

Cambridge University Press

0521345332 - A Coherent Splendor: The American Poetic Renaissance, 1910-1950

Albert Gelpi

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*A Coherent Splendor*

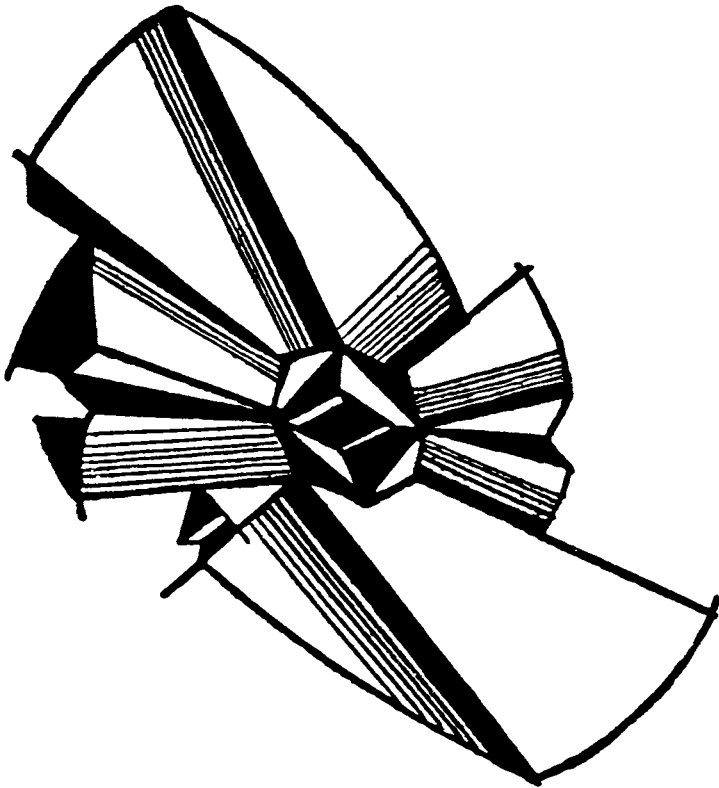
Cambridge University Press

0521345332 - A Coherent Splendor: The American Poetic Renaissance, 1910-1950

Albert Gelpi

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



Cambridge University Press

0521345332 - A Coherent Splendor: The American Poetic Renaissance, 1910-1950

Albert Gelpi

Frontmatter

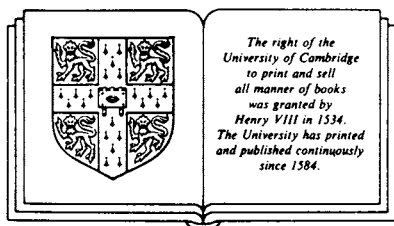
[More information](#)

# *A Coherent Splendor*

*The American Poetic Renaissance, 1910–1950*

*ALBERT GELPI*

*Stanford University*



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE

NEW YORK PORT CHESTER MELBOURNE SYDNEY

Cambridge University Press

0521345332 - A Coherent Splendor: The American Poetic Renaissance, 1910-1950

Albert Gelpi

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, CB2 1RP  
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011, USA  
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1987

First published 1987

First paperback edition 1990

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Gelpi, Albert.

A coherent splendor.

1. American poetry – 20th century – History and criticism.
2. Modernism (Literature) – United States.
3. Romanticism – United States.

1. Title.  
PS324.G45 1987 811'.52'091 87-10876

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

Gelpi, Albert

A coherent splendor: the American poetic renaissance, 1910-1950.

1. American poetry – 20th century – History and criticism

1. Title  
811'.52'09 PS323.5

ISBN 0-521-34533-2 hardback

ISBN 0-521-38687-x paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2003

Frontispiece: *Radiation* by Edward Bomberg

Cambridge University Press

0521345332 - A Coherent Splendor: The American Poetic Renaissance, 1910-1950

Albert Gelpi

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*This book is for Barbara  
and for Christopher and Adrienne  
with much love*

# Contents

Acknowledgments	page ix
Introduction. The Janus-Face of Romanticism and Modernism	1
1. Robert Frost and John Crowe Ransom: Diptych of Ironists, the Woodsman and the Chevalier	8
2. Wallace Stevens: World as <i>Mundo</i> , <i>Mundo</i> as World	49
3. T. S. Eliot: The Lady Between the Yew Trees	91
4. Ezra Pound: Between Kung and Eleusis	169
5. H. D.: Helen in Bethlehem, Hilda in Egypt	253
6. William Carlos Williams: Mother-Son and Paterson	321
7. Allen Tate and Hart Cranc: Diptych with Angels and Demons	373
Coda. Yvor Winters and Robinson Jeffers: The Janus-Face of Anti-Modernism	423
Notes	447
Index	471

Cambridge University Press

0521345332 - A Coherent Splendor: The American Poetic Renaissance, 1910-1950

Albert Gelpi

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Acknowledgments*

I want to thank several libraries for their help: the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library for allowing me to consult the unpublished poems of T. S. Eliot; the Beinecke Library at Yale and the Houghton Library at Harvard for the use of some unpublished H. D. materials in their collections; the Cecil H. Green Library at Stanford, and especially William Allan, then curator of English and American literature, for many instances of assistance. I am also very grateful to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation for awarding me a fellowship which allowed me to draft three of the long central chapters of the book.

The scope of the undertaking has allowed me to acknowledge by name in the text and notes only those scholars and critics whose work my argument engaged explicitly, but I am acutely aware of, and grateful to, the many unnamed whose work has over the years helped to inform my understanding of the poets and the period. Many friends have generously given comments, encouragement, suggestions, and queries which have extended, challenged, clarified, and in all cases improved both the argument and the presentation. I have in mind and heart particularly (and alphabetically): George Dekker, William Everson, Susan Stanford Friedman, Robert Kiely, Denise Levertov, Herbert Lindenberger, Thomas Moser, Marjorie Perloff, Joel Porte, Adrienne Rich, Jonathan Veitch. Seth Magalaner served as keen-eyed research assistant at a crucial phase.

And of course the loving presence and active interest of my family I have relied upon throughout: my mother, who kept asking when I was going to finish the book, without once doubting that I would; my brother Don, an Americanist himself, always eager to hear me out on my poets both over the kitchen table and along the jogging trail; Barbara, ever my most enthusiastic and exacting critic, my companion in literary pursuits as in all other life commitments; and Christopher and Adrienne, who were fated to grow up with the book and came to view Papa's obsessions with H. D. and Pound and the others with a bracing blend of bemusement and curiosity.

ALBERT GELPI

June 4, 1987

ix

Cambridge University Press

0521345332 - A Coherent Splendor: The American Poetic Renaissance, 1910-1950

Albert Gelpi

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The greatest truth we could hope to discover, in whatever field we discovered it, is that man's truth is the final resolution of everything. Poets and painters alike today make that assumption and this is what gives them the validity and serious dignity that becomes them as among those that seek wisdom, seek understanding. I am elevating this a little, because I am trying to generalize and because it is incredible that one should speak of the aspirations of the last two or three generations without a degree of elevation.

WALLACE STEVENS

"The Relations Between Poetry and Painting"

i.e. it coheres all right

even if my notes do not cohere.

EZRA POUND

Canto 116

*Faas:* A poet like Antin traces post-Modernism to the *Cantos* and *The Waste Land*.

*Duncan:* Well, I'm not a Modernist. He can do that. I read Modernism as Romanticism; and I finally begin to feel myself pretty much a 19th century mind.

*Faas:* Really!

*Duncan:* I don't feel out of my century, I like this century immensely. But my ties to Pound, Stein, Surrealism and so forth all seem to me entirely consequent to their unbroken continuity from the Romantic period.

ROBERT DUNCAN

"Interview" in Ekbert Faas, *Toward a New American Poetics*