (wife of the American senator Don Cameron and a woman to whom Henry Adams had been closely attached for several years) had 'sucked the lifeblood' of her confidant.⁵⁴ One might think that work on *The Sacred Fount* had produced so lurid a metaphor. According to Edel, however, James had reached these conclusions about Cameron's relationship with Adams on an 1898 visit to Surrenden Dering in Kent (see Edel 4:221).⁵⁵

The second notebook entry on *The Sacred Fount* was written in February 1899. During the months that followed, several experiences influenced the germination of the novel. James travelled to Italy early in 1899. In a travel piece first published in the autumn of that year, he recalled a visit to 'a high historic house' – the Palazzo Barbaro in Venice – during which he had

⁵⁴ bMS Am 1094 (1143), Harvard.

⁵⁵ On Surrenden Dering as a possible model for Newmarch, see note 3 (p. 185).

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encountered ‘old, old women with [...] old, old jewels’ and been struck by an ‘absence of youth [...] in either sex.’⁵⁶ ‘Youth’ was the most beautiful word in the language, but on this occasion at least it was a scarce commodity in Italy. For James, there was also a personal dimension to this interplay between past and present. In a letter to Paul Bourget on 15 May 1899, James confessed to finding Rome ‘more and more “modern” as I grow more and more antique’ (Edel 4:273). This was not quite an instance of the sacred fount theme: Rome’s modernity was not responsible for the novelist’s antiquity. But the Italian visit nevertheless played a part in the development of *The Sacred Fount*: the letter to Bourget was written the day before James’s third and final notebook entry on the story and shortly before a visit to an actual sacred fount.

Chapter 3 of *The Sacred Fount* features an extended conversation between the unnamed first-person narrator of the novel and Mrs Brissenden. The narrator outlines his idea that the intelligence of one of their companions has been drawn from another source. To look for the woman whose stores of wit have been depleted will be, as the narrator puts it, to find ‘our friend’s mystic Egeria’ (p. 23). According to the *New Classical Dictionary* (1850), Egeria was ‘one of the Camenae in Roman mythology, from whom Numa received advice regarding the forms of worship he proposed to introduce. The grove in which the king had his interviews with the goddess, and in which a well gushed forth from a dark recess, was dedicated by him to the Camenae.’⁵⁷ Egeria – the goddess who loved a mortal and gave freely of her

⁵⁶ *Collected Travel Writings: The Continent, A Little Tour in France, Italian Hours, Other Travels*, ed. Richard Howard (New York: Library of America, 1993), p. 350.

⁵⁷ *New Classical Dictionary of Biography, Mythology and Geography*, ed. William Smith (London: John Murray, 1850). James owned the second edition of this work (see Leon Edel and Adeline R. Tintner, ‘The Library of Henry James, From Inventory, Catalogues, and Library Lists’, *Henry James Review* 4.3 (Spring 1983), 158–90; 184). Smith’s entry on Egeria is drawn largely from Livy. When he succeeded Romulus as ruler of Rome, Numa Pompilius ‘pretended [...] that he was in the habit of meeting the goddess Egeria by night’ in order to receive instructions concerning ‘the establishment of such rites as were most acceptable to the gods’; the meetings between Numa and Egeria took place in ‘a certain little copse watered summer and winter by a stream of which the spring was in a dark grotto’ (*The Early History of Rome* (Books 1–5 of *The History of Rome from its Foundations*), eds. R. M. Ogilvie and S. P. Oakley, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt (1960) (London: Penguin, 2002), pp. 20–21). Egeria is also mentioned in Book XV of Ovid’s *The Metamorphoses*, by Virgil in Book VII of *The Aeneid* and by Juvenal in his third satire.

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wisdom – was worshipped at a spring near the Porta Capena in Rome. But a second spring, also sacred to Egeria, is located some fifteen miles further along the Appian Way, beside Lake Nemi. The site featured in paintings by Nicolas Poussin, Claude Lorrain and J. M. W. Turner; it was mentioned in Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812–18); J. G. Frazer began and ended *The Golden Bough* (1890) with an evocative account of the rituals conducted along the lake's 'lonely shore'.⁵⁸ And it was to Egeria's grotto that James came in late May 1899, while staying with Mary Augusta ('Mrs. Humphry') Ward at the Villa Barberini in Castel Gandolfo. Edel's account of this visit and its bearing on *The Sacred Fount* (see Edel 4:276–81) is based on *A Writer's Recollections* (1918), in which Ward remembered descending with James 'from Genzano to the strawberry farm that now holds the site of the famous temple of Diana Nemorensis'. It had been 'a wonderful evening, with a golden sun on the lake'. Most wonderful and golden – at least from James's point of view – had been an encounter with a labourer named Aristodemo, 'a young Hermes in the transfiguring light'.⁵⁹

Ward's account of the visit to Lake Nemi emphasized legendary connections with Diana – 'Diana Nemorensis' – but Egeria was a more important figure in *Eleanor* (1900), the novel Ward began to write shortly after arriving at the Villa Barberini in March 1899. Her title character – Eleanor Burgoyne – is the friend and adviser of Edward Manisty, a former liberal MP who is writing a book critical of modern, secular Italy, an apologia for the papacy of Leo XIII. Basing parts of the novel on her Italian experiences, Ward's principal characters undertake the excursion to Lake Nemi which their author had made with James. Eleanor and Manisty, who are travelling with Lucy Foster (a young American woman, a friend of Manisty's aunt), encounter a labourer named Aristodemo – the 'young Hermes' of Ward's expedition. Eleanor hopes to explore Egeria's spring in the company of Manisty but is disappointed because the latter has begun to transfer his affections to Lucy. When Eleanor subsequently develops a heart condition, she finds sanctuary in the mountains near Orvieto. Having previously felt that her contributions to Manisty's work have been

⁵⁸ J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1890), 1:1.

⁵⁹ Mrs. Humphry Ward, *A Writer's Recollections* (London: W. Collins, 1918), pp. 328–9.

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unrewarded, Eleanor realizes that she must again perform the role of the donor by bringing about a match between Manisty and Lucy.

Ward's novel did not remotely resemble James's: *Eleanor* had a specific historical and geographical setting and explicitly addressed current religious and political debates, while – at least in the minds of many readers – *The Sacred Fount* had few connections with an actually existing world. *Eleanor* ends with a marriage which repairs the divisions (tradition vs modernity, Protestantism vs Catholicism) dramatized by Ward. By contrast, *The Sacred Fount* abjures the use of marriage as a plot device and offers little by way of resolution. Yet both *Eleanor* and *The Sacred Fount* were conceived around the same time and partly in the same place; both are preoccupied with the present and the past, with age and youth; both feature relationships in which one partner appears to gain at the expense of another. And Eleanor Burgoyne – a woman who has lost husband and child, and devotes herself to the service of another man (she is described as 'Manisty's Egeria') – distinctly resembles May Server in *The Sacred Fount*.⁶⁰ James's character has 'had three children and lost them'; she has no husband in attendance and is, at least in the mind of James's narrator, the most likely candidate for the role of Gilbert Long's 'mystic Egeria' (p. 23).

The visit to Egeria's spring in May 1899 was imaginatively reworked by Ward almost immediately; James's response was slower and also less direct. Edel suggests that the novelist read 'portions of the proof of Mrs Ward's novel' while writing *The Sacred Fount* (Edel 4:281).⁶¹ A letter of 22 November 1900 demonstrates that James had enjoyed Ward's depictions of 'the beloved Italy' but did not consider that *Eleanor* established a satisfactory antithesis between the principal female characters (LL 349). At this stage, Ward's novel had been in print for three weeks and *The Sacred Fount* was in press. An earlier letter to Ward (of 26 July 1899) shows that James read a 'few pages' of *Eleanor* while in Italy and had at this time discussed the novel with his hostess (HJL 4:110). Yet whatever the level of his familiarity with *Eleanor*, this novel was not the sole source of James's mythological reference in *The Sacred Fount* for he had mentioned the figure of Egeria in two tales written during

⁶⁰ Mrs. Humphry Ward, *Eleanor*, 4th impression (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1900), p. 93.

⁶¹ On *Eleanor* as an influence on *The Sacred Fount*, see Adeline R. Tintner, *Henry James's Legacy: The Afterlife of his Figure and Fiction* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), p. 21.

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the 1870s.⁶² The novelist might nevertheless have been struck by Mrs Ward's discussion of another legend associated with Lake Nemi. *Eleanor* includes an account, supposedly written by Manisty, of the Priest of Nemi. Ward touches here on the legend of Virbius, the *rex Nemorensis* mentioned by Roman authors, the 'ghastly priest' who, in the words of Macaulay, 'slew the slayer / And shall himself be slain'.⁶³ Virbius is traditionally represented both as an old and a young man, being doomed, in the words of C. M. C. Green, to 'eternal life without eternal youth'. Like Egeria, Virbius is associated with 'life and death' and the transition 'from one condition to another'.⁶⁴ Egeria's gift of her wisdom informed one of the pairings which James presented in *The Sacred Fount*. But Virbius lost his youth, and it is possible that this second legend of Nemi informed the other main relationship in this novel.

James's appreciation of youth was stirred by his encounter with Aristodemo at Lake Nemi. His trip to Italy also marked the beginning of a longer-lasting relationship with Hendrik Andersen, to whom the novelist was introduced in June 1899. Andersen had started his career as a sculptor in Newport – where both Henry and William James had earlier trained as painters. The connection may have been strengthened, at least in James's mind, by further coincidences: first, his earliest acknowledged novel, *Roderick Hudson* (1875), had featured a young sculptor in Italy; second, he shared a birthday (April 15) with Andersen. In Edel's view, Andersen (who was twenty-seven when he met the fifty-six-year-old James) represented the youth which the older man felt he had lost. Shortly after Andersen visited Rye in August 1899, James began *The Sense of the Past* – a tale in which, according to Edel, he was able in fantasy to be 'old and young at the same time' (Edel 4:317). If the figure of Andersen sounded a chord which can be heard in James's fiction at this period, the influence may also have operated in the opposite direction, though not in ways which the novelist would have relished. Rosella Mamoli Zorzi reports that Andersen began work on his monumental sculpture 'The Fountain of Life' 'as early

⁶² See note 41 (p. 192).

⁶³ Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The Lays of Ancient Rome* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1911), p. 52. There is an entry on Virbius in the *New Classical Dictionary*, a work owned by James (see note 57 above).

⁶⁴ C. M. C. Green, *Roman Religion and the Cult of Diana at Aricia* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 220, 231.

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as 1901': during the first years of his friendship with James, in other words, and around the time that *The Sacred Fount* was published.⁶⁵ But the novelist found this piece painfully overstated, telling Andersen on 2 January 1912 that he was 'glad' the 'many-figured fountain' had at last been completed (*HJL* 4:593).

James's experiences in Italy during the first half of 1899 played some part in the development of his ideas for *The Sacred Fount*. But in the months before he began this novel, several other incidents may have contributed to his imaginative preparation. In 1869, James had experienced 'degenerescence' when the health of his siblings improved. Three decades later, a new permutation emerged when William James was diagnosed with a heart condition. William visited Rye in the autumn of 1899, and on 25 October Henry told Henrietta Reubell that to see his brother 'down while I am up bewilders and disorients me'.⁶⁶ James was also struck by his sister-in-law's devotion to her husband, which showed (as he wrote to Francis Boott on 2 February 1900) 'what a woman can do for a man'.⁶⁷ Like the wife of his father, the wife of his brother had given everything. Like the father, William was now 'down' and Henry was 'up'. But perhaps it was possible to control the movement of these almost tidal flows of energy. On 12 May 1900 – in the midst of writing *The Sacred Fount* – the novelist told his brother that he had become 'unable to bear' the 'increased hoariness' of his beard: it made him 'feel, as well as look so old'. He had therefore shaved, with the result that he now felt 'forty and clean and light' (*HJL* 4:139). The sense of personal alteration persisted: enclosing a photograph of himself and William in a letter to Hendrik Andersen on 7 September 1900, James observed that his brother was 'thin & changed' while he was 'fat & shaved!'⁶⁸

Yet the fifty-seven-year-old did not always feel forty. Meeting the 'utterly unchanged and remarkably young' Charles Eliot Norton (aged seventy-two) in June 1900, the clean-shaven novelist – now wrestling with the later

⁶⁵ Henry James, *Beloved Boy: Letters to Hendrik C. Andersen, 1899–1915*, ed. Rosella Mamoli Zorzi (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2004), p. xxvi.

⁶⁶ bMS Am 1094 (1139), Harvard.

⁶⁷ bMS Am 1094 (632), Harvard.

⁶⁸ James, *Beloved Boy*, 15. James described himself as 'forty' on 12 May 1900 and 'fat' on 7 September 1900; in *The Sacred Fount*, he describes Gilbert Long as 'fat and forty' (p. 64).

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chapters of *The Sacred Fount* – reported to William Dean Howells that he had felt ‘Methusalesque’ (*HJL* 4:152). Another letter to Howells in August 1900 also suggests that James was capable of using motifs drawn from his own work in order to characterize his life: he informed Howells that he had ‘just finished [...] a fine flight (of eighty thousand words) *into* the high fantastic, which has rather depleted me’ (*HJL* 4:158). As Michael Anesko notes, this passage suggests that the novelist had himself undergone the ‘fate suffered by his own victimised subjects.’⁶⁹ Yet James’s depletion was not evident to at least one influential witness: writing to Edward Garnett on 12 November 1900 (three months before the publication of *The Sacred Fount*), Joseph Conrad welcomed a letter from the Master as ‘a draught from the Fountain of Eternal Youth.’⁷⁰

The perception that one partner in a relationship might benefit at the expense of the other may have had its origin in James’s childhood and possibly influenced his earliest works. As the novelist entered the second half of the 1890s, he became preoccupied by the phenomenon of youth and, with a rueful sense of advancing age, made efforts to look younger. During the months spent writing *The Sacred Fount*, a further circumstance might have been influential. James completed his novel towards the end of July 1900. Early the previous month, his fellow novelist Stephen Crane had died of tuberculosis at Badenweiler in the Black Forest. There is disagreement about how close the friendship between the two writers became after James returned from Italy in the summer of 1899 (Crane and his wife had moved to Brede, a village eight miles west of Rye, in the February of that year).⁷¹ The extent to which Crane’s condition was visible to others is also unclear.

⁶⁹ Michael Anesko (ed.), *Letters, Fictions, Lives: Henry James and William Dean Howells* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 327.

⁷⁰ Joseph Conrad, *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, eds. Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies, 9 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1982–2009), 2:303.

⁷¹ Leon Edel asserts that visits between James and Crane were exchanged ‘on two, perhaps three occasions’ (Edel 5:61) and Stanley Wertheim describes the relationship as ‘not intimate’ (*A Stephen Crane Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), p. 178). However, John Berryman suggests that James visited the Cranes ‘two to four times a week’ (*Stephen Crane* (London: Methuen and Co., 1950), p. 237); Lillian Gilkes claims visits took place ‘at least once a week’ (*Cora Crane: A Biography of Mrs Stephen Crane* (London: Neville Spearman, 1962), p. 204); Gordon Milne also writes of ‘frequent visits’ (*Stephen Crane at Brede: An Anglo-American Literary Circle of the 1890s* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), p. 5).

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Berryman claims that Crane reported feeling ‘a hundred years old’ in late 1899 while Edith Richie Jones found Crane ‘as vigorous as ever’ in January 1900.⁷² Crane suffered his first serious haemorrhage in December 1899, and at this time H. G. Wells thought he looked ‘profoundly weary and ill’.⁷³ Yet although Edel denies that the friendship between James and Crane was intimate, he accepts that *The Sacred Fount* ‘may have derived some of its poignancy’ from the fact that Cora (aged thirty-four in June 1900) ‘thrived’ while Crane (aged twenty-eight) was ‘visibly dying’ (Edel 5:64).

* * *

The Sacred Fount is not by any means an openly social novel like *The Bostonians* (1886) or *The Princess Casamassima* (1886). It is, however (as a small number of early commentators realized), obliquely engaged with some of the defining issues of the day. In the United States, the earliest pre-publication announcement pointed to the setting of the novel – ‘an English country house’ – and deduced that its occupants would be ‘well equipped’ mentally, ‘whatever they may be from a [...] moral point of view’.⁷⁴ The American press was quick to suggest that *The Sacred Fount* offered a picture of English life and to draw a conclusion flattering to Americans: in the *Boston Evening Transcript* on 13 February 1901, Joseph Edgar Chamberlin observed that James’s latest novel revealed a difference between the ‘social customs’ of Britain and the US ‘to our advantage’ (Hayes 340). Yet the USA was not the only source of critical remarks about the British elite. Rebecca West felt that James’s ‘respect for the mere gross largeness and expensiveness of the country house’ had resulted in excessive elaboration and a limiting focus on the ‘social envelope’.⁷⁵

In spite of these early attempts to identify a national or class context within which to evaluate *The Sacred Fount*, it would be several decades before the subject matter of the novel was seen as part of a specific literary tradition.

⁷² Berryman, *Stephen Crane*, 241; Edith Richie Jones, ‘Stephen Crane at Brede’, *Atlantic Monthly* 194 (July 1954), 57–61; 61.

⁷³ H. G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain, Since 1866*, 2 vols. (London: Victor Gollancz, 1934), 2:614.

⁷⁴ ‘Topics of the Week’, *New York Times* (26 January 1901), 49.

⁷⁵ Rebecca West, *Henry James, Writers of the Day* (London: Nisbet and Co. Ltd., 1916), pp. 107–8.

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In 1948, Edward Sackville-West looked back to the ‘condition of England’ novels of the previous century, suggesting that with Newmarch – the country house which features in *The Sacred Fount* – James ‘did the stately home prouder than it has, I think, ever been done, outside the novels of Disraeli’.⁷⁶ More recently, Marcia Jacobson has suggested that events at Newmarch have points in common with the country house parties depicted in such best-sellers as Elinor Glyn’s *The Visits of Elizabeth* (1900).⁷⁷ Adeline R. Tintner has placed *The Sacred Fount* alongside a number of novels with country house settings including W. H. Mallock’s *The New Republic* (1877) and Ouida’s *A House Party* (1887), seeing James’s novel as a parody of Paul Bourget’s *La Terre Promise* (1892) and *Cosmopolis* (1892).⁷⁸ James’s treatment of the country house topos has been presented in different ways: J. A. Ward argues that Newmarch is ‘a microcosm of all society’; for Barbara Everett, James is thinking of a more specific ‘social scene’.⁷⁹ Sackville-West suggests that the house stands for ‘civilised ripeness’; for E. C. Curtsinger it is an ‘ideal realm’.⁸⁰ Beneath the fine façade of Newmarch, however, many critics detect an ugly reality: Miriam Allott argues that Newmarch represents the ‘artificiality and tyranny’ of ‘conventional society’; for Oscar Cargill the novel depicts a ‘corrupt society’.⁸¹ Tony Tanner suggests that Newmarch contains ‘something mephitic’ and Walter Isle sees *The Sacred Fount* as ‘in its way [...] as strong a criticism of James’s society as *The Awkward Age* or *What Maisie Knew*’.⁸²

⁷⁶ Edward Sackville-West, ‘The Personality of Henry James’, in *Inclinations* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1949), pp. 42–71; 68.

⁷⁷ See Marcia Jacobson, *Henry James and the Mass Market* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1983), pp. 171–2, n. 4.

⁷⁸ See Adeline R. Tintner, *The Cosmopolitan World of Henry James: An Intertextual Study* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), pp. 14–20, 219–24.

⁷⁹ J. A. Ward, *The Imagination of Disaster: Evil in the Fiction of Henry James* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 74; Barbara Everett, ‘The Last Turn: Henry James and the Spirits of the English Country House’, *Times Literary Supplement* (23 December 2005), 16–18; 17.

⁸⁰ Sackville-West, ‘The Personality of Henry James’, 68; E. C. Curtsinger, ‘James’s Writer at the Sacred Fount’, *Henry James Review* 3.2 (Winter 1982), 117–28; 117–18.

⁸¹ Miriam Allott, ‘Henry James and the Fantasticated Conceit: *The Sacred Fount*’, *Northern Miscellany of Literary Criticism* 1 (Autumn 1953), 76–86; 78; Oscar Cargill, *The Novels of Henry James* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 283.

⁸² Tony Tanner, *The Reign of Wonder: Naivety and Reality in American Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 322; Walter Isle, *Experiments in Form: Henry James’s Novels, 1896–1901* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 224.

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The variety of these assessments can in part be explained in biographical terms. The image of the English country house had deep roots for James: in his autobiography, the novelist recalled leafing as a child through the ‘entrancing’ lithographs in Joseph Nash’s *Mansions of England in the Olden Time* (1839–49).⁸³ Yet James was not always entranced by English mansions: Edel suggests that *The Sacred Fount* displays an ‘antipathy’ which contrasts with the ‘relish’ the novelist had taken in such places ‘fifteen or twenty years before’ (Edel 4:321). Certainly, the period referred to by Edel as the ‘conquest of London’ (1870–83) was one in which James became acquainted with many of the country houses owned by those he dined with in the capital. In a letter to his sister on 15 September 1878, James (who was staying with Sir John and Lady Clark at Tillypronie in Aberdeenshire) described ‘the British country-house’ as one of ‘the highest results of civilization’ (*CLHJ* 1876–78 2:209). This remark anticipated the inclusion of ‘old country-houses’ among the items of ‘high civilization’ in *Hawthorne* (1879) as well as a notable passage in ‘An English New Year’ (1879), a travel essay later included in *Portraits of Places* (1883): ‘Of all the great things that the English have invented [...] the one they have mastered most completely in all its details, so that it has become a compendious illustration of their social genius and their manners, is the well-appointed, well-administered, well-filled country-house.’⁸⁴ Within two years of these remarks, James would record in his notebooks what was, perhaps, the single most significant decision of his life – to take up permanent residence in Europe. This was in large part the result of the novelist’s experiences in Florence, Rome, Paris and London. But, as he continued to take stock of the first part of his career in a second notebook entry, written in New York on 20 December 1881, it became clear that James’s momentous decision had been in part informed by the place that English country houses had come to assume in his imagination. He remembered a visit several months earlier to Somerset, where a series of

⁸³ Henry James, *A Small Boy and Others: A Critical Edition*, ed. Peter Collister (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2011), p. 20.

⁸⁴ *Literary Criticism: Essays on Literature, American Writers, English Writers*, eds. Leon Edel and Mark Wilson (New York: Library of America, 1984), 351–2; hereafter *LCI*; *Collected Travel Writings: Great Britain and America*, ed. Richard Howard (New York: Library of America, 1993), p. 222.

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‘delicious old houses [...] rose before me like a series of visions’, prompting thoughts of ‘all the life of the past’ (CN 224).

Edel argues that James’s idealization of the English country house – and the civilization it represented – changed significantly after his decision to live and work in England. On 23 August 1885, the novelist told Grace Norton that he had more important things to do (he was in Dover, working on *The Princess Casamassima*) than ‘twaddling in even the most luxurious country houses’ (HJL 3:98). He went further in a letter to Charles Eliot Norton on 6 December 1886, suggesting that the condition of the English upper class was ‘very much the same rotten and *collapsible* one as that of the French aristocracy before the revolution—minus cleverness and conversation’ (HJL 3:146). Yet James’s responses to the country house had not always been appreciative: in his 1878 letter to his sister, the novelist observed that country house life could have ‘an insuperable flatness’ for a ‘cosmopolitanized American’ (CLHJ 1876–78 2:209). Still, the country house in James’s subsequent fiction was on occasions less a place of flatness – or rottenness – than of something approaching the tragic: one thinks of the death of Ralph Touchett at Gardencourt in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), of the title character at Paramore in ‘Owen Wingrave’ (1892) or of Neil Paraday at Prestidge in ‘The Death of the Lion’ (1894). Even in his later work, James did not invariably see the country house in a negative light. In ‘Covering End’ (1898), he imagined a house that, with Bly in ‘The Turn of the Screw’, formed one of ‘the two magics’ – weal to the latter’s woe, bliss to its bale – which in 1898 provided the title for the book edition of these two tales.

Biographical investigation sheds light on James’s fictional treatment of the country house. But Laurence B. Holland’s sense that *The Sacred Fount* depicts ‘a world in the throes of change’ points less to a particular judgement on the novelist’s part – either positive or negative – than to a more complex and historically informed perspective. For Holland, the novel is ‘a brilliant caricature of a distinctly modern community where change and immanent transformation are the norms.’⁸⁵ In his 1994 introduction to *The Sacred Fount*, John Lyon also emphasizes the acuity with which James observed the British class system. At Newmarch, skilled performers display

⁸⁵ Laurence B. Holland, *The Expense of Vision: Essays on the Craft of Henry James* (Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 181, 186.

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an ‘ability to sustain a verbally patterned dialogue of reciprocal repetitions, including variations slight but seemingly portentous’, displaying high-level skills in ‘the gracious forestalling of any need for [...] full elaboration’.⁸⁶ For many early reviewers, *The Sacred Fount* was an exercise in psychology; for Lyon, the insights it offers are virtually sociological.

The Sacred Fount concerns itself with the fate of the British upper class in its most characteristic habitat – the English country house. But the novel is less about property in itself than the ways in which its possession begins and ends in human relationships, and particularly in sexual relationships. Early commentators were aware that the novel needed to be seen in such a context, though their remarks were often oblique. For the reviewer in the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, the ‘physiologico-psychical’ states under scrutiny in *The Sacred Fount* echoed Walt Whitman’s ‘theory of emanation’,⁸⁷ in which ‘a sort of divine afflatus proceeds from the healthy human body to one in disease when the two are in intimate association’ (Hayes 348). For the reviewer in the *London Daily Chronicle*, a notion of ‘parasitic action’ provided the key to the novel (Hayes 349). Such hypotheses are characteristic of the age: Lyon points out that James’s contemporaries frequently believed that ‘human sexuality drew on a finite supply of human energy’. For Lyon, *The Sacred Fount* explores precisely such a ‘closed and finite system of exchange’ and is in this respect ‘almost a parody of typical Victorian attitudes’ (Lyon xix).⁸⁸ Several of the novel’s reviewers

⁸⁶ John Lyon, ‘Introduction’, in Henry James, *The Sacred Fount*, ed. John Lyon (London: Penguin, 1994), vii–xxxiii (xvii); hereafter Lyon.

⁸⁷ In Section 39 of ‘Song of Myself’, Whitman writes of the ‘flowing savage’ whose ‘emanations’ flow ‘from the tips of his fingers’ (*The Complete Poems*, ed. Francis Murphy (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 108). Hugh Walpole seems also to have thought of Whitman when he read *The Sacred Fount*. In a letter of 27 September 1912, presumably responding to a remark by Walpole, James referred to ‘[p]oor dear old Walt!’ and wondered ‘what would *he* make of *The Sacred Fount*!’ (*Dearly Beloved Friends: Henry James’s Letters to Younger Men*, eds. Susan E. Gunter and Steven H. Jobe (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001), p. 211). Walpole may have been thinking of this exchange in a later article: ‘I remember that once, after I had patiently read all through “*The Sacred Fount*” [...] I asked James what really was the theme or subject of it. He said: “My dear boy, once there was a little idea, I knew what it was; now the years have passed and I feel that it has escaped me”’ (‘Our Changing Life Reflected in Art’, *New York Times* (20 May 1928), 8:22).

⁸⁸ The classic study of this sexual economy is G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

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employed Gothic terms in order to describe its treatment of the sexual ‘system’: for the reviewer in the New York *Tribune*, the author had populated his novel with ‘vampires in evening dress’ (Hayes 337); for another reviewer, it was the narrator who was the ‘intellectual vampire’.⁸⁹ The *fin de siècle* flavour of such remarks is still more evident in the suggestion in *The Athenæum* that James was describing a ‘decadent civilization’ (Hayes 345), or in comments from across the Atlantic that the characters in the novel were ‘decadents’, and that the novelist himself had become ‘morbid and decadent’.⁹⁰ Following William Bysshe Stein, a number of critics have situated *The Sacred Fount* in the context of the British Aesthetic and Decadent movements.⁹¹

The Sacred Fount seems also to engage (again in a sideways manner) with the contemporary debate about the ‘New Woman’. In 1892 Eliza Lynn Linton drew attention with some unease to a phenomenon which in her view connected male Decadents and New Women: ‘the truth is simply this – *the unsexed woman pleases the unsexed man* [...] The thing is a physiological fact as intelligible as it is absolute. Domineering women choose effeminate men whom they can rule at will. Effeminate men fall back on resolute and energetic women.’⁹² Linton’s account of the ‘unsexed’ man and woman is not unique: in 1894, for example, Edward Carpenter would more hopefully suggest that ‘modern woman’ had become ‘more masculine’ while modern man (though not ‘effeminate’) had become ‘more sensitive’.⁹³ The cultural

⁸⁹ *Outlook* [US] 67 (2 March 1901), 554.

⁹⁰ ‘New Novels’, *Churchman* [New York] 83 (4 May 1901), 552; Harry Thurston Peck, review of *The Sacred Fount*, *Bookman* [New York] 13 (July 1901), 442.

⁹¹ See William Bysshe Stein, ‘*The Sacred Fount* and British Aestheticism: The Artist as Clown and Pornographer’, *Arizona Quarterly* 27.2 (1971), 161–73; Allon White, *The Uses of Obscurity: The Fiction of Early Modernism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 143–4; Jonathan Freedman, *Professions of Taste: Henry James, British Aestheticism, and Commodity Culture* (Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 202–3; Sheila Teahan, ‘The Face of Decadence in *The Sacred Fount*’, in *Henry James Against the Aesthetic Movement: Essays on the Middle and Late Fiction*, eds. David Garrett Izzo and Daniel T. O’Hara (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2006), pp. 109–22.

⁹² Eliza Lynn Linton, ‘The Partisans of the Wild Women’, *Nineteenth Century* 31 (March 1892), 455–64; 461.

⁹³ Edward Carpenter, ‘The Intermediate Sex’, in *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, c.1880–1900*, eds. Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 303–7; 313.

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shifts detected by Linton and Carpenter recall the patterns which James had explored throughout his fiction and may first have noticed in – the terms are Edel’s – his ‘manly’ but ‘feminine’ father and ‘strong’ yet ‘irrational’ mother. Yet although the controversies of the 1890s may have been one of the imaginative ingredients of *The Sacred Fount*, the novel can hardly be described as a cultural *roman-à-clef*. James does not invoke stereotypes of the Decadent man or the New Woman: Mrs Brissenden has not taken up smoking or joined the rational dress movement; her husband is not, like Mark Ambient in ‘The Author of “Beltraffio”’ (1884), ‘addicted to velvet jackets’ and ‘loose shirt collars’ (*CT* 5:306). Yet a glancing reference may be there, for those who want to hear it: if Guy Brissenden has become an ‘old’ man, his wife is by the same token a ‘new’ woman – one who is able to demonstrate her recently won autonomy by paraphrasing music hall songs.⁹⁴ Stock images of the female aesthete are perhaps at work in the presentation of Mrs Server’s wan and tragic beauty. And James’s narrator might well be seen as a male aesthete, a figure whose masculinity depends not on economic productivity but, in the words of Talia Schaffer, ‘the pleasurable exercise of taste’ – particularly since the narrator is positioned (like male aesthetes generally) ‘not only against a mass marketplace but also against a specifically female rival’.⁹⁵

James had followed debates about the role of women for decades, responding to them in such non-fictional works as his review of *Modern Women* (1868) and ‘The Future of the Novel’ (1899) as well as in ‘Daisy Miller’ (1878), ‘Pandora’ (1884) and *The Bostonians* (1886). His 1892 essay on Mrs Ward suggested, in terms which perhaps foreshadow those of *The Sacred Fount*, that female novelists had been triumphant in their ‘well-fought battle’ for control while male writers had fallen victim to their ‘predestined weakness’ (*LCI* 1372). Yet it must be acknowledged that *The Awkward Age* (1899) and *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) treat the ‘woman question’ more openly than *The Sacred Fount*. The novelist’s engagement with the Aesthetic movement seems also to be less direct in this novel than in other works: ‘The Author of “Beltraffio”’ (1884) has already been mentioned, but one might also point to

⁹⁴ On Mrs Brissenden’s allusion to Charles Coborn’s ‘He’s All Right When You Know Him’, see note 66 (p. 196).

⁹⁵ Talia Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late Victorian England* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2000), p. 251.

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the characterization of Gilbert Osmond in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) or of Gabriel Nash in *The Tragic Muse* (1890). Still, James's first notebook entry on *The Sacred Fount* was made early in 1894, the year which Lyn Pykett describes as the 'annus mirabilis' of the New Woman.⁹⁶ The novelist had an intimate knowledge of the metropolitan elite, and this may have played a part in the imaginative genesis of *The Sacred Fount*. The month before the dinner at which James acquired the germ of *The Sacred Fount* from Stopford Brooke, James's hostess had published an article in the *Nineteenth Century* which, according to Talia Schaffer, prompted 'an animated New Woman debate'.⁹⁷ Blanche Crackanthorpe's 'The Revolt of the Daughters' accepted that the demands of the younger generation of middle-class women for greater freedom were understandable. Yet the 'daughters' were 'tiresome': access to higher education was all very well, but marriage remained 'the best profession for a woman'. The issues raised in 'The Revolt of the Daughters' were addressed more directly in *The Awkward Age* than in *The Sacred Fount*, but this latter novel seems at points to echo elusively the changing social dynamics detected by Crackanthorpe. Each generation needed to draw on the strengths of the other, she argued: the strength of the mothers consisted of their 'wide experience [...] wisdom, far-reaching vision, and [...] staying power'; the daughters on the other hand possessed 'youth, vitality, "go", and [...] muscle strength'.⁹⁸ 'Wisdom', 'youth': these indices of power are treated positively, as qualities to be shared and developed. But in *The Sacred Fount* the same qualities are imagined more negatively, as things which are capable of being taken or lost.

The idea that *The Sacred Fount* responds in oblique and playful ways to *fin de siècle* debates is as suggestive in the case of the Decadent movement as it is in that of the New Woman. A month before the Rutland Gate dinner, the journalist Arthur Waugh (father of Alec and later of Evelyn Waugh) reported that Henry Harland, the editor of the *Yellow Book* – the

⁹⁶ Lyn Pykett, *The 'Improper' Feminine: The Women's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 137.

⁹⁷ Talia Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes*, 21. Ann L. Ardis points out that the term 'New Woman' was introduced by Ouida (Maria Louis Ramé) in the *North American Review* of May 1894 (*New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 179).

⁹⁸ Blanche Alethea Crackanthorpe, 'The Revolt of the Daughters', *Nineteenth Century* 35 (January 1894), 23–31; 24–5.

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house journal of the Decadent movement – ‘would have Henry James’ for his new publication.⁹⁹ In April 1894, the first item in the inaugural issue of the *Yellow Book* was ‘The Death of the Lion’. The following year, this tale headed James’s ominously titled collection of short stories, *Terminations*. ‘The Death of the Lion’ featured inversions which might have resonated with Carpenter or Linton. As foils to Neil Paraday – the ‘lion’ of the title – James mentions two artistically inferior but commercially successful writers, Dora Forbes and Guy Walsingham. These are pen names: the former that of a man, the latter of a woman. This reversal, and the fact that both writers argue for ‘the larger latitude’ in fiction, are playful allusions to current Decadent and New Woman writing – notorious in certain quarters for its controversial subject matter.¹⁰⁰ James was well aware of this notoriety: ‘The Death of the Lion’ appeared in the same number of the *Yellow Book* as Arthur Waugh’s ‘Reticence in Literature’, which warned that the tendency to ‘gloat over pleasure’ in British fiction was ‘inartistic’.¹⁰¹ The novelist would also have been aware that the Crackanthorpe family was publicly involved in these debates. Waugh’s article immediately preceded Hubert Crackanthorpe’s first piece for the *Yellow Book*, ‘Modern Melodrama’. In a second essay which appeared alongside ‘The Coxon Fund’ in the July 1894 issue of the *Yellow Book*, Blanche Crackanthorpe’s son put the case for fiction which did not find the representation of joy ‘inartistic’ and was not committed to a morality defined in terms of the ‘established relations between the sexes’.¹⁰² Hubert’s point was elsewhere underlined by his mother, whose contribution to the New Woman debate had scarcely been radical but who was more liberal in aesthetic matters: ‘Sex in Modern Literature’ appeared in April 1895.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Quoted by Karl Beckson in *Henry Harland: His Life and Work* (London: The Eighteen Nineties Society, 1978), p. 59.

¹⁰⁰ Henry James, ‘The Death of the Lion’, *Yellow Book* 1 (April 1894), 7–56; 19. The demand for a ‘wider range’ of subject matter was rejected by Walter Besant in ‘Candour in English Fiction’ while the other two contributors to this document – Eliza Lynn Linton and Thomas Hardy – argued for greater frankness (*New Review* 2 (January 1890), 6–21; 7).

¹⁰¹ Arthur Waugh, ‘Reticence in Literature’, *Yellow Book* 1 (April 1894), 201–23.

¹⁰² Hubert Crackanthorpe, ‘Reticence in Literature: Some Roundabout Remarks’, *Yellow Book* 2 (July 1894), 259–69; 267, 265.

¹⁰³ See Blanche Crackanthorpe, ‘Sex in Modern Literature’, *Nineteenth Century* 37 (April 1895), 607–16.

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Hubert Crackanthorpe's slender body of work is little known nowadays, but his death at the age of twenty-six (he was found drowned in the River Seine on Christmas Eve, 1896) was, according to Jad Adams, 'a defining incident' in *fin de siècle* Britain.¹⁰⁴ In a letter to Grace Norton on 28 December 1896, James alluded to the 'dismal little Hubert Crackanthorpe tragedy'. The novelist's account of the events leading up to the death – 'a somewhat sordid drama of crude, incompatible youthful matrimony' in which the husband had been 'straightforward' and the wife 'foolish' – fell in with the impression created by the Crackanthorpe family that Hubert, devastated by his wife Leila's desertion, had taken his own life (in fact, it seems that she was about to sue for divorce on the grounds of cruelty, claiming Hubert had infected her with syphilis).¹⁰⁵ Like the relationship between Cora and Stephen Crane or that between Henry Adams and Elizabeth Cameron, the marriage of Hubert and Leila Crackanthorpe seems to anticipate *The Sacred Fount*: according to one observer, Leila was a 'hard-eyed Amazon' while Hubert was 'below medium height, slight and white-faced, with eyes like pale Parma violets'.¹⁰⁶

James privately dismissed the Crackanthorpe case as 'unimportant' but was prevailed upon by Hubert's mother to contribute an appreciation to a posthumously published collection of her son's work, *Last Studies* (1897).¹⁰⁷ This piece baffled Stopford Brooke, who complained to Blanche Crackanthorpe that James had 'so involved and tormented a style that I find the greatest difficulty in discovering what he means'.¹⁰⁸ The novelist's tribute was indeed guarded, but his remarks on Hubert Crackanthorpe's 'troubled individual note' and his insight into 'the cruelty of life' were plain enough (*LCI* 840, 844). The appreciation also gave voice to a theme which was closely associated with the Decadent movement and would resurface in *The Sacred Fount*: youth. It was, to use once more that memorable

¹⁰⁴ Jad Adams, 'The Drowning of Hubert Crackanthorpe and the Persecution of Leila Macdonald', *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920* 52.1 (2009), 6–34; 6.

¹⁰⁵ bMS Am 1094 (1008), Harvard.

¹⁰⁶ David Crackanthorpe, *Hubert Crackanthorpe and English Realism in the 1890s* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1977), p. 58.

¹⁰⁷ James to Grace Norton, 28 December 1896 (bMS Am 1094 (1008), Harvard).

¹⁰⁸ *Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke*, ed. Lawrence Pearsall Jacks, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1917), 2:528–9.

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phrase from James's notebooks, the most beautiful word in the language. In Hubert Crackanthorpe's case, however, actual 'juvenility' had in James's view been combined with literary subject matter of an 'almost extreme maturity' (*LCI* 840). Crackanthorpe was 'new' but his writing achieved a kind of 'antiquity': this was part of the young writer's 'secret and mystery' (*LCI* 840–3).

In his response to the early death of Hubert Crackanthorpe, James found antiquity and juvenility paradoxically combined. Similar dynamics can also be detected in the wider cultural imagination of the *fin de siècle*. In Walter Pater's description of *La Gioconda* in *The Renaissance* (1873), for example, or in Rider Haggard's representation of Ayesha in *She* (1887), the feminine was figured in terms of extreme antiquity. Yet the demands of the rising generation could also be expressed in terms of youth: the New Women were, precisely, 'new'. In the case of the Decadent movement's 'sons', however, the impression of youth was, as Lisa K. Hamilton has observed, frequently accompanied by that of age.¹⁰⁹ Male members of the Decadent movement lived fast and died young: Aubrey Beardsley in 1898, aged twenty-five; Oscar Wilde in 1900 at the age of forty-six; Henry Harland in 1905, aged forty-four. Max Beerbohm brought out his *Complete Works* in 1896 at the age of twenty-four, claiming he had been 'outmoded' by 'younger men' (Wilde quipped that Beerbohm had 'the gift of perpetual old age').¹¹⁰ Ernest Dowson (dead aged twenty-two in 1900) was another member of that 'restless and tragic' generation which, as Holbrook Jackson put it in *The Eighteen Nineties* (1913) – it is a line which might almost have come from the pages of *The Sacred Fount* – 'thirsted so much for life [...] that they put the cup to their lips and drained it in one deep draught'.¹¹¹ Crackanthorpe's attitude to the Decadent movement

¹⁰⁹ See Lisa K. Hamilton, 'New Women and "Old" Men: Gendering Degeneration', in *Women and British Aestheticism*, eds. Talia Schaffer and Kathy Alexis Psomiades (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1999), pp. 62–80.

¹¹⁰ Max Beerbohm, quoted by Regina Gagnier in 'Productive Bodies, Pleasured Bodies', in *Women and British Aestheticism*, eds. Schaffer and Psomiades, 270–89; 273. Oscar Wilde, quoted by Richard Ellmann in *Oscar Wilde* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987), 292.

¹¹¹ Holbrook Jackson, *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Grant Richards, 1913), p. 158.

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seems to have been at least as ambivalent as that of James.¹¹² But there was no doubt in the mind of the journalist Jeannette Gilder, who on 2 January 1897 (the day after Crackanthorpe's funeral in All Saints' Church, Rutland Gate) pronounced herself 'not at all surprised' by the young writer's death: his 'morbid, loathsome stories' had revealed him to be 'the most pronounced type of decadent'.¹¹³ Crackanthorpe might not have been a card-carrying member of the Decadent movement, but the theme of personal and cultural exhaustion was strongly present in his work. In 'Trevor Perkins', one of the stories in *Last Studies*, Crackanthorpe wrote of a 'new generation' growing old before its time – '*venue trop tard dans un siècle trop vieux*'.¹¹⁴ Two years earlier and more notoriously, Max Nordau had written that the *fin de siècle* displayed 'the impotent despair of a sick man, who feels himself dying by inches in the midst of an eternally living nature blooming insolently for ever'.¹¹⁵ Shortly after the end of that century '*trop vieux*', James took up a number of themes which preoccupied Decadent writers, but handled them so lightly that direct attribution is almost impossible.

* * *

The Sacred Fount attracted a few early supporters and would in time gain more, but even its author showed little fondness for this, his first full-length fiction of the twentieth century. The novelist's earliest post-publication remarks on *The Sacred Fount* were made in a letter to Ariana Curtis: sending his friend of old Venetian days a copy of the novel, James described it as a 'pale fantasticality for a dull evening'.¹¹⁶ The word 'fantasticality' – and the sense of something attenuated – returned. On 27 February 1901, the

¹¹² According to Chris Snodgrass, Hubert Crackanthorpe found Beardsley's artwork for the *Yellow Book* 'offensive' (*Aubrey Beardsley: Dandy of the Grotesque* (Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 7). On 28 May 1894 James told his brother and sister-in-law that 'I hate too much the horrid aspect and company of the whole publication'; he had published 'The Death of the Lion' in the *Yellow Book* 'for gold and to oblige the worshipful Harland' (*HJL* 3:482).

¹¹³ Quoted by David Crackanthorpe in *Hubert Crackanthorpe and English Realism*, 145.

¹¹⁴ Hubert Crackanthorpe, 'Trevor Perkins', in *Last Studies* (London: William Heinemann, 1897), 71–98; 75.

¹¹⁵ Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, 4th edn (London: William Heinemann, 1895), p. 3.

¹¹⁶ James to Mrs Daniel Curtis, 21 February 1901 (Tintner-Janowitz Collection (Box 174, Folder 10), Berg Collection).

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novelist informed his old friend Henrietta Reubell that he had sent her a ‘storybook’ of his own – ‘a mere fantasticality’.¹¹⁷ By the summer of 1901, however, James’s mind was turning to the future. On 11 June, he wrote to Millicent Leveson-Gower, the Duchess of Sutherland, regretting that she had ‘gracefully followed me to Newmarch’. His latest novel was a ‘profitless labyrinth [...] a dim and distracting limbo’: in subsequent work, the novelist intended to serve ‘nothing but boiled mutton and potatoes’ – of which dish ‘I shall some day ask you to partake’.¹¹⁸ This new emphasis on the real and the substantial may in part have been a result of discussions with fellow practitioners. On 12 March 1901, the novelist advised William Morton Fullerton to wait for *The Ambassadors* ‘instead of troubling over the vapid little *Sacred Fount*’. He had sent Fullerton a copy of the latter ‘as a mere token—but not, God knows, as a task or a charge. It takes too long to explain things—otherwise I wd. tell you how the S. F. came to be written at all’.¹¹⁹ In a second letter to Fullerton on 9 August, James described *The Sacred Fount* as ‘a mere trade-accident [...] an incident of technics, pure and simple—brought about by—well, if you were here I could tell you’ (*HJL* 4:198). James had in the same letter already mentioned that he was writing ‘under the midnight lamp’ (*HJL* 4:196). For him, the factors relevant to his latest novel – too complicated to go into at so late an hour – were economic or technical. *The Sacred Fount* was not, as Fullerton had suggested, an ‘intellectual’ accident. This was to do the novel ‘too much honour’: it was merely a ‘*jeu d’esprit*’, ‘an accident, pure and simple’ (*HJL* 4:198).

‘*Jeu d’esprit*’: like James’s description of *The Sacred Fount* as a ‘fantasticality’, this expression would be repeated. In a letter to Mrs Ward on 15 March 1901, the novelist dismissed his latest work as ‘the merest of *jeux d’esprit*’ before turning to ‘technics’: ‘The subject was a small fantasticality which [...] I had intended to treat in the compass of a single magazine instalment—a matter of eight or ten thousand words. But it *gave* more, before I knew it; before I knew it had grown to 25,000 and was still but a third developed’ (*HJL* 4:185–6). Secrets of the workbench were also to the fore in a letter of 11 December 1902 to William Dean Howells. James had ‘melted’ on hearing

¹¹⁷ bMS Am 1094 (1143), Harvard.

¹¹⁸ Leon Edel Papers, Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University and Archives.

¹¹⁹ bMS Am 1094.1 (84), Harvard.

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that Howells had read *The Sacred Fount* ‘*en famille*’, but had not forgotten the difficulties which had beset him two years earlier. *The Sacred Fount* was:

one of several things of mine [...] that have paid the penalty of having been conceived only as the ‘short story’ [...] and then grew by a rank force of its own into something of which the idea had, modestly, never been to be a book. That is essentially the case with the *S.F.*, planned [...] as a story of the ‘eight to ten thousand words’!! and then having accepted its bookish necessity or destiny in consequence of becoming already, at the start, 20,000, accepted it ruefully and blushing, moreover, since, *given the tenuity of the idea*, the larger quantity of treatment hadn’t been aimed at.

James would have “chucked” his tale at the fifteenth thousand word’ if he ‘could have afforded to “waste” 15,000’ and was not ‘ridden by a superstitious terror of not finishing [...] what I have begun’ (*HJL* 4:251).

Indications of the wider reception of *The Sacred Fount* began to appear even before the novel was published. In what Roger Burlingame describes as a ‘confidential’ report for Charles Scribner, William Crary Brownell wrote as follows:

It is surely the nth power of Jamesiness – his peculiar manner carried to an excessive degree. I have had the greatest difficulty in following it [...] It is like trying to make out page after page of illegible writing. The sense of effort becomes acutely exasperating. Your spine curls up, your hair-roots prickle & you want to get up and walk around the block.¹²⁰

Burlingame emphasizes Brownell’s hospitality to ‘subtleties of style’, and this was certainly evident in a 1905 essay.¹²¹ When even Brownell became impatient, therefore, ‘it was news’.¹²² The fact that Scribner’s subsequently issued a contract seems rather surprising in the light of Brownell’s response. But in April 1900, Edward L. Burlingame (Roger’s father, a Scribner’s editor) had broached the possibility of a collected edition of James at a meeting in New York and, according to Pinker, wanted in the meantime to have

¹²⁰ Roger Burlingame, *Of Making Many Books: A Hundred Years of Reading, Writing and Publishing* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946), p. 37; Anesko, ‘Collected Editions’, 206.

¹²¹ Burlingame, *Of Making Many Books*, 37. Brownell praised James’s ‘seriousness’ and his ‘critical faculty’ but found *The Sacred Fount* ‘disagreeable’ in its ‘scrutiny of defenceless personages’ (‘Henry James’, *Atlantic Monthly* 95 (April 1905), 496–518; 497, 501, 511).

¹²² Burlingame, *Of Making Many Books*, 37.

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‘the opportunity of publishing some of [James’s] books’.¹²³ This for Pinker was a chance – as Michael Anesko puts it – to ‘unload’ *The Sacred Fount*.¹²⁴ Charles Scribner was content to ‘go on’ with *The Sacred Fount* and even Brownell felt that a collected James might ‘become our list’.¹²⁵ In Britain, Algernon Methuen was scarcely more enthusiastic about *The Sacred Fount* than Brownell. In a postscript scribbled in the margin of a letter to Pinker on 7 October 1900, James mentioned having received ‘a very urbane letter’ from Methuen agreeing to publication in 1901 but ‘remonstrating a little with me, benevolently, again, upon my style of writing!’¹²⁶ These remonstrations need to be seen in context: on 4 October 1900, Methuen had written to Pinker about his client’s ‘flittings’: ‘we cannot do much in the commercial interests of an author unless we can operate on several of his books’.¹²⁷ James had published *The Soft Side* with Methuen in August 1900. By October *The Sacred Fount* was already in production with the firm and at this point Methuen seems with some irritation to have discovered that his author had taken *The Wings of the Dove* to Constable (in fact, a signed contract was returned to Pinker on 9 October 1900).¹²⁸

Even before the publication of *The Sacred Fount*, then, there were indications that the novel would be met with bewilderment or hostility. This initial phase in the reception of the novel might perhaps be called ‘realist’ in the sense that it was committed to traditional conceptions of plot, character and textual meaning. These conceptions are by no means extinct: indeed, a realist emphasis on clarity and linearity continues to flourish today in casual critical dismissals of the narrator as ‘insane’ and in professions of incomprehension by general readers on such websites as Goodreads (‘nothing ever actually happens’; ‘too hard’; ‘like murder mystery with no murder’).¹²⁹ A second, distinctively modernist, approach to the novel emerged shortly after James’s death and

¹²³ Co101 (Box 104, Folder 2), Princeton.

¹²⁴ Anesko, ‘Collected Editions’, 192.

¹²⁵ Burlingame, *Of Making Many Books*, 37; Anesko, ‘Collected Editions’, 206.

¹²⁶ MSS 830 (Box 3), Yale.

¹²⁷ bMS Am 2540 (1), Harvard.

¹²⁸ MSS 830 (Box 3), Yale. I am grateful to Tamara Follini for advice on the contract for *The Wings of the Dove*.

¹²⁹ www.goodreads.com, consulted 1 January 2019.

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continued into the 1930s, laying the groundwork for the critical appropriation of James as, in the words of Richard A. Hocks, ‘the arbiter of New Criticism’.¹³⁰ Here, *The Sacred Fount* and James’s work more generally were celebrated for precisely the qualities which had caused realist readers to bristle: its mysteriousness, its lack of resolution and its emphasis on dialogue rather than external action. This period of modernist canonization may be said to have begun with R. P. Blackmur’s 1942 essay in the *Kenyon Review*, and to have reached its apogee in Leon Edel’s two editions of the novel (1953 and 1959) and his five-volume biography of James (1953–72). According to Hocks, a subsequent ‘recanonization’ made of James a ‘receptacle for all the divergent [...] strands of post-modern critical theory’.¹³¹ This period of reassessment began in the 1980s and coincides with a third, post-structuralist phase in the reception of *The Sacred Fount*, during which a distinctively modernist emphasis on myth and parable gave way to a more linguistically attuned sense of textual ambiguity. Finally, it is possible to identify a fourth, historicist strand in critical work on *The Sacred Fount*. The origins of this approach can be seen in Edward Sackville-West’s efforts to situate the novel in the context of the condition of England novel in his 1949 essay, in Laurence B. Holland’s *The Expense of Vision* (1964), which sees *The Sacred Fount* as part of an attempt by James to consider the consequences of rapid social change, or in William Bysshe Stein’s 1971 article on *The Sacred Fount* and the Decadent movement (see pp. li, liii and lv above). Both John Lyon’s 1994 edition of the novel and the present one could broadly be characterized as historicist, as could almost all of the work over the last quarter-century which has sought to place *The Sacred Fount* in the context of *fin de siècle* debates about class, gender and sexuality.

To date, approximately fifty reviews of *The Sacred Fount* have been identified.¹³² Existing bibliographical studies have not, however, catalogued one

¹³⁰ Richard A. Hocks, ‘Recanonizing the Multiple Canons of Henry James’, in *American Realism and the Canon*, eds. Tom Quirk and Gary Scharnhorst (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1994), pp. 154–69; 156.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹³² In *Criticism in American Periodicals of the Works of Henry James from 1866 to 1916* (PhD dissertation (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1944)), Richard Nicholas Foley lists and quotes from nine reviews of *The Sacred Fount*. Gard reprints an unsigned

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review by a member of James's circle: a piece by Francis Marion Crawford which appeared in the *New York Journal and Advertiser* on 9 February 1901. Though positive, Crawford's review was not especially acute: it consisted mainly of plot summary and contained a 500-word quotation which was said to be 'admirable'.¹³³ An equally hospitable but more probing discussion featured in William Dean Howells's 'Mr Henry James's Later Work' (1903) – an essay which, like Crawford's review, was the fruit of personal knowledge and a fellow writer's interest in technique. This piece is best known for Howells's claim to have 'mastered the secret' of *The Sacred Fount* – and still more for his refusal to share that secret. Howells nevertheless identified James's dialogue as a 'key', though not one which would 'unlock everything'. When they finished *The Sacred Fount*, mystified readers could console themselves by reflecting that they had spent time among characters 'abidingly left with your imagination'. After all, 'why should not a novel be written so like to life, in which most of the events remain the meaningless, that we shall never quite know what the author meant?'¹³⁴ The question, as Philip Horne dryly observes, does not seem to have been asked with any 'satirical intention' (LL 377).

In the meantime, cooler responses to *The Sacred Fount* were being heard elsewhere in the James circle. On 12 March 1901, Edith Wharton found

review in the *Spectator*, a review by Cornelia Atwood Pratt in the *New York Critic* and a review by Harry T. Peck in the *New York Bookman*. Beatrice Ricks gives publication details of these and seventeen other reviews in *Henry James: A Bibliography of Secondary Works*, Scarecrow Author Bibliographies 24 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1975). James Gargano reprints the Peck review alongside reviews from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, *The Times* and the *Edinburgh Review* (*Critical Essays on Henry James: The Late Novels* (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall, 1987)). Linda J. Taylor lists and excerpts nearly forty notices and reviews of *The Sacred Fount* in *Henry James, 1866–1916: A Reference Guide* (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall and Co., 1982). Hayes reprints the Pratt review and the review in *The Times* alongside fourteen previously unreprinted reviews (a further twenty-three reviews are also listed). Robin Hoople lists more than thirty reviews in *In Darkest James: Reviewing Impressionism, 1900–1905* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2000).

¹³³ F. Marion Crawford, 'The Sacred Fount, a New Novel by Henry James: An Intellectual Problem without a Solution – From an Advance Copy', *Journal and Advertiser* (9 February 1901), 8; repr. in T. J. Lustig, 'Mocking the Master: Early Responses to *The Sacred Fount*', *Henry James Review* 38.1 (2017), 22–36; 26; hereafter Lustig.

¹³⁴ William Dean Howells, 'Mr Henry James's Later Work', *North American Review* (January 1903), 125–37; 135–6.

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herself wishing that ‘so fine a title had not been attached to so ignoble a book’; ‘I could cry over the ruins of such a talent’, she wrote.¹³⁵ Henry Adams was also concerned about James’s well-being, reporting on 6 May 1901 that John Hay, statesman and former US Ambassador to Great Britain, suspected that ‘Harry’s last volume’ was ‘very close on extravagance’.¹³⁶ Adams read the novel and ‘recognised at once’ that James and himself had ‘the same disease, the obsession of the *idée fixe*’. *The Sacred Fount*, Adams concluded, ‘is insanity, and I think Harry must soon take a vacation [...] in a cheery asylum’.¹³⁷ By the time that these unpropitious comments were made, reviews of *The Sacred Fount* were beginning to appear. Yet it was, perhaps, a *refusal* to review which provided the most telling evidence of the novel’s early reception. On publication, Charles Scribner sent a copy of *The Sacred Fount* to Bliss Perry in the hope that he would review it in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Perry was not wholly dismissive: *The Sacred Fount* contained lines ‘as exquisitely perfect as a bird’s egg that has dropped from the nest + lies all unbroken upon the sidewalk’. But he disliked the author’s ‘later developments as a juggler with the English language’: *The Sacred Fount* was like ‘talking with some confoundedly clever woman who is two or three “moves” ahead of you in the conversational game, and doesn’t allow you to catch up’. Declining Scribner’s invitation to review the novel, Perry expressed surprise at the publisher’s ‘hospitality’ to writers who did not appeal to the ‘great public’.¹³⁸

Tony Tanner suggested in 1968 that the publication of *The Sacred Fount* ‘marks the second really low point in James’s reputation during his own lifetime’ (the first came after the publication of *The Bostonians* in 1886).¹³⁹ For the reviewers, the greatest weakness of the novel was precisely what

¹³⁵ Letter to Sara Norton in *The Letters of Edith Wharton*, ed. R. W. B. Lewis (London: Simon and Schuster, 1988), p. 45.

¹³⁶ In a letter of 20 October 1902, John Hay described *The Wings of the Dove* as ‘the worstest-while thing I have seen for many a day’, concluding with relief that James was ‘all right’: *The Sacred Fount* had been written ‘just to scare us’ (*Letters of John Hay and Extracts from Diary*, eds. Henry Adams and Clara Louise Hay, 3 vols. (Washington DC: printed but not published, 1908), 3:260).

¹³⁷ Letter to Elizabeth Cameron, *The Letters of Henry Adams*, eds. J. C. Levenson, Ernest Samuels, Charles Vandersee and Viola Hopkins Winner, 6 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1988), 4:248.

¹³⁸ Co101 (Box 864, Folder 18), Princeton.

¹³⁹ Tony Tanner, ‘Introduction’, in *Henry James: Modern Judgements*, ed. Tony Tanner (London: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 11–41; 14–15.

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Howells and Crawford identified as its main strength: the dialogue. Writing in the Boston *Evening Transcript*, Joseph Edgar Chamberlin was surprised that James had devoted ‘four or five chapters’ to one conversation (Hayes 339); in fact, it was only three chapters (although these did amount to a quarter of the novel). In New York, a second reviewer deplored the concluding scene in *The Sacred Fount*, a dialogue enacted over ‘eighty-two blessed pages’.¹⁴⁰ The Boston *Sunday Post* agreed: ‘about one-half’ of the concluding conversation was ‘unintelligible’.¹⁴¹ In Britain, the *Outlook* drew attention to the ‘curious intangibility’ of the dialogue: characters talked as if ‘words that meant anything were stones falling on glass’.¹⁴² *The Sacred Fount* was too talky, too long and ultimately too difficult. An anonymous reviewer – probably Royal Cortissoz, the drama critic of the *New-York Daily Tribune*¹⁴³ – found the novel ‘wellnigh unbelievable in its irrelevance’ and predicted that readers would be ‘baffled’ by the ‘*impasse*’ of the ending (Hayes 338). The difficulties of the novel were also a product of its style, which, for Mary Dear in the *Indianapolis News*, would be unreadable if it became ‘much more involved’ (Hayes 355). Style was also a problem for the *Detroit Evening News*, though not for the same reason: this reviewer found *The Sacred Fount* to be ‘marred by colloquialisms, vulgar expressions and peculiarly constructed sentences’.¹⁴⁴ In Rhode Island, James’s ‘high’ and ‘low’ styles were attacked simultaneously: the *Providence Journal* spoke of the ‘extraordinary deterioration’ of the author’s style, which had become a ‘jumble of euphuisms and

¹⁴⁰ ‘Henry James. His New Work, “The Sacred Fount”’, *New York Times* (16 February 1901), 112.

¹⁴¹ “‘The Sacred Fount.’ First Important Offering of the Season in Books. Henry James’s Latest Effort’, *Sunday Post* [Boston, MA] (24 February 1901), 30. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library.

¹⁴² ‘The Perversity of Mr. Henry James’, *Outlook* [UK] 7 (23 February 1901), 120–1.

¹⁴³ The *New-York Daily Tribune* review appeared on 9 February 1901. A quotation from this piece was attributed to Royal Cortissoz in Scribner’s advert for *The Sacred Fount* in the *Tribune* on 16 February. This identification is significant because Cortissoz later wrote an essay which has been described by David Minter as ‘one of the most important denouncements’ of the 1913 Armory Show (‘A Cultural History of the Modern American Novel’, in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, vol. 6 (*Prose Writing, 1910–1950*), ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1–282; 72). Cortissoz’s objections to *The Sacred Fount* anticipated his sense that modern art lacked substance: finding the truth of a post-impressionist painting, he declared, was like ‘going down into a cellar at midnight without a candle to look for a black cat that isn’t there’ (‘The Post-Impressionist Illusion’, *Century Magazine* 85 (April 1913), 805–15; 808).

¹⁴⁴ ‘A Puzzling Novel by Henry James’, *Evening News* [Detroit, MI] (24 February 1901), 2:17.

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colloquialisms.¹⁴⁵ Stylistic elaboration was felt to correspond to an absence of action. The *New York World* found ‘no incidents’ in the novel, ‘no elopements, no open scandals, not even a runaway horse.’¹⁴⁶ The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* thought it was ‘much ado about nothing.’¹⁴⁷ The reviewer in the *Boston Sunday Post* indulged in ‘a bit of frivolity’ by enumerating actual incidents: ‘one afternoon tea on the lawn, several walks, one dinner with music afterwards, and the exchange of cigarettes, which’ – this last detail is part of the frivolity but actually incorrect – ‘were not lighted.’¹⁴⁸ But an absence of meaning was just as irritating as the absence of plot. The reviewer in the *Chicago Tribune* claimed to be an ‘ardent admirer’ of James and had read *The Sacred Fount* with ‘painstaking minuteness’ but gained ‘little or no notion what it is all about’ (Hayes 346). After much ‘solitary wrestling’ with the novel and ‘consultation with other readers’, the reviewer for the *London Times* had not ‘the dimmest of notions as to what “The Sacred Fount” is all about’ (Hayes 356). In New York, a third reviewer concluded that the novel must be counted among James’s ‘books about nothing.’¹⁴⁹

Negative responses to *The Sacred Fount* were often the product of uncertainty about the relation between the author and his narrator. Writing in the *Academy*, one reviewer spoke of the ‘nameless narrator’, scrupulously adding that ‘we must restrain ourselves from the temptation of identifying him with Mr. James’ (Hayes 342). In the *Speaker*, ‘L.R.F.O.’ immediately yielded to precisely this temptation, writing about ‘Mr. James’ taking ‘solitary walks [...] through Newmarch glades’ (Hayes 344). The reviewer in the *Athenæum* was clear that *The Sacred Fount* was narrated ‘in the first person’ but muddled the waters by choosing to ‘preserve Mr. James’s own name in describing the narrator’ (Hayes 345). Any blurring of the boundary between novelist and narrator was particularly problematic if the reviewer was unable to identify with the narrator. In the *New York Critic*, Cornelia Atwood Pratt saw the distinction between the ‘narrator’ and James, but the

¹⁴⁵ ‘The Latest from Mr. James’, *Providence Journal* (24 February 1901), 15.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Henry James in a Fresh Analysis of “Polite” Society’, *World* [New York] (9 February 1901), 8.

¹⁴⁷ ‘Novels, Romances and Short Stories’, *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (3 March 1901), 3:8.

¹⁴⁸ “‘The Sacred Fount.’” *Sunday Post*, 30. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library.

For criticism of James’s style in *The Sacred Fount*, see also Henry Austin Clapp, *Daily Advertiser* (23 February 1901), 8; repr. in Lustig, 26–8.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Appraisals of New Books’, *World’s Work* [US] 1 (April 1901), 667; listed in Hayes 357.

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sense that the former was in the grip of a ‘ridiculous obsession’ potentially extended to the latter (Hayes 353). Joseph Edgar Chamberlin transferred this judgement from the author to his work: ‘I don’t [...] imagine the author is insane’, this commentator protested; ‘it has merely pleased his fancy to make an insane book’ (Hayes 339). James was more directly the target for ‘L.R.F.O.’, who felt that a ‘theory’ of relationships became an ‘obsession’ in *The Sacred Fount* (Hayes 344). The word ‘theory’ connoted lack of feeling: readers could almost feel ‘the pin piercing the specimens’ as ‘Mr. James’ (the narrator, named so as to indict the author as a vivisectionist) ‘fixes them on his setting-board’ (Hayes 345). Once more conflating the novelist and his narrator, the reviewer in the New York *Independent* compared the novel to ‘a game of solitaire’ in which James was ‘absorbed in working out his own theory’ (Hayes 351). Royal Cortissoz saw only ‘the falling into place of the figures in a pattern which the author has [...] kept on juggling with in order to make us think him clever’ (Hayes 338).

The idea of a ‘juggling’ James recalls Bliss Perry on James as a ‘juggler’ with language, and similar ludic metaphors were employed elsewhere. ‘L.R.F.O.’ saw *The Sacred Fount* as an instance of the novelist ‘at his favourite pursuit of building card-houses’. Instead of knocking them down in a ‘swift climax of destruction’, however, readers were compelled to watch James ‘unbuilding’ his structure by a ‘slow and deliberate removal of each card’ (Hayes 343–4). The reviewer in the London *Academy* felt that the novel was built from ‘bricks of gossamer and mortar of sunbeams’ (Hayes 342). For Pratt, *The Sacred Fount* was made of ‘soapsuds’ – ‘an immense, brilliantly variegated brain-bubble’ (Hayes 352). Such vivid but mocking images enabled reviewers to express their sense of the novel’s impalpability: it ought to have been solid but was all cobwebs or bubbles – a card-house being slowly taken apart. Reviewers repeatedly suggested that *The Sacred Fount* seemed to have been written in a foreign language. For the reviewer in the London *Daily News*, the dialogue presented ‘the same difficulty as a passage from a Greek play’ (Hayes 341). According to the reviewer in the London *Saturday Review*, the text required a level of concentration appropriate for ‘the tougher passages of Aristotle’s “Metaphysics”’ (Hayes 355). *The Sacred Fount* was taking a panning, but the terms which the novel put into play enable one (perhaps with a little ingenuity) to see its reception more positively: even as they belittled *The Sacred Fount*, reviewers drew considerable imaginative energy from it.

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The exasperation of contemporary critics with *The Sacred Fount* often found summative expression in the charge of intellectual arrogance. 'L.R.F.O.' felt that the author of *The Sacred Fount* judged mankind with 'bleak aloofness' (Hayes 345). Royal Cortissoz imagined James smiling at 'the absurdity of those readers who do not appreciate [...] the juggling of inductive processes' (Hayes 338). Yet the mocking James sometimes became a jesting one who made jokes at his own expense rather than that of his readers. Leo B. Levy has suggested that Wilson Follett was the first critic to see the novel as a self-parody when he described the novel in 1936 as 'a practical joke, and a merciless self-portrait'.¹⁵⁰ But the notion that *The Sacred Fount* was a joke had already (though less sympathetically) been entertained in 1901. For the reviewer in the *Academy*, the novel was 'an elaborate satire' (Hayes 342). The reviewer in the *Manchester Guardian* sounded a similar note: the novel was 'so barren of any profitable result' that it had become 'a parody' (Hayes 347). The reviewer in the *Times* speculated that James had decided to 'parody himself' in order to laugh at his 'sham enthusiasts' (Hayes 356). According to Edmund Wilson, Owen Seaman's 1902 parody marked the point at which James finally became 'unassimilably exasperating and ridiculous' to the general reader.¹⁵¹ Seaman's stylistic jokes – his narrator talks about 'faculties of discriminative volition' and alerts us to 'considerations of a high sociologic interest' – are certainly reminiscent of *The Sacred Fount*.¹⁵² In these and other cases, the joke was on James. It is true that neither of Max Beerbohm's gentle and appreciative parodies of James – 'The Mote in the Middle Distance' (1912) and 'The Guerdon' (1925) – took *The Sacred Fount* as a model. In one of Beerbohm's caricatures of James, however, the novelist crouches beside the door of a hotel room, pondering

¹⁵⁰ Wilson Follett, 'Henry James's Portrait of Henry James', *New York Times* (23 August 1936), 6:12; see Leo B. Levy, 'What Does *The Sacred Fount* Mean?', *College English* 23.5 (February 1962), 381–4; 381.

¹⁵¹ Edmund Wilson, 'The Ambiguity of Henry James' (1934), in *The Triple Thinkers: Ten Essays on Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 122–64; 134.

¹⁵² Owen Seaman, 'Mr. Henry James [*The Sacred Fount*]', in *Borrowed Plumes* (London: Westminster, Archibald Constable and Co. Ltd., 1902), pp. 133–49; 133–4. A number of other literary skits and parodies took *The Sacred Fount* as their subject. See Carolyn Wells, 'Verbarium Tremens', *Critic*, 38 (May 1901), 404; repr. in Lustig 29; Truman Robert Andrews, 'Mr. Pickley and the Nacherl Novel', *Times* [Richmond, VA] (11 May 1902), 20; repr. in Lustig, 31–2; M. Nesbit, 'The Fountain Pen. By H***y J***s. (Author of "The Sacred Fount," etc.)', *New-York Daily Tribune* (3 April 1904), 10; repr. in Lustig, 32.

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two pairs of footwear – one male, one female.¹⁵³ For Edel, this image evokes ‘the mental detective narrator of *The Sacred Fount*’ (Edel 4:324).

Most of the reactions I have described above came within the standard one-year reviewing cycle. Towards the end of James’s life, however, *The Sacred Fount* may once more have been in the air when H. G. Wells memorably described the novelist as ‘a magnificent but painful hippopotamus resolved at any cost, even at the cost of its dignity, upon picking up a pea which has got into the corner of its den.’¹⁵⁴ In a letter to Wells on 6 July 1915, James understandably confessed that he had not been filled with ‘fond elation’ on reading these remarks (*HJL* 4:766). Wells had remained on friendly terms with James at least until the end of 1900, and Leon Edel and Gordon N. Ray suggest that a reference in a letter of 9 December 1900 to a ‘most kind letter’ from Wells about ‘my last book’ relates to *The Sacred Fount*.¹⁵⁵ But Wells’s letter must have concerned either *The Awkward Age* (published in April 1899) or *The Soft Side* (published in August 1900) rather than *The Sacred Fount*, which did not appear until February 1901. The idea that a piece published in 1915 would set out to demolish a work produced in 1901 seems unlikely. As Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie note, however, parts of Wells’s essay were ‘drafted in 1905’.¹⁵⁶ It remains possible that Wells’s essay had still earlier origins; at any rate, although he did not explicitly mention *The Sacred Fount* in *Boon*, both Edward Sackville-West and Jeremy Tambling have seen this novel as Wells’s principal target.¹⁵⁷

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¹⁵³ The drawing is reproduced in *Beerbohm’s Literary Caricatures: From Homer to Huxley*, ed. J. G. Riewald (London: Allen Lane, 1977), p. 224. Beerbohm may have had *The Sacred Fount* in mind but was thinking most immediately of a 1904 essay in which James commented on Gabriele d’Annunzio’s presentation of ‘sexual passion’ as something with ‘no more dignity than [...] the boots and shoes that we see, in the corridors of promiscuous hotels, standing, often in double pairs, at the doors of rooms’ (*Literary Criticism: French Writers, Other European Writers, The Prefaces to the New York Edition*, eds. Leon Edel and Mark Wilson (New York: Library of America, 1984), p. 942; hereafter *LC2*).

¹⁵⁴ H. G. Wells (‘Reginald Bliss’), ‘Of Art, of Literature, of Mr Henry James’, in *Boon, The Mind of the Race, The Wild Asses of the Devil and The Last Trump* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1915), pp. 97–108; 108.

¹⁵⁵ Leon Edel and Gordon N. Ray (eds.), *Henry James and H. G. Wells: A Record of their Friendship, their Debate on the Art of Fiction, and their Quarrel* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1958), p. 69.

¹⁵⁶ Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie, *The Time Traveller: The Life of H. G. Wells* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), p. 291.

¹⁵⁷ See Sackville-West, ‘The Personality of Henry James’, 66; Jeremy Tambling, *Henry James* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 9.

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The earliest known response to *The Sacred Fount* after James's death echoed both Wells's irritation and his delight in satirizing the Master's later style. For Rebecca West in 1916, the sentences of this novel were like 'the granite blocks of the Pyramids' although the story was the size of 'a hen-house'. James's narrator, West continued, spent 'more intellectual force than Kant can have used on *The Critique of Pure Reason* in an unsuccessful attempt to discover whether there exists between certain of his fellow-guests a relationship not more interesting among these vacuous people than it is among sparrows'.¹⁵⁸ Nicholas Delbanco argues that these remarks are 'of a piece with *Boon*'; Miranda Seymour likewise describes the passage as 'pure Boonery'.¹⁵⁹ This is unsurprising, since much of *Boon* and *Henry James* had been written while West and Wells lived and worked together in Hunstanton, Norfolk. West's reference to Kant certainly echoes Wells, who had suggested in *Boon* that 'James is to criticism what Immanuel Kant is to philosophy – a partially comprehensible essential'.¹⁶⁰ But West did not simply replicate Wells's line: as Gordon Ray points out, the two writers were often 'poles apart in their assumptions'.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, *The Sacred Fount* seems for both Wells and West to have been the leading example of James at his most maddeningly overblown.

Published a few months after James's death, West's book was the nadir in the critical reception of *The Sacred Fount*. Yet the rhetorical weapons of Wells and West continued to serve the critics. In 1925, Van Wyck Brooks quoted Wells's image of the hippopotamus, suggesting in a similar spirit that the later James was like 'some vast arachnid of art'. For Brooks, the American novelist's cultural deracination had resulted in a rootless prose where metaphors bloomed 'like tropical air-plants'.¹⁶² The charge that the late style in general was a case of manner without matter was levelled at *The Sacred Fount* in particular. In 1927, Pelham Edgar described the novel

¹⁵⁸ Rebecca West, *Henry James*, 107–8.

¹⁵⁹ Nicholas Delbanco, *Group Portrait: Joseph Conrad, Stephen Crane, Ford Madox Ford, Henry James, and H. G. Wells* (London: Faber and Faber, 1982), p. 141; Miranda Seymour, *A Ring of Conspirators: Henry James and His Literary Circle, 1895–1915* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988), p. 268.

¹⁶⁰ Wells, 'Of Art, of Literature, of Mr Henry James', 98.

¹⁶¹ Gordon N. Ray, *H. G. Wells and Rebecca West* (London: Macmillan, 1974), p. 123.

¹⁶² Van Wyck Brooks, *The Pilgrimage of Henry James* (1925; New York: Octagon, 1972), pp. 130–1.

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as ‘a monstrously overgrown short story’. The novel was ‘wasted’ work and the writing bewildering: ‘We enter a maze at the book’s beginning and are still in a labyrinth at its close.’¹⁶³ Some time before Brooks and Edgar delivered their assessments, however, there were signs that the reputation of *The Sacred Fount* was entering a second phase which, as I have suggested, might be associated with literary modernism. Anticipating the image of James as an ‘arachnid’, Ezra Pound in 1918 found the novelist’s later work ‘cobwebby’.¹⁶⁴ Yet Pound was more receptive than Brooks to the artistry implicit in such an image. The 1918 essay suggested that the later works of James did not provide a model for novelists, but when Pound revised this piece for publication in *Make it New* (1934), he inserted the new and more positive claim that James had achieved ‘form, perfect form, his form’ in *The Sacred Fount*.¹⁶⁵ In 1901 a reviewer of *The Sacred Fount* had described the author as an ‘intellectual vampire’.¹⁶⁶ In 1918 this pejorative judgement was given a different gloss when T. S. Eliot suggested that James was unique in that he ‘preyed not upon ideas, but upon living beings’.¹⁶⁷ Eliot did not mention *The Sacred Fount*, but his vampiric image embraced precisely those qualities which earlier commentators found hard to accept – in terms possibly made available by *The Sacred Fount* itself. The title of another work of 1918 – *The Method of Henry James* – further underlines the changing fortunes of *The Sacred Fount*. In 1901 one reviewer had felt that the novel suffered from ‘the ravages of a method’; for Joseph Warren Beach, however, the novel was an ‘amazing’ display of ‘relationships and points of view’.¹⁶⁸

The reputation of *The Sacred Fount* continued to improve in subsequent decades. While Eliot imagined an artist preying upon ‘living beings’, Wilson Follett wrote in 1936 of the ‘psychophysical vampirism’ which James had performed upon himself in *The Sacred Fount*. Follett may have been the

¹⁶³ Pelham Edgar, *Henry James: Man and Author* (London: Grant Richards Ltd., 1927), pp. 144, 147.

¹⁶⁴ Ezra Pound, ‘A Shake Down’, *Little Review* 5.4 (August 1918), 9–39; 16.

¹⁶⁵ Ezra Pound, ‘Henry James’ (Part 1 of ‘Henry James and Remy de Gourmont’), in *Make it New* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), pp. 251–307; 292.

¹⁶⁶ *Outlook* [US] 67 (2 March 1901), 554.

¹⁶⁷ T. S. Eliot, ‘In Memory’, *Little Review* 5.4 (August 1918), 44–7; 45. Eliot’s article was first published as ‘In Memory of Henry James’, *Egoist* 5.1 (January 1918), 1–2.

¹⁶⁸ ‘The James Method’, *Courier* [Lincoln, NB] (31 August 1901), 2–3; 2; Joseph Warren Beach, *The Method of Henry James* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1918), p. 43.

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first to openly praise this turning of the self upon itself: for him, the novel contained some of its author's 'most luminous, and most neglected pages'.¹⁶⁹ Two years later, Edmund Wilson responded to this article in a rewritten passage of an essay originally published in 1934. Wilson agreed that James 'put himself' into *The Sacred Fount*, seeing the novel as a 'fable about the imaginative mind'.¹⁷⁰ The improving critical fortunes of the novel during the 1930s were also evident in the response of a fellow writer. Writing in her diary on 14 May 1933, Virginia Woolf did not suggest, as Follett had, that *The Sacred Fount* was one of James's most important works: for her, the world of the novel was that of 'an orchis in a greenhouse'. Yet Woolf was not dismissing *The Sacred Fount*: reading the novel had made her realize that 'the sign of a masterly writer is his power to break his mould'. The motif of the sacred fount then suddenly seemed to emerge, and to operate in James's favour: for Woolf, none of James's imitators possessed his 'vigour' or 'native juice'.¹⁷¹

By suggesting that James was reflecting upon his own work in *The Sacred Fount*, Follett planted a critical milestone. Wilson's idea of the novel as a fable was also influential. A further sign that the modernist response to *The Sacred Fount* was gaining currency within the academy was a 1942 essay in which R. P. Blackmur described *The Sacred Fount* as one of the novelist's 'most difficult works', finding this 'rewarding' rather than infuriating.¹⁷² Blackmur's essay appeared in the *Kenyon Review*, a leading journal of the 'New Criticism'. As Stacey Margolis suggests, *The Sacred Fount* became an exemplary work for the New Critics because it was felt to champion 'art and "ambiguity"'.¹⁷³ Blackmur was receptive to ambiguity as one form of textual 'difficulty' and also admired the novel because it was in his view concerned with artistry: the novel was a 'parable' or – Wilson's word – a 'fable'. It was also ahead of its time: comparing *The Sacred Fount* to the writing of Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and Franz Kafka, Blackmur proposed that the novel anticipated

¹⁶⁹ Follett, 'Henry James's Portrait of Henry James', 12.

¹⁷⁰ Wilson, 'The Ambiguity of Henry James', 137.

¹⁷¹ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, eds. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie, 6 vols. (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1979–85), 4:157. I am grateful to Philip Horne for drawing my attention to this passage.

¹⁷² Blackmur, 'The Sacred Fount', 328–9.

¹⁷³ Stacey Margolis, 'Homo-Formalism: Analogy in *The Sacred Fount*', *Novel* 34.3 (Summer 2001), 391–410; 393.

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‘a good deal of modern fiction.’¹⁷⁴ This was not an original claim: at least two reviewers had attached the word ‘modern’ to *The Sacred Fount*, and in 1928 Hugh Walpole had suggested that it paved the way for the ‘modern novel’.¹⁷⁵ But Blackmur’s references to modernist writers were echoed by later critics.¹⁷⁶ In 1927, Pelham Edgar had disliked the ‘maze’ of *The Sacred Fount*. For Jorge Luis Borges in 1966, however, James’s sense of the world as ‘a kind of maze’ made *The Sacred Fount* a precursor of Kafka’s parables.¹⁷⁷

Leon Edel hailed *The Sacred Fount* as the first ‘authentic masterpiece’ of modernism in 1972, and it was around this time that the novel first began to be celebrated in a new and distinctively postmodern way (Edel 5:97). In 1970, Philip M. Weinstein had been uncomfortable with the fact that ‘a definitive interpretation’ of *The Sacred Fount* was ‘impossible’.¹⁷⁸ Just two years later, however, this was exactly the point for Frank Kermode: the novel was ‘designed to frustrate closure’.¹⁷⁹ In 1977, Shlomith Rimmon agreed with earlier critics that *The Sacred Fount* was ambiguous: either the narrator possessed ‘penetrating insight’ or his theory was a ‘figment’ of his own imagination. But Rimmon then employed narratological theory, tracing ‘singly’ or ‘doubly

¹⁷⁴ Blackmur, ‘*The Sacred Fount*’, 330–1.

¹⁷⁵ On 2 February 1901, the *New-York Daily Tribune* announced that *The Sacred Fount* was written in James’s ‘most modern manner’ (8); an unsigned review in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* on 16 February described James as ‘essentially modern’ (7); Hugh Walpole, ‘Our Changing Life Reflected in Art’, *New York Times* (20 May 1928), 8:22.

¹⁷⁶ See, for example, Arnold P. Hinchliffe, ‘Henry James’s *The Sacred Fount*’, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 2.1 (Spring 1960), 88–94; 94; Cargill, *The Novels of Henry James*, 295; Robert J. Andreach, ‘Henry James’s *The Sacred Fount*: The Existential Predicament’, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 17.3 (December 1962), 197–216; 216; Peter Brooks, *Henry James Goes to Paris* (Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 3. For alternative views, see Sidney Finkelstein, ‘The “Mystery” of Henry James’s *The Sacred Fount*’, *Massachusetts Review* 3.4 (Summer 1962), 753–76; 766; Levy, ‘What Does *The Sacred Fount* Mean?’, 384; Isle, *Experiments in Form*, 218; Heath Moon, ‘Saving James from Modernism: How to Read *The Sacred Fount*’, *MLQ* 49.2 (1988), 120–41; 140; Freedman, *Professions of Taste*, 248; Paul Giles, ‘Deterritorialization in *The Sacred Fount*’, *Henry James Review* 24.3 (Fall 2003), 225–32; 227.

¹⁷⁷ Ronald Christ, Interview with Jorge Luis Borges, *Paris Review* 40 (Winter–Spring 1967), www.theparisreview.org, consulted 1 January 2019. I am grateful to Philip Horne for drawing my attention to this piece.

¹⁷⁸ Philip M. Weinstein, ‘The Exploitative and Protective Imagination: Unreliable Narration in *The Sacred Fount*’, in *The Interpretation of Narrative: Theory and Practice*, ed. Morton W. Bloomfield (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 189–209; 190.

¹⁷⁹ Frank Kermode, *Novel and Narrative* (University of Glasgow Press, 1972), p. 24.

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directed' clues and identifying 'a central informational gap' in the narrative – one created by the indirection of James's narrator and of his characters.¹⁸⁰ Rimmon was not the first to suggest that the novel anticipated the work of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Nathalie Sarraute, but such connections were later explored by several critics.¹⁸¹ In the 1980s, *The Sacred Fount* was again being seen as a key modernist text, but this literary movement was now understood less in terms of myth or parable than of historical crisis. Thus, for Allon White, the novel embodied a 'conflict of meaning and desire'. In the closing years of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, sexual knowledge was everywhere the subject of narrative but could nowhere be openly articulated: hence, for the modernist, the 'uses of obscurity'. Eschewing banality and vulgarity, *The Sacred Fount* 'shows in its form what it cannot say, and it is the silence of the unsaid which gives it existence'.¹⁸²

In 1962, Leo B. Levy was ahead of his time when he suggested that *The Sacred Fount* was an 'essay in epistemology' whose 'experimental relativism' called 'the whole enterprise of fiction into question'.¹⁸³ During the 1980s, the idea that the novel's stance might be defined in philosophical terms ('epistemological', 'relativist') gained ground. Numerous earlier critics had presented the novel as a study of writing or reading, and this approach was given additional impetus when in 1987 Paul B. Armstrong wrote of the 'playful self-referentiality' of *The Sacred Fount*, suggesting that the novel might be read as a 'liberating display of [...] semiotic creativity'. Yet Armstrong ultimately followed John Carlos Rowe in arguing that James was calling attention to the 'drive for mastery implicit in [the narrator's] reading'.¹⁸⁴ The

¹⁸⁰ Shlomith Rimmon, *The Concept of Ambiguity: The Example of James* (University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. 167–8.

¹⁸¹ On *The Sacred Fount* and the *nouveau roman*, see Sergio Perosa, 'Introduction', in *La fonte sacra*, ed. and trans. Sergio Perosa (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1963), pp. ix–xxxvii; xxxvii; Melchiori, 'Cups of Gold for the Sacred Fount'; Sallie Sears, *The Negative Imagination: Form and Perspective in the Novels of Henry James* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968), pp. 51–5.

¹⁸² White, *The Uses of Obscurity*, 28.

¹⁸³ Levy, 'What Does *The Sacred Fount* Mean?', 381.

¹⁸⁴ Paul B. Armstrong, *The Challenge of Bewilderment: Understanding and Representation in James, Conrad, and Ford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 52. John Carlos Rowe had argued that the narrator of *The Sacred Fount* demonstrates the 'violence of interpretation' ('The Authority of the Sign in Henry James's *The Sacred Fount*', *Criticism* 19.3 (Summer 1977), 223–40).

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post-structuralist emphasis on reading and interpretation was certainly new, yet its conclusions curiously echoed traditionalist criticisms of the narrator which had been prevalent among the early reviewers of *The Sacred Fount*.

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A concluding assessment of the overall significance of *The Sacred Fount* should first acknowledge that, of all James's novels, this is the one that has been disliked the most intensely and the most frequently. For admirers, it is an awkward fact that one of the earliest and most severe critics of the novel was its own author. James showed a brave face to his agent when on 25 July 1901 he described his latest production as 'controlled and directed' (*HJL* 4:154–5). There was also a flash of authorial pride when James referred to the novel's 'little law of composition' in a letter to Mrs Ward on 15 March 1901 (*HJL* 4:186). Even before he had finished writing *The Sacred Fount*, however, the novelist dismissed the novel as one of the things he was 'direfully forced' to produce in order to make money.¹⁸⁵ His opinion did not improve. The novel was 'bewildering + perhaps boring', he told Henrietta Reubell on 27 February 1901, anticipating that reading it might put 'a strain on your reason'.¹⁸⁶ To Mrs Ward – the correspondent to whom he wrote most openly and extensively of his intentions in the final chapters of the novel – James confessed, in the same letter of 15 March 1901 which had shown some pride in *The Sacred Fount*, that he had finished the novel 'hatingly' and 'mortally loathe[d] it' (*HJL* 4:186).

James held *The Sacred Fount* in such low esteem that it would scarcely be surprising if he neglected signs of its public reception. Writing to William Dean Howells on 11 December 1902, the novelist claimed not to know 'anything' about American reviews of *The Sacred Fount* and to have no 'sense of confrontation with a public more than usually childish' on either side of the Atlantic (*LL* 377). Yet one might ask how James knew that the public was being 'childish'. The letter of 15 March 1901 to Mrs Ward also leads one to consider the possibility that the novelist's remarks to Howells were a little disingenuous. *The Sacred Fount*, James told Ward, was a 'joke' but – 'round about me here' – had been 'taken rather seriously' (*HJL* 4:186).

¹⁸⁵ James to Jessie Allen, 19 June 1900 (bMS Am 1504 (7), Harvard).

¹⁸⁶ bMS Am 1094 (1143), Harvard.

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James might well have been thinking of Morton Fullerton, who had discussed *The Sacred Fount* in a letter to which the novelist had replied just three days earlier. But the expression ‘round about me here’ suggests that there had been reactions from more than one direction. Perhaps, then, in spite of the indifference he assumed when writing to Howells, James had some knowledge of British responses to *The Sacred Fount* (there had, by the middle of March 1901, been ten reviews). Whether or not this was the case, there is evidence that the novelist would come – though not immediately – to view *The Ambassadors* in the light of *The Sacred Fount*. One observer to notice a change of direction was Percy Lubbock, who in 1921 – while editing Macmillan’s 35-volume *Novels and Stories of Henry James* – singled out *The Ambassadors* as ‘a living demonstration of all that autobiography cannot achieve’.¹⁸⁷ *The Ambassadors* appeared as vols. 32 and 33 in the Macmillan edition, but the immediately preceding instance of ‘autobiography’ in James’s work was *The Sacred Fount*, republished for the first time as vol. 29 of that edition.

James’s criticisms of *The Sacred Fount* seem to have related mainly to the content of the novel. In a letter to Howells on 11 December 1902, the novelist referred to the ‘tenuity’ of his ‘idea’ and did not mention matters of style or form (*HJL* 4:251). Some years later, James made no reference to *The Sacred Fount* in his Preface to *The Ambassadors*. Yet there may be some significance in the fact that James’s Preface set out his reasons for writing *The Ambassadors* in the third person at considerable length. This was, after all, his customary narrative method as a novelist, and the use of the third-person form had not called for comment in, for example, the Prefaces to *Roderick Hudson* or *The Portrait of a Lady*. In a much-discussed passage, James commented that he had not endowed Lambert Strether with ‘the romantic privilege of the “first person”’ because ‘in the long piece’ this was ‘a form foredoomed to looseness’.¹⁸⁸ Yet the notebook entry on *The Ambassadors* (31 October 1895) and the ‘Project of Novel [*The Ambassadors*]’ (1 September 1900) bear out the point made by Claire J. Raeth in 1949: that James did

¹⁸⁷ Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1921), p. 145.

¹⁸⁸ *LC2* 1315.

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not at any point consider presenting this novel in the first person.¹⁸⁹ The prefatory remarks about the ‘foredoomed [...] looseness’ of the first-person form in the Preface to *The Ambassadors* might therefore have involved an uneasy memory of James’s struggles some years earlier with *The Sacred Fount* – the most obvious and extreme example of the first-person form being used in a ‘long piece’.¹⁹⁰ This argument gains additional weight in the light of a notebook entry made on 9 August 1900 – just two weeks after James despatched the typescript of *The Sacred Fount* to his agent and on the very day he reported arrangements for the US publication of this novel to William Dean Howells. Having completed the Preface for a reissued edition of *A Little Tour in France*, James had at this point returned to *The Sense of the Past* – the project which had ‘broken down’ in January 1900 (LL 334).¹⁹¹ James confided to his notebook the hope that ‘SIMPLIFICATION’ would enable him to retain the first person in this work (CN 191). But simplification did not, as Raeth observes, prove possible: James abandoned work on *The Sense of the Past* for a second time, and when he returned to the novel in 1914 adopted the third-person form, having perhaps learned the lesson recorded some years previously in the Preface to *The Ambassadors*.¹⁹²

The relationship between *The Sacred Fount* and *The Ambassadors* has been the subject of extensive debate. Blackmur saw the novel as the ‘final preparation’ for the novelist’s ‘great later work’.¹⁹³ In its ‘seriousness of thought’ and ‘sharp social criticism’, *The Sacred Fount* was for Finkelstein a ‘prelude’ to the “major phase”.¹⁹⁴ More recently, Barbara Hardy has described the novel as ‘a predecessor to the three novels which follow’.¹⁹⁵ As several critics

¹⁸⁹ Raeth notes that *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl* were conceived of as third-person novels from the outset; *The Sacred Fount* showed the ‘development of a short-story subject by a short-story device into the form of a novel’ (‘Henry James’s Rejection of *The Sacred Fount*’, *ELH* 16.4 (December 1949), 308–24; 317–19).

¹⁹⁰ On the idea that the Preface to *The Ambassadors* indirectly refers to *The Sacred Fount*, see Isle, *Experiments in Form*, 210–11; Alan W. Bellringer, ‘*The Sacred Fount*: The Scientific Method’, *Essays in Criticism* 22.3 (1972), 244–64; 245–7.

¹⁹¹ On the recurrence of a phrase used in *A Little Tour in France* in the text of *The Sacred Fount*, see note 56 (p. 194).

¹⁹² See Raeth, ‘Henry James’s Rejection of *The Sacred Fount*’, 323.

¹⁹³ Blackmur, ‘*The Sacred Fount*’, 343.

¹⁹⁴ Finkelstein, ‘The “Mystery” of Henry James’s *The Sacred Fount*’, 753.

¹⁹⁵ Barbara Hardy, *Henry James: The Later Writing* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1996), p. 25.

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have observed, *The Ambassadors* seems at points to echo *The Sacred Fount*. Leon Edel argued in 1953 that Madame de Vionnet recalls May Server: it is at her 'sacred fount' that Chad Newsome has acquired 'a measure of polish' and she who is 'left depleted at the end'.¹⁹⁶ Chad's new-found refinement reminds one of Gilbert Long, but he also resembles Guy Brissenden, having aged as well as become more sophisticated: Strether notes 'the marked streaks of grey' in the young man's hair (Ch. 7).

As well as arousing more hostility (and bemusement) than any other work by James, *The Sacred Fount* enjoys a more specific distinction in that it inaugurated the professional relationship between the novelist and the American publishing firm of Scribner's. Ironically, however, this novel was excluded from that firm's most ambitious Jamesian publication: the *New York Edition* (1907–9). Pinker had discussed the possibility of a collected James at a meeting in New York with Edward L. Burlingame in April 1900, when his client was in the early stages of writing *The Sacred Fount*.¹⁹⁷ Scribner's decision to publish this novel was a further step on a journey which ultimately proved so gruelling that James made use of terms seemingly derived from *The Sacred Fount*, telling Witter Bynner on 20 September 1908 that his work on the *New York Edition* had 'made me ten years older' and his books 'twenty or thirty years younger'.¹⁹⁸ Some years before this, when discussions over a collected edition were still at an early stage, the novelist had warmly praised Scribner's work: 'I feel that I have never been so well presented, materially, & that my prose itself very essentially gains thereby [...]. As I compare the London edition dejectedly with yours, I feel yours to be, beyond comparison, the book.'¹⁹⁹ 'The' book referred to in this letter of 12 September 1902 was the two-volume US edition of *The Wings of the Dove*. Yet James had first wit-

¹⁹⁶ Edel, 'An Introductory Essay', xxx. On connections between *The Sacred Fount* and *The Ambassadors*, see also Cargill, *The Novels of Henry James*, 295; Julian B. Kaye, 'The Awkward Age, *The Sacred Fount*, and *The Ambassadors*: Another Figure in the Carpet', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 17.4 (March 1963), 339–51; 339; Philip M. Weinstein, *Henry James and the Requirements of the Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 121–5; Bernard Richards, 'The Ambassadors and *The Sacred Fount*', in *The Air of Reality: New Essays on Henry James*, ed. John Goode (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1972), 219–43; 230.

¹⁹⁷ Pinker to Charles Scribner's Sons, 27 July 1900 (C0101 (Box 104, Folder 2), Princeton).

¹⁹⁸ Quoted by Anesko in 'Collected Editions', 196.

¹⁹⁹ John Delaney (ed.), *The House of Scribner, 1846–1904: An Illustrated Chronicle*, Dictionary of Literary Biography, Documentary Series 13 (Detroit, MI: Gale Research, 1995), p. 315.

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nessed the book-making skills of Charles Scribner's Sons in this company's edition of *The Sacred Fount*, published as a single volume, but in a format almost identical to that of *The Wings of the Dove*.

Most critics of *The Sacred Fount* have argued that James left the novel out of the *New York Edition* on grounds of quality, and there is little reason to doubt this conclusion. For Beach, the reason for the exclusion was that the novel was only 'a technical exercise'; for Edgar, 'vicious over-treatment' ruled it out; Follett claimed that *The Sacred Fount* did not meet James's 'idea of a novel'.²⁰⁰ Listing the seven full-length fictions which did not appear in the *New York Edition* – *Watch and Ward* (1871), *The Europeans* (1878), *Confidence* (1879), *Washington Square* (1880), *The Bostonians* (1886), *The Other House* (1896) and, of course, *The Sacred Fount* – Edel argued in 1951 that James excluded works set wholly or partly in the United States.²⁰¹ If this was a criterion, the novelist made an exception in the case of *Confidence*, *The Other House* and *The Sacred Fount*. Yet this latter novel was not unique among works written around the turn of the century: a number of tales written shortly before *The Sacred Fount* and one later story were not included in the *New York Edition*.²⁰² Still, the blow that fell on *The Sacred Fount* was an unusual and heavy one. According to Martha Banta, *Watch and Ward* was 'decisively off James's list from the start'; *The Europeans*, *Confidence* and *Washington Square* were left out because the novelist felt that the 'demands of rewriting' these works would be too great.²⁰³ James told William Dean Howells on 17 August 1908 that he did not regret excluding works 'from deep-seated preference and design, but I do a little those that are crowded out by want of space'. Among the works 'crowded out' was *The Bostonians*, which the novelist described in the same letter as 'tolerably full and good'

²⁰⁰ Beach, *The Method of Henry James*, 250; Edgar, *Henry James: Man and Author*, 144; Follett, 'Henry James's Portrait of Henry James', 12.

²⁰¹ See Leon Edel, 'The Architecture of Henry James's "New York Edition"', *New England Quarterly* 24.2 (June 1951), 169–78.

²⁰² James did not include 'John Delavoy' (1898), 'Covering End' (1898), 'The Given Case' (1898), 'The Great Condition' (1899) or 'The Third Person' (1900) in the *New York Edition*. The only story published after *The Sacred Fount* to have been excluded was 'The Papers' (1904).

²⁰³ Martha Banta, 'The Excluded Seven: Practice of Omission, Aesthetics of Refusal', in *Henry James's New York Edition: The Construction of Authorship*, ed. David McWhirter (Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 240–66; 240.

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(*LHJ* 2:103). The *New York Edition* was a monument to a lifetime's work but also – as James observed to Pinker on 6 June 1905 – an opportunity to 'quietly disown a few things' (*LL* 412). This seems to have been the fate of *The Other House*, a pot-boiler written for the *Illustrated London News*. The absence of *The Sacred Fount* from the *New York Edition* is evidence enough of its author's intention: only a few years after writing the novel, he wanted to 'disown' it – in all probability because, as Raeth argues, the novel did not 'transcend those elements of the short story in which it was conceived'.²⁰⁴

The Sacred Fount was one of James's least popular novels. It cemented the novelist's connection with Scribner's but was excluded from their collected edition. Among the novels not included in that edition, *The Sacred Fount* was the last to be published – a work of James's maturity almost immediately eclipsed by the novel he would regard as 'quite the best, "all round," of all my productions': *The Ambassadors* (*LC2* 1306). One might enumerate further instances of the ways in which *The Sacred Fount* might be seen as a special case. It was the first novel by James to be published by Methuen and Company in Britain (and also, as previously mentioned, by Scribner's in the US). It was James's first novel of the twentieth century; the only work – to mention a significant personal circumstance – which he started with a full beard and completed clean-shaven. Edmund Gosse later recollected that this alteration brought out 'something sacerdotal' in the novelist's appearance.²⁰⁵ It was in 1900, then – while writing *The Sacred Fount* in Rye – that James assumed the visage of 'the Master'. In professional terms, too, the novel appeared at a moment of great significance. Anesko sees the period around the turn of the century as one of 'diversification' for James, who was responding to 'a fundamental change [...] in the nature of the literary marketplace'.²⁰⁶ One of the clearest signs of this transformation was the rise of the literary agent. *The Sacred Fount* was the first of James's novels to be handled by James Brand Pinker – a good match because, as Mary Ann Gillies points out, this literary agent 'mined the transatlantic trade' with considerable skill.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Raeth, 'Henry James's Rejection of *The Sacred Fount*', 313.

²⁰⁵ Edmund Gosse, *Aspects and Impressions* (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1922), p. 41.

²⁰⁶ Anesko, 'Friction with the Market', 142.

²⁰⁷ Mary Ann Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880–1920* (University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 88.

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The Sacred Fount may or may not have been ‘the first authentic masterpiece of the “modern movement”’, as Edel claimed in 1972 (Edel 5:97). But it was without doubt a work written and published using the techniques, practices and machinery of a rapidly modernizing industry: the typewriter, the postal service, the telegraph system, the professional literary agent, synchronized transatlantic publication, coordinated advertising campaigns, bound-in catalogues, organized discounting by booksellers and an apparatus of published response which depended on paid reviewing by staff and freelance writers. The novel was ‘modern’ in a number of ways, then, yet it is possible that *The Sacred Fount* will in future be received less as a classic case of ambiguity or a parable of the artistic life than as a document of social and cultural history. The novel belongs, as Lyon observes, to ‘a long tradition in English literature’ in which the country house represents ‘larger social worlds and realities’ (Lyon xv). As has been observed, such houses had appeared in numerous previous works by James. By the time of *The Sacred Fount*, as Tintner argues, a setting which was merely a backdrop in ‘The Siege of London’ (1883) and ‘The Lesson of the Master’ (1888) now ‘takes over the whole story’.²⁰⁸ There is good reason for country house settings to take centre stage at this point in time. As David Cannadine observes, the British landed class seemed ‘secure, serene and unchallenged’ at the start of the 1870s; however, the century that followed saw a ‘territorial transfer’ paralleled only by the Norman Conquest and the Dissolution of the Monasteries.²⁰⁹ *The Sacred Fount* was written during a period of steep decline for the landed class and can be seen as an early contribution to a debate which, as Peter Mandler points out, resurfaced in such works as George Bernard Shaw’s *Major Barbara* (1905), John Galsworthy’s *The Man of Property* (1906) and H. G. Wells’s *Tono-Bungay* (1909).²¹⁰ *The Sacred Fount* was James’s most sustained contribution to country house literature. It was also one of the first country house novels of the twentieth century, and its successors would include such works as

²⁰⁸ Adeline R. Tintner, *The Museum World of Henry James* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1986), p. 206.

²⁰⁹ David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 15, 89.

²¹⁰ See Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

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E. M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910), Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* (1915), Aldous Huxley's *Crome Yellow* (1921), Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* (1934), Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938), Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* (1941), Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) and L. P. Hartley's *The Go-Between* (1953), as well as more recent novels such as Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989), W. G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn* (1995), Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001) and Alan Hollinghurst's *The Stranger's Child* (2011).

If cultural history is in question, there is little doubt that *The Sacred Fount* can be seen as an acute and mischievously oblique study of the *fin de siècle*. The novel displays the qualities which in 1893 Arthur Symons associated with decadence: 'an intense self-consciousness, a restless curiosity in research, an over-subtilizing refinement upon refinement'.²¹¹ *The Sacred Fount* also sheds light on turn-of-the-century conceptions of sexuality. In 1995, Tintner was the first critic to propose that, given a 'knowledge of the period and of the circles in which James moved', *The Sacred Fount* might be read as 'a text of homosexual love'.²¹² Some years later, Lloyd Davis argued that *The Sacred Fount* responded to increased homophobia after Oscar Wilde's conviction for gross indecency in May 1895, suggesting on these grounds that James's narrator is compelled 'to evade detection by displacing the social gaze from himself and his sexuality onto others'.²¹³ Margolis agrees that the novel treats homosexuality with a degree of anxiety. For her, the intimacy between Obert and the narrator is 'all but explicitly sexual': their conversation presents 'a familiar turn-of-the-century scene of homoerotic desire that is indistinguishable [...] from a full-fledged homosexual panic'.²¹⁴ Hugh Stevens would challenge this reading: for him,

²¹¹ Arthur Symons, 'The Decadent Movement in Literature', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 87 (1893), 858–67; 858–9.

²¹² Adeline R. Tintner, 'A Gay *Sacred Fount*: The Reader as Detective', *Twentieth-Century Literature* 41.2 (1995), 224–46; 228, 224. On Victorian homosexuality and *The Sacred Fount*, see also Richard Dellamora, *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Leland S. Person, Jr., 'James's Homo-Aesthetics: Deploying Desire in the Tales of Writers and Artists', *Henry James Review* 14.2 (1993), 188–203.

²¹³ Lloyd Davis, 'Sexual Secrets and Social Knowledge: Henry James's *The Sacred Fount*', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 26.2 (1998), 321–35; 331.

²¹⁴ Margolis, 'Homo-Formalism', 401. Margolis makes use of ideas first introduced in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's 'The Beast in the Closet: Henry James and the Writing of Homosexual Panic', in

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James's work at this period should be seen as a deliberate and affirmative response to the emergence of 'homosexuality' as a 'sexual identity'.²¹⁵ In a recent study, however, Daniel Hannah questions the notion of a unified sexual identity by returning to a setpiece of New Critical analysis: the scene in which the narrator, May Server, Ford Obert and Gilbert Long ponder the significance of a painting of a man with a mask. For Hannah, this scene and *The Sacred Fount* as a whole address the ways in which 'the discursive tropes of unveiling, revealing, and knowing that structure sexological and punitive approaches to marginal sexual identities in the public sphere emerge from the same structures of desire that these systems seek to demystify and contain'. In Hannah's view, James is advancing an 'aesthetics of desire' which 'seeks to refuse [...] and paradoxically mimic a culture seemingly consumed with exposing dissonant sexuality'.²¹⁶

The range of potential responses to *The Sacred Fount* is significant in its own right: a novel which for many is detached, difficult and other-worldly in the extreme is for others deeply engaged with society. Roslyn Jolly sees *The Sacred Fount* as 'an important document in the history of the problematic relations between authors and readers in late nineteenth-century England'.²¹⁷ As a turn of the century 'document', the novel illuminates some familiar antinomies: realism and modernism, populism and elitism, traditionalism and avant-gardism. The reception of the novel by American reviewers sheds light on the ways in which disagreements over questions of literary genre and literary value were imbricated with conceptions of democracy and nationalism. It is, as Andreas Huyssen has warned, easy to overstate the idea of a 'great divide' between modernism and mass culture. *The Sacred Fount* has often been taken as an early instance of a modernist aesthetic which, in Huyssen's words, is 'self-referential, self-conscious, frequently ironic, ambiguous, and rigorously experimental' – yet the novel might also be seen as socially referential and outwardly directed in the

Sex, Politics, and Science in the Nineteenth-Century Novel, ed. Ruth Bernard Yeazell (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 148–86.

²¹⁵ Hugh Stevens, *Henry James and Sexuality* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 117.

²¹⁶ Daniel Hannah, *Henry James, Impressionism, and the Public* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 77–8, 80.

²¹⁷ Roslyn Jolly, *Henry James: History, Narrative, Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 122.

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most expansive way.²¹⁸ David Seed argued some years ago that the principal theme of *The Sacred Fount* – ‘vampirism’ – is an ‘extreme form’ of what is ‘going on behind the social surface’, and the idea that the novel is a social allegory is as plausible as it is in other fantastical fictions of this period: Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897).²¹⁹

If *The Sacred Fount* does indeed stand astride Huyssen’s divide, it would for this reason alone become a key text for historicist studies of ‘modernity’ (as opposed to a specifically literary or cultural ‘modernism’). Carolyn Porter’s 1981 reading of the novel as a critique of ‘a reified social world’ has more recently been developed by Paul Giles, who resists Tintner’s ‘gay’ reading and instead proposes that *The Sacred Fount* charts the historical transposition ‘of social beings into financial and psycho-sexual commodities’.²²⁰ The displacements of modernity are often said to have a dualistic or dialectical character, and for John Lyon the novel offers a ‘recognizable and persuasive representation’ of the ‘modern’ because Newmarch is both ‘a dream world’ and ‘a nightmare world’ (Lyon xviii). In *The Sacred Fount*, the ‘dream’ and the ‘nightmare’ are most evident in the narrator’s much-quoted description of Newmarch as a ‘crystal cage’ and the suggestion that his fellow guests – his fellow humans, perhaps – are ‘dashing in a locked railway-train across a lovely land’ (p. 114). Julian Cowley vividly conveys James’s ability to summon a world of historical significance in a single, seemingly solipsistic moment by quoting Michel de Certeau’s description of the railway carriage as ‘a bubble of panoptic and classifying power, a module of imprisonment that makes possible the production of an order, a closed and autonomous insularity’.²²¹

²¹⁸ Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 53.

²¹⁹ David Seed, ‘Completing the Picture: Deduction and Creation in Henry James’s *The Sacred Fount*’, *Études Anglaises* 39.3 (1986), 268–80; 278.

²²⁰ Carolyn Porter, *Seeing and Being: The Plight of the Participant Observer in Emerson, James, Adams, and Faulkner* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), p. 35; Giles, ‘Deterritorialization in *The Sacred Fount*’, 228.

²²¹ Julian Cowley, ‘*The Sacred Fount* and Modernist Baroque’, *Henry James Review* 18.3 (1997), 273–9; 276; Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Randall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), p. 111.

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Discussing the same image of the railway train in 1962, Sidney Finkelstein suggested that the subject of the novel is nothing less than the benefits and costs of “civilized life” itself.²²² His comment reminds one that James listed the English country house as one of the items of ‘high civilization’ in *Hawthorne* (1879) (LC1 351). In years to come, *The Sacred Fount* – strange, infuriating and fascinating novel that it is – might well be remembered as one of James’s most profound studies of civilization conceived of as, in Raymond Williams’s words, ‘a whole modern social process’ with both ‘positive and negative effects.’²²³

²²² Finkelstein, ‘The “Mystery” of Henry James’s *The Sacred Fount*’, 762.

²²³ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, rev. edn (London: Fontana Press, 1983).

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This is a chronologically arranged selection of reviews and other material relating to *The Sacred Fount* from 1900 to James's death in 1916. All items listed are unsigned unless otherwise noted. Many reviews are reprinted, as noted, in Roger Gard (ed.), *Henry James: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968); in James W. Gargano (ed.), *Critical Essays on Henry James: The Late Novels* (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall and Co., 1987); and in Kevin J. Hayes (ed.) *Henry James: The Contemporary Reviews*, American Critical Archives (Cambridge University Press, 1996); hereafter Gard, Gargano and Hayes respectively. Selections from a number of previously unreprinted pieces can be found in T. J. Lustig, 'Mocking the Master: Early Responses to *The Sacred Fount*', *Henry James Review*, 38.1 (2017), 22–36; hereafter Lustig. Also valuable are: Richard Nicholas Foley, *Criticism in American Periodicals of the Works of Henry James from 1866 to 1916*, PhD dissertation (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1944); Beatrice Ricks, *Henry James: A Bibliography of Secondary Works*, Scarecrow Author Bibliographies 24 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1975); Linda J. Taylor, *Henry James, 1866–1916: A Reference Guide* (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall and Co., 1982); and Robin Hoople, *In Darkest James: Reviewing Impressionism, 1900–1905* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2000).

[Cortissoz, Royal], 'Vampires: A Story about Them by Henry James', *New-York Daily Tribune* (9 February 1901), 8; in Hayes 337–9.

Crawford, F. Marion, 'The Sacred Fount, a New Novel by Henry James: An Intellectual Problem without a Solution—From an Advance Copy', *Journal and Advertiser* [New York] (9 February 1901), 8; in Lustig 26.

'Henry James in a Fresh Analysis of "Polite" Society', *World* [New York] (9 February 1901), 8.

'Mr. James's Unrevealed Secret', *Evening Post* [Chicago] (9 February 1901), 5.

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Chamberlin, Joseph Edgar, 'Henry James's New Novel', *Evening Transcript* [Boston, MA] (13 February 1901), 12; in Hayes 339–41.

'Henry James. His New Work, "The Sacred Fount"', *New York Times* (16 February 1901), 112.

'Henry James's New Novel', *Daily Eagle* [Brooklyn, NY] (16 February 1901), 7.

'Paragraphs about Books and Literary Folks', *Republic* [St Louis, MO] (16 February 1901), 9.

'Mr. Henry James', *Daily News* [London] (19 February 1901), 6; in Hayes 341–2.

Clapp, Henry Austin, [untitled review], *Daily Advertiser* [Boston, MA] (23 February 1901), 8; in Lustig 26–8.

'L. R. F. O.', [untitled review], *Speaker* [London] 3 (23 February 1901), 580–1; in Hayes 343–5.

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'The Perversity of Mr. Henry James', *Outlook* [UK] 7 (23 February 1901), 120–1.

Academy [London] 1503 (23 February 1901), 165–6; in Hayes 342–3.

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'Mr James's "The Sacred Fount"', *Daily Republican* [Springfield, MA] (24 February 1901), 15. The author of this review is identified as Charles Goodrich Whiting by Robin Hoople, *In Darkest James: Reviewing Impressionism*, 279.

'Notices of New Books', *Richmond Dispatch* (24 February 1901), 8.

'The Latest from Mr. James', *Providence Journal* (24 February 1901), 15.

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Shipman, Carolyn, ‘Light Reading’, *Book Buyer: A Review and Record of Current Literature* [New York] 22 (March 1901), 146–8.

‘The Literature of the Day’, *Congregationalist* [Boston, MA] (2 March 1901), 353.

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‘A Puzzle’, *Tribune* [Chicago, IL] (5 March 1901), 13; in Hayes 346–7.

Guardian [Manchester] (6 March 1901), 3; in Hayes 347.

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‘Henry James at His Vaguest: *The Sacred Fount*, His Latest Work, Is Also His Most Characteristic’, *Courier-Journal* [Louisville, KY] (9 March 1901), 5; in Hayes 347–9.

‘Manner’, *Daily Chronicle* [London] (11 March 1901), 3; in Hayes 349–50.

‘A Mysterious Novel’, *Independent* [New York] 53 (14 March 1901), 619–20; in Hayes 350–2.

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Wells, Carolyn, ‘Verbarium Tremens’, *Critic* [New York] 38 (May 1901), 404; in Lustig 29.

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‘New Novels’, *Churchman* [New York] 83 (4 May 1901), 552.

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The Times (4 May 1901), 5; in Hayes 356.

‘Penelope’, ‘Omaha Letter’, *Courier* [Lincoln, NB] (22 June 1901), 9–10; in Lustig 29–31.

Peck, Harry T., [untitled review], *Bookman* [New York] 13 (July 1901), 442; in Gard 308; in Gargano 42–4.

‘The James Method’, *Courier* [Lincoln, NB] (31 August 1901), 2–3.

‘Literature in 1901: Some Memories and Impressions’, *Academy* [London] 1544 (7 December 1901), 561.

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TEXTUAL INTRODUCTION

James's preliminary ideas for *The Sacred Fount* were recorded in the third volume of his notebooks on 17/18 February 1894, and in the sixth volume of his notebooks on 15 February 1899 and 16 May 1899 (see CN 88, 176, 184). The three typescript copies of *The Sacred Fount*, two of which were sent by James to Pinker on 25 and 26 July 1901, do not seem to have been preserved. There was no periodical version of the novel. The first UK edition of *The Sacred Fount* (here *SFM*) was published by Methuen and Company on or about 15 February 1901. James chose not to republish *The Sacred Fount* in *The Novels and Tales of Henry James* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907–9) and did not directly discuss the novel in his Prefaces to that edition. The only other edition of the novel to be issued during James's lifetime was the first US edition (here *SFS*) published by Charles Scribner's Sons on or about 8 February 1901.

Compared to novels such as *The Portrait of a Lady* or *The Ambassadors*, where a first periodical version as well as a New York Edition text exists, the situation in the case of *The Sacred Fount* is straightforward. The copy text adopted in this edition is *SFM* rather than *SFS*. It is true that *SFS* was published a few days before *SFM* but this does not accord it priority in any meaningful sense: *SFM* is not a 'descendant' of *SFS*. On 15 October 1900, James Brand Pinker did suggest to Scribner's that Methuen 'may like to take plates of your edition'.¹ Yet this did not happen: the Methuen text consisted of 316 pages and the Scribner text of 319 pages. In this as in other cases, therefore, *CFHJ* policy is to adopt the first British edition as the copy text. Moreover, a comparison of *SFM* and *SFS* reveals that the former text is in general more reliable than the latter (see the Textual Variants).

In at least one case, an unusual binding error was made during the production of *SFM*. The present editor possesses a copy (once the property of Mudie's Select Library and Benn's Circulating Library) in which pages

¹ Co101, Archives of Charles Scribner's Sons, 1786–2003, Box 104, Folder 2, Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

TEXTUAL INTRODUCTION

257–72 are missing, having been replaced with a duplicate of pages 65–80. David J. Supino advises that ‘the binder wrongly inserted a second copy of signature D (pp. 65–80) between signature I which ends on page 256 and signature K (the next signature after I, as the printer did not use the signature mark J) which starts on page 273’ (email to editor, 5 October 2014).

For a statement of editorial principle and policy, see the General Editors’ Preface. In the present edition, dashes in the text of *The Sacred Fount* appear as unspaced ‘em-rules’ (—) or double-em rules (— —). *SFM* consistently uses hyphens for ‘to-day’ and ‘to-morrow’; this practice is maintained in the present edition. Double speech marks in the text have been retained, though the placement of punctuation has been regularized. ‘Mr.’ ‘Mrs.’ and ‘Mme.’ are given with stops, as in *SFM*. In cases where the concluding word of a sentence is italicized and followed by an italicized punctuation mark (!, ? or ;), italics have been retained.

CHRONOLOGY OF COMPOSITION AND PRODUCTION

1894

17/18 February: After returning to 34 De Vere Gardens from a dinner party at the home of Blanche and Montague Crackanthorpe, James records his first notebook entry on *The Sacred Fount*.

1899

15 February: Writing at Lamb House, Rye, James sets down his second notebook entry on *The Sacred Fount*.

March–June: James visits France and Italy. On 16 May, James makes his third and final notebook entry on *The Sacred Fount*. Late May: James stays with Mary Augusta ('Mrs Humphry') Ward at Castel Gandolfo and visits Lake Nemi (see Introduction, pp. xlv–xlvii).

1900

17 January: James tells his agent James Brand Pinker that he is finding *The Sense of the Past* 'diabolically, tormentingly, difficult' and will instead write 'some more short tales' (LL 334).

22 February: James informs Pinker that four stories ('The Tone of Time', 'The Story in It', 'Flickerbridge' and 'The Sacred Fount') are 'practically ready to send to you' (LL 336).

2 March: James tells Pinker that he is 'keeping back' *The Sacred Fount* because 'I am not yet satisfied with it' (LL 336).

15 April: James reaches the age of fifty-seven.

12 May: James informs his brother William that he has shaved off his beard (see Introduction, p. xlviii).

12 June: James tells Pinker that he is 'intensely finishing' the last sixth of *The Sacred Fount* (LL 338).

27 June: James tells Pinker that *The Sacred Fount* 'shall be soon in your hands' (MSS 830 (Box 2), Yale).

8 July: James informs Pinker that all 'delays and delusions' are behind him: *The Sacred Fount* will be completed by 16 or 17 July (MSS 830 (Box 2), Yale).

CHRONOLOGY OF COMPOSITION AND PRODUCTION

- 10 July:** James writes to Jonathan Sturges: he has ‘just finished’ *The Sacred Fount* after writing ‘70,000 words’ (HJL 4:153).
- 25 July:** James sends Pinker one of two 327-page carbon duplicates of *The Sacred Fount* (the original typescript is dispatched on 26 July; James retains the second duplicate at Lamb House).
- 27 July:** Pinker sends one copy of *The Sacred Fount* to Charles Scribner’s Sons.
- 30 July:** Methuen issues a contract for *The Sacred Fount*.
- 1 August:** James returns the signed contract with Methuen to Pinker.
- 7 August:** William Brownell, a reader for Scribner’s, experiences the ‘greatest difficulty’ in reading *The Sacred Fount* (Roger Burlingame, *Of Making Many Books*, p. 37).
- 16 August:** James receives from Pinker ‘£225, representing the amount received from Methuen and Co. on the agreement for *The Sacred Fount*, less your commission’ (HJL 4:162).
- 24 August:** James agrees to the terms proposed by Scribner’s for publication of *The Sacred Fount* in the US.
- 1 October:** James buys Lamb House. Scribner’s issues a contract for *The Sacred Fount*.
- 7 October:** James receives payment of £360 for *The Sacred Fount* from Scribner’s, telling Pinker that it is ‘very convenient to me to receive the money’ (MSS 830 (Box 3), Yale).
- 5 November:** James begins work on ‘a big bundle of proofs’ of *The Sacred Fount* (MSS 830 (Box 3), Yale).
- 22 November:** James returns proofs to Pinker.

1901

- 11 January:** Pinker returns the signed contract for *The Sacred Fount* to Scribner’s.
- 6 February:** Scribner’s claim copyright by depositing a copy of *The Sacred Fount* in the Library of Congress.
- 8 February:** Usual date given for publication of *The Sacred Fount* in the US.
- 15 February:** *The Sacred Fount* is published in London by Methuen and Company.
- 20 February:** Bliss Perry declines Charles Scribner’s invitation to review *The Sacred Fount*.

CHRONOLOGY OF COMPOSITION AND PRODUCTION

- 21 February:** James sends a copy of *The Sacred Fount* to Ariana ('Mrs Daniel') Curtis, referring to it as a 'pale fantasticality' (Tintner-Janowitz Collection (Box 174, Folder 10), Berg Collection).
- 27 February:** James writes to Henrietta Reubell: his new novel is 'a mere fantasticality' (bMS Am 1094 (1143), Harvard).
- 12 March:** James tells William Morton Fullerton to read *The Ambassadors* instead of 'the vapid little *Sacred Fount*' (bMS Am 1094.1 (84), Harvard).
- 15 March:** James writes to Mrs Humphry Ward: *The Sacred Fount* is 'the merest of *jeux d'esprit*', a 'small fantasticality'. The letter contains a detailed account of James's intentions in the final chapters of the novel (HJL 4:185–86).
- 11 June:** James writes to the Duchess of Sutherland: *The Sacred Fount* is 'a profitless labyrinth'; in future he will serve 'nothing but boiled mutton and potatoes' (Leon Edel Papers, Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University and Archives).
- 9 August:** James describes *The Sacred Fount* as a '*jeu d'esprit*' in a second letter to William Morton Fullerton (HJL 4:198).

1902

- 11 December:** In a letter to William Dean Howells, James gives his fullest account of how *The Sacred Fount* 'grew by a rank force of its own' (HJL 4:251).

1912

- 27 September:** James makes his last known reference to *The Sacred Fount* in a letter to Hugh Walpole: 'Poor dear old Walt [Whitman?!]—what would *he* make of *The Sacred Fount*!' (*Dearly Beloved Friends: Henry James's Letters to Younger Men*, eds. Susan E. Gunter and Steven H. Jobe, p. 211).

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The Bibliography serves the editorial materials in the volume as a whole. It does not aim for comprehensive coverage of everything that has been written about *The Sacred Fount*, but is limited to works that are explicitly cited in the editorial matter or, if not cited, works that contribute information and evidence directly relevant to the history of the text's genesis, composition and critical afterlife. For bibliographical information on reviews and other material relating to the novel from 1900 to the death of James in 1916, see the Contemporary Reception of *The Sacred Fount*, pp. lxxxix–xciii.

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