Inexplicable Voices:
Liminal Whiteness in Antebellum American Fiction

Hannah Lauren Murray, BA, MA

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

April 2017

Abstract

This thesis examines the repeated appearance of liminal white voices in antebellum American fiction. It identifies a number of white characters who inhabit the boundary between life and death and produce inexplicable voices: talking corpses, ghosts, ventriloquists, spiritualist mediums and non-human bodies. It argues that Charles Brockden Brown, Washington Irving, Robert Montgomery Bird, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville continually associate dead, dying and supernatural white figures with African Americans and Native Americans to amplify these white characters own marginal positions within their communities. While existing criticism classifies the non-white and female body as a site of otherness, this thesis identifies marginality within the white male citizen himself.

The six chapters examine how authors articulate liminal whiteness in different vocal contexts: ventriloquism in Brown, storytelling in Irving, blackface minstrelsy in Bird, medical discourse in Poe, enchanting speech in Hawthorne, and wordlessness in Melville. Across these texts, the liminal figure's voice disturbs essentialist racial ideologies and challenges prescriptions of citizenship in the antebellum period. Inexplicable voices act as powerful articulations of liminal whiteness that question, contest or negate antebellum ideals of the autonomous, rational, industrious, social and respectable white citizen. This thesis demonstrates that antebellum authors employ liminal white voices across the border of life and death to both explore and attempt to contain threats and anxieties of fragile or negated white citizenship. In doing so, this thesis contributes to a growing body of scholarship concerned with the cultural construction of whiteness and citizenship in the antebellum period.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors Matthew Pethers and Graham Thompson for all their support, from initial application to completion. Their encyclopaedic knowledge of antebellum literature and print culture, and incisive questions and comments, have pushed me to think of this project in ways I never initially conceived, while their lightning-quick email replies have kept me on track. I am also grateful to staff and postgraduate researchers in the Department of American and Canadian Studies for their feedback during work-in-progress sessions and annual reviews, as well as panel audiences at the British Association of American Studies (BAAS), Australian and New Zealand American Studies Association, and British Association of Nineteenth-Century Americanists conferences. Thanks also to my eagle-eyed proofreaders: Alex Bryne, Alice Lilly, Katie McGettigan, Benjamin Pickford, Matthew Salway, and Rachel Williams.

Doctoral studentship awards from the Midlands 3 Cities Arts and Humanities Research Council and the University of Nottingham School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies funded this research. A generous Fulbright American Studies Research Grant in 2015 supported my archival work on Robert Montgomery Bird at the Kislak Library, University of Pennsylvania. Thanks also to BAAS and *US Studies Online* for selecting and funding my keynote paper on Bird at the Postgraduate BAAS Conference, November 2016.

Outside of Nottingham I have received encouragement, advice and drinks from several colleagues within the nineteenth century research

community not mentioned above: Hester Blum, J. Michelle Coghlan, Michael Collins, Hilary Emmett, Ed Sugden, and Tom Wright. Beyond disciplinary and institutional borders, the PostgRAD Facebook group has given me a tremendous sense of postgraduate camaraderie.

My parents, Patricia and Philip, and my sister, Ella, have given me constant love and encouraged me in all my academic endeavours, even when it has not been clear exactly what an arts researcher does all day. Thanks to Chuck and Elizabeth Ziegler for the sunshine and boundless enthusiasm. Tim, your unwavering support and belief in my abilities—especially when my own faith faltered—has sustained me.

Table of Contents

Abstract 1

Acknowledgements 3

Table of Contents 5

Introduction. Inexplicable Voices: 7

Liminal Whiteness in Antebellum American Fiction .....

Chapter 1. “A shriek so terrible!”: 46

Sensational Ventriloquism in Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland* and “Somnambulism” .....

Chapter 2. “This is a story-telling age”: 91

Spectral Nostalgia in Washington Irving’s *Bracebridge Hall* .....

Chapter 3. “What had become of me?”: 134

Sheppard Lee’s Blackface Transformation .....

Chapter 4. “I say to you that I am dead!”: 168

Protesting Cadavers in Edgar Allan Poe’s “Loss of Breath” and “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar” .....

Chapter 5. “A respectable narrative”: 203

Enchanting Orality in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “Mr. Higginbotham’s Catastrophe” and “Feathertop” .....

Chapter 6. “How can I speak to thee?”: 241

The Muted and Wordless Voice in Herman Melville’s *Pierre* and “Bartleby the Scrivener” .....

Conclusion 282

Bibliography 293

Introduction

Inexplicable Voices: Liminal Whiteness in Antebellum American Fiction

In this thesis I examine a recurring motif in antebellum American fiction: white voices on the boundary between life and death. Voices from the dead, dying and supernatural pervaded antebellum American fiction. Readers repeatedly encountered speaking visions and ghosts, talking corpses, quasi-supernatural speakers such as ventriloquists and spiritualist mediums, talking objects, and spectral or dying figures. In this thesis I identify "liminal whiteness" in a number of characters in works from Charles Brockden Brown to Herman Melville, including: Frank Carwin in Brown's *Wieland* (1798), Antony Vander Heyden in Washington Irving's *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), Sheppard Lee in Robert Montgomery Bird's eponymous novel (1836), Ernest Valdemar in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845), the scarecrow in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Feathertop" (1852), and Bartleby in Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener" (1853). I argue that these characters, who exist on the threshold between the physical and spiritual worlds, become racially liminal. When they speak, authors associate these physically dead, dying and otherworldly white characters with "socially dead" groups in the antebellum period, in particular Native Americans and African Americans, in ways that amplify the white character's own marginal position within their community.[1] These voices, speaking when and where they should not, act as powerful articulations of liminal whiteness in nineteenth-century America.

---

[1] I take the idea of the "socially dead" from Orlando Patterson's landmark study *Slavery and Social Death,* which conceives enslavement as a state of living death. Slaves are not dead, but they are "natally alienated" and therefore cannot claim the rights of the living afforded to free men and women, in particular ties to family and

Critical work in the past two decades has identified and investigated the haunting presence of non-white groups in American literature. Toni Morrison influentially suggested in *Playing in the Dark* (1991) that an African American "shadow" or ghost can be detected in white-authored texts, even when "texts are not 'about' Africanist presences or characters or narrative or idiom".[2] In Morrison's view, and that of many subsequent critics, symbolic and literal representations of the racially oppressed are "the vehicle by which the American self knows itself".[3] But few scholars have asked what happens when this otherness is channelled through a white body. In this thesis, I examine the possibility that across the works of Brown, Irving, Bird, Poe, Hawthorne and Melville, white middle-class Americans "*contain* … the female, the dark-skinned, the alienated worker, and the geographically marginal".[4] The texts in this thesis all feature white communities permeated by inexplicable liminal voices. I contend that these occurrences are transformative, that the liminal figure's voice is crucial in the construction of identity, and that it disturbs self-

---

inheritance. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 6. Patterson's concept grounds a number of literary studies of disenfranchised groups in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America. Scholars such as Julia Stern, Russ Castronovo and Colin Dayan extend his term to women, African Americans, Native Americans, recent immigrants, the incarcerated, and the institutionalised, who experienced legal and social exclusion in the early national and antebellum periods. Stern and Castronovo both argue that white civic identity is dependent on (yet haunted by) the mass social death of marginalised Americans. Dayan offers "negative personhood" as an alternative name for this excluded state. Russ Castronovo, *Necro Citizenship: Death, Eroticism, and the Public Sphere in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); Julia A. Stern, *Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Colin (formerly Joan) Dayan, *The Law Is a White Dog: How Legal Rituals Make and Unmake Persons* (Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), xii.

[2] Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 47. Another key work that traces this Africanist shadow in American Gothic is Teresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

[3] Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, 52.

[4] Renée L. Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000), 13.

knowledge, prescriptions of racial belonging, and essentialist ideas of white identity in the antebellum period. At the same time, by "containing" socially marginal groups within white male characters, authors attempt to exorcise anxieties about shifting ideals of citizenship, social position and racial mobility in the antebellum period.

This argument is located in three overlapping spheres of reference: ideas of white citizenship; the physical and metaphoric voice; and death, dying and the supernatural. The texts I examine are all concerned with behaviours and values associated with white citizenship, place importance on the voice, and include dead, dying or otherworldly characters. At the same time, recent theories of liminality, which have been extended from anthropology to literary studies, guide this thesis. Before turning to my chosen authors and texts, it is necessary to first consider these definitions and applications of liminality, and their relation to my three interlocking frames in the antebellum period. In doing so, I will outline how the concept of liminality at the centre of this thesis is present within each frame.

Liminality originated as a concept in the anthropological work of Arnold van Gennep. His *Rites of Passage* (1908) conceives liminality as a transformative process in which an individual experiences the death of one stage of life and the birth of a new stage. In van Gennep's study of African and Asian tribes, this process occurs during key events in an individual's life—adulthood, marriage, childbirth, and death—and is marked by "preliminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of transformation), and postliminal rites

(rites of incorporation)".[5] Liminality is most associated with Victor Turner, who reinvigorated the concept in the 1960s. In *The Forest of Symbols* (1967), Turner focuses on van Gennep's "liminal rites", defining liminality as a temporary "interstructural situation", in which someone transitions between the "relatively fixed or stable condition[s]" of "legal status, profession, office or calling, rank or degree".[6] Turner associates the liminal with "such general oppositions as life and death, male and female, food and excrement, simultaneously, since they are at once dying from or dead to their former status and life, and being born and growing into new ones". Liminality is characterised by the "blurring and merging" of these oppositions or "distinctions".[7] To Turner's list I add the racial "distinctions" white and non-white, and in this thesis I discuss cases of racial liminality in antebellum fiction.

Furthermore, to be liminal means to be marginalised and to lose status. In the Ndembu rites that Turner observed in his fieldwork, those in transition often "have no status, property, insignia, secular clothing indicating rank or role, [or] position in a kinship system".[8] They experience a temporary social death during which their ties to family and community are severed and they have no claim to possessions or position. In this thesis I conceive of liminality and liminal whiteness as a process of transformation, but most often as an experience of destruction and demotion. I move away from ritualised

---

[5] Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, ed. Solon T. Kimball, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 11.
[6] Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 93.
[7] Victor Turner, *Process, Performance and Pilgrimage: A Study in Comparitive Symbology* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1979), 18.
[8] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), 95.

behaviour studied in anthropology to these experiences of exclusion and marginality found in literature. As I show across my six chapters, literature of the early national and antebellum periods features characters continually in flux along class and racial lines. Turner's work provides a pertinent vocabulary and theoretical framework to conceive these transformations across social boundaries in nineteenth-century literature.

As a theory focused on transformations, transgressions and marginality, liminality is an apt concept to use in literary studies. Literary plots rely on character development and movement between local, national, or global, locations. Genres such as the *bildungsroman* centre on a character's development between states of childhood and adulthood as they traverse different environments. Since 2000, a range of scholarship has emerged to consider texts that represent liminal figures, spaces and moments, and which views literature itself as liminal. However, literary liminality studies differ from anthropological studies because they acknowledge that writers often "shun complete incorporation" found in post-liminal states, to instead focus on the "ambivalence and uncertainty" of liminal characters and situations.[9] Literary liminality explores the "undoing, dissolution, [and] decompositions" of Turner's liminal process, without the resolution of growth and progress found in the post-liminal state.[10] In this thesis, some characters I discuss—such as Antony Vander Heyden and Sheppard Lee—experience a temporary removal and then return that is much closer to Turner's theory; other figures like Bartleby experience liminality on a permanent basis until their death. Authors

[9] Hein Viljoen and Chris N. van der Merwe, "A Poetics of Liminality and Hybridity," in *Beyond the Threshold: Explorations of Liminality in Literature*, ed. Hein Viljoen (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 23.
[10] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 99.

such as Brown, Poe and Melville craft deliberately ambiguous and uncertain texts, in which the liminal moment persists as a condition of social exclusion and loss.

The Madrid School's *Studies in Liminality and Literature* (2000–2009) constructs a schema for identifying and understanding liminality in literature.[11] In their manifesto "The Lure of the Limen", the School define liminal texts as always containing thresholds that are inhabited or crossed. These thresholds are ambiguous spaces and crucial sites of power; liminal occupants either "take this power upon themselves" or are subjected to the power and will of others.[12] The School identify "liminal characters" as those who straddle social and physical categories. They cross over "the line between races, between orders, between human and Other".[13] In crossing these boundaries, liminal characters are often disruptive within texts because they overturn social and physical hierarchies, and they lead characters and readers to question the validity of these strict categories. For example, a ghost in a text overturns the hierarchy of the living over the dead and shows the border between life and death as permeable. The liminal characters in this thesis all fit into this schema because they inhabit the

[11] This research series consists of six books that examine liminality across multiple genres, time periods and regions: Manuel Aguirre, Roberta Quance, and Philip Sutton, *Margins and Thresholds: An Enquiry into the Concept of Liminality in Text Studies*, Studies in Liminality and Literature 1 (Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2000); Isabel Soto, ed., *A Place That Is Not a Place: Essays on Liminality and Text*, Studies in Liminality and Literature 2 (Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2000); Philip G. Sutton, ed., *Betwixt-and-between: Essays in Liminal Geography*, Studies in Liminality and Literature 3 (Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2002); Nancy Brendendick, ed., *Mapping the Threshold: Essays in Liminal Analysis*, Studies in Liminality and Literature 4 (Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2004); Jesús Benito and Anna Ma Manzanas, eds., *The Dynamics of the Threshold: Essays on Liminal Negotiations*, Studies in Liminality and Literature 5 (Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2006); Manuel Aguirre, *The Thresholds of the Tale: Liminality and the Structure of Fairytales*, Studies in Liminality and Literature 6 (Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2007).

[12] "The Lure of the Limen: An Introduction to the Concept, Uses and Problems of Liminality," in *The TRELLIS Papers* (Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2006), 10.

[13] Ibid., 9.

thresholds between racial categories and life and death. They disrupt texts by forcing other characters and the reader to question values of white citizenship and confront the marginal experiences of which they speak.

Furthermore, the literary text is liminal itself because it is a distinct cultural sphere. Fiction, separate from the real world, is a "symbolically demarcated liminal zone" that enables transformation and encourages readers to contemplate alternative possibilities or "new ways of thinking and being".[14] For example, the recent collection *Liminality and the Short Story* (2015) frames short fiction as the "liminal genre *par excellence*" because it replicates the liminal experience by offering a short removal from real world structures.[15] This separation from the real world is heightened in genres such as horror, fantasy, and the Gothic, where not only new social possibilities exist, but so too do new physical possibilities. These genres enable readers to imagine the dead encroaching on the living world, or the appearance of new and strange creatures.

The majority of literary liminality studies attend to liminality's spatial parameters by defining this scholarship as "mapping" liminality and by focusing on physical thresholds and ambiguous geographies, such as the frontier, the coastline, and the haunted house.[16] However, this attention tends to

---

[14] Viljoen and van der Merwe, "A Poetics of Liminality and Hybridity," 11.

[15] Jochen Achilles and Ina Bergmann, eds., "'Betwixt and Between': Boundary Crossings in American, Canadian, and British Short Fiction," in *Liminality and the Short Story: Boundary Crossings in American, Canadian, and British Writing* (New York; London: Routledge, 2015), 15.

[16] For example, many scholars employ Mary Louise Pratt's notion of a "contact zone" of different cultures to frame liminality as a space where two discourses "meet, clash, and grapple with each other". Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 4. See Jesús Benito, "The Crossing and the Crossed: Fear and Loathing In/Of American Cultural Interspaces," in *Mapping the Threshold,* 75–89; Lucy Kay et al., eds., *Mapping Liminalities: Thresholds in Cultural and Literary Texts* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007); Rebecca Janicker, *The Literary Haunted*

overlook the significance of the temporal categories that van Gennep and Turner identify; liminality occurs at moments of significant change, including the transition between life and death, which I examine in this thesis. Furthermore, most critics apply liminality to marginal or minor literature to theorise the experience of writing from the thresholds of society. While this thesis does not seek to diminish this scholarship, it instead takes up Isabel Soto's call that "liminality as a threshold or critical tool need not be limited to marginal or marginalised literatures".[17] The canonical white male authors in this thesis, often writing from a position of social dominance, produce characters on the margins of society. The liminal white characters I examine often navigate experiences of loss and relegation. As I discuss in the following pages, liminal whiteness often means inhabiting a state of being below the full rights and privileges of citizenship that were afforded to able white middle-class men in the antebellum period. Within texts by Brown, Irving, Bird, Poe, Hawthorne and Melville, we can find experiences of liminality tied to ideals of antebellum white citizenship, to which I now turn.

We can begin to understand the idea of liminal whiteness by tracing conceptions of whiteness and white citizenship in antebellum society. The early national and antebellum period witnessed dramatic and rapid social changes, such as the growth of cities, westward expansion, accelerated immigration, the movement towards a more free-market economy, the rise of professionalism and the idea of the "self-made" man, and increasingly fraught debates over slavery. After the Revolution, America entered a liminal period of nation- and

---

House: Lovecraft, Matheson, King and the Horror in Between (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, Inc., Publishers, 2015).

[17] Isabel Soto, ed., "Introduction," in *A Place That Is Not a Place*, 15.

citizen-building, as people transitioned from colonial subjects to independent self-governing citizens. Citizenship and the qualities of Americanness were the subject of intense debate. Legal thresholds for citizenship were written into the Naturalization Acts of 1790 onwards, which guaranteed citizenship to white immigrants only.[18] This thesis understands citizenship to be a cultural ideology—a set of expected qualities and behaviours that included industry, respectability, autonomy, sociality and rationality. These personal and civic qualities were not explicitly stated in legal texts, yet became increasingly connected to whiteness, specifically an Anglo or Germanic whiteness.[19] All the states debated who counted as a citizen, often excluding free African Americans, Native Americans and recent French and Irish immigrants.[20] Race became the "prevailing idiom" for framing and discussing citizenship.[21]

In this context, the novels of the period consequently demonstrate an "epistemological anxiety" about identity—what it means to be an American

[18] The 1790 Naturalization Act stated that an alien "being a free white person" and residing in the United States for two years "may be admitted to become a citizen thereof". John Adams' 1798 amendment re-inscribed citizenship as white only; the path to citizenship was open to "all white persons", including aliens after an extended fourteen-year period of residency. "A Bill to Establish an Uniform Rule of Naturalization, and Enable Aliens to Hold Lands under Certain Restrictions" (New York, 1790), Printed Ephemera, Library of Congress, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbpe.21301100; "An Act Supplementary To, and to Amend the Act, Intituled [*sic*] 'An Act to Establish an Uniform Rule of Naturalization; and to Repeal the Act Heretofore Passed on That Subject'" (Philadelphia, 1798), Printed Ephemera, Library of Congress, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbpe.22400500.

[19] For a discussion on the qualities viewed as American by post-Independence citizens, see, Daniel Walker Howe, *Making the American Self: Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); David M. Ricci, *Good Citizenship in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Joyce O. Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[20] See Douglas Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union 1774-1804* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

[21] Matthew Frye Jacobsen, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 9.

and who can be included in the definition of "citizen".[22] The novels of Brown at the turn of the century, for example, feature educated young white men navigating and negotiating citizenship in the growing American city—*Arthur Mervyn* (1799-1800), *Ormond* (1800)—and on the frontier—*Edgar Huntly* (1799). Within this context Brown's heroines, Clara in *Wieland* and Constantia Davis in "Somnambulism", who I discuss in Chapter 1, serve as prime examples of middle-class white women subscribing to republican values of constancy and rationality. Non-Anglo-American populations—African Americans free or enslaved, Native Americans, and European immigrants—as well as poor white men and women, often exist as marginalised figures in the early American novel, excluded from discourses on citizenship and appearing as shadowy or even invisible characters in national literature.[23]

The last twenty-five years of citizenship and critical whiteness studies provide numerous insights into how whiteness was integral to citizenship in antebellum America. Works by Matthew Frye Jacobsen, Ruth Frankenberg and Cythia Levine-Rasky, tell us whiteness is not physical appearance or genetics, but "a way of 'doing' identity".[24] In other words, whiteness is a social construct, a performance of personal values such as rationality, autonomy,

---

[22] Maria Karafilis, "The American Novel: Beginnings through the American Renaissance," in *A Companion to the American Novel*, ed. Alfred Bendixen (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 39.

[23] Julia Stern claims that these invisible Americans (women, African Americans, Native Americans, immigrants, the impoverished), who have been "erased from official forms of political representation", reappear as a "gothic residue" in early national literature. Stern, *Plight of Feeling*, 184. Renée L. Bergland identifies insubstantial and invisible Native bodies in Brown and Irving's works. Bergland, *The National Uncanny*, 49-57.

[24] Cynthia Levine-Rasky, *Whiteness Fractured* (Abingdon, Oxon: Ashgate, 2013), 18. See also Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 6. In particular, Jacobsen's work on nineteenth century European immigration charts a process of "*becoming* white" in America that depends on more than skin colour. Jacobsen, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 8.

industry and sociality, which can be co-opted as civic ideals. As David Ricci outlines, a good citizen obeys the laws of their country, participates in state activities (such as voting), and exercises their virtues in society.[25] Able, white and propertied men were required to fulfil all three expectations because they were considered capable of doing so, in contrast to Native Americans, African Americans, women, recent immigrants, the disabled, the itinerant and the insane. All these groups existed on a sliding scale of states below full social, legal and political citizenship. White women were expected to display civic virtues yet had limited freedom and suffrage, while African American slaves were viewed as human property incapable of understanding or participating in society.[26] More specifically, in the antebellum period whiteness denoted an ability to govern the self. Whiteness was a claim on an "inalienable" property-in-oneself, ensuring by definition a "virtuous, self-possessed citizen", as opposed to the dependency experienced by African American slaves.[27] Whiteness meant not being a piece of property but nevertheless became a property in itself that white Americans could use to assert their social dominance over non-white groups and enjoy exclusive social privileges.[28]

---

[25] Table 4.1 in Ricci, *Good Citizenship in America*, 97.

[26] White women were expected to participate in society, in particular by educating their families and raising civically aware sons, yet they were not afforded the full political and legal rights of citizenship. Evelyn Nakano Glenn writes, "jurists, legislators, and political philosophers agreed that (white) women were moral and virtuous citizens, but that their citizenship did not entail suffrage". I will discuss the concept of republican womanhood further in Chapter 1. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 26–27.

[27] Peter Coviello, *Intimacy in America: Dreams of Affiliation in Antebellum Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 52.

[28] Here I draw on the work of Cheryl L. Harris and more recently, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, who view whiteness as property in itself. This self-ownership enabled European Americans to take ownership of African Americans as human property, and colonise land belonging to Native American tribes. Cheryl L. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993): 1721, 1718; Aileen Moreton-

Thus, white men who are incapable of meeting these expectations, or do not actively demonstrate these personal and civic values become "not quite right", "not *right* white", less than white, or as I term it, liminal white.[29]

As states extended the franchise to all white men and some free African Americans during the antebellum period, whiteness increasingly became an "*enforced* identification, an identification from which one increasingly could not demur", and which was employed by politicians, writers and workers to unite white citizens across the nation.[30] Developments in the antebellum period suggest that anxieties in white populations over social status were rooted in perceptions of race and desires to create a fixed white identity and bolster these claims on properties of whiteness. Dana Nelson's *National Manhood* (1998), for example, identifies a national project from the 1830s to 1860s to formalise rational white middle-class masculine identity through an increasing professionalisation dependent on classification, objectification and management of "Other" (non-white, non-male) Americans.[31] And similarly, in *Wages of Whiteness* (1991), David Roediger argues that the white working classes strove, through the language of labour, to distinguish themselves from free and enslaved African Americans. They viewed black men and women in cities as dependent "anticitizens" whose presence threatened white workers.

Robinson, *White Possessive: Property, Power and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 52.

[29] Matt Wray terms impoverished and rural white populations that became "white trash" as "not quite white". María DeGuzmán uses "not *right* white" to describe attitudes towards Catholic immigrants, particularly those from Spain, in the nineteenth century. Matt Wray, *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); María DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow: The Black Legend, Off-Whiteness, and Anglo-American Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

[30] Coviello, *Intimacy in America*, 11. For more on these discourses of white unity, see Ibid., 25-57.

[31] Dana D. Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).

They feared becoming black themselves, or "white niggers" in urban spaces where black and white populations interacted in shared workplaces and professions.[32]

During the antebellum period, too, the science of race developed from attempts to classify different races in the eighteenth-century taxonomic works of Johann Blumenbach and Carl Linnaeus to the "American School" of the mid-nineteenth century, which constructed racial hierarchies demeaning to African Americans and was often used to support anti-abolitionism.[33] Race science not only demarcated physical traits but also character, categorising "Negroes" as ill tempered, lazy, childish and brutish. Blackface minstrelsy and grotesque racial caricature firmly degraded African Americans and mocked black pretensions of genteel behaviour, clearly signalling fears of amalgamation and miscegenation in white urban communities.[34] These biological theories and exaggerated representations were appealing because they made race legible through appearance, intellect and behaviour. White middle-class Americans could stand apart from a distinct non-white racial "Other" and justify their social dominance.

---

[32] David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 145. See also Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1990).

[33] Supporters of slavery used theories of racial hierarchy to argue that African Americans were inferior to white Americans, for example, Richard H. Colfax, *Evidence Against the Views of the Abolitionists, Consisting of Physical and Moral Proofs, of the Natural Inferiority of the Negroes* (1833). Samuel George Morton, George Gliddon and Josiah Nott employed craniology to support theories of polygenism and African mental inferiority. For more on the development of scientific racism in America see Bruce R. Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind: American Race Theory in the Early Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). This will be covered further in Chapter 3.

[34] For example, Edward Williams Clay's lithograph series *Life in Philadelphia* caricatured free blacks dancing and shopping in the city. Edward Williams Clay, *Life in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: S. Hart, 1829), http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource /pga.05680/.

The texts I examine in my thesis, however, offer moments that threaten these essentialist ideas of race and where the voice of the liminal white character questions and challenges ideals of middle-class white—and often male—citizenship. In their association with non-white groups denied citizenship and social freedom, these liminal whites suggest the possibility of their white middle-class counterparts losing an already fragile hold on a valued socioeconomic position. In a period when the idea of whiteness became both formalised and formative to individual and communal identity, it is necessary to look at instances of marginality, liminality and racial transformation that destabilise whiteness and disturb this "enforced identification". In these antebellum works, the liminal white character interrupts or influences the actions of the surrounding community who are confronted by the liminal figure's disruptively inexplicable voice. The effect can be seen in the community's reactions to the liminal figure, which include sympathy, confusion, shock, horror, disgust, curiosity or an amalgamation of several emotions, as their ideals of middle-class white citizenship are challenged and threatened.

For example, as I examine in Chapter 6, in Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener" the ghostly figure of Bartleby repeatedly asserts "I would prefer not to", a statement that derails business in the Wall Street law office where he is employed. After Bartleby's refusal to work or leave the office, "haunting the building generally", he is forcibly removed to the Tombs, a Manhattan jail, where he later dies of self-starvation.[35] These protestations against work from Bartleby, a shadowy figure approaching death, challenge the lawyer-narrator's

[35] Herman Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener," in *The Complete Shorter Fiction* (London: D. Campbell, 1997), 45.

values of white citizenship, namely industriousness, autonomy and sociality. Confronted by a man who chooses to disengage from both the professional sphere and the physical world itself, the narrator becomes increasingly exasperated and perturbed during the course of the short story. Bartleby is a contagion; he represents the frightening possibility that an educated professional white man, like the narrator, could himself abstain from these civic expectations. These anxieties, which I return to later in the introduction, come into much sharper relief during encounters with death, dying and the supernatural.

Anxieties over whiteness, as I have already begun to suggest, are inextricably linked to class position in the antebellum period. Indeed, critical whiteness studies across the previous two decades has demonstrated that race and class exist in a nexus to create social and individual identity.[36] However, these anxieties over social position were not exclusive to the working classes; for the communities or groups of characters in my texts can be broadly labelled as middle class. The concept of being middle class is difficult to define in an American context since, as Stuart Blumin puts it, the idea of the middle class in the United States has been "pervasive and elusive; indeed … elusive precisely because it is pervasive".[37] In the mid-nineteenth century there was not necessarily a clearly defined or organised middle-class consciousness, but there were sets of behaviours and "broadly homogenous" social positions that could adopt this label.[38] There are many markers of being middle class and it is a social label that is manifest in different intersecting locations: the workplace,

[36] Wray, *Not Quite White*, 6.
[37] Stuart Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 2.
[38] Ibid., 249.

home, and public spaces. But in this thesis I use middle class to identify those who possess a certain amount of economic, social and cultural capital: educated professionals (bankers, lawyers, merchants, writers, teachers, clergy, doctors). The first-person narrators in Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar", Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener" and Bird's *Sheppard Lee*, as well as characters in all the works I examine, fit into this wide-ranging label. At the same time, being middle class was "a permanent condition of liminality".[39] Citizens could manoeuvre into (or out of) this category because the status could be attained through a combination of education, profession, taste and wealth. As Amy Schrager Lang identifies, fiction of the period "actively participate[s] in the process of articulating, mediating, and displacing" class distinctions and identity.[40] In Hawthorne's comic short fiction, which I discuss in Chapter 5, characters strive to attain this status through performances of respectability in concordance with financial or professional success. For example, Dominicus Pike in "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" seeks to become a respectable gentleman and successful pedlar by constructing and retelling a "respectable narrative" about the murder of a local trader.[41]

The texts in this thesis often focus on the appearance of liminal white figures who threaten citizens, by suggesting the possibility that these citizens could be "unmade" themselves, and that liminality and disenfranchisement is contagious or inevitable. For example, as I examine in Chapter 3, the ghost of downwardly mobile middle-class Sheppard Lee, a Princeton-educated

[39] Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1982), 29.
[40] Amy Schrager Lang, *The Syntax of Class: Writing Inequality in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 6.
[41] Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe," in *Tales and Sketches* (New York: Library of America, 1982), 189.

landowner, enters a number of male bodies, including a Virginia slave, suggesting that social position can rapidly and dramatically shift. This is a fantastical scenario involving racial transformation but it nonetheless represents concrete anxieties of losing social position and capital in a turbulent economic climate. As the financial crashes of 1819 and 1837 demonstrated, socioeconomic position was precarious and people moved into and out of social categories. Thus we see many characters in antebellum fiction who are intensely concerned with their social position, and recognise its dependence on market economies. Looking at the antebellum literary response to these crashes and panics, David Anthony's *Paper Money Men* (2009) argues that anxieties over finance were channelled into a "sensational public sphere" in which the fantasy of treasure and violence combine to reconfirm white middle-class masculinity.[42] As I discuss later in my consideration of genre, this thesis shares Anthony's view that real world anxieties manifest themselves through the fantastic. I differ from Anthony, however, in thinking that the fantastic does not always offer resolution or victory for the professional white male, but often leaves white communities damaged and their values negated.

As I have done above, Anthony also provides a list of employments as examples of professional men in the antebellum period: "Clerks, merchants, financiers, confidence men, lawyers, bachelors, libertines, doctors, politicians, philosophers, investors, speculators, dandies".[43] But interestingly, Anthony's list does not include writers, a growing profession during the antebellum period, starting with Brown, the first "professional" American author. All six

[42] David Anthony, *Paper Money Men: Commerce, Manhood, and the Sensational Public Sphere in Antebellum America* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2009), 22.
[43] Ibid., 6.

authors in this thesis attempted—with varying degrees of success—to make a living through writing, but nearly all entered other professional roles that may be labelled as middle class. For example, Brown started his professional life as a lawyer, Hawthorne spent years working in the Salem custom house and Bird initially practised medicine before his prolific writing career in the 1830s, and in the 1840s returned to the University of Philadelphia's medical school to lecture. Melville came from a family whose social status rapidly declined as he was growing up; the family were downwardly mobile due to his father, Alan Melvill, accumulating excessive debts. Therefore, these six professional white male authors are representative of the most enfranchised group in America, yet also a group aware of socioeconomic changes and anxious over the slipperiness of social position. It is valuable to interrogate instances in their works where the ideals of white middle-class citizenship are threatened by the appearance of liminal white characters and their inexplicable voices, in order to understand how these authors, representative of the wider professional population, formulated socio-racial identity in the antebellum period.

In the past four decades, American literary studies have sought to connect this nineteenth-century sociopolitical context with the nation's literary production. New Americanists have reimagined the canon as a more inclusive and representative body, bringing to the fore the voices of non-white and non-male authors. At the same time, their drive to examine the "residual ideology" of past Americanist critique has reinvigorated study of canonical white male authors, in particular those in this thesis.[44] In seminal works such as Donald

[44] Donald E. Pease, ed., "New Americanists: Revisionist Interventions into the Canon," in *Revisionary Interventions into the Americanist Canon* (Durham, NC: London: Duke University Press, 1994), 10. By past Americanist critique I refer to the American

Pease's edited *Revisionary Interventions into the Americanist Canon* (1994), scholars have taken New Historicist approaches to read literary texts as products of their historical and cultural contexts. This work involves reuniting nineteenth-century American literature with its often-repressed "potential traumatic material"—the exclusion and disenfranchisement of African American, Native Americans, women, immigrants and the working class.[45]

Harry Levin's *The Power of Blackness* (1958) is one example of past Americanist critique that offers a "residual ideology" prime for exploration in regards to citizenship, class and race in the antebellum period. Levin identifies a pessimistic view of the United States in his analysis of blackness at work in Poe, Hawthorne and Melville. The three authors imparted a vision of the United States "not rose-coloured but sombre, and the symbols through which they impart it are charged with significations that profoundly justify the most searching analysis". [46] For Levin, the blackness he surveys symbolises damnation and unmaking. Blackness is a loss of self-possession, an emptiness and death. In this thesis I return to Levin's central notion of the power of blackness, by examining characters who authors continually associate with non-white groups. Drawing on New Americanist scholarship, I examine how these feelings of loss of autonomy that Levin identifies in works by white male

---

School and the Myth and Symbol School, which in the mid-twentieth century disconnected nineteenth-century canonical authors from these social traumas. Examples include F.O. Matthiessen's *The American Renaissance* (1941), Lionel Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination* (1950), Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land* (1950), Richard Chase's *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (1957), Harry Levin's *The Power of Blackness* (1958), and Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* (1964).

[45] Ibid., 12. Other landmark New Americanist texts that carry out this work include Jane Tompkins's *Sensational Designs* (1985), David S. Reynolds's *Beneath the American Renaissance* (1988) and Priscilla Wald's *Constituting Americans* (1995).

[46] Harry Levin, *The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, Melville* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1980), 39.

antebellum authors are tied to the reality of social and racial anxieties I have outlined above.

This thesis employs close reading to examine how my chosen authors channel these socio-racial issues into the fictional realm. Scholars have often criticised New Historicism (and by extension New Americanism) for their focus on recovering a hidden historical or cultural meaning at the expense of aesthetic discussion found in close reading. Their interpretation of literature as manifestations of cultural ideologies often leads to reading texts for absences or gaps that represent repressed historical truths, as opposed to focussing on what is present.[47] This "suspicious" reading overshadows the author's intentions and their aesthetic choices.[48] In response, a movement towards New Formalism in the last fifteen years "seek[s] to reinstate close reading" as the "basic materials that form the subject matter of even the most historical of investigations".[49] Slowing down critique to focus on word choice, figurative language, structure, genre and tone recognises the text as a literary object itself instead as simply an historical one.

Nineteenth-century Americanist scholarship of the last decade has sought to return formal concerns to literary criticism, to bring aesthetics "in[to] fruitful conjunction with the historicist and political questions that have earned

---

[47] For example, Samuel Otter and Geoffrey Sanborn open their collection on Melville with, "For the last quarter of a century, 'aesthetics' has been something of a dirty word in American literary criticism". Samuel Otter and Geoffrey Sanborn, eds., "Aesthetics and Melville," in *Melville and Aesthetics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1. Other examples of this dissatisfaction with New Historicism can be found in Christopher Castiglia, "Twists and Turns," in *Turns of Event: Nineteenth-Century American Literary Studies in Motion*, ed. Hester Blum (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 61–78; Rita Felski, "'Context Stinks!,'" *New Literary History* 42, no. 4 (2011): 573–91.

[48] See Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, "Surface Reading: An Introduction," *Representations* 108, no. 1 (2009): 1–21.

[49] Marjorie Levinson, "What Is New Formalism?, " *PMLA* 122, no. 2 (2007): 560.

their central position" in literary scholarship.[50] In this vein, Cindy Weinstein's recent work exemplifies the approach I take with close reading in this thesis. Focussing on American literature's relationship with, and representation of, time, her close reading concentrates on "exact words, often adverbs, and the tenses of verbs" contextualized in a specific historical setting.[51] Close reading from this fusion of New Americanist and Formalist perspectives recognises that context can appear in these small units of meaning, and this close attention illuminates our readings of the text and our understanding of antebellum America. We can see this in the description of liminal white characters that employ Native allusion: the same language that describes indigenous populations as insensible and savage and their speech as ventriloquial indicates white characters on the margins of whiteness. Furthermore, the oral and written forms discussed in this thesis—the gothic novel, the ghost story, blackface, medical case reports, folk tales, and séances—all carry social meaning. For example, blackface relies on stereotyped African American speech to continually mark black Americans outside an intelligent white society and its intelligible speech. Similarly, through language of observation, medical case reports distinguish their white male authors as elite members of antebellum society who embody ideals of rationality and professionalism. Close examination of the dialogue, free indirect speech, and narrative that make up these forms enables my discussion of the voice, which I argue transmits social

[50] Christopher Looby and Cindy Weinstein, eds., "Introduction," in *American Literature's Aesthetic Dimensions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 1. See also Theo Davis, *Formalism, Experience, and the Making of American Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and *Melville and Aesthetics*.

[51] Cindy Weinstein, *Time, Tense, and American Literature: When Is Now?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 12.

and racial significance as the expression of liminal whiteness in the antebellum period.

Turning to the voice—the second of the aforementioned themes—we can see that civic or social identity is tied inextricably to both a metaphorical voice and manifestations of the physical voice. The voice is "the very texture of the social" and "the intimate level of subjectivity".[52] It carries individual and social identity and allows us to interact with each other on a one-to-one basis and in larger communal arenas. Jay Fliegelman's landmark *Declaring Independence* (1993) outlines a late eighteenth-century search for a "natural spoken language" that could both connect citizens across the nation and articulate the speaker's individuality. Exemplified in Thomas Jefferson's oratory and writings, to speak in one's own voice performs the ideals of the Declaration; the self-expression of speech makes oneself visible and "self-evident".[53] In enacting America as a new nation, statesmen often utilised the voice in written cultural and political discourses on nation building and national identity. In his survey of democratic states in *A Defence of the Constitutions* (1787), John Adams repeatedly referred to "the voice" of the people. Modern democracy is dependent on oral discussion in Congress; the public use their metaphoric voice by voting to elect representatives who will enact this deliberative democracy. When Adams wrote, "the voice of the people is the voice of God", he saw an inherent power in the public metaphoric voice, a divine right in the will of the people to construct their own governance.[54]However, "the voice of the people" that

[52] Mladen Dolar, "The Linguistics of the Voice," in *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne (Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis, 2012), 540.
[53] Jay Fliegelman, *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, & the Culture of Performance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 2.
[54] John Adams, *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* (London: C. Dilly, 1787), 127.

Adams praised excluded swathes of the national population: recent immigrants, women, and in most states, non-white groups. In his important study *Voicing America* (1996), for example, Christopher Looby shows that in the 1790s, the Federalists attempted to forge a unified national voice by shutting down alternative voices that were associated with non-citizen aliens (the Irish, the French) who critiqued the Adams administration. The Sedition Act of 1798, in this respect, prohibited opposition to the Federalist government in any text "written, printed, uttered or published"; the purpose was to control who could speak and what could be said.[55]

A generation later, another Adams, John Quincy, cemented the connection between the physical voice and political power, offering an 1810 Harvard seminar on the "soul-subduing power of eloquence". [56] Post-Revolutionary America was conceived as a logocracy with political power drawn from the power of words, and the "grain of the voice" valued in national documents.[57] In this period, politicians and public figures were praised for their eloquent and powerful speeches. The stump speech, a theatrical mode of political address, engaged with the public through storytelling to become "the paradigmatic rhetorical form of antebellum democracy".[58] Politicians Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, judge Rufus Choate, abolitionist Wendell Phillips and preacher Henry Ward Beecher all featured in Edward G. Parker's *The Golden*

---

[55] "An Act in Addition to the Act, Entitled 'An Act for the Punishment of Certain Crimes Against the United States'" 1798, http://www.ourdocuments.gov/document_data/pdf/doc_016b.pdf.

[56] John Quincy Adams, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory, Delivered to the Classes of Senior and Junior Sophisters* (Cambridge, MA: Hillard and Metcale, 1810), 1:134.

[57] Christopher Looby, *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3.

[58] Sandra M. Gustafson, "The Emerging Media of Early America," in *Cultural Narratives: Textuality and Performance in American Culture Before 1900*, ed. Sandra M. Gustafson and Caroline F. Sloat (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 346.

Age of American Oratory (1857), a biography of great speechmakers from the previous eight decades. Parker proclaimed, "the oratory of America is the song of triumph, bursting from the lips of Prophets whose feet are resting on the beautiful mountains of a promised land".[59] Such hyperbolic and romantic statements firmly connect speech with the nation, national character and American exceptionalism.

Through the antebellum period, then, the voice retained its importance for citizenship and civic identity. Outside of politics, discussion, deliberation, oration and rhetoric were necessary for interacting with and contributing to both local communities and the nation. From the late 1820s, lyceums acted as forums for "culture-making rhetorical practice[s]" through public recitations of magazine and newspaper articles and personal poems, debates and discussions, and educational lectures.[60] The correct use of the English language was a marker of position in society at this time—both Kenneth Cmiel and Thomas Gustafson identify the importance of anxieties over the use of the English language in America, with cultural commentators and magazine writers voicing their concerns about improper usage in spelling, vocabulary or pronunciation.[61] For example in *English Grammar* (1850), Amherst College professor William Fowler stated that "the leading men in the greater or smaller communities, the editors of periodicals, and authors generally" had a duty to maintain and police

---

[59] Edward G. Parker, *The Golden Age of American Oratory* (Boston: Whittemore, Niles, and Hall, 1857), 4.
[60] Angela Ray, *The Lyceum and Public Culture in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005), 2.
[61] Kenneth Cmiel, *Democratic Eloquence: The Fight Over Popular Speech in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Thomas Gustafson, *Representative Words: Politics, Literature, and the American Language, 1776-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

the English language with "guardian care".[62] William Cullen Bryant, poet and editor of the *New York Evening Post*, had already taken up this call decades earlier, maintaining an index of vulgar words and incorrect usage banned from his paper.[63] Thinking and talking about language itself infuses literature of the period. We can see this policing of language in the figure of Dawkins in *Sheppard Lee*—a Philadelphia dandy who castigates his country cousins for their overfamiliar language. He educates them by saying, "the first lesson I will give you is never to call me 'Ikey' again, for that's vulgar; but always 'Mr. Dawkins,' or just plain 'cousin;' … As for your brother, you must always call him 'brother;' occasionally you may say 'Wilkins,' and it will sound aristocratic, as being a family name".[64]

However, as recent work from Sandra M. Gustafson and Caleb Smith has shown, outside of this judicial and political elite, the voice often manifested itself in resistance to the nation-building work of lyceums and congressional speeches. Those who opposed the exclusionary and discriminatory work of legal, political and cultural institutions also used eloquence as a form of protest. In *Imagining Deliberative Democracy in the Early American Republic* (2011), Gustafson argues that a "crisis of deliberation" took place in the decades up to the Civil War. Disenfranchised and marginalised groups, such as free African Americans and Native Americans, used rhetoric and oratory, perceived as the written and spoken realm of white middle-class and elite citizens, articulately to

---

[62] William Chauncey Fowler, *English Grammar: The English Language in Its Elements and Forms; With a History of Its Origin and Development; Designed for Use in Colleges and Schools* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1850), v.
[63] This was published under the title *Index Expurgatorious* (1877) after fifty years of his editorship. Cmiel, *Democratic Eloquence*, 60.
[64] Robert Montgomery Bird, *Sheppard Lee: Written by Himself*, ed. Christopher Looby (New York: New York Review Books, 2008), 148.

call for abolition and land rights.[65] Alongside this work, Smith identifies two public exclamations—the oracle and the curse—in antebellum print culture. Both are persuasive performative speech acts, yet are uttered by two groups on opposite sides of the legal divide. The oracle, spoken by those in power, carries significant representational authority, such as a judge's sentencing. The judge speaks eloquently and reasonably to "give voice to the spirit of the sovereign people".[66] In contrast, the curse—a pessimistic or damning prophecy—assumes the same power as the oracle, but is spoken by protesters, campaigners, convicts and blasphemers, representing those disqualified or alienated from citizenship.[67] Their voices cut through the sentimental culture of the mid-nineteenth century, becoming a "monstrous other" that reminds Americans of the failure of national ideals.[68] Smith cites John Brown and Nat Turner as prime examples of cursers who, facing the death penalty, gave courtroom and prison testimonies that condemned the nation and spoke out against the legal and cultural institution of slavery.

The occurrences of eloquent protest Smith and Gustafson examine are contained within public discourse in public spaces. This thesis differs from their scholarship as I move away from judicial and political spheres into smaller communities within texts, namely workplaces and homes, and different vocal contexts. Each of my six chapters focuses on how an author manifests liminal whiteness within a specific vocal context: ventriloquism and mimicry in Brown; supernatural storytelling in Irving; blackface performance in Bird;

---

[65] Sandra M. Gustafson, *Imagining Deliberative Democracy in the Early American Republic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 6.
[66] Caleb Smith, *The Oracle and the Curse: A Poetics of Justice from the Revolution to the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 11.
[67] Ibid., 4.
[68] Ibid., 34.

discourses of medical science in Poe; enchanting orality in Hawthorne; and finally, expressions of silence and resistance in Melville. This thesis thus focuses on the types of vocal utterances that Nancy Ruttenburg identifies as emerging through antebellum literature in *Democratic Personality* (1998), voices that are "unanticipated, inarticulate, uncontainable, [and] heedless of the forms".[69] When who should or should not speak carries political significance and gatekeeps participation in a democratic society, unusual or unexpected voices—ventriloquism, mimicry, whispers, cries, shrieks, howls, curses, interruptions, shouts—act out resistance to the eloquent voices of white citizenry found in national discourse. Ruttenburg herself considers these voices to be a "spectral presence" in literature.[70] I then develop this line of argument by explicitly examining the voices of spectres and other interstitial figures. In the fictional spaces I examine, in which the spiritual world often intrudes upon the physical, the impossible becomes possible and unexpected voices emerge.

As shown above, speech works with and against ideas of nation, community and citizenship. This contradiction, as I show, is mirrored in the liminal quality of the physical voice itself. It is ephemeral, dynamic and mutable, yet captured and represented in print. Speech and print exists in a "mutually dependent" relationship.[71] While we may usually ask what is lost by putting something living and moving (speech) into something dead and static (print), we also need to consider what is gained. In a period before audio recording, print was necessary to record and circulate speech through transcription—thereby increasing an audience for the orator—and the print

---

[69] Nancy Ruttenburg, *Democratic Personality: Popular Voice and the Trial of American Authorship* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 6.
[70] Ibid., 17.
[71] Gustafson, "The Emerging Media of Early America," 356.

medium depended on oral events to report on and fill its pages, giving publications civic prominence. Newspapers and magazines transcribed and published the public addresses of politicians and abolitionists, the summations of judges, and the gallows confessions of prisoners. For example, the *National Intelligencer*, the *Register of Debates* and the *Congressional Globe* printed congressional debates and speeches in full during the antebellum period. At the other end of the print spectrum, the penny press blurred the boundary between print and speech when they printed, rumour-like, the grisly details of criminal cases, supposedly for the public good, as well as to further their own political agenda.[72] In "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe", the *Parker's Falls Gazette* blurs the boundary between speech and print by publishing rumours of Higginbotham's murder, which have been spread through Pike's tale telling.

Print also brings together a number of voices into one written space that a reading audience can consume. Considering the relationship between voice and print in literary works, the novel itself is a "heteroglossic" printed form composed of multiple layered voices including authorial voice, narrative voice, and characters' speech.[73] Literature gives space to multiple voices at the same time, creating tensions and disruptions as each voice negotiates its place. In *Sheppard Lee*, a linear memoir is disrupted by a first-person narrative voice that subtly shifts between subject positions, when Sheppard merges with his transformations, for example the dandy Dawkins. At points in the text the

[72] See Isabelle Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 36-58.

[73] Mikhail Bakhtin lists these overlapping literary voices at work in the novel: narration, *skaz* (oral narration), semiliterary written narration (for example epistolary), extra-artistic discourse (for example scientific description), and character speech. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 262.

reader is not sure whether Sheppard is professing his own opinions or those inflected by the social position of Dawkins.

Finally, moving into my third sphere of reference, death, dying and the supernatural, it is clear that the voices of the dead are unusual and unexpected presences within literature. This thesis centres on what I term "inexplicable voices" that occur where they should not be: speaking corpses and ghosts, mediums, ventriloquists, enchanted non-human bodies. In this respect a long-standing connection exists between dead and dying physical bodies and "socially dead" or disenfranchised groups.[74] In *Dead Women Talking* (2013), for example, Brian Norman argues that vocal dead women in canonical works of American literature, including Madeline in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), speak not only for themselves but often for disenfranchised groups including African Americans and Native Americans.[75] Talking corpses criticise social oppression, enacting an uncanny haunting that implores living characters and readers to bring about change. This thesis differs from Norman's work in two key ways, however. First, while Norman restricts his argument to talking corpses, I take a wider remit in considering a range of supernatural and disembodied voices. Second, I argue that the voices of dead, dying and supernatural white characters are aligned by authors *with* non-white groups instead of speaking *for* non-white groups. In this association, the characters I examine use their voices to convey truths of liminal whiteness that threaten the

[74] See Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*; Sharon Patricia Holland, *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity* (Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 2000).
[75] Brian Norman, *Dead Women Talking : Figures of Injustice in American Literature* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

stability and certainty of white middle-class communities, rather than explicitly protesting the oppression of non-white marginalised groups.

Death itself is a liminal state, in between physical and spiritual worlds, as studies by van Gennep, Turner and more recently Joseph Roach make clear. Developing Turner's work on liminal rites, Roach's *Cities of the Dead* (1996), for example, argues that circum-atlantic performances, such as New Orleans carnivals, mirror the lawlessness and timelessness found in death by theatrically crossing racial boundaries in the Zulu blackface and "Black Indians" at Mardi Gras parades.[76] Characters who straddle the boundary between these states do not have to ascribe to the behaviours we would require of the living, hence they speak when they are expected to be silent. In my selected texts, the spiritual world encroaches upon the physical or material, permeating the community with ghosts, possessed spiritualists or talking corpses.

As discussed in the second half of this thesis, the rise of mesmerism and spiritualism from the 1830s onwards indicates a growing belief that the threshold between mind and matter, and between life and death, could be traversed. Mesmerists advanced theories that the mind could control others through the magnetisation of fluids in another's body, a practice that developed healing applications. Poe, for example, in "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains" (1844) dramatically extends the medical mesmeriser's power over his patient; Dr Templeton causes the ailing Bedloe to have an out-of-body past life experience, in which the young man claims to have travelled to India and witnessed his own death. In spiritualist circles, mediums also believed that

[76] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 18–19, 181.

external forces, specifically the spirits of deceased loved ones, strangers or historical figures, could possess and control their bodies. By the 1850s, debates over the legitimacy and merits of spiritualism widened from specific religious or philosophical publications to regional and national periodicals.[77] Coupled with the regular presence of supernatural stories in literary magazines, the reading public were increasingly familiar with the permeability of the boundary between this world and the next.

Within this context, Jeffrey Weinstock maintains that the recent "spectral turn" in literary studies, and its sustained attention to ghosts and spiritual presences, provides insight into a text's sociopolitical context.[78] Death studies is no longer inextricably attached to sentimental literature and scenes of grief; instead, scholars explore the political impact and significance of the dead body and deceased characters in texts.[79] Thus, in *Necro Citizenship,* Russ Castronovo argues for the ambivalent position of the dead in antebellum America. The dead are marginalised entities, and are no longer able to claim the rights of the living citizen, mirroring many socially dead groups in antebellum America. They signal "darker patterns of dis*cor*poration" or the

[77] Examples include *Atlantic Monthly*, *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and *United States Democratic Review*, publications for which the majority of authors in this thesis wrote, or read.

[78] Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, ed., "Introduction: The Spectral Turn," in *Spectral America: Phantoms and the National Imagination* (Madison; London: The University of Wisconsin Press/Popular Press, 2004), 6. In particular, in the past decade studies of spiritualism have reconnected the phenomena to discussions of abolition, Native land rights and women's suffrage in which many leading mediums participated. See Bridget Bennett, *Transatlantic Spiritualism and Nineteenth Century American Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Molly McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Christine Ferguson, *Determined Spirits: Eugenics, Heredity and Racial Regeneration in Anglo-American Spiritualist Writing, 1848-1930* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

[79] Lucy Elizabeth Frank, ed., "Introduction: Curious Dreams: Representations of Death in Nineteenth-Century US Writing and Culture," in *Representations of Death in Nineteenth-Century US Writing and Culture* (Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub, 2007), 5.

exclusion from the community and the body politic.[80] The dead are perceived as unchanging and unable to participate in their community, but at the same time through memorialisation and commemoration offer living citizens models of behaviour. They are held up as an idealised form of state identity because death represents the "abstract body" of "democrative selfhood" that has been stripped of individual, living desires.[81] In other words, the individual subject must experience a metaphoric death, casting aside any identity associated with gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality or class, in order to become a well-behaved citizen. To enjoy political representation, the individual must subscribe to set behaviours expected of citizen. I argue, however, that death also serves as an aperture for voices that challenge the ideals of white citizenship I have outlined: rationality, industry, self-making, autonomy, sociality and respectability. The white communities in the texts I examine are continually negotiating their social positions. Encountering dead, dying or supernatural liminal figures often acts as a catalyst or focal point for these personal and communal considerations of citizenship.

In employing these otherworldly figures, all the texts in this thesis are forms of gothic literature. They may not conform to the specific typological genre with set plotlines and characters, but they offer a "versatile rhetorical mode" with a distinctive pessimistic tone and way of viewing the world.[82] A dominant tradition of American Gothic criticism derived from Leslie Fiedler's seminal *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960) historicises gothic

[80] Castronovo, *Necro Citizenship*, 3.
[81] Ibid., 8. This abstraction does have bodily specificity because by elevating deceased figures such as the Founding Fathers, the ideal citizen's body came to be seen as white, male, heterosexual, Protestant and middle class.
[82] Siân Silyn Roberts, *Gothic Subjects: The Transformation of Individualism in American Fiction, 1790-1861* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 142.

literature of the nineteenth century as a response to the "hidden blackness" of society and a Faustian nightmarish counterpoint to the American Dream. In part, Fiedler views the source of the American Gothic as the nation's "obsessive concerns" over "the ambiguity of our relationship with the Indian and Negro".[83] This repression thesis has been sustained for a number of decades as critics have moved towards increasingly racialised readings of the Gothic, connecting a psychological "darkness" or blackness with non-white Americans. In particular, Teresa Goddu asserts that American Gothic has its roots in the oppression of African Americans and Native Americans through slavery and westward expansion, which returns to disturb white American communities in the text through death and destruction.[84]

While it is important to place nineteenth-century American Gothic texts in their historical and psychoanalytic context, including the oppression of African Americans and Native Americans, gothic scenes of death and haunting do not necessarily signal the uncanny return of repressed racial groups. As Siân Silyn Roberts has recently contended, this "guilt thesis" mode of symptomatically interpreting the Gothic often excludes broader issues of community and individual formation set within this nexus of class and race that I have earlier outlined.[85] Instead of examining literature for representatives of repressed groups, I instead investigate how authors employ death, dying and

---

[83] Leslie A. Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 1st Dalkey Archive ed. (Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1997), 31.
[84] Goddu, *Gothic America*, 7–10. See also Justin Edwards on the presence of mixed race characters in American Gothic and Robert Martin and Eric Savoy's collection on the American Gothic tradition. Justin D. Edwards, *Gothic Passages: Racial Ambiguity and the American Gothic* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003); Robert K. Martin and Eric Savoy, eds., *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1998).
[85] Silyn Roberts, *Gothic Subjects*, 21.

the supernatural to associate particular white male characters with socially dead groups, in order to express concerns over white citizenship's cultural ideology.

Crucially, these supernatural events—ghosts, monsters, body hopping, talking objects—are framed within the real world. The settings of New England towns, Philadelphia city streets and Manhattan's Wall Street seen in Hawthorne, Bird and Melville, were all recognisable locations for the antebellum reader, and many of their characters represent common antebellum figures. These texts channel anxieties over white citizenship in the antebellum period into an imaginative realm that fuses together the fantastical with social reality, which simultaneously entertains and challenges readers. In the words of Harry Levin, "it is the business of fiction to explore what might have been, what may be, [and] what is not".[86] The Gothic offers fantastical opportunities through which those three possibilities can be realised. As this introduction discussed earlier in regards to literary liminality studies, the supernatural is a space where characters inhabit alternative subject positions, and writers explore and exorcise the threat of discorporation, at a time when full citizenship was in flux and vulnerable to social, legal and economic change.[87]

[86] Levin, *The Power of Blackness*, 19.

[87] Marina Warner's work discusses this supernatural possibility as a "breaking of rules of natural law" that gives the reader "intrinsic pleasure" to "enter the world, inhabit it, move inside it". I add that part of this pleasure, in particular when reading Gothic texts, is the freedom to leave that world and to contain it within fiction. In addition, Warner identifies that stories of supernatural transformation generate and regenerate at time of "historical and cultural metamorphosis". Warner's work supports my argument that antebellum authors channelled complex debates on white citizenship into fantastical realms. Marina Warner, *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 18–19, 212.

Gothic texts exist as "conundrums" for the reader to decide their own ethical position on the events in the text.[88] The texts I examine all ask questions of the reader, inviting both emotional and cerebral involvement. For example, as I argue in Chapter 1, ventriloquism in Brown's *Wieland* presents a puzzle for the reader. Like the heroine Clara Wieland, the reader must work out if the strange cries heard in the Wieland home emanate from a human or supernatural source. Texts such as Poe's horror stories evoke a range of responses including disgust, shock, terror and curiosity, reactions almost physical in nature. At the same time these texts reflect the reading public's negotiations of citizenship by often featuring characters grappling with their own social status and threatened by the possibility of losing citizenship, as represented by the liminal white figure's voice.

Through six chronological chapters, this thesis examines how a group of antebellum authors responded to the developing ideology of white citizenship through unusual and unexpected voices on the boundary between life and death. Chapter 1 examines how Brown communicates liminal whiteness through sensational ventriloquism, which marked marginalised white men as non-white noncitizens along the shifting frontier. Itinerant Frank Carwin in *Wieland* and cognitively disabled Nick Handyside in "Somnambulism" transform into haunting Native American figures, through their unusual vocal abilities of ventriloquism and mimicry. Their shape-shifting and transgressive cries disturb the senses of white middle-class families—the Wielands and Davises—who serve as prime fictional examples of rational

[88] Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet, *The Poetics and Politics of the American Gothic: Gender and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2013), 29.

white citizens in the early republic. Written as pieces of irrational yet instructive entertainment, Brown transcribes these disruptive and powerful speech acts within his fiction to test the senses of his republican heroines and Gothic readers.

In contrast to Brown's scepticism, Irving embraces the irrational and the supernatural in his early national ghost stories. In his transatlantic fiction, Irving repeatedly invokes nostalgia for pre-Revolutionary America through spectral landscapes and figures. Chapter 2 argues that Irving employs Native-inflected spectral colonial men to enact nostalgia for rugged white masculinities and interdependent yet hierarchical communities, both rooted in land ownership. The spectral Antony Vander Heyden in "Dolph Heyliger" is a relic of a past America, who protests the increasing professionalisation of white male citizens and the destruction of colonial communal structures. Within the episodic novel *Bracebridge Hall*—of which "Dolph Heyliger" is the sole American piece—Irving reproduces oral accounts and scenes of supernatural storytelling as a means of rescuing and propagating these fading civic structures of relation and feeling.

As Irving's protagonists and stories seem to travel through time, Bird's Sheppard Lee travels through bodies. In *Sheppard Lee*, Bird experiments boldly with cross-racial transformation. Chapter 3 reads the novel as textual blackface and evinces the theatrical influences on Bird's work. Sheppard's supernatural liminal journey into and out of an African American enslaved body mirrors the paradoxical demarcation and blurring of racial categories set up in early blackface minstrelsy. This chapter employs archival research on Bird to argue that Sheppard's inhabitation of blackness mocks white civic values of industry

and property, while seeking to contain palpable threats of fluid and violent social and racial movement in Jacksonian America.

How the supernatural can both enunciate and exorcise anxieties of white male citizenship extends to Chapter 4, on Poe. In his fantastical horror tales, Poe employs scientific and medical experiments as narrative devices to voice white male civic fragility. Written in a context of antebellum medical graverobbing and dissection—a practice that targeted unprotected African American bodies—Poe's medical narratives realise the frightening possibility that white middle-class man could also be controlled and manipulated in the name of medical progress. For Poe, the dying or dead body in the hands of the doctor or scientist offers an opportunity to both explore and exorcise fears of social exclusion and loss. In subjecting his protagonists to near-death or fatal experiences, Poe asks what it means for citizens to lose their self-possession and instead become the property of others. In "Loss of Breath" and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar", the dead are conscious, talking beings. In speaking of and protesting suffering, these voices undermine the expectation of an autonomous, rational and self-possessed antebellum citizenship, represented by the professional white male doctor.

Poe's work repeatedly engages with the destruction of white civic and individual bodies. In contrast, Hawthorne's humorous short fiction often reveals the constructed nature of the white male citizen. Chapter 5 argues that Hawthorne's folk tales of enchantment reflect and satirise the centrality of the voice in forming respectable middle class identities. In "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" the central character exploits Higginbotham's silent dead body to weave a captivating news story of sensational murder, and establish himself as

a respectable and profitable peddler. In "Feathertop" Hawthorne draws on prevalent spiritualist phenomena in the 1850s and employs a conceit of enchantment to satirise the emptiness of respectability: an inanimate scarecrow coming to life and aping eloquent speech both unnerves and entices a local community, revealing the performativity of gentility. Hawthorne employs scenes of fabricated gossip and clichéd speech to mock pretentions of respectability, and through enchantment he reveals these respectable men to be constructed selves, and the white male citizen to be an illusory ideal.

In my final chapter I examine a movement towards silence and wordlessness to express liminal whiteness in Melville's late fiction. In *Pierre*, the otherworldly Isabel Banford voices her social isolation through shrieks and a spirit-possessed guitar. Cadaverous Bartleby in "Bartleby the Scrivener" is a ghostly figure whose verbal refusals and withdrawals from conversation disavow the ideal of the professional male tied to sociality and self-making. In response to these unusual utterances, Pierre and the narrator of "Bartleby" turn Isabel and Bartleby into dependent figures that define their own formation of male civic identity as providers and protectors. Melville explores how one can move beyond language to testify experience, both in his characters' strange voices and in his own wrestling with language and writing itself in his later fiction.

As my six chapters demonstrate, I extend readings of racial conflict away from white interactions with literal blackness, towards internalised manifestations of marginalisation, present in the liminal white figure. In doing so, I argue the white body is an ambiguous space whose voice has the potential to deconstruct the white community of

which it is a part. The voice, crucial in the construction of white social identity, and which manifests itself in the works of Brown, Irving, Bird, Poe, Hawthorne and Melville as an inexplicable, forceful and haunting presence, disrupts normative communities, disturbs self-knowledge and challenges prescriptions of racial belonging in the antebellum period.

Chapter 1

"A shriek so terrible!": Sensational Ventriloquism in Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland* and "Somnambulism"

Reflecting on a terrifying encounter some nights before, when an unidentified voice emanating from her bedroom closet discussed murdering her, Clara Wieland, the narrator of Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland* (1798), attempts to visualise the source of this voice:

> My fears had pictured to themselves no precise object. It would be difficult to depict, in words, the ingredients and hues of that phantom which haunted me. An hand invisible and of preternatural strength, lifted by human passions, and selecting my life for its aims, were parts of this terrific image. All places were alike accessible to this foe, or if his empire were restricted by local bounds, those bounds were utterly inscrutable by me.[1]

Clara struggles rationally to process the event. The ineffability of the voice and the shape-shifting nature of the vocal "phantom" challenge both her understanding of space and her ability to describe the men who made the murderous claims. Indeed, all Clara can imagine is a "preternatural" invisible hand from a quasi-supernatural being, with a voice that knows no bounds or restrictions. She attempts to construct what Stephen Connor terms a "vocalic body", a physical speaker, to help her understand how this voice could enter her house.[2] From the voice alone, Clara imagines a man supernaturally able to exceed his space and enter hers, coming from the outside in. In Brown's

---

[1] Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland; and Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist*, ed. Jay Fliegelman (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 97 (hereafter cited in text as *W*).
[2] Steven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 35.

description of her thought process, Clara moves from the senses to the sensational. She starts by using her hearing, recording that she encountered voices nights before, and then her thinking develops into an act of supernatural imagination. The disembodied voice in the text overwhelms and disorders Clara's mind—led by her hearing alone, she constructs an improbable supernatural foe. Although unable completely to picture this man, in this moment Clara does assign a fantastical imaginary speaker to the voice she has heard. Brown presents the source of the voice as a liminal figure who exists between visible and invisible worlds, as both a man who threatens physically to invade Clara's house, and as a disembodied phantom.

Taking this mysterious aural episode as a starting point, this chapter focuses on the significance of disembodied cries in Brown's *Wieland: Or, the Transformation, An American Tale* and "Somnambulism: A Fragment" (1805). The two texts feature families plagued by mysterious disembodied voices and their attempts to locate and interpret the sources. In *Wieland*, Clara and her family—brother Theodore, sister-in-law Catharine and brother-in-law Henry Pleyel—are disturbed by a series of inexplicable cries, all performed by Frank Carwin, a man of swarthy appearance, his skin of an off-white "sallow hue", and itinerant lifestyle (*W* 61). In "Somnambulism", two travellers, Constantia Davis and her father, navigate a nocturnal journey haunted by the shadowy figure of Nick Handyside, a savage idiot who shrieks in the darkness. Brown transforms these men into liminal-white frontier figures in order to mark them as outside the family-as-nation microcosm. With their shape-shifting vocal powers, they unsettle the communities they encounter by throwing into doubt the reliability of the physical senses. In doing so, Carwin and Nick reveal the

fractures of an early national society that elevated educated white middle-class families as model enlightenment citizens.

What citizenship looks like and how it interacts with the slippery nature of whiteness and racial identity is an undercurrent running through Brown's depiction of early national society. As Katy Chiles has recently argued, race in the early national period was "transformable". Whiteness could be transitioned into and out of because race was "potentially mutable" and "continuously subject to change".[3] New theories of natural history in the late eighteenth century hypothesised that the environment caused variations in race. These environmental theories exalted whiteness by espousing that African Americans could erase their blackness over time and that Native Americans could be civilised and integrated into Anglo-American society.[4] In Brown's work there are a number of characters who transgress or blur the boundaries of Anglo-American whiteness. For instance, in *Ormond* (1800), Ormond disguises himself in "the complexion and habiliments of a negro" in order to enter a house; racial masquerade enables Ormond to gain access to private spaces as an invisible American.[5] Similarly, in *Edgar Huntly* (1799), the eponymous

[3] Katy L. Chiles, *Transformable Race: Surprising Metamorphoses in the Literature of Early America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2.

[4] For example, the physician Benjamin Rush argued that endemic leprosy had led to Africans developing black skin. The remarkable case of Henry Moss in 1796, a free black man from Maryland whose skin began turning white, suggested to Rush that blackness could be gradually erased or remedied. Brown reprinted a report on Moss in *The Weekly Magazine* in 1798. These discussions of malleable race extended to perceptions of Native Americans. Unlike African Americans however, this group were expected to assimilate by changing their behaviour, not physical appearance. Thomas Jefferson contended that through educational and agricultural programmes, Native Americans would move from savagery to civilisation. See Chiles, *Transformable Race*, 132, 197; D. W., "Account of a Singular Change of Color in a Negro," *The Weekly Magazine of Original Essays, Fugitive Pieces, and Interesting Intelligence*, 24 February 1798, 109-11; Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind*, 24–25, 28–29.

[5] Charles Brockden Brown, *Ormond, Or the Secret Witness* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1999), 154. Julia Stern argues his blackface "dramatically exposes

protagonist performs "racial cross-dressing", transforming into a violent savage by closely resembling Native Americans in his bloody, ragged appearance and animalistic movements.[6] Anglo-Americans taking on Native and African American physical markers, such as Brown's characters, could blur and transgress the distinctions between white and non-white. Through these physical transformations, it was possible in the early national period to become less than white. Another way to think of this racial mutability is as liminality—the blurring and merging of racial categories and the transformation of white citizens into less-than-white outsiders. Liminal characters inhabit the margins of whiteness to signify their position on the periphery of society. In *Wieland*, Carwin is a disowned son and itinerant wanderer, who invades a white middle-class family estate. In "Somnambulism", Nick is a cognitively disabled young man unable to take part in society and community.

Brown associates both men with indigenous figures to signify their outsider status. In this chapter I read Carwin and Nick as liminal white figures, not just because of their frontier locations and grotesque physiques as other critiques have noted, but crucially for their shape-shifting and ventriloquial vocal powers.[7] Although Anglo-American men, Brown closely associates the pair's vocal dexterity with Native American speech, accentuating their position as less than white. Dislocated from a physical source, their voices are mutable and amorphous, and blur essentialised categories of identity.

---

the Janus face of republican freedom—liberty for the few constituted over against the bodies of the many". Ormond employs the guise of black "social invisibility" as a strategy for social dominance—it affords him privileged intimate access into the Dudley family home. I return to the complexities of blackface transformation in my discussion of *Sheppard Lee* in Chapter 3. Stern, *Plight of Feeling*, 213, 215.

[6] Jared Gardner, "Alien Nation: Edgar Huntly's Savage Awakening," *American Literature* 66, no. 3 (1994): 446.

[7] See DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow*, 9-25; Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, *Charles Brockden Brown* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), 34–36.

In these texts Brown pairs speaking, and its counterpart, listening, to bring to the fore and question ideals of rational white citizenship. Importantly, Carwin and Nick's liminal voices disrupt the hearing of the white familial communities in each text—family units who represent ideals of citizenship in the early national period. As discussed in my Introduction, the Naturalization Acts of the 1790s re-inscribed the nation as composed of white citizens only, who would demonstrate control and regulation of the senses.[8] This ideal citizen was expected to participate at a quotidian level by engaging in conversation and maintaining social relationships. At the most basic level, this required a rational citizen who made sense when they spoke and used their senses correctly, regulating their body and mind. Empiricism as formulated by eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid—the belief that truth is established through correctly using the five senses—was found at the heart of American enlightenment concepts of citizen building.[9] Strange vocal talents, such as ventriloquism and mimicry, were part of a rational entertainment industry employed in early national communities to test and refine citizens' senses. In public spaces such as Philadelphia pleasure gardens, the public encountered a host of spectacles, "from magic lanterns, perspective boxes, and solar microscopes to speaking figures, automata, and cosmoramas".[10] These were designed to enchant, intrigue, and test the senses of city dwellers; they encouraged citizens to sharpen their faculties in order to negotiate an environment of "forgers, counterfeiters, conspirators, imposters, and

[8] "A Bill to Establish an Uniform Rule of Naturalization"; "An Act Supplementary To, and to Amend the Act, Intituled [*sic*] 'An Act to Establish an Uniform Rule of Naturalization.'"

[9] As I detail later in the chapter, this empirical world-view significantly influenced early national political and civic thought.

[10] Wendy Bellion, *Citizen Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 5.

demagogues".[11] The educational purpose of these entertainments depended on seemingly inexplicable technology and art.

As part of this growth of rational entertainments, transatlantic gothic fiction boomed in the 1790s, providing a crucial opportunity for the popular challenging and testing of readerly reason.[12] Brown situates his gothic fiction in a specifically American context, testing both his characters and readers with confusing and shady figures, both within the growing city and along the shifting frontier. In *Wieland* and "Somnambulism", this is a test the Wielands and Davises fail. When confronted by these seemingly inexplicable voices, the white families display an over-reliance on the senses and sensory experience alone, which leads to misrecognition and sensational gothic imaginations. In *Wieland* the family misinterpret Carwin's voice and believe it to be a supernatural event; in "Somnambulism", Constantia Davis and her father hear Nick's strange savage cries and mistakenly imagine him as part of a gothic frontier fantasy. I argue there is a significant shift from the senses to the sensational, and from observation and empiricism to imagination, in the figures of Clara and Constantia. In examining the heroines' reactions to Carwin and Nick's voices, this chapter positions Clara and Constantia as gothic readers, who construct sensational scenarios in response to the unclassifiable or savage figure, which blinds them from the dangerous men in the domestic space—obsessive and violent Althorpe and fanatical Theodore. In *Wieland* and

[11] Ibid., 14–15.
[12] Siân Silyn Roberts' list of British gothic fiction imported and reprinted in Boston, New York and Philadelphia in the 1790s evinces the popularity of the genre amongst American readers and its presence in the literary marketplace. Silyn Roberts, *Gothic Subjects*, 28–29.

"Somnambulism" Brown employs the liminal figure to critique the ideals of an exclusive white citizenship based on government of the senses.

Critics have debated to what extent Brown's works are nationalist texts. Shirley Samuels and Jane Tompkins, for example, have influentially detected a nationalist agenda in *Wieland*, arguing that the novel asks for order and protection for the nation. Samuels views Carwin as a threatening alien from revolutionary France against which America must be "inoculated".[13] Tompkins sees him as an internal threat, a "child of the revolution" who wreaks violence on a young nation, and argues that Brown calls for "the restoration of civic authority in a post-Revolutionary age".[14] In his work on *Edgar Huntly*, meanwhile, Jared Gardner reads the novel as a "nationalist project", which creates a new American identity along the frontier through "exorcising" the Indian and the alien.[15] More recently, though, Stephen Shapiro has stated that it is a mistake to situate Brown "as a nationalist and ultimately a conservative writer" since he is much more critical of national ideals and institutions than previously argued.[16] Shapiro's holistic approach, which unites Brown's progressive political worldview on women's rights, indigenous affairs and slavery, with his fiction, suggests that the focus of Brown criticism needs to ask how Carwin and other marginal figures disrupt these ideals and institutions. By reading Carwin and Nick as liminal white figures we can see Brown interrogating citizenship and its exclusive demographic.

---

[13] Shirley Samuels, "'Wieland': Alien and Infidel," *Early American Literature* 25, no. 1 (1990): 63.
[14] Tompkins, *Sensational Designs*, 52, 61.
[15] Gardner, "Alien Nation," 430.
[16] Stephen Shapiro, *The Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic World-System* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 213.

It is apparent that scholars want to classify Carwin as representative of *something*: a foreign threat, democratic citizen or marginalised Native presence.[17] At times he appears as Spanish, Native, an American peasant, a devil, a thug, a woman, in dress or speech, which supports these multiple alternative readings. Instead, I argue that addressing his unclassifiable nature, which is manifest through a number of physical and vocal guises, is a better approach to viewing Carwin. I use Ed White's claim in *Revising Charles Brockden Brown* that the author does not "identify the subaltern in an essentialist fashion", to argue for a reading of Carwin that focuses on his liminality and mutability.[18] Through mimicry, Carwin could be anyone: male/female, human/supernatural, Native/American/alien. His strange vocal abilities allow him to cross these national and ontological categories. His alignment with Native Americans or Spanish visitors emphasises his position as a liminal white man on the edges of the family-as-nation microcosm. It is this unknown quality that leads to the disruption of the senses in the Wieland family.

The majority of Brown scholarship focuses on the four gothic novels (*Wieland*, *Edgar Huntly*, *Arthur Mervyn*, *Ormond*). As a result, most existing criticism on "Somnambulism" views the fragment as an early draft of *Edgar Huntly*, with Nick simply a stand-in for savage Native American behaviour on

---

[17] Writing on *Wieland*'s prequel *Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist* (1803-5), Paul Downes interprets Carwin as "an insistently *democratic* subject*"*. Hsuan Hsu takes the view that Carwin represents a colonised subject re-entering the white domestic space. Paul Downes, "Constitutional Secrets: 'Memoirs of Carwin' and the Politics of Concealment," *Criticism* 39, no. 1 (1997): 110; Hsuan L. Hsu, "Democratic Expansionism in 'Memoirs of Carwin,'" *Early American Literature* 35, no. 2 (2000): 137–56.

[18] Ed White, "Carwin the Peasant Rebel," in *Revising Charles Brockden Brown: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality in the Early Republic*, ed. Philip Barnard, Mark L. Kamrath, and Stephen Shapiro (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004), 52.

the frontier.[19] However, I argue that Brown frames Nick in references to indigenous behaviour and culture in order to emphasise his marginality as a disabled young man unable to participate in civic life. Sustained attention to the fragment enriches our understanding of how Brown and early national literature attended to the place of young Americans within a nexus of gender, class, race and ability that determined their position on the margins of society.

*

"Somnambulism: A Fragment" is a short gothic tale narrated by Richard Althorpe, a nervous and romantic man. One evening, his guests Mr Davis and his daughter Constantia—the object of Althorpe's unrequited affection—must leave him to travel through the night. Althorpe protests, claiming the journey is "attended with uncommon danger" but "unable to explain" to them or himself why.[20] Undeterred, the Davises embark, and Althorpe falls asleep in a chair, dreaming that he is on the roadside, shooting a potential assailant. He awakens in the morning to news that disaster has struck. When travelling through the rural Norwood, Constantia and her father encounter a haunting shadowy figure on the roadside. A farmer informs them it is Nick Handyside, a local simpleton who enjoys lurking in the darkness and scaring travellers with his shrieks. The Davises' curiosity and speculation increases to a heightened state of excitement, until they hear Nick's shrieks, at which point Constantia is attacked

[19] Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro posit that the short story is "possibly written as a draft 'fragment' in the process of planning *Sky-Walk* or *Edgar Huntly*". Jeffrey Weinstock reads Nick as a stand-in for Native Americans, arguing that Brown "recast[s]" him as the Lenni Lenape in *Edgar Huntly*. Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly, Or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker: With Related Texts*, ed. Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006), 244; Weinstock, *Charles Brockden Brown*, 36.

[20] Charles Brockden Brown, "Somnambulism: A Fragment," in *American Gothic: An Anthology, 1787-1916*, ed. Charles L. Crow (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999), 8 (hereafter cited in text as *S*).

by an unseen assailant and dies of her wounds. With the aid of Brown's introductory note—which cites the influence of a *Vienna Gazette* article concerning a sleepwalking murderer—the reader is to infer that Althorpe's violent dream was reality and that he is the attacker.

Originally published in *The American Register and Literary Magazine* in May 1805, during Brown's editorship, "Somnambulism" was written before *Edgar Huntly*.[21] The two texts share frontier locations (Norwood in "Somnambulism" becomes Norwalk in *Edgar Huntly*) and have young male sleepwalking protagonists. However, whereas *Edgar Huntly* features encounters between settlers and Native Americans, "Somnambulism" only gestures toward Native Americans. In *Edgar Huntly* the Native is a physical embodiment of the violent, savage and inhospitable frontier. In "Somnambulism" the Native is an imagined figure only summoned through aurally encountering the insensible and animalistic Nick, himself an unseen character. I contend that Nick is not a Native stand-in, but an insensible simpleton who Brown renders as less than white to amplify his exclusion from early national citizenship.

Haunting the frontier, Nick occupies the same "liminal crepuscular realm" as Native Americans.[22] Norwood is a Pennsylvanian wilderness, "a region, rude, sterile, and lonely, bestrewn with rock, and embarrassed with bushes" (*S* 15). Early national literature reduced the Native American to an incorporeal being who appeared as a ghost in the landscape, reflecting how indigenous tribes vanished due to a campaign of white violence and

[21] See Shapiro and Barnard's note on "Somnambulism" in Brown, *Edgar Huntly*, 244.
[22] Weinstock, *Charles Brockden Brown*, 34.

expansion.[23] Nick is both invisible and visible: a "ghost" unseen throughout the tale, but physically described by the farmer and Althorpe, who portray him as a grotesque simpleton, a deformed half-man half-beast figure.

> Near the spot where they are now, lived a Mr. Handyside, whose only son was an idiot. He also merited the name of monster, if a projecting breast, a mis-shapen head, features horrid and distorted … This being, besides the natural deformity of his frame, wore looks and practised gesticulations that were, in an inconceivable degree, uncouth and hideous. (*S* 14)

Brown describes Nick in a similar way to how he later presents Native Americans in *Edgar Huntly*. Hidden by the gloom Nick is a shape-shifting figure, slipping between man and animal, rendered interchangeable with "a sheep or a cow … or hog" (*S* 14). This same slippage between animal and man appears in *Edgar Huntly* when Edgar encounters a Lenni Lenape in the darkness, whom he likens to "a wolf, or panther, or bear" and observes moving "upon all fours".[24] Althorpe's observational tone fixes Nick as a strange creature possessing peculiar talents and skills particular to the wilderness landscape: he is "fleet as a deer" and "patient, to an incredible degree, of watchfulness, and cold, and hunger" (*S* 15). Althorpe echoes contemporary views of Native Americans as possessing an insensibility and imperviousness to the elements. Benjamin Rush, for example, in a 1774 lecture to the American Philosophical Society, commented on the abilities of Indian men "to bear the most exquisite pain without complaining", which contributed "to give a tone to the nervous system". He noted too that the use of grease and clay to paint the body served to "lessen the sensibility of the extremities of the nerves", making

[23] For more on the "vanishing Indian" in early national literature see Bergland, *The National Uncanny*, 49-57.
[24] Brown, *Edgar Huntly*, 132.

the Native American impervious to the damaging effects of extreme heat or cold.[25]

Cognitively impaired and physically disfigured, Nick is already a marginalised figure in the early national period, because he is unable to contribute to the community. Many early national texts such as Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1789) and Sarah Wood's *Dorval; or The Speculator* (1800) employ temporary or sudden insensibility and madness to show the damage of unscrupulous seduction plots on unfortunate heroines.[26] Nick stands apart from this group because he is not insane, but cognitively disabled. As an "idiot" he lacks the mental understanding to take part in civic discussions, both at a quotidian and political level: Althorpe describes his actions as "entirely bereft of reason" (*S* 15).[27] Nick's position on the frontier amplifies this marginality as he is rendered analogous to Native Americans. The association with the Native American through wild behaviours and animalistic appearance, I would suggest, serves to further "disidentify" Nick from "an 'American' national identity".[28] The Native American fully represented insensibility as a disability that disqualified them from participating

---

[25] Benjamin Rush, "An Inquiry into the Natural History of Medicine Among the Indians of North-America, and a Comparitive View of Their Diseases and Remedies with Those of Civilized Nation," in *Medical Inquiries and Observations*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: J. Conrad & Co., 1805), 1:12–13.

[26] Charlotte Temple goes insane and dies shortly after lover Montraville abandons her. In *Dorval*, the eponymous bigamist seduces and imprisons Elizabeth Dunbar. She escapes but goes mad from guilt and is incarcerated in a Philadelphia asylum. Karen A. Weyler connects female madness in these novels with early national discourses on female sexuality in *Intricate Relations: Sexual and Economic Desire in American Fiction, 1789-1814* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2005), 75-104.

[27] Taking an empirical world-view, Samuel Johnson defined "idiot" as someone in "want of understanding" and therefore outside of society, as knowledge and understanding was necessary for conversation. Martin Halliwell covers the developing etymology of "idiot" in *Images of Idiocy: The Idiot Figure in Modern Fiction and Film* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2004), 6–13.

[28] Chiles, *Transformable Race*, 108.

in a rational society. Native coding of this disabled man reinforces citizenship as exclusively for those who are sensible and can participate in society.[29] Nick is deficient and defective and so appears as a Native American, a non-white and non-American subject automatically excluded from citizenship. Kim Nielsen argues that early national political theorists grouped together all those deemed incapable of being responsible citizens, contrasting "idiots, lunatics, women of all races, people of indigenous nations, and African Americans with those considered worthy of full citizenship".[30] A supposed lack of reason or sense connected all these groups excluded from the vote and political participation. Nick's less-than-human description amplifies his segregation from the community in the early national period and excludes him from the rights or responsibilities of the citizen. I argue later that this exclusion from white citizenship is apparent not just in Nick's physicality, but also in his vocality.

Carwin, too, inhabits a frontier space in Mettingen. The isolated family estate on the banks of the Schuylkill a few miles outside Philadelphia, is set within a wild and chiaroscuro natural landscape, the shore of the river "chequered by patches of dark verdure and shapeless masses of white marble, and crowned by copses of cedar" (*W* 54). Clara's father, Wieland, purchases the Mettingen farm as a young man and constructs a temple as part of his deep non-conformist religious passion. When Clara is a child, he experiences a violent inexplicable death, apparently spontaneously combusting, leaving Clara with unresolved questions whether it was a natural phenomenon or the hand of

[29] Emily Ogden offers a similar reading of *Edgar Huntly*. Both somnambulist Edgar and the Lenni Lenape are traditionally insensible figures whose experiences and testimony cannot be accepted in rational society. Emily Ogden, "*Edgar Huntly* and the Regulation of the Senses," *American Literature* 85, no. 3 (2013): 419–45.
[30] Kim E. Nielsen, *A Disability History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), 50.

God: “Was this the penalty of disobedience? This the stroke of a vindictive and invisible hand?” (*W* 21). The mysterious traveller Carwin enters the enclosed lives of the family some years later after Theodore has married. At the same time as Carwin’s arrival, Clara, Theodore and Pleyel all hear disembodied voices in the guise of family members, criminal thugs, and a supernatural power, believing what they hear despite contrary testimony. As the family are alternately intrigued and terrified by these seemingly inexplicable occurrences, the novel reaches a climax when Theodore murders Catharine, their children and a servant girl Louisa Conway, claiming to hear the voice of God ordering him. After Carwin reveals himself as the ventriloquial source of the earlier voices, Clara struggles to decide whether Theodore has imagined this holy voice or been deceived by Carwin, demonic or human, as she is increasingly unable to rely on her senses alone.

When the reader and Clara first encounter Carwin, he is walking through the grounds of Clara’s property, appearing as a rustic figure that Clara has only seen in the past “on the road or field” (*W* 57). His clothing, coarse and weathered, suggests he is a wanderer or peasant. We can read this as the first of Carwin’s physical disguises, as he presents himself as an itinerant to conceal his identity and avoid detection by Ludloe, his villainous guardian in Europe. In this guise he is afforded a form of invisibility; as an impoverished figure he fades into the background of a number of politically unimportant yet economically necessary domestic workers and poor labourers. Disguised as such he is able to access different locations in the city and the surrounding

countryside without attention.[31] As such, from her distanced perspective Clara dismisses him as not part of the educated company she keeps at Mettingen. However, if Carwin chooses plain dress in order to have largely unimpeded movement and to avoid attention, this is negated by the remarkableness of his face. When Clara sees his face later, it is marked as abnormal:

> His cheeks were pallid and lank, his eyes sunken, his forehead overshadowed by coarse straggling hairs, his teeth large and irregular, though sound and brilliantly white, and his chin discoloured by a tetter. His skin was of coarse grain and sallow hue. Every feature was wide of beauty, and the outline of his face reminded you of an inverted cone. (*W* 61)

Compared to the Wieland family, who are noticeably bodiless in Brown's descriptions, Carwin's grotesque visage is closely detailed by Clara. Throughout *Wieland*, readers are told of characters' physical movements and expressions, for example Clara's fainting spells, without actually knowing what the family look like. Carwin's distorted physique is emphasised first in person and then again when Clara sketches his face, a "rare and prodigious" form that she cannot remove from her mind, which accentuates his uncategorisable strangeness and his distinct position outside the family (*W* 62). Simultaneously, both Nick and Carwin are socially invisible yet strongly physically demarcated as strange less-than-white figures.

[31] In *Wieland*, Judith serves as a prime example of the ignored servant: she continually resides in the domestic space and is privy to intimate information, yet Clara regularly overlooks her subjectivity. For example, on first meeting Carwin, Clara quotes the stranger yet demotes Judith's words into indirect speech. See Matthew Pethers, "The Secret Witness: Thinking, and Not Thinking, about Servants in the Early American Novel," in *Class and the Making of American Literature*, ed. Andrew Lawson (New York: Routledge, 2014), 42.

María DeGuzmán reads the above description of Carwin as one of "racial ambiguity" due to his off-white physical appearance.[32] This, combined with his residency in Spain, she argues, represents a Spanish threat to the new nation. This is another of Carwin's physical guises; Clara identifies Carwin's "garb, aspect, and deportment" as "wholly Spanish" (*W* 77). He is tainted and darkened through his "*transformation* into a Spaniard", not least due to his conversion to Catholicism, a denomination viewed with suspicion in eighteenth century British and American cultural discourse (*W* 78).[33] Recent European immigrants, in particular Catholics and Jews, hold a liminal position in Brown's fiction, as both insiders who have many of the freedoms of white Americans, and outsiders who have distinct political and religious beliefs. For example, in *Arthur Mervyn* (1800), Achsa Fielding, an English Sephardic Jew, is both part of Philadelphian society and economy and an exotic darkened figure ("as tawney as a moor") who attracts Arthur.[34] Both Carwin and Achsa demonstrate that multifaceted American identity shifts and transforms along geographic and racial lines in the early national period.

When focussing on the physical or geographical aspects of Carwin and Nick, DeGuzmán and Weinstock overlook the power of the men's voices, which I argue is inextricably linked to their character. Their liminality is

---

[32] DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow*, 25.

[33] An example is Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), which scandalised audiences with its sensational depiction of the lascivious and demonic Spanish monk Ambrosio. The first American edition of *The Monk* was published in Boston in 1799. Silyn Roberts, *Gothic Subjects*, 26.

[34] Stephen Shapiro views Achsa's Jewish identity as a cover for her "(Caribbean) mixed-race" and connects her to the circum-Atlantic slave trade that Brown weaves through the novel. He contends that Achsa's marriage to Arthur at the novel's conclusion puts forth an argument for interracial marriage, which supports Brockden Brown's abolitionist writings published in the early 1800s. Shapiro, *The Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel*, 287; Charles Brockden Brown, *Arthur Mervyn, Or, Memoirs of the Year 1793: With Related Texts*, ed. Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008), 320.

manifest through their strange vocal abilities of ventriloquism and mimicry. The voice is a liminal entity itself, straddling visible and invisible worlds. Carwin and Nick's disembodied cries produce imagined physical bodies yet are ephemeral and intangible. In the texts they appear as liminal supernatural figures, as shape-shifters who are ascribed preternatural origins as a "ghost" or "dæmon" by other characters, which firmly places them outside white, rational communities. As I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, turning to scholarship on the voice in the early national period offers two potential readings of these voices in relation to American citizenship. Christopher Looby, on the one hand, outlines the importance of the "grain of the voice" in enacting America as a new nation, arguing that the voice is utilised in written cultural and political discourses on nation building, national and individual identity.[35] The Federalists, who were losing their grip on power just as Brown was producing his major works, passed the Sedition Act of 1798 to shut down alternative voices implicitly from non-citizen aliens who criticised the Adams administration.

In response to Looby's work, however, Nancy Ruttenburg views speech as an aperture for the emergence of disenfranchised voices (women, the working classes, racial minorities) which undermine the ideals set out in national discourses, spoken and written realms primarily inhabited by middle-class and elite white men. [36] For Ruttenburg, Carwin's unstable and unlocatable utterances in *Wieland* represent the uncontainable, forceful and often

[35] Looby, *Voicing America*, 3.
[36] In addition, Julia Stern argues that literature of the 1790s acts as an "unquiet platform" for these voices to unconsciously manifest. Ruttenburg, *Democratic Personality*, 6; Stern, *Plight of Feeling*, 2.

inarticulate voice of democratic personality.[37] The ontological uncertainty and multiplicity of the ventriloquial voice—its separation from a visible human source and its amorphousness—serves to represent those who are liminal and mutable in society and who are disconnected from the white family-as-nation, nation-as-family view of America. Carwin and Nick, literally invisible for significant portions of the text, and only represented by their voices, are also, to use Julia Stern's term, figurative "invisible Americans" because they are marginalised white men outside the communities of the Wieland and Davis families.[38] Developing Stern and Ruttenburg's work, from this perspective the presence of Carwin's and Nick's mimicry and ventriloquism, which cross the boundaries of race and species, serve to amplify their positions as liminal white figures and mark them on the peripheries of early national citizenship.

In addressing Carwin's vocal powers, we can read his ventriloquism as clearly drawn from Native American culture. Firstly, as Brown makes clear in his prequel to *Wieland*, *Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist*, Carwin's ventriloquism originates with him imitating a Mohawk savage cry as an adolescent.

> I uttered the words which chanced to occur to me, and repeated in the shrill tones of a Mohock savage… "Cow! cow! come home! home!"… These notes were of course reverberated from the rocks which on either side towered aloft, but the echo was confused and indistinct. (*W* 284-5)

The cries produce a response of "the same words, with equal distinctness and deliberation, and in the same tone" from a dusky spot "some hundred feet" behind him. The speaker is "concealed from … view" located at a position

[37] Ruttenburg, *Democratic Personality*, 6.
[38] Stern, *Plight of Feeling*, 2.

"inaccessible to man or beast" (*W* 285). Realising it is his own vocal power producing the responses, Carwin moves into "new positions", penetrating the landscape with his inventive cries (*W* 286).[39] In this episode, the savage "shrill tones" reverberate through the air to create a Native "vocalic body", an imagined Mohawk re-inhabiting the frontier region of western Pennsylvania, where the young Carwin lives. The echoes multiply this body so that the landscape is filled with several Native voices in the shadows, behind rocks and above cliffs. In this instance, the Mohawk acts as a vocalic guise, one of many identities Carwin takes on using his voice, which further emphasises Carwin as a liminal figure, an Anglo-American who in this instance could be mistaken for a Native American.

Importantly, the magazine piece "On the Scheme of an American Language" (July 1800), which appeared in *The Monthly Magazine* under Brown's editorship, acknowledges that Anglo-American culture linguistically incorporates Native culture: "Afghan and Mohock, Kenneback and Owhyhee may in some sense, be said to have become English words, since they are in established use among Englishmen".[40] The writer argues against the idea of a distinctly American language, stating that America is "a country which stretches nearly from one pole to the other" with dialects localised in each region, making it impossible to distinguish language on a national level. Therefore the language of America, is not an "American language", but an amorphous body incorporating influences of "Indian vicinity … intermixture of

[39] Brown's interest in the production of sounds continues in *Edgar Huntly*. Crying out in the wilderness, Edgar notes, "its echoes were sent back to me in broken and confused sounds and from above … I had hallooed with all my force, knowing that sound is reflected according to the distance and relative positions of the substances from which it is repelled". Brown, *Edgar Huntly*, 109.

[40] "On the Scheme of an American Language," *The Monthly Magazine, and American Review*, July 1800, 4.

emigrants of different nations, and, particularly in the southern states, from converse with negroes".[41] As David Kazanjian argues, Carwin's ownership of a Mohock voice represents Brown's "assimilation or incorporation of the uncivilizable" Native tongue into white settler language.[42] Carwin serves as an extension of this linguistic fluidity, as an American who inhabits the guises, physical or vocalic, of different nations, races, genders and class positions.

However, it is not just the subjects Carwin imitates that render him liminal, as he crosses between white and non-white guises, but also the manner in which he produces sound. In *Wieland* and *Memoirs*, Carwin uses a vocal practice firmly associated with non-white and non-Christian groups. This can be seen in *Wieland*, which audiences could have read five years before encountering Carwin's adolescent ventriloquism in the 1803 serialisation of *Memoirs*. Leigh Eric Schmidt suggests that M. de la Chapelle's work on ventriloquism, *La Ventriloque* (1773), to which Brown refers in *Wieland*, "offered a naturalistic lens … to provide a way of making sense of indigenous conjurers encountered through colonial contact".[43] Eighteenth-century writers saw the thrown voice and its unknown corporal origin as a pagan and distinctly non-white act. Early examples of ventriloquism can be found in ancient Greece, where priestesses acted as conduits for the Delphic Oracle. Later, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Britain and colonial America, the

---

[41] Ibid., 2–3.

[42] David Kazanjian, "Charles Brockden Brown's Biloquial Nation: National Culture and White Settler Colonialism in *Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist*", *American Literature* 73, no. 3 (2001): 479, 463. Furthermore, Kazanjian connects this Mohock savage cry with the demonic colonised Caliban from *The Tempest*. When Carwin later ventriloquises Ariel's song from *The Tempest* in *Memoirs*, this Caliban-Mohock figure transforms into a noble savage, a product of the white settler colonial imagination. Ibid., 487.

[43] Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 151.

ventriloquial voice was firmly associated with the devil and witchcraft, either real or fraudulently produced to torment believers.[44]

While ventriloquism began to transform into a form of popular entertainment at the end of the eighteenth century, it still connoted the occult or the pagan, and was therefore implicitly non-Christian and non-white. Clara describes Carwin's voice as "louder than human organs could produce, shriller than language can depict", and exceeding both human capability and understanding, firmly placing the speaker outside an Anglo-American realm (*W* 261). In Rush's lecture "Of Speech" (1792), he in fact describes Native speech as a ventriloquial act, remaining in the throat and not engaging the lips and tongue: "The Indians in the country, use their tongues and lips as little as possible in conversation. Even at public treaties, they grunt their assent to what is proposed to them, through their throats. All their languages partake largely of guttural sounds".[45] And similarly to Rush, Thomas Reid viewed "savage" speech as "an exercise, not of the voice and lungs but of all the muscles of the body".[46] Carwin uses the generic term "organs" to describe the source of his vocal power encompassing his throat and abdomen, suggesting a guttural source and matching the Latin etymology of "ventriloquism" as speaking from the stomach (*W* 226, 287, 288). His ventriloquism is an act of physicality, "every muscle tense" in his face when Clara sees him throwing his voice (*W* 168). It is this peculiar production that Carwin uses not just to imitate a Mohawk, but in all his vocal guises in the text: Catharine Wieland, the "sweet

[44] Ibid., 138–43.
[45] Benjamin Rush, "Of Speech," in *Benjamin Rush's Lectures on the Mind*, ed. Eric T. Carlson, Patricia S. Noel, and Jeffrey L. Wollock (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1981), 204–5.
[46] Thomas Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense*, 4th ed. (London: T. Cadell, 1785), 96.

and delectable" sounding Clara, "hoarse" whispering thugs, and an omnipotent deity (*W* 152, 66).

Brown renders Nick's thrown voice distinctly otherworldly and pagan too: Althorpe describes it as resembling "nothing that was ever before heard" (S 14). The strange savage shrieks once again associate Nick with a Native presence. As in *Memoirs of Carwin*, Nick's cries similarly carry through the country landscape.

> Unable to extricate himself, and, at length, tormented with hunger, he manifested his distress by the most doleful shrieks. These were uttered with most vehemence, and heard at great distance, by night. … He had improved the flexibility of his voice, till his cries, always loud and rueful, were capable of being diversified without end. Instances had been known in which the stoutest heart was appalled by them; and some, particularly in the case of women, in which they had been productive of consequences truly deplorable. (*S* 15)

The amorphous quality of his voice matches his shape-shifting appearance, and he projects "inexpressibly wild and melancholy" howls that remind Althorpe of "a troop of hungry wolves" (*S* 15). Nick's vocal flexibility and his diverse cries suggest again a ventriloquial source in the diaphragm. His shrieks inspire not just a fear of someone unusual and otherworldly, but primarily a fear of savage attack by an Indian, the unspeakable danger of the country road that Althorpe cannot visualise or explain to his guests. Althorpe's obsessive thoughts over Constantia at the beginning of the text, combined with his dream that he has rescued her from an unknown assailant, imply that in his mind "consequences truly deplorable" has a subtext of female sexual violation. As Nick is a roaming "monster", the reader is led to assume that any attack would be perpetrated by him. However, Nick performs "tricks" in his shrieks and laughs; there is an element of play in his behaviour, not terror as Althorpe infers. The idiot

becomes a subversive figure of disorder, a trickster who "loves to frighten folks" (*S* 14). Nick may be incapable of speech and therefore unable to take part in democratic society, but he is able to scream and cry, which is a powerful and effective reminder of his presence that tricks the Davis family out on the road.

Brown chooses to populate each text with savage vocalic bodies produced by liminal white men in order to test his republican characters and readers. When Carwin enters Mettingen his Mohock cry re-emerges as a series of voices, known and unknown, that intrude on the white domestic space and wreak havoc on the Wieland family. Carwin deliberately uses his voice to create disorder in the community; he confesses to producing "a mysterious dread" through a number of vocalic guises in order to destroy the reputation of Clara, mislead Theodore and Pleyel and satisfy his own curiosity (*W* 239). Hsuan Hsu identifies Carwin's voice as an indigenous spatial disturbance to colonial possession of the land, that "destabilize[s] the Jeffersonian grid by importing colonial voices back into the inmost cells of the colonizing nation".[47] The "Jeffersonian grid"—a stable and structured sense of social and geographic place in the early national period—originates with Wieland Sr.'s landgrab at the beginning of the novel, with the Wieland microcosm representing a nation seeking democratic expansion across the continent, appropriating indigenous land for white domestic estates. Carwin's is a liminal intermediary voice that brings together the expansionist aims of the early republic—it is a colonising force that enters and takes over the Mettingen estate—and the voices of those removed from the land in this expansionist project—the Mohock cry. The

[47] Hsu, "Democratic Expansionism in 'Memoirs of Carwin,'" 144.

ventriloquial voice takes up space where it is not. Clara, for example, asks: "How could he be at once stationed at my shoulder and shut up in my closet? How could he stand near me and yet be invisible?" (*W* 107). In being where it should not, the ventriloquial voice confuses understanding of space and enacts a sensory disturbance.

Diverging from Hsu's work on spatial disturbance, I contend that the liminal voice intruding into Mettingen enacts a sensory disruption that challenges ideals of rational white citizenship in the early national period. During the 1790s, it was whiteness that began to unite existing and new citizens.[48] However, as I noted in the introduction to this thesis, national documents, including the Constitution did not define the expected personal qualities of the citizen, only legal requirements. Justine S. Murison claims that "the status of citizenship fixed morality, memory, and residency … citizenship became a psychological character as much as political definition of rights and requirements". This she terms "moral citizenship".[49] I extend Murison's definition of psychological character as a combination of morality and memory to include the regulation of the senses. The ideal citizen, in this respect, has a sound relationship between body and mind, governing their senses in order to make correct judgments and actions; this is the "good character" demanded by the Naturalization Acts. In an early diary entry, for example, Brown specifically connected the senses with community:

---

[48] Nelson, *National Manhood*, 37.

[49] In her work on *Edgar Huntly*, Murison argues that sleepwalking endangers moral citizenship as it reveals the white citizen's true desire and capability for violence. Justine S. Murison, "The Tyranny of Sleep: Somnambulism, Moral Citizenship, and Charles Brockden Brown's 'Edgar Huntly,'" *Early American Literature* 44, no. 2 (2009): 244.

> Man possesses five senses or inlets to his mind. Of these the sight is the most useful, extensive and delicate in its formation … The importance of sight to men, and the exquisite organization of that matter in which it is centered, demand and have a separate theory … Man may be considered as one and alone; or he may be considered as a member of a community, and connected with others.[50]

The senses connect man to the external world and to others around him, bringing together individuals in local and national communities. Bonds of community and relation are predicated on individuals agreeing on what they have observed, for example, that blue is blue. One half of sense—soundwaves vibrating the ear drum, light reflecting off an object and entering the eye—is a corporeal event; the other half of sense—identifying correctly where the noise is produced, who or what is the object in the light—is an act of judgment. Reid noted this second meaning of sense: "in common language, sense always implies judgment. A man of sense is a man of judgment. Good sense is good judgment".[51]

At a national level, the Declaration was established upon "self-evident" truths, statements that all men can agree to be true. In this founding document the influence of Scottish Enlightenment philosophy is patent: all men are connected by shared physical senses and by shared common sense—knowledge of how the physical world operates and what is correct.[52] Reid claims, "All knowledge and all science, must be built upon principles that are self-evident;

---

[50] Charles Brockden Brown, diary entry (ca. 1787), quoted in William Dunlap, *The Life of Charles Brockden Brown: Together with Selections from the Rarest of His Printed Works from His Original Letters, and from His Manuscripts before Unpublished* (Philadelphia: James P. Parke, 1815), 1:20.

[51] Thomas Reid, "Essay VI: Of Judgment," in *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (Dublin: L. White, 1786), 2:196.

[52] Gary Wills meticulously traces the influence of the Enlightenment, in particularly the work of Reid, on Thomas Jefferson's framing of the Declaration. Gary Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 61–94.

and of such principles, every man who has common sense is a competent judge".[53] Although Reid's principles "put all men upon a level", including the philosopher, the savage and the layman, in the early national period they narrowed to the exclusive realm of the middle class, the elite and the educated.[54] As Sophia Rosenfeld writes, the philosophy of common sense created "new forms of exclusions, just as much as interclass solidarity or identity". Elevated as a "prized American value" necessary for the good character of the natural born or new citizen, common sense automatically excluded Native Americans, African Americans, the uneducated and the cognitively disabled.[55] Good sense or common sense requires the regulation and correct interpretation of the physical senses, with the Enlightenment citizen making decisions based on what they have seen, felt, smelled, tasted and heard. As I have earlier suggested, Nick in "Somnambulism" is excluded from this community because he is physically insensible and lacks rational understanding of the world around him. Sensing and reasoning are therefore inextricably linked.

In this context, we can see ventriloquism and unusual vocal powers to be a "form of rational entertainment" testing the judgment of Enlightenment citizens' senses.[56] Although the majority of these spectacles (magic lanterns, cosmoramas, automatons) prized accurate vision in order to distinguish truth from falsehood, accurate hearing was valued in the same way and ventriloquism was, "perversely enough, pressed into service for the refinement

---

[53] Reid, "Essay VI: Of Judgment," 199.
[54] Ibid., 177.
[55] Sophia A. Rosenfeld, *Common Sense: A Political History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 15, 154.
[56] Schmidt, *Hearing Things*, 136.

of the ear".[57] In the accounts of ventriloquism appearing in British and American magazines in the late eighteenth century, including *The Weekly Magazine* edited by Brown, the ventriloquist attempts to trick or mislead the listening audience. Sixteenth-century French ventriloquist Petrus Brabantius, for example, "put divers [*sic*] cheats on several persons", and mimicked the voice of one man's deceased father, tricking him into giving Brabantius six thousand francs.[58] Others, such as German nobleman Baron de Mengen, performed as dinner-table entertainment, leading the audience to speculate how the voices were produced.[59] A similar episode occurs in *Memoirs of Carwin*, as an outdoor audience hear a disembodied voice singing Ariel's song from *The Tempest* and wonder where the singer is positioned (*W* 298). In these ventriloquial episodes, hearing is continually tested, with most listeners failing to correctly identify the human source of the voice. The test carries outside of the text too, so that the reader of these magazine pieces can ask themselves if they would be able to work out the ventriloquial trick—could their ears detect the location and source of the voices, or would they too be hoodwinked?

Returning to Reid's work on the senses, the expectation of Enlightenment citizens was that they "should as little know, whether a sound came from the right or left, from above or below, from a great or a small distance, as we

---

[57] Ibid., 137.

[58] "An Instance of Ventriloquism," *The Weekly Magazine of Original Essays, Fugitive Pieces, and Interesting Intelligence*, 30 June 1798, 277. This anecdote originally appeared as "Singular Anecdote Relative to Ventriloquism," *Weekly Magazine, Or Edinburgh Amusements*, 25 August 1774, 275–77.

[59] In one account, the Baron produced a small wooden doll, who was so "impertinent" in her ventriloquised speech, that the Baron stuffed her in his pocket to quiet her, much to the worry of an Irish officer who "was so firmly persuaded that the baron's doll was a real living animal" that he attempted to rescue her from the confines of the pocket. "Singular Anecdote Relative to Ventriloquism," 277.

should know whether it was the sounds of a drum, or a bell, or a cart".[60] Referring to magazine accounts of European ventriloquists and travelling British showmen, Reid considered the talent to be "only such an imperfect imitation as may deceive those who are inattentive, or under a panic". Pressing the point that a good citizen would carefully use their senses in the face of this perplexing act, he maintained that "an attentive ear would be able to distinguish the copy from the original".[61] In *Wieland* and "Somnambulism", the families are asked throughout to distinguish who or what has produced the mysterious voices that plague them.

This is a question that can be asked of fiction readers as well. Fiction provided a readership—presumed by social commentators to be largely female—with moral education and lessons in fortitude, virtue and rationality. In the face of innumerable essays on the danger of novel reading for naïve young women caught up in the narrator's intimate voice and unable to differentiate between fiction and reality, early American novels asserted their veracity to emphasise their moral value.[62] Successful texts such as *Charlotte Temple*, William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1794) and Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette* (1797) all employ subtitles with these claims—*A Tale of Truth*, *A Novel; Founded on Fact,* and *Founded in Truth*, respectively. In *Wieland*, Brown makes plain the moral usefulness of the text to illustrate "some important branches of the moral constitution of man" based on factual accounts of ventriloquism and legal cases of homicide (*W* 3). As part of this educational

[60] Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind,* 90.
[61] Thomas Reid, "Essay II: Of the Powers We Have by Means of Our External Senses," in *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, 1:356.
[62] Cathy Davidson summarises contemporaneous fears that reading the "wrong text" was "a kind of seduction or even a state of possession", which prevented "women from being good wives". Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 43.

purpose, Brown performs his own ventriloquism, writing in the first-person voice of a young woman (Clara) or man (Althorpe) and creating dialogue and narrative that is designed to perplex, frighten and entertain. Writing, in particular fiction, that involves sensational and mysterious events equally tests the reader and challenges them to decipher clues and reach correct conclusions. In particular in *Wieland*, Clara, Pleyel and Theodore all act as representative of the fiction reader; they misread situations and people, fundamentally misinterpreting Carwin's voices.[63]

The Wieland and Davis families initially serve as prime examples of "the sensible 'artificers' of middling and elite status: sedentary whites"—citizens who correctly regulate their senses and use reason to make sound judgments.[64] They are essentially static family units, with their only movement tied to visiting friends and family. "Somnambulism" opens with Constantia and her father enjoying a social visit to Althorpe's family, and in *Wieland* Clara often walks to her brother's property to spend time with Theodore, Catharine and Pleyel. Nick and Carwin fall outside this group as they are roamers who lack the ties of family or property to keep them in one place. Nick lives with his father but as a "perpetual rover" escapes the bounds of the Handyside farm into the wilderness, whereas Carwin traverses the Atlantic, dislocated from his family and living in Spain and England before returning to Pennsylvania (*S* 15).

In *Wieland*, the temple at Mettingen, previously a religious sanctuary constructed by Wieland Sr., is transformed by Theodore into an intellectual

[63] The novel's opening foreshadows the family's critical misreading in Wieland Sr.'s misinterpretation of the Bible, a part of his Christian fundamentalism that leads to his emigration to America. Brown writes, "his constructions of the text were hasty, and formed on a narrow scale. Everything was viewed in a disconnected position" (*W* 9).
[64] Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 102.

meeting place, where he and Pleyel debate philosophy, national politics and metaphysics, "bandying quotations and syllogisms" (*W* 34). They idolise Cicero and his bust takes central stage in the shrine where Theodore, "an indefatigable student" of the Roman orator, practises "conning and rehearsing … the gestures and cadences" of the Latin text (*W* 27). Theodore himself is performing an act of mimicry, similar to Carwin's practising of Clara and Catherine's voices, but he justifies this imitation as a means of furthering his classical education. Pleyel is held up as a man of critical thought—"the champion of intellectual liberty" who "rejected all guidance but that of his reason" (*W* 28). In "Somnambulism", meanwhile, Constantia is positioned against narrator Althorpe—he is the irrational superstitious one with a "mind … too powerfully excited" and "ideas … full of confusion and inaccuracy" to which he inexplicably clings (*S* 11). In contrast, Constantia believes that rationality will triumph during her unusual encounters in Norwood: "What is at present inexplicable might be obvious enough if we were better acquainted with this neighbourhood" (*S* 14).

At the beginning of each text the two women serve as prime examples of rational citizens precisely because they cast off the irrationality ascribed to their sex. Although women were denied political suffrage, they were still expected to demonstrate the personal qualities of citizenship. The ideal of republican womanhood, as Linda Kerber and more recently Lucia McMahon outline, granted women rationalism while delimiting them to the private sphere. The archetypal republican woman was "competent and confident … rational,

benevolent, independent, self-reliant".[65] She attained an acceptable level of education that would prevent her from becoming a sexualised silly coquette and at the same time retain her femininity in order to become a suitable wife and mother for the civically engaged male citizen.[66] In literature of the 1790s the republican daughter functioned as a figure of virtue, often guiding her family through the tumultuous and uncertain new national landscape. The republican daughter navigated the American city, protecting and securing her family's finances and using her rationality to avoid rogues, tricksters and sexual predators. She would not be fooled by automaton and magic lantern shows on display in town. For example in *Ormond*, Constantia Dudley is "the consummate embodiment" of the constant, rational and courageous republican daughter who overcomes the mysterious Ormond and his sexual advances.[67]

In "Somnambulism", the prototype Constantia initially uses her senses to perceive and judge what she and her father encounter on the road. She criticises Althorpe's overactive imagination, telling her father "I am not so much a *girl* as to be scared merely because it is dark" (*S* 10, my emphasis). Althorpe himself criticises the effeminacy of his superstitious mind too, admitting to being "ashamed" of his "weakness" and inability to name what scares him (*S* 10). Constantia begins as eminently rational, employing her sight to ascertain who is there. Mr Davis, a victim of poor sight and aging eyes, believes he sees a shady figure, but "the young lady's better eyes enabled her to detect his mistake. It was the trunk of a cherry tree that he had observed" (*S*

[65] Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Williamsburg, VA; Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture; University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 206.
[66] Lucia McMahon, *Mere Equals: The Paradox of Educated Women in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 9.
[67] Eve Tavor Bannet, "The Constantias of the 1790s: Tales of Constancy and Republican Daughters," *Early American Literature* 49, no. 2 (2014): 450–51.

13). She warns her father against jumping to conclusions, assuring him there is no danger on the road. Later, Mr Davis believes that he has seen a light ahead, signifying a house where they can rest and get advice for the journey. Constantia again corrects him: "the light which you saw is gone: a sufficient proof that it was nothing but a meteor" (*S* 14). Language of observation permeates the first half of the text as Constantia uses her common sense to dismiss inaccurate assumptions.

In *Wieland*, Pleyel praises Clara for her temperament in comparison to the overtly feminine figure of his sister Catharine—"her strength of mind is inferior to yours"—who is defined in the novel by her gender, existing as little more than Theodore's wife and mother to his children (*W* 48). Clara's reputation as a rational woman precedes her. Carwin praises her as a "prodigy", an "object of worship", and "a woman capable of recollection in danger, of warding off groundless panics, of discerning the true mode of proceeding, and profiting by her best resources" (*W* 230). Clara is not swayed by testimony or "tales of apparition and enchantments", which she sees as "ignorance and folly", and she seeks to discriminate truth from fantasy on what she can observe (*W* 52). When Carwin seeks to induce panic, superstition and fear through his strange cries, he tests these values of citizenry. However, despite her rational reputation, Clara is not a fully engaged republican woman. She admits that the family shut themselves off from the world and republican society, "We gradually withdrew ourselves from the society of others, and found every moment irksome that was not devoted to each other" (*W* 23). Through the Wieland family, Brown suggests that citizens must do more than display their education and reason; they must act and engage in the world. Those who shut

themselves off politically or socially also shut out dissenting or sceptical voices that would rectify their increasingly irrational assumptions.

Nick and Carwin's ventriloquism and mimicry, which blur the boundary between the physical and spiritual, tests the hearing and judgment of the Wielands and Davises. As Eric Wolfe argues of *Wieland*, the danger of Carwin's ventriloquism is not his deliberate misrepresentation through a number of vocalic guises, but the "misrecognition" of Clara, Pleyel and Theodore.[68] In the Wieland microcosm, Brown presents a national community so disturbed that the very foundation of its identity—empirical reasoning, rooted in the senses—is shown to be fallible in the presence of an unclassifiable chameleon such as Carwin. These disturbed states of fear, confusion, doubt and awe when listening to ontologically inexplicable voices, lead the protagonists to return to their bodies, accepting and trusting their senses and dismissing extra-corporeal evidence. When confronted with what cannot be explained easily or at all, the Wielands assume truth in the senses alone, which are fallible through manipulation or delusion. In the early ventriloquial episodes, the family use the senses to justify their conclusions on who is delivering the voices, using prolific legal language to establish truth. They must weigh up the testimony of family members against the testimony of their senses. The first time the inexplicable voice is heard, Theodore returns from visiting the temple, claiming to have heard Catharine's voice beckoning him to the house. While Catharine, Clara and Pleyel seek to dissuade him, he states, "your assurances … are solemn and unanimous; and yet I must deny credit to your assertions, or disbelieve the testimony of my sense, which informed, when I was half way up

[68] Eric A. Wolfe, "Ventriloquizing Nation: Voice, Identity, and Radical Democracy in Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*," *American Literature* 76, no. 3 (2006): 436.

the hill, that Catharine was at the bottom" (*W* 36). To quote Reid, man's belief in his senses, "remains as firm as if it were grounded on demonstration".[69] For Theodore, his belief in his hearing takes precedence, even though he has no supporting visual evidence of Catharine speaking in front on him.

This acceptance of the senses as truth in the face of competing testimony is most apparent in the incident between Pleyel and Clara. Pleyel judges Clara to be "the most abandoned and detestable of human creatures" after supposedly hearing an illicit meeting between her and Carwin (*W* 135). Pleyel, usually "skeptical in a transcendant degree" fully accepts the aural "evidence" presented (*W* 126, 130). He exclaims, "That my eyes, that my ears, should bear witness to thy fall!" (*W* 118). His empiricism creates the legal framework with which he puts Clara on trial. Clara's lament that "he had judged me without hearing" is ironic because Pleyel has judged her on his hearing almost exclusively, relying on the testimony of his ears over her version of events (*W* 120). Relaying how he heard the lovers' meeting, Pleyel recalls: "My sight was of no use to me. Beneath so thick an umbrage, the darkness was intense. Hearing was the only avenue to information, which the circumstances allowed to be open" (*W* 154). In these few sentences, Pleyel's senses are restricted to hearing alone; his sight would have remedied his "inexplicable and momentary phrenzy" to show that the figures he heard were Carwin and Clara's servant Judith, part of Carwin's plot to set up Pleyel and toy with his and Clara's emotions (*W* 136). In a text composed of long passages of descriptive monologue and dialogue, "saying makes it so"; other characters

[69] Reid, "Essay II: Of the Powers We Have by Means of Our External Senses," 326.

speak the plot into existence, retelling events that Clara has missed.[70] Carwin's ventriloquism dictates the plot; through his mimicry he creates an entire alter ego for Clara, painting her as a scandalous woman embroiled in an affair with the traveller, a guise that Pleyel fully accepts. At the same time, hearing makes it so: characters construct their truths through what they have heard; Pleyel brings to life Clara's alter ego through retelling the conversation he has heard.

The idea that sensory experience alone creates truth is most apparent in the transformations of Clara and Theodore. The inexplicable disembodied nature of the voices, spoken where no man is present, leads Theodore and Clara, guided by their empiricist learning and theism, to believe that these voices have a supernatural origin, at first omniscient and benevolent, and later demonic. Particularly in the case of Clara, there is a clear shift from the senses to the sensational. By this I mean that Clara moves from using her senses to take an empirical view of the world, to her senses feeding a sensation-driven, heavily gothic imagination. Upon hearing shrieks that she believes to be from an assailant entering her house, Clara recalls:

> O! may my ears lose their sensibility, ere they be again assailed by a shriek so terrible! Not merely my understanding was subdued by the sound; it acted on my nerves like an edge of steel. It appeared to cut asunder the fibres of my brain, and rack every joint with agony … Shuddering, I dashed myself against the wall. (*W* 97)

The voice disorders Clara's mind. Unable rationally to process the sounds, all she is capable of is a physical response that signifies a return to the body and a reliance on the senses alone. For Clara, as the vocal intrusions increase, her other sense of deduction—sight—is increasingly unreliable. Instead of

[70] Mark Seltzer, "Sayings Makes It So: Language and Event in Brown's 'Wieland,'" *Early American Literature* 13, no. 1 (1978): 81–91.

following Rush's advice that the senses should be used in tandem to ward off deception and mistakes, when Clara uses her sight it is distorted and further lends to her sensational imagination.[71] In a heightened state of trepidation, Clara experiences visual and aural hallucinations where "slight movements and casual sounds were transformed into beckoning shadows and calling shapes" (*W* 220). When she sees Carwin practise his ventriloquism, the monstrosity of his shrieking "vehement expression" is accompanied by "the eyes emitt[ing] sparks, which, no doubt, if I had been unattended by a light, would have illuminated like the coruscations of a meteor" (*W* 168). Clara's comparison of Carwin to a meteor has the opposite effect of Constantia's observation of a meteor in "Somnambulism". The two examples highlight a key debate on the natural world in the eighteenth century: whether celestial phenomena are signs of an omnipotent God or unconnected natural occurrences. [72] In "Somnambulism", the meteor serves as purely a natural occurrence, a rational explanation for a light seen by the travellers but now extinguished, whereas in *Wieland*, Clara's use of the meteor has preternatural connotations and serves to strengthen her belief that Carwin is imbued with supernatural power. The sight of a figure whom she deduces to be Carwin, giving off sparks, convinces her that he "exceeded the standard of humanity" (*W* 168). Even when Carwin confesses his ventriloquial ability, a human if strange bodily quirk, Clara prefers her sensory subjective explanation that his voices are a supernatural

[71] Benjamin Rush, "Of the Subserviency of the Senses to Each Other, and on the Knowledge Derived from Them," in *Benjamin Rush's Lectures on the Mind*, 351–61.
[72] Roberta J. M. Olson and Jay M. Pasachoff, *Fire in the Sky: Comets and Meteors, the Decisive Centuries, in British Art and Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41.

occurrence: "Was there not reason to doubt the accuracy of my perceptions?" (*W* 253).

Although I would not go so far as James Russo—who claims that Clara is "in effect a schizophrenic" and completely imagines Carwin's final appearance—it is clear that Clara becomes an increasingly unreliable narrator.[73] She is unable to distinguish between imagination and reality and fails to recall all events. Her fainting spells again signify a return to the body, a physical response overwhelming her processing of events, and throughout her narrative she relies on her uncle's recollections to fill in the gaps. Narrative voice is disrupted throughout the text, as Clara's narration is replaced with a transcription of Theodore's court testimony, which narrates the events of his murders, and Carwin's confessional, a speech that crosses chapter breaks, therefore temporarily removing Clara as the narrator. With such an unstable narrative voice, Brown places further responsibility on the reader to navigate these seemingly inexplicable events and reach their own conclusion.

When Clara is "transformed from rational and human into creature of nameless and fearful attributes" it is due to her heightened sensational imagination (*W* 204-5). Carwin's inexplicable voices and his appearances stoke Clara's desire for imaginative reverie. Throughout her narrative, Clara admits finding pleasure in the unknown and dangerous. Against a life of domestic duties and conversation, the mysteries and danger of Carwin's vocal power, whether human or spiritual, offer Clara the opportunity to indulge her imagination. Originally presented as a rational empirical citizen, Clara in fact

[73] Furthermore, Russo contends that Clara may be responsible for Louisa Conway's death during a schizophrenic episode. James R. Russo, "'The Chimeras of the Brain': Clara's Narrative in 'Wieland,'" *Early American Literature* 16, no. 1 (1981): 67.

takes pleasure from experiences that plunge her into states of melancholy or fear, often meditating on strange and violent events. Clara is not only a gothic heroine but also a gothic reader. To use a Freudian interpretation of the genre, readers enjoy the repeated terrors of the gothic tale, because trauma of the mysterious or violent is transferred into pleasure.[74] There is a catharsis in experiencing terrors from which the reader is somewhat distanced. We can see that the trauma of Wieland Sr.'s inexplicable death leads to Clara's repeated attraction to and musings on danger. We are not told of Clara reading novels, but the "news" of the recent French and Indian war—perhaps an oral report, perhaps a printed newspaper—is the source of her reverie before Carwin's arrival, producing "thrilling, and not unpleasing solemnity" (*W* 39).

This thrill intensifies upon Clara encountering Carwin. His strange and exotic form, racially ambiguous, throws Clara into a "fit of musing" and she suddenly finds herself experiencing an outpouring of sensibility, which she can't explain: "Why was my mind absorbed in thoughts ominous and dreary? Why did my bosom heave with sighs, and my eyes overflown with tears?" (*W* 60, 62). She cannot decide whether Carwin is "an object to be dreaded or adored", in part because of his liminal appearance; he can look darkened and grotesque yet have features that "betoken a mind of the highest order" (*W* 81, 61). The combination of attraction and repulsion Clara feels from encountering Carwin and the compulsion she has to re-imagine and re-visualise his face in her drawings emphasises that he reawakens her sensory and sensational imagination. Clara is firmly rooted in her body, and her imagination anticipates sensory experiences: having a physical relationship with Carwin or Pleyel,

[74] Fred Botting, *Gothic*, 2nd ed. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 8.

escaping violence from assailants known and unknown, thinking about her father's inexplicable violent death, imagining the sensations of war. She admits of her imagination, "I was tormented by phantoms of my own creation", which leads to flights of fancy, shapes transformed into creatures and seeing flashes from Carwin's eyes, believing it as proof that he is "leagued with hell" (*W* 107, 249). The scene in which Clara sees Carwin's ventriloquial act—a face emitting sparks in a horrifying contorted expression—has parallels with sensational phantasmagoria, in which audiences were subjected to grotesque moving images, terrifying sounds and atmospheric light shows. The phantasmagoria has clear links to gothic fiction; both are forms of entertainment designed to deliberately scare and entertain an audience and Clara is a willing participant.

This shift from the five senses, and more specifically hearing, to the sensational takes place in "Somnambulism". The father and daughter accept and trust their senses yet do not follow through with the good sense required of republican citizens. The Davises shift from rational observation to a sensationalism that prioritises imagination, adventure and romance. The liminal figure's savage voice is the catalyst for Constantia's sensational imagination. Narrating Constantia's journey, Althorpe imagines that his irrational fears may have "infected her" or that she has "imagined evils that my incautious temper might draw upon me". They share a sensational imagination, prompted by thinking about the frontier. When Constantia and Mr. Davis are first assailed by the mysterious figure on the roadside he becomes a "topic of abundant speculation" (*S* 12). After meeting with the farmer and hearing about the savage wandering Nick, they consider him to be "so singular a specimen of the

forms which human nature is found to assume" that deserves "a variety of remarks" (*S* 16).

Upon being told about Nick's wild exploits and in anticipation of hearing the shrieks, the Davises indulge in a moment of frontier fantasy.

> They pictured to themselves many combinations of circumstance in which Handyside might be the agent, and in which the most momentous effects might flow from his agency, without its being possible for others to conjecture the true nature of the agent. The propensities of this being might contribute to realize, on an American road, many of those imaginary tokens and perils which abound in the wildest romance. He would be an admirable machine, in a plan whose purpose was to generate or foster, in a given subject, the frenzy of quixotism.—No theatre was better adapted than Norwood to such an exhibition. … Yet the choice of Handyside, varied with the force and skill of which he was known to be capable, would fill these shades with outcries as ferocious as those which are to be heard in Siamese or Abyssinian forests. The tale of his recent elopement had been told by the man with who they had just parted, in a rustic but picturesque style. (*S* 16)

The language in this passage conveys the Davises' imagination at work as they picture a number of scenarios in which Nick may appear. Their speculation creates a romanticised savage vocalic body in Nick, who serves as "an admirable machine" to shock and frighten travellers. Here, "machine" resonates with early national ideals of citizenship; Rush expected citizens to become "republican machines" who "perform their parts properly" to improve society.[75] As I have discussed earlier in this chapter, insensible and savage Nick is excluded from this ideal group of citizens. The Davises and Nick play parts in this "wild romance", with Constantia casting Nick in the "Indian" role. In Brown's language of theatrical performance, Nick is a figure of entertainment.

[75] Benjamin Rush, "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," in *Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1806), 14.

The combination of his cries and the frontier location renders him simultaneously exoticised and abhorred, as Norwood is temporarily transformed into Siam or Abyssinia, nations not only harbouring ferocious animals but populated by indigenous populations that resisted European colonisation. Constantia is particularly swayed by this frontier romance, declaring "she should be highly pleased by hearing his outcries", and she "console[s] herself with the belief, that he would not allow them to pass the limits which he had prescribed to his wanderings, without greeting them with a strain or two" (*S* 16). The senses lead to the sensational; Constantia finds pleasing terror in the idea of the frontier monster who can be repelled.

The picturesque savage figure is a product of white literary imagination. Constantia's frontier fantasy of a wild savage haunting her at a safe distance illuminates readings of *Edgar Huntly*, which was written shortly after, as a piece of diverting Anglo-American gothic fiction. In the frontispiece to the novel, Brown writes that he wants "to exhibit a series of adventures, growing out of the condition of our country". Instead of "puerile superstition and exploded manners; Gothic castles and chimeras" found in European Gothic, he instead claims, "the incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the western wilderness, are far more suitable; and, for a native of America to overlook these, would admit of no apology".[76] Brown aims to create a distinctly American form of the Gothic that is inextricably linked to the dangers of the American landscape, namely Native Americans and the frontier wilderness. In *Edgar Huntly*, Edgar must navigate a gloomy wilderness landscape and battle the natural world and a host of Lenni Lenape who Brown presents as ghostly

[76] Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly*, 3–4.

figures. Native Americans serve as an obstacle to be overcome in the gothic narrative, providing a pleasing terror to the reader familiar with the genre, especially as the sources of terror in *Edgar Huntly* are more familiar to an American audience than castles and Catholicism found in Ann Radcliffe. The "vanishing Indian" is a persistent trope of the American Gothic that appears a generation later in the supernatural works of Washington Irving, which I discuss in the next chapter.[77] Constantia serves as a representative of both Brown and his readership. Through her imagination she creates a savage vocalic body tied to the frontier in Nick, writing in her mind a "wild romance". She becomes a playwright, populating the set of the Norwood frontier with Nick as savage antagonist and herself as the republican heroine who can protect her family from the perils of the road. At the same time, despite her claims of rationality and empiricism, upon hearing about Nick's cries, Constantia's anticipation at this sensory event transforms her into one of Brown's gothic readers, eager to hear the shrieks, which she transposes into a musical "strain or two", attesting to its pleasing terror.

As the savage shrieks mislead the Wielands and Pleyels, leading to misinterpretation and sensational imagination, the liminal figure serves as a Gothic narrative technique to increase and decrease tension. In "Somnambulism", this tension escalates with each appearance of the shadowy figure, only to decrease each time Constantia dismisses her father's fears. The farmer's potted history of Nick heightens anticipation of his appearance and the

[77] The links between the supernatural and the Native American are made apparent in short stories such as "Rip Van Winkle" and "Dolph Heyliger", in which the narrator attributes explorer Henry Hudson's disappearance to vengeful indigenous spirits. Furthermore, as I discuss in Chapter 2, Irving associates his colonial male figures with Native Americans to show these men as fading relics of colonial masculinity and citizenship.

assumption he will commit the violence. In both *Wieland* and "Somnambulism", Brown simultaneously offers clues and diversions towards the source of the violence and havoc, requiring the text to be re-read after the fact and creating the perfect test for the intelligent reader.[78] Just as the ventriloquial figures Carwin and Nick throw their voices, Brown throws his narrative, misdirecting and diverting the reader from the sources of violence in the text—the white middle-class males Althorpe and Theodore. If we position Constantia as a gothic reader, enjoying the pleasing terror of Nick's presence, her imagination of a frontier romance blinds her to the danger in the woods, Althorpe himself, her sleepwalking attacker. Michael Cody offers a Freudian reading of Althorpe, agreeing with Murison's assessment of *Edgar Huntly*, that it is sleepwalking which reveals his savagery: "When his id is separated by sleep from the control of his ego, he becomes a far more dangerous unknown than Handyside".[79] It is true that the only act of violence Althorpe admits to is in his sleep, dreaming that when fighting off an assailant he "did not employ the usual preliminaries which honour prescribes, but, stimulated by rage, attacked him with a pistol, and terminated his career by a mortal wound" (*S* 11). This dream does mirror the nature of Constantia's attack, acting as a veiled confession that Althorpe has committed the murder. However, Althorpe's savagery is made clear when he is awake too, when his ego is active, at the end of the fragment when he narrates Constantia's death.

---

[78] This is especially true of "Somnambulism", which Brown constructs as a series of puzzle pieces, leading Alfred Weber to call it "the first American detective story". Charles Brockden Brown, *Somnambulism & Other Stories*, ed. Alfred Weber (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1987), xiii.

[79] Michael Cody, *Charles Brockden Brown and the Literary Magazine: Cultural Journalism in the Early American Republic* (Jefferson, NC; London: McFarland & Co, Inc., Publishers, 2004), 143.

> They dying lady was removed to the house. The ball had lodged in her brain, and to extract it was impossible. Why should I dwell on the remaining incidents of this tale? She languished till the next morning, and then expired.— (*S* 18)

The short sentences and matter-of-fact tone convey a chilling detachment, unusual for a man who has earlier in the narrative professed his love for the victim. Similarly, at the end of *Wieland*, Clara must wrestle with the truth that Theodore has committed unspeakable violence due to mania or rage, not due to Carwin's supernatural deception. The true terror of these texts is not haunting invisible voices or savage figures, but middling gentleman capable of obsessive violence.[80]

In Brown's works, the liminal white figure blurs racial boundaries to reflect the slippery and indistinct nature of white citizenship in the early national period. In doing so, the liminal figure, on the physical and metaphorical margins of society, critiques the expectations of white citizens. Nick and Carwin's ventriloquial cries transgress the boundaries of race, gender, class and species, and blur the demarcation between the material and immaterial. In particular, Carwin's multiple physical and vocalic guises, as later seen in Robert Montgomery Bird's *Sheppard Lee* (1836) offer an alternative vision of identity that is dislocated from genealogy, property, geography and race. These liminal manifestations of whiteness are resistant to the increasing essentialising of identity and formalising of whiteness in the antebellum period. As I discuss in Chapter 3, Sheppard's racial transformation

[80] The same too occurs in *Edgar Huntly*, with the threat posed by the haunting, subhuman Native American equalled by the violence of which white men are capable. Gardner in particular highlights white savagery in the case of Selby, a European immigrant farmer. When Edgar visits the homestead, the violence he encounters seems to be from an Indian attack, but after finding the farmer's terrified wife, he is unsure if the assailant was Native American or an intoxicated Selby. Gardner, "Alien Nation," 448.

offers the opportunity to escape the confines of white middle-class civic responsibilities, while presenting the frightening possibility of rapid and violent racial movement.

In *Wieland* and "Somnambulism", the Native allusions serve to signify Carwin and Nick's exclusion from a community of enlightened citizens. The liminal figure, in its marginal mischief, exposes the fragility of this ideal of white citizenship where the senses will inevitably lead to "good sense"; citizens require reason and suspicion as well as empirical sense on the unfamiliar frontier. When Clara ends her narrative with the seduction plot of Louisa's mother, she says, "I leave you to moralize on this tale", a message that resonates with her own baffling encounters with Carwin (*W* 278). Brown's American Gothic reflects the social concerns of a young nation through recognisable Native allusions and asks for intelligent citizens and readers to show good sense in the face of seemingly inexplicable and turbulent events. In my next chapter I turn to Irving, whose 1820s ghost stories again employ Native-inflected white male figures in frontier spaces. He does so I argue, to create nostalgia for colonial communities that embrace the irrational and supernatural storytelling, a contrast to Brown's resounding scepticism.

Chapter 2

"This is a story-telling age": Spectral Nostalgia in Washington Irving's *Bracebridge Hall*

In his historical tales, Washington Irving makes colonial male characters ghostly by connecting them to the premodern "vanishing Indian" disappearing across the nation in the early national period. Like Charles Brockden Brown, Irving uses Native-coded speech and appearance to mark white men as liminal and outside the structures of early national society. Whereas Brown uses liminal whiteness significantly to challenge ideals of exclusionary rational white citizenship, Irving's liminal white men speak against changes in early national conceptions of civic economic masculinity. This chapter argues that Irving employs liminal white figures temporarily marked by spectral indigeneity to enshrine a colonial vision of hierarchical yet interdependent community and citizenship, itself vanishing in the early national period. I propose that Irving is involved in a project of "spectral nostalgia", using ghostly white male figures to critique an early national citizenship predicated on individual success and mobility, which is driven by progress but racked by instability, intangibility and disconnection. In his collection of tales and sketches, he employs scenes of supernatural storytelling to transmit this nostalgia for colonial masculinity, citizenship and community.

In this chapter I examine the prevalence of spectral figures and supernatural storytelling in *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), Irving's episodic novel of sketches of rural Yorkshire life and international ghostly tales. The supernaturally inflected Hudson Valley in *The Sketch Book* (1819-20) and

Bracebridge Hall is itself a liminal space between fantasy and reality, inhabited with otherworldly Native figures, mischievous indigenous spirits, and the ghosts of Dutch explorers and settlers. A natural space seemingly removed from the modern world, it acts as a fitting location for Antony Vander Heyden, a liminal white figure who blurs the boundaries between citizen and noncitizen, the propertied gentleman and roaming savage in "Dolph Heyliger".

Bracebridge Hall's lone American piece, "Dolph Heyliger" is a ghost story by fictional historian Diedrich Knickerbocker set in the colonial Hudson Valley. Its content occupies a liminal space between the physical and spiritual worlds in which the dead are repeatedly invoked and intrude upon the imaginations of communities across decades, from 1720s New York, the setting of the short story, to 1820s Yorkshire, where the story is recited. Geoffrey Crayon, Irving's travelling narrator and observer of British life, recites the story one evening to entertain his hosts at the Bracebridge estate. The ghost of the piece is Killian Vander Spiegel, a Dutch settler who in the 1640s buries significant wealth in Dolph's native Manhattan. After meeting the ghost, Dolph embarks on a dreamlike journey up the Hudson River to the outskirts of Albany. Lost in the wilderness, he encounters Vander Heyden, who appears as an uncanny reminder of the Dutch ghost and who slips in and out of Native appearance and spaces. Antony is a spectral figure made ghostly through an association with "vanishing Indians" and Dutch settler ghosts. In the wilderness, he tells stories of these Dutch ghosts and vocally protests the changing world around him.

Unlike Brown, who conveys liminality as a permanent state of exclusion, Irving conceives of liminality as a transformational period between

removal from and return to society. Liminal figure Antony transitions from propertied white settler to racially ambiguous outsider and back to colonial landowner, as Irving roots prosperous white citizenship within a supernatural and Native-inflected frontier. Antony is part of a multiracial group and appears as a Native American. He vocally protests an increasingly professionalised cerebral form of masculine citizenship detached from community and the land. In tying propertied fathers to property-less, socially excluded and otherworldly non-white counterparts, *Bracebridge Hall* positions its white patriarchs as vanishing figures themselves, out of place in Georgian England and the early United States. In a project of what I term "spectral nostalgia", Irving enshrines faded structures of communal citizenship that indigeneity marks.

In the form of these spectral figures such as Antony, the past seems to re-enter the present. *Bracebridge Hall* comprises scenes of supernatural storytelling, and tales of ghosts appear alongside sketches of rural English life. Thinking about haunting as a "collision of temporalities and spaces" as María del Pilar Blanco does, we can apply this ghostly frame to many of the texts within Irving's collections, in which the past and present seem to blur.[1] We can read a figure like Antony performing the same purpose as ghosts in that he appears to be from another time and when he talks he invokes nostalgia for white colonial masculinity. His presence enacts a collision of temporalities within the text because he embodies a form of white male citizenship that Irving conceives to be from the past. Spectrality, or the appearance of ghostly figures, enacts a collapse of the linear progression of time, as the present seems

[1] María del Pilar Blanco, *Ghost-Watching American Modernity: Haunting, Landscape, and the Hemispheric Imagination* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 1.

to become the past. By bringing these ghostly figures into the present, the supernatural is a key apparatus of Irving's project of spectral nostalgia.

Irving's work has often been called "nostalgic" for its use of idealised rural English landscapes and sleepy New York villages.[2] However, what is missing from Irving scholarship is an examination of the apparatus of this nostalgia and what spectral figures and supernatural storytelling adds to his projection of an idealised past. Nostalgia is not just a descriptor for the effect of Irving's fiction on the reader but also refers to a literary technique in which time appears to be amorphous and the past re-enters the present. Originally conceived of as a disease of homesickness (the etymology of nostalgia meaning "home longing"), during the eighteenth century nostalgia transformed in cultural understanding into a practice of accessing a past that no longer existed. Nostalgia became a creative act that reimagined the past through selectively omitting or adding, diminishing or exaggerating, aspects of either a recent or distant period.[3] We can see this in Irving's works, which often present romanticised versions of English and American life and characters: the Dutch American towns in the Hudson Valley, or the celebratory biography of James

[2] For example, works by Robert Hughes, Laura Murray, Michelle Sizemore and Walter Sondey all locate the Hudson Valley and Crayon's English travelogue as sites of nostalgia. See Robert Hughes, "Sleepy Hollow: Fearful Pleasures and the Nightmare of History," *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 61, no. 3 (2005): 1–26; Laura J. Murray, "The Aesthetic of Dispossession: Washington Irving and Ideologies of (De)Colonisation in the Early Republic," *American Literary History* 8, no. 2 (1996): 205–31; Michelle R. Sizemore, "'Changing by Enchantment:' Temporal Convergence, Early National Comparisons, and Washington Irving's *Sketchbook*," *Studies in American Fiction* 40, no. 2 (2013): 157–83; Walter Sondey, "From Nation of Virtue to Virtual Nation: Washington Irving and American Nationalism," in *Narratives of Nostalgia, Gender and Nationalism*, ed. Jean Pickering and Suzanna Kehde (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997), 52–73.

[3] Both Nicholas Dames and Tamara Wagner, writing about nineteenth-century British fiction, contend that Georgian and Victorian authors created nostalgic selective memories to form characters' personal narratives. Nicholas Dames, *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810-1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 10; Tamara S. Wagner, *Longing: Narratives of Nostalgia in the British Novel, 1740-1890* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2004), 22.

IV in "A Royal Poet" from *The Sketch Book* are ideal examples. In *The Sketch Book* and *Bracebridge Hall*, Crayon continually enters an environment of nostalgia during his journeys. In these two collections, the past and the present collide as Crayon meets a number of men "out of time": men like the Squire and the gypsies of Bracebridge Hall, who seem to be from an idealised past outside of living memory but are alive in Georgian England.

Both the ghost story and nostalgia look backwards to previous eras, but also forwards. As work by Svetlana Boym, Alastair Bonnett and Jennifer Ladino has shown, nostalgia has a radical or "critical edge" in which the past is used to critique the present and put forward an alternative future.[4] It is radical in offering attachments to the past and denying progression, futurity and change. In Irving's "spectral nostalgia", the liminal Antony embodies and gives voice to an outdated form of white male colonial citizenship attached to the natural environment, land ownership and communal structures. By associating Antony with a primitive Native shadow, Irving presents Dutch American communities as artefacts of colonial America but hopes to reinstate their values of stability and kinship within a contemporary United States.

Irving's interest in propertied patriarchal figures on both sides of the Atlantic and their association with not just property-less but socially excluded and otherworldly non-white counterparts, serves to emphasise that the citizenship these men represent is a fading relic and out of place in 1820s conceptions of citizenship. The Jeffersonian ideal of detaching property from

---

[4] Jennifer K. Ladino, *Reclaiming Nostalgia: Longing for Nature in American Literature* (Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 15. See also Alastair Bonnett, *Left in the Past: Radicalism and the Politics of Nostalgia* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 2; Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xv, 5.

citizenship in an attempt to dismantle hierarchical structures (although only for white men), developed into the male citizen's value being signified by his ability to earn and control capital.[5] Economic shifts towards finance capitalism, the stock market and entrepreneurialism in the early national period significantly changed social relations.[6] What Walter Sondey describes as "corporatism" in Irving's works, an attachment to community and institutions, was overshadowed by self-interest, self-reliance and the pursuit of social mobility.[7] By the 1820s, with the expansion of the franchise to all white men in most American states, the paternalist citizenship embodied by figures like Antony is outdated, and yet Irving resurrects and propagates it in his supernatural tales. As new demographics found their metaphorical and physical voice, Irving instead casts in favourable light colonial structures of hierarchical and paternalistic societies. I argue that he brings together past and present to offer a vision of financial and social stability in an increasingly fragmented and unstable economic landscape. In "Dolph Heyliger", Irving overlays nineteenth-century economic and social developments onto colonial characters and

---

[5] Jeffery Sklansky traces the development of economic citizenship in *The Soul's Economy*. In Chapter 3 I discuss further the civic value of work and industry in relation to *Sheppard Lee*. Jeffrey P. Sklansky, *The Soul's Economy: Market Society and Selfhood in American Thought, 1820-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

[6] Steven Watts argues that in the 1790s American economy shifted from a "moral economy" of households that produced goods and services in communal exchange, to a market economy that "spurred an ethos of entrepreneurialism and self-made success" centered on the individual. This he terms a "culture of capitalism" and the bedrock of liberal America. Steven Watts, *The Revolution Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal America, 1790-1820* (Baltimore, MD; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 7–8.

[7] Sondey, "From Nation of Virtue to Virtual Nation," 52. "Corporatism" has an unintended economic echo here with "corporation". However, whereas corporations are "invisible, intangible and artificial being[s]" greater than the sum of their founders and employees, corporatism is a world-view rooted in personal, social and economic interconnectivity. Chief Justice Marshall, *Bank of U.S. vs Deveaux* (1809), quoted in Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1997), 194.

settings. In his association with supernaturally-inflected and socially excluded Native Americans, Antony offers a "masculinity unscathed by the forces of commerce and market" and stands apart from the progression towards an increasingly individualised society disconnected from community and property, that would have been familiar to Irving's readers.[8]

Much like Irving's first collection *The Sketch Book*, which I refer to throughout the chapter, *Bracebridge Hall* sees Crayon observing rural English life, this time returning to the Bracebridge family who hosted him at Christmas in *The Sketch Book*. Irving uses *Bracebridge Hall*'s English sketches in a complementary way to the Knickerbocker stories: to show idealised communities that negotiate an increasingly industrialised and progressive society, and to think through forms of citizenship on both sides of the Atlantic. Furthermore, it is not just individual pieces that contribute to Irving's nostalgic vision but the apparatus in which they are set: hybrid assemblages of sketches and tales. In the final part of this chapter I argue that Irving's supernatural storytelling apparatus, which uses multiple narrators, is crucial in his spectral nostalgia project, because his vision of community and citizenship depends on a continued genealogy of oral cultures. In Irving's work, it is not just the spectral figure that is important to his nostalgia project, but the act of supernatural storytelling itself. As dispossessed figures, ghosts usually appear within literature to critique contemporary society and are dependent on a chain of storytellers to pass on their haunting message. Storytelling and the passing

[8] David Anthony writes specifically about "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow", but his discussions on forms of economic masculinity are pertinent to "Dolph Heyliger" and *Bracebridge Hall* and I will return to them later in the chapter. David Anthony, "'Gone Distracted': 'Sleepy Hollow,' Gothic Masculinity, and the Panic of 1819," *Early American Literature* 40, no. 1 (2005): 127.

on of stories are central to "Dolph Heyliger" and *Bracebridge Hall* as a whole. Irving's storytelling in "Dolph Heyliger" creates a chain of narration stretching from 1822 back to the 1720s, in which the repeated sharing of tales through generations propagates an alternative mode of history, one which values communal experiences, folklore and myth. Oral culture provides the flexibility and variability necessary to transmit this alternative history. A succession of narrators continuously mediate the voices of Irving's storytellers, which is an aural experience that Irving seeks to recreate within the printed form. Supernatural storytelling is a vehicle that carries Irving's nostalgia for interdependent yet hierarchical stable communities that spectral figures such as Vander Heyden represent.

*

Irving's storytelling in "Dolph Heyliger" is inspired by a unique natural landscape tied to Native Americans and the supernatural.[9] While connecting the author to European literary traditions, critics have under-acknowledged the Native influence on Irving's work. Irving's portrayals of indigenous populations in *The Sketch Book* show that they are already spectral figures on the edges of American society, vanishing from the landscape due to a campaign of white violence and expansion. Irving is part of a tradition of early national writing, from Brown to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, which reduces Native Americans to incorporeal beings for aesthetic purposes.[10] In particular, Irving's "Traits of Indian Character" and "Philip of Pokanoket" in *The Sketch Book*, while attempting to elicit sympathy towards Native tribes, present them as

[9] This sequence includes two introductory sketches "The Historian" and "The Haunted House", and the story of Dolph, which is split into "Dolph Heyliger" and "The Storm Ship".
[10] Bergland, *The National Uncanny*, 57–58.

noble yet insubstantial half-formed figures. In "Traits" they are "mere wrecks and remnants of once powerful tribes, who have lingered in the vicinity of the settlements and sunk into precarious and vagabond existence".[11] Not only will they soon be gone "like a vapor from the face of the earth", but will be forgotten from history and "the places that now know them will know them no more forever". In the biographical sketch of King Philip, Pequod, Narrangesett and Wampanoag warriors "stalk like gigantic shadows in the dim twilight of tradition" instead of the pages of history books (*SB* 248). In fact if memories or "tradition" are to sustain their presence, it will only be as an ornamental supernatural presence in the "romantic dreams of the poet", who depicts Native figures as fabled forest creatures (*SB* 246). Fading indigenous tribes become a mythical part of the landscape, a reliquary for lost histories, and a source of artistic inspiration. As I discuss later in this chapter, they represent an alternative connection with history and memory itself, which Irving extends to his colonial figures when writing Dutch American folk history.

This "vanishing Indian" trope filters through to Irving's fiction. The belief in a supernatural presence intruding on the natural world is found in Irving's earlier Knickerbocker tale "Rip Van Winkle" (1819). Native figures, although absent from Rip's upstate New York community, are the bedrock of the story itself. Their myths of the landscape are part of Knickerbocker's explanation for Rip's supernatural disappearance and reappearance: the Native Americans are the original storytellers in the Hudson Valley. For the indigenous population, the mountains were "the abode of spirits" and terrorised by a Manitou that "took a mischievous pleasure in wreaking all kind of evils

[11] Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury (London: Everyman, 1993), 238 (hereafter cited in text as *SB*).

and vexations upon the red men", often masquerading as a wild animal leading them through the forests until they reached "the brink of a beetling precipice or raging torrent" (*SB* 40-41). These stories transfer to European settler communities, as Rip spends his time entertaining the village children with "long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians" (*SB* 27). In *The Sketch Book*, Irving built a Native fantastical into his tales.

As in Brown's frontier works I discussed in the previous chapter, "Dolph Heyliger" imprints the Native American upon the wild landscape. Dolph, a young doctor's assistant in Manhattan, meets a Flemish ghost, Killian Vander Spiegel, who mysteriously and silently haunts a local house. This encounter prompts Dolph's adventure along the Hudson River to upstate New York. During a storm Dolph is thrown overboard onto the banks of the Hudson and when seeking a path through the forest, he finds a "savage and trackless" landscape, almost totally impenetrable due to "wild vines and briers, which completely matted themselves together, and opposed a barrier to all ingress".[12] Furthermore, this landscape lacks the markers of Euro-American colonisation or civilisation to which Dolph is accustomed in Manhattan, with "no signs of cultivation, nor any smoke curling amongst the trees, to indicate human residence" (*BH* 331). The wilderness and its indigenous inhabitants represent a premodern life.

The Native landscape, wild, unknown and dangerous, is an ideal environment for Dutch Americans to implant their own ghostly figures. In fact, according to Antony Vander Heyden, the mythical Native landscape is the catalyst for stories of European settler ghosts. He says that many believe spirits

[12] Washington Irving, *Bracebridge Hall, Tales of a Traveller, The Alhambra* (New York: Library of America, 1991), 330 (hereafter cited in text as *BH*).

conjured by vengeful Indians wreaked havoc on white settlers in retribution for colonisation. Developing the indigenous mythology found in the "Rip Van Winkle" postscript, Antony says the Indians' incantations brought about "the misadventure which befell the renowned Hendrick Hudson, when he sailed so gallantly up this river in quest of a north-west passage, and, as he thought, run his ship aground" (*BH* 337-8). He then launches into "The Storm Ship", a ghost story of a doomed Dutch clipper wrecked on the Hudson. Antony's interweaving of a Native mythology and Dutch ghostly past encapsulates Irving's own interpretation of the Hudson Valley.

Antony is one of the spectral Dutch American figures inhabiting this new American environment. Dolph is within a liminal space between fantasy and reality, full of uncanny reminders of an earlier dream in which he travels up the Hudson and returns with bags of gold. Fragments of the dream reappear in the daytime as he somnambulistically embarks on the same journey; he is a passive body "under supernatural influence" and "unconsciously carried along" the pier to a sloop heading to Albany. Things seem to happen to Dolph without much reason or causality as Irving moves him from house, to town, to ship. Encountering the sloop's captain, Dolph is "surprised and aroused" to find him "short and swarthy, with crisped black hair; blind of one eye, and lame of one leg—the very commander that he had seen in his dream!" (*BH* 326). Dolph's journey signals the uncanny return of these elements of his dream the night before; they are recognisable and familiar because he half-remembers his dream, and unfamiliar precisely because what he recognises is from a dream and by its own nature strange and unusual. Upon meeting Antony, Dolph is struck by the older man who reminds him of Killian, although not in physical

appearance: "it was hard to define where the vague resemblance lay—but a resemblance there certainly was" (*BH* 333). Throughout his encounter with Antony, Dolph is "repeatedly perplexed" by the reappearance of the phantom in the form of Antony, again claiming this "vague resemblance" in spirit "that could not be fixed upon any precise feature of lineament, but which pervaded the general air of his countenance and figure" (*BH* 337). Antony appears as a Dutch-Native spectral presence, in a hybrid liminality that unites Native culture, Dutch colonial communities and the supernatural in Irving's fiction.

Irving places Antony within a spectral and "primitive" Native American society inhabiting the Catskill Mountains in order to emphasise that he is a relic of a colonial society, another vanishing American. At first Dolph thinks only Indians comprise the hunting party he stumbles upon; on closer inspection, he discovers Antony is white, a "hale and hearty" older man whose "face was bronzed almost to the colour of an Indian's … He wore a hunting-frock, with Indian leggings, and moccasons, and a tomahawk in the broad wampum belt round his waist" (*BH* 333). Antony is a racially liminal figure, whose ambiguous appearance signals his integration with the Native group. The wampum belt may be a small detail but tells us that Antony is involved in cross-cultural exchange, since indigenous tribes used these belts of shell beads to trade. Due to a shortage of metal coins in the seventeenth century, European settlers also used wampum as supplementary currency to trade between themselves and Native groups. By the 1720s, trade between settlers had all but ceased, yet Antony still keeps large stores at his Albany home, presumably to trade with Native groups. Wampum was not only a "monetary lingua franca" enabling trade between disparate groups but also a form of Native language

itself, which Marc Shell likens to Chinook or Choctaw.[13] The belts made up of these shells often depicted a pictorial or symbolic language that recounted relationships between tribes or between indigenous and settler communities. The fact that Antony is participating in this form of communication again lends weight to reading him as a liminal figure, who has temporarily left a settler community and is now outside its structures within his own multi-racial group.

Irving associates non-scripted and oral communication with Native American communities. In his "Traits" essay, Irving ventriloquises Native speech by quoting at length an unknown Native chief. Native oratory is forceful yet eloquent. It is an oral form of which early national writers take ownership and set in print to capture a vanishing premodern society.[14] As discussed above, Native storytelling—although silent in Knickerbocker's texts—forms the basis of the Hudson Valley legends. Native storytelling underlies Antony's ghost stories; the white settler supplants these Native voices with his own. Settling around a campfire for the evening, Antony "sing[s] a stave or two of a Dutch drinking song" before his Dutch American "myrmidons" or companions "join in the chorus". Like Brown in *Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist*, Irving describes the liminal voice filling up the frontier space, "until the woods echoed again" (*BH* 336). However, as opposed to Carwin's racially ambiguous ventriloquism in *Memoirs*, in "Dolph Heyliger" Antony replaces indigenous

[13] Shell also notes that some European settlers advertised themselves as wampum interpreters. Marc Shell, *Wampum and the Origins of American Money* (Urbana; Chicago; Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 38, 53–54.

[14] For example, in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785), Thomas Jefferson transcribes Mingo chief Logan's lament over his family's murder as an example of Native American eloquence. He asks if European culture has "produced a single passage, superior to the speech of Logan" in order to support his argument that Native Americans were mentally equal to the white race, but required European education and agriculture to advance them from savagery to civilization. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London: John Stockdale, 1787), 104.

speech and oral culture with his own. He colonises the Catskill woods with more European settler vocalic bodies, as opposed to Carwin whose "shrill tones of a Mohock" populate the rural Pennsylvania valley with Native vocalic bodies.[15]

After the singing, Vander Heyden begins to tell "legendary tales … about the river, and the settlements on its borders". Irving writes, "the sturdy bush-beater sat in the twisted root of a tree, that served him for a kind of arm-chair, dealing forth these wild stories, with the fire gleaming on his strongly-marked visage" (*BH* 337). This storytelling scene draws on both European and Native influences to create a domestic scene along the frontier, in which the wild and untraversable natural space transforms into homely furniture. The settler reconfiguration of the natural space is another way in which Antony supplants Native Americans; it mirrors Antony's possession and transformation of an indigenous legend into a Dutch ghost story. As a patriarchal and propertied white man, Antony can easily appropriate the culture and storytelling of property-less non-white figures to indulge in fantasies of frontier masculinity and the wild lifestyle of the Native American. At the same time, this liminal storytelling space acts as a fitting setting for Vander Heyden to protest changes in society that would see his form of colonial citizenship vanish.

The limited amount of scholarship on race in Irving has primarily focused on how his depiction of Native culture marks *The Sketch Book* and *Bracebridge Hall* as works of identifiably "American" literature. Laura Murray is right to argue that Irving uses the Native figures above to discuss the position

[15] Brockden Brown, *Wieland*, 284.

of America as a young nation. She claims that Irving creates an "aesthetics of dispossession" by placing the Indian essays within a collection of romanticised English sketches. The closing speech from an unnamed warrior in "Traits" is for her an example of Native oratory and culture that has been "subsumed" by white writers in order to cultivate "their [own] sense of vulnerability with respect to Britain".[16] Native figures serve Irving's construction of white Americans as passive peoples, since they too have been victims under an English colonial rule, an analogy that masks their own involvement as colonizers of Indian land.[17] Sladja Blazan, meanwhile, develops this reading by specifically focussing on the relationship between white and non-white figures in "Dolph Heyliger". She argues that Dutch Americans' relationships with non-white figures distances them from "policies of exclusion" and exploitation practised against non-white groups in both colonial and independent America.[18] The African American and Native characters in the "Dolph Heyliger" story collection all exist as marginalised and silenced figures, there to demonstrate the value of the white Dutch American protagonist. In "The Storm Ship", African American slaves fawn over Antony. His house in Albany is full of "pet negroes" who joyfully surround Antony on his return and eagerly wait to hear his stories of adventure in the wilderness, while the Indian hunting party are reduced to a pack of dogs, "sleeping like hounds in the sunshine" around his house (*BH* 350, 336). While Irving reduces these two non-white groups to a "spectralized supporting role", Dutch settlers fill the landscape with their own

[16] Murray, "The Aesthetic of Dispossession," 219, 207.
[17] Ibid., 221.
[18] Sladja Blazan, "Silencing the Dead: Washington Irving's Use of the Supernatural in the Context of Slavery and Genocide," *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 69, no. 2 (2013): 14.

ghosts and spectral figures.[19] Blazan argues that Irving populates his texts with Dutch-Native ghosts to construct a legacy for Dutch Americans, like the Native American figures have, and write their claim of ownership onto the land.

While I agree with Blazan that Irving uses the supernatural to create a cultural legacy for settler communities, I contend that making the Dutch American into a form of Native ghost does not just legitimise Dutch American involvement in European colonisation but also expresses anxiety about a vanishing form of colonial male citizenship. Blazan contends that these ghostly Euro-Americans use the supernatural to "elevate" themselves into "the role of mediator and spokesperson for disempowered inhabitants of early America".[20] However, instead of speaking for the dispossessed Native Americans—a mode of cultural appropriation that Renée Bergland, Murray and Blazan identify—or exculpating their own colonialism, Antony speaks of his own threatened type of white colonial citizenship. Irving's portrayal of liminal Dutch Americans as another colonised group does not just represent adolescent national identity in relation to English rule, but also values a structure of communal citizenship vanishing from the newly independent nation.

Irving distinguishes between Dutch Americans and English Americans by depicting differences in the structure and behaviours of their communities. They are two distinct ethno-regional groups that Irving maps onto the Northeast. As Donald Ringe notes, in Knickerbocker's faux histories, Dutch American New Yorkers exist in opposition to the Yankee New Englander, who practises a roaming self-interest and represents an intangible economy based on a speculative stock market. In response, Irving offers Dutch American villages

[19] Ibid., 18.
[20] Ibid., 14.

as places of "permanence and social stability".[21] Ringe focuses on Dutch American communities in *A History of New York* (1809) and *The Sketch Book*, but his argument can be mapped onto Irving's portrayal of 1720s New York in "Dolph Heyliger". Irving presents a European colonised group in "Dolph Heyliger". The Dutch population in Manhattan "groaned under the tyranny" of English powers and is both metaphorically and physically silenced, as Lord Cornbury "carried his cruelties towards the Dutch inhabitants so far as to allow no Dominie, or schoolmaster, to officiate in their language, without his special license; about this time" (*BH* 304). Against this, Albany remains untouched by "the restless people of New England", as the English have yet to reach that far north. Knickerbocker idealises Albany "in all its glory", in particular suggesting that it is a steady, stable and slow environment: "every thing was quiet and orderly; every thing was conducted calmly and leisurely; no hurry, no bustle, no struggling and scrambling for existence" (*BH* 349-50).

Using Ringe's distinction, I argue that the liminal white voice and references to Native appearance and speech within "Dolph Heyliger" invokes nostalgia for a white male citizenship that Irving attaches to vanishing Dutch American communities. Furthering Ringe's arguments on competing regional values of change versus stasis, however, I add that Irving uses liminal white figures and their connection to Native culture to offer an alternative, older view of time, that challenges a modern idea of development and progress, in particular in regards to shifting ideas of urban economic male citizenship. A "culture of capitalism" significantly affected communal structures and interpersonal relations in the early national period, when the ideal male citizen

[21] Donald A. Ringe, "New York and New England: Irving's Criticism of American Society," *American Literature* 38, no. 4 (1967): 459.

had a strong Protestant work ethic, was self-disciplined and self-possessed. However, instead of investing these traits in a "moral economy" of communal exchange that existed in colonial towns, he directed these virtues into finance capitalism and entrepreneurialism in the growing early national city.[22] The certainty and stability of paternalism shifted to the risk and independent success of individual endeavour. In a "culture of capitalism" social interactions are framed in terms of value and accumulation of capital. These new self-made men in the early national period used their voices, in acts of public speaking and writing, to further their social and economic position.

Irving overlays these early nineteenth century developments onto his early eighteenth century tale. Dolph's journey from Manhattan to Albany and its surrounding wilderness is a movement backwards in time, towards a period untouched by English colonisers and the Yankee economic masculinity they represent. Antony enacts a "natural" way of life on his hunting trips with his Indian guides, taking time out of his life in Albany to indulge in the adventure of Native pursuits.[23] Antony owns a large swath of inherited wild land and derives his wealth from the environment, but he seeks a closer connection with the earth away from the sleepy town. He appears as a Native American and acts out an "Indian mode of life", breaking temporarily from his patriarchal domesticity in Albany. Antony is a "man of property" and because of his commanding wealth, can appropriate Native culture and "indulge his humours

[22] Watts, *The Revolution Reborn*, 7–8.
[23] Antony is part of a tradition of frontier masculinity in literature of the early national and antebellum periods, in which white men live amongst Native communities or display "savage" traits and skills to mark them as outside the structures of white society. This includes Edgar and Stephen in Brown's *Edgar Huntly* (1799) and *Memoirs of Stephen Calvert* (1800), Basil in James Kirk Paulding's *The Backwoodsman* (1818), Nick in Bird's *Nick of the Woods* (1837) and most notably Natty Bumppo in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Leatherstocking Tales* (1823-41).

without control" or refusal. This involves taking hunting parties into the forests, sleeping outdoors, fishing, hunting and "living the Lord knows how" with his "several Indian hangers on" (*BH* 334-5). Antony is a genealogical forerunner to a figure such as Davy Crockett who Carol Smith-Rosenberg examines as an example of liminal antebellum masculinity. In being mistaken for a Native American, Vander Heyden steps outside the social structures of white colonial America. His appearance and temporary mode of living signifies the "social and economic inferior", the Native excluded from legal, social and economic citizenship.[24]

As I discuss further in my next chapter on blackface in *Sheppard Lee*, racial transformation is a liminal act that marks white men apart from society, but only temporarily. Although appearing as "social and economic inferior", Antony can and does return to Albany to enjoy his wealth and patriarchal power. Antony embodies a form of white protest, from the colonial period onwards, in which settler communities employ Native traits to make their own claims on American selfhood. As Philip Deloria writes, "playing Indian"—the appropriation of indigenous dress and behaviours—allows white Americans to "encounter the authentic amidst the anxiety of urban industrial and postindustrial life".[25] These moments in the forest when Irving associates Antony with a Native presence show that Antony's form of white masculinity—a physical, robust outdoors "authentic" existence—is out-of-step

[24] Smith-Rosenberg views Crockett as temporarily removing himself from society through taking on Native dress and a frontier lifestyle. She argues that his wilderness lifestyle indicates that he is outside social structures and represents a marginalised and anxious white masculinity in the antebellum period. Carol Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 101.

[25] Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1998), 7.

with ideas of the successful urban citizen in an increasingly professionalised and market-driven America of the 1820s. In the forest, Antony bemoans the increasing professionalisation and education of young men at the expense of "manly accomplishments" (*BH* 348). On finding out that Dolph is a doctor's apprentice, Antony is appalled that his natural and masculine "talents and accomplishments" have been "cramped and buried under a doctor's wig". Holding a "mortal grudge" against the medical profession he decries that a young man such as Dolph "who could shoot, fish, run, jump, ride, and wrestle, should be obliged, to roll pills and administer juleps for a living—twas monstrous!" (*BH* 348-9).[26] He instructs Dolph to disregard his apprenticeship and rely on his natural skills, and he takes a paternal role over the young adventurer, offering to house him until he can make his own way in life away from the regiment, toil and tedium of the physician. Antony's free indirect speech, mediated through Knickerbocker's narration, protests the progression away from a "natural" masculinity attached to household systems, moral economy and the land. He fulfils his purpose as a figure of spectral nostalgia by critiquing contemporary society, a critique that he develops through his tale of Killian Vander Spiegel.

Irving revisits the division between Dutch Americans and English Americans when Antony relays the story of Killian. Antony narrates that after the 1664 English purchase of New Amsterdam, Killian,

> fell into a melancholy apprehending that his wealth would be taken from him and that he would come to beggary. He turned all his property into cash, and used to hide it away. He was for a year or

[26] As seen in his portrayal of the foppish Ichabod Crane in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and the snobbish scholars in "The Art of Bookmaking", Crayon has a general suspicion of overeducated professionals.

> two concealed in various places, fancying himself sought after by the English, to strip him of his wealth; and finally was found dead in his bed one morning, without any one being able to discover where he had concealed the greater part of his money. (*BH* 354)

Killian is a figure of male economic anxiety, concerned with the vulnerability of any intangible wealth and hoping to find security in hard cash. Killian's paranoia paints the English, genealogical forerunners of the speculating Yankee, as avaricious villains who roam from house to house stealing Dutch wealth. By taking over the narration, Antony employs the story of Killian's lost wealth from fifty years earlier to support his protest against changes in a colonial male citizenship attached to landed property, a dependency on the natural environment and "manly pursuits". And by extension, Irving employs a supernatural tale from the previous century, brought forward to the 1820s through a chain of oral and written narratives, to challenge citizenship in the early national period and its dependence on economic masculinity.

Killian's story fits into Irving's modes of economic masculinity that David Anthony describes at work in *The Sketch Book* and *Tales of a Traveller*. In these collections Anthony sees two options for white American economic masculinity: the instability and flux of the financial market as seen in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820) and "The Devil and Tom Walker" (1824), and the fantasy of tangible treasure in "The Golden Dreams of Wolfert Webber" (1824). Anthony argues that Irving retreats to the fantasy of finding gold in the face of fluctuating and insecure financial situations, in particular the loss of the Irving family business in 1817 and the financial panic of 1819.[27] It is

[27] Anthony builds upon a line of scholarship, most notably the work of Irving biographers William Hedges and Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky, which argues Irving wrote *The Sketch Book* to soothe his personal psychological trauma. Rubin-Dorsky contends

strange that Anthony does not discuss *Bracebridge Hall*, the middle work in the Crayon triptych, because in "Dolph Heyliger", this fantasy becomes reality when Dolph does strike gold, finding Killian's buried treasure in Manhattan and using it to support his family and benefit his community. Considering *Bracebridge Hall* in light of Anthony's thesis offers a third formation of economic masculinity: a success story predicated on inheritance. Dolph is a wish-fulfilment figure; through finding gold and inheriting a fortune, he succeeds and demonstrates a citizenship attached to property and rooted in community.

Dolph is a liminal figure himself, who transitions from an adolescent apprentice into a wealthy and responsible community leader via his journey out of Manhattan and into the pastoral Albany. His "up-from" narrative offers security because the means by which he becomes wealthy are rooted in the traditional made fantastical. In other words, Dolph's treasure finding is a mediated form of inheritance. While Dolph's trajectory embodies the "phenomenon of social mobility in America", it is not, as William Hedges claims, devoid of "aristocratic exclusivities".[28] In taking Dolph to Albany and narrating his ancestor's lost wealth, which is waiting to be recovered, Antony becomes a surrogate father. After hearing Killian's story from Antony, Dolph asks himself, "why the plague could not the old goblin have told me … without sending me all the way to Albany to hear a story that was to send me all the

---

that Irving created the fictional Crayon persona as a buffer between himself and the world, through which he could negotiate the cultural position of American literature in the early national period and channel anxieties about economic failure into the realm of fantasy. William L. Hedges, *Washington Irving: An American Study, 1802-1832* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965); Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky, *Adrift in the Old World: The Psychological Pilgrimage of Washington Irving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

[28] Hedges, *Washington Irving*, 187–88.

way back again?" (*BH* 354-55). By having Antony speak for Killian instead of the ghost speaking for himself, Irving brings to the fore a paternal relationship between the older and younger man, as Dolph inherits the story of Killian and subsequently secures the ghost's treasure. Dolph realises that both he and Antony are descendants of Killian and thinks to himself that if he can marry Antony's daughter "both branches of the family will be again united, and the property can go on in the proper channel" (*BH* 355). Finding the gold reclaims his ghostly ancestor's inheritance and continues a traditional genealogical line. In marrying Marie Vander Heyden, Dolph regenerates Antony's successful patriarchal citizenship, making "good use of his wealth" and "becoming a distinguished citizen, and a valuable member of the community" (*BH* 362). The fantastical coincidence of paternal inheritance enables Dolph self-making. In the tale's conclusion, Irving offers a balm for early national anxieties about unstable economies and the societal pressures for young men to display independent economic male citizenship.

Irving employs inherited storytelling throughout *Bracebridge Hall* to propagate the conceit of a good and valuable citizen, who supports and leads his community and looks after those less fortunate than himself. The voice is integral to forging and developing this enshrined colonial vision of citizenship. Irving closely explores the conceit of oral storytelling in the collection's English sketches. As Michelle Sizemore contends of *The Sketch Book*, by just reading the American pieces on their own "critics have circumvented the chaotic heterogeneity of the Atlantic world conflated in the collection".[29] As an early transnational writer, Irving draws on international influences (German

[29] Sizemore, "'Changing by Enchantment,'" 165.

folklore, Walter Scott's historical romances, *Arabian Nights*, *The Spectator*) and engages with ideas of community and citizenship that cross national boundaries.[30] Described by Irving as a "connected series of tales and essays", *Bracebridge Hall* again jumps across space and time, crossing the Atlantic between colonial America, Georgian England, pre-Revolutionary France and early modern Spain through the narratives of Crayon's travelogue, the stories of Squire Bracebridge's guests, and Knickerbocker's historical manuscripts.[31] It is necessary to read this tale *in situ* to understand Irving's wider project of nostalgia, which involves Crayon's English travel narratives and Knickerbocker's faux New York history, as well as the storytelling apparatus of which they are a part. For Crayon, travel around England is a process of nostalgia because it unites different periods from his own past. By encountering the landscapes and scenes that he read about "in every stage of his existence" he is overcome with the "recollected ideas of infancy, youth, and manhood; of the nursery, the school, and the study", which "come swarming at once" in a "delightful train of remembrance" (*BH* 8). Travelling to England is not just a trip back in time to encounter Old World customs and traditions, but is also a way Crayon can access his own past, experienced as a selective editing of his own life through a transatlantic lens.

Irving's English scenes feature nostalgic communities. Irving is aware that the English community he presents in *The Sketch Book* and *Bracebridge Hall* is a fading relic of previous generations. Re-introducing the aristocratic

[30] Paul Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formations of American Literature, 1730-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 42.
[31] Irving to Ebenezer Irving, 29 January 1822, in *Letters: Volume 1, 1802-1823,* eds. Ralph M. Alderman, Herbert L. Kleinfield, and Jennifer S. Banks, vol. 23 of *The Complete Works of Washington Irving*, ed. Herbert L. Kleinfield, Henry A. Pochman, and Richard D. Rust (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), 661.

Bracebridge family in "The Hall", Crayon calls the Squire "a lingering specimen of the old English country gentleman" (*BH* 13).[32] His sketches of the Squire are similar to his essay on James IV (1473-1513) in *The Sketch Book*. Both men are paternalistic figures who socialise with the "lower orders" and rule for their best interests. In "A Royal Poet", James promoted "every thing that could diffuse comfort, competency and innocent enjoyment through the humblest ranks of society" and "mingled occasionally among the common people in disguise; visited their firesides; entered into their cares, their pursuits, and their amusements" (*SB* 77-78). In the same vein Crayon praises the Squire's attentiveness to his tenants—"inquiring into their concerns, and assisting them in times of difficulty and hardship"—which makes him "one of the most popular, and of course one of the happiest, of landlords" (*BH* 192). However, he admits that the example set by the Squire is but a "Utopian dream", not upheld by many landed gentry in England. Crayon criticises self-exiling wealthy families for fleeing in the face of financial crisis, and urges them to retire to their estates to exercise "noble simplicity", "good sense" and a frugality that their poor neighbours already practise (*BH* 196). Irving acknowledges the Squire is a man "out of time" and that his memories of communal traditions and customs belong to an Elizabethan age, "stored with the accounts given by Stow, in his Survey of London", a city history completed in 1598 (*BH* 204).

In opposition to the Squire, Irving sets up his neighbour Mr. Faddy as a model of wealthy citizenship embodying a self-interested society. Setting up a

[32] Irving's attachment to vanishing figures of British society was recognised by contemporaneous readers and criticised by a *Blackwood's* review, which bemoaned that *Bracebridge Hall* was "not drawn from life, but from musty volumes". Unsigned review of *Bracebridge Hall*, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, June 1822, 689.

country pile after accumulating "a large fortune by dint of steam-engines and spinning-jennies", Mr. Faddy prioritises finance—he has "a face full of business"—instead of fostering inter-rank relationships. After hearing about the upcoming May Day celebrations, his capitalist dogma colours his criticism: instead of "fiddling, dancing, and carousing" the rural poor should be "staying at home to work for their families" (*BH* 203). Imposing his "territorial rights" over his estate, he blocks public right of way and threatens prosecution for trespass (*BH* 202). Mr Faddy is a Yankee in English guise, transforming the landscape and "bent upon improving and reforming" the village under his plans for urbanisation (*BH* 269).

Irving's creation of English parallels for his American types extends to his portrayal of the less-than-white gypsies living on the estate. Irving's representation of the gypsies at Bracebridge Hall was partially influenced by Walter Scott's historical romances such as *Guy Mannering* (1815) and its 1817 stage production, in which gypsy witch Meg Merrillies appears as an exotic supernatural figure.[33] At the same time, the "vanishing Indian" inflects Irving's depiction of this less-than-white group. Crayon mythologises the gypsy presence by describing them as spectral figures "haunting the purlieus of the Hall". Despite creating mischief and invading local poultry-yards to steal food, they serve as figures of nostalgia for the Squire, who sees "the race as belonging to the good old times" of feudal patriarchalism (*BH* 207). For the Squire, they are exotic relics of a lost rural idyll he seeks to regain through

[33] Deborah Epstein Nord writes that Scott's gypsies represent a lost national history and appear as dreamlike figures of "primal phantasy". A friend of Scott and an admirer of his historical romances, Irving too renders his gypsy figures as representative of a displaced social and economic way of life. Deborah Epstein Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination, 1807-1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 40.

paternal ownership of the land and control of its residents. Crayon too shares this attraction but for slightly different reasons. He is drawn to their sexualised exoticism, "their clear olive complexions, their romantic black eyes, their raven locks, their lithe, slender figures" and their connection to popular myth and superstition as they speak "in low silver tones, dealing forth magnificent promises, of honours and estates, of world's worth, and ladies' love" (*BH* 209). The gypsies are simultaneously a link to the past, a wandering and primitive community outside the civic bounds of "county gaols and country magistrates" who roam the landscape as "free denizens of nature", as well as a bridge to the future, offering to tell visitors' fortunes (for a fee) with supposed supernatural powers (*BH* 209-10).

Crayon's description of wildness and spectrality renders the gypsies a European stand-in for the Native Americans ghosting the Hudson Valley. In fact, Crayon admits:

> They seem to be like the Indians of America, either above or below the ordinary cares and anxieties of mankind. Heedless of power, of honours, of wealth; and indifferent to the fluctuations of the times, the rise or fall of grain, or stock, or empires, they seem to laugh at the toiling, fretting world around them. (*BH* 209-10)

The gypsies and Native Americans are both out of step with worldly developments, whether financial, political or technological. As a result, they stand against the movement of time itself, the "toiling, fretting world" that continually strives for progress and success. Irving presents a nightmarish picture of this toiling world when the Squire relates a visit to industrialised Dudley, where "the pale and ghastly people, toiling among vile exhalations, looked more like demons than human beings; the clanking wheels and engines,

seen through the murky atmosphere, looked like instruments of torture in this pandemonium" (*BH* 203-4).[34] For the Squire and Crayon the gypsies offer an alternative means of survival, away from this hellish world of industrial capitalism, and like the Indians in "Dolph Heyliger" they offer both a vision of a premodern way of life, dependent on the land, and a static point in time. Seemingly ungoverned by and uninterested in politics, laws or a financial economy, they appear not to have changed over generations. In this increasingly industrial and urban nation he visits, Crayon's only way to understand the gypsies is to transform them into indigenous, mythical figures that serve his nostalgia.

Crayon, and by extension Irving, is invested in the utopian ideal of interdependent communities practised at Bracebridge Hall. The attraction to English rural life creates a vision of communal existence that Irving sees disappearing in America and remaining only in the under-represented and forgotten Dutch American towns. As Elisa Tamarkin writes, this "anglophilia"—an attachment to England—in antebellum writing presents "an aesthetics of return to colonial structures of feeling".[35] In other words, independent Americans wanted the relationships found in English towns that were predicated on interdependency and communal customs as well as

[34] While this chapter does not specifically focus on Irving's depiction of English landscape, it is important to note that Irving deliberately locates Bracebridge Hall in rural Yorkshire and not in the West Midlands. Irving took the name Bracebridge from the family that built Aston Hall, a Jacobean mansion on the outskirts of Birmingham. Having spent a significant portion of time living with his sister and brother-in-law Sarah and Henry van Wart in Edgbaston while writing both *The Sketch Book* and *Bracebridge Hall*, Irving would have been familiar with the burgeoning industry around the city. His choice to avoid the obvious setting for the text and instead move to Yorkshire consciously contributes towards his project of nostalgia for communities less exposed to the demands and destruction of the industrial revolution.

[35] Elisa Tamarkin, *Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion, and Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), xxviii.

hierarchy, a structure from which they had previously rebelled. Tamarkin writes about antebellum literature and culture after Irving, but this statement holds true for his fiction as well. *Bracebridge Hall* is written just after the height of the Paper War (1815-19), during which American and English writers engaged in a "battle of words", openly criticising the opposing nation's culture and communities.[36] However, attitudes in America towards England softened in 1820s as writers sought to find commonalities with their transatlantic kin, despite a "proclamation of an end of ties to Britain".[37] The English sketches in partnership with the Knickerbocker stories create nostalgia for an alternative vision of community relations to which Americans such as Irving could opt in. When Crayon comments in *The Sketch Book*, "we may thus place England before us as a perpetual volume of reference", he justifies his attachment to the country. Just like using an encyclopaedia or dictionary, he can dip in and out, using different aspects of the nation as good or bad examples of citizenship and community in order to "avoid the errors and uncertainties that have crept into the page" and "draw thence golden maxims of practical wisdom" to improve American character (*SB* 49). His anglophilia meditates on the fostering of communities and white male citizenship in relation to an increasingly progress- and success-driven individualist society on both sides of the Atlantic. At the opening of *Bracebridge Hall* Crayon claims not to be a politician and to be more interested in the "ancient and genuine characteristics of my 'fatherland'", but through his portrayal of the members of Bracebridge's rural community and

[36] Jennifer Clark, *The American Idea of England, 1776-1840: Transatlantic Writing* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 12. Irving engages in this war of words in 1819 when he criticises English travelogues about America in "English Writers on America" in *The Sketch Book*.
[37] Joseph Eaton, *The Anglo-American Paper War: Debates about the New Republic, 1800-1825* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 7.

their rituals he presents both a utopian paternalistic society and the reality of these communities increasingly faced by drives for profit, exploitation and separation (*BH* 14).

These sketches perform nostalgia in that they present time as fluid. Past customs and traditions are alive at Bracebridge Hall, and men from the past seem to appear in the present on Crayon's travels around the country. Irving portrays Bracebridge Hall as simultaneously of the past and the current moment. Readers do not gain a strong impression of specifically what year events are taking place, due to the focus on cyclical communal events and traditions over political discussion.[38] Returning to Crayon's first visit to Bracebridge Hall in *The Sketch Book*, "The Christmas Dinner" embodies this amorphous time as different members of the family are "metamorphosed" into folk characters by wearing their ancestors' clothing.

> The irruption of this motley crew with beat of drum, according to ancient custom, was the consummation of uproar and merriment. Master Simon covered himself with glory by the stateliness with which, as Ancient Christmas, he walked a minuet with the peerless though giggling Dame Mince Pie. It was followed by a dance of all the characters, which from its medley of costumes seemed as though the old family portraits had skipped down from their frames to join in the sport. Different centuries were figuring at cross hands and right and left; the Dark Ages were cutting pirouettes and rigadoons; and the days of Queen Bess jigging merrily down the middle through a line of succeeding generations. (*SB* 199-200)

In this masque, time seems to be multiplicious as different periods dance in an interweaving choreography. Past and present co-exist, as time is punctured and

[38] There are a few mentions to very recent political events, such as in "Little Britain" in *The Sketch Book*, when the speaker Mr. Skryme refers to the 1819 Peterloo massacre as "the bloody scenes in Manchester" and the 1820 conspiracy to assassinate Prime Minister Lord Liverpool and his cabinet as "the great plot in Cato Street" (*SB* 210).

allows for this illusion of time travel. At the same time, Crayon is aware that these "fleeting customs were posting fast in oblivion" and time is moving forward, just like he acknowledges the Squire is a relic of a fading society "of long departed years" (*SB* 200).

The form of the sketch itself contributes to this project of spectral nostalgia, because it is inherently contradictory in how it presents time. It is deliberately fragmented, a quick account of a character, location or event that can exist within a series or as a standalone piece. This fragmentation suggests that time is moving quickly, that the writer only spent a very short period with the subject of the sketch, and is constantly moving just like a tourist making visual sketches on a trip.[39] However, by only focusing on singular moments with no plot arc, the sketch simultaneously creates a space outside of time's progression. As both Amanpal Garcha and Kristie Hamilton contend, literary sketches on both sides of the Atlantic offered respite to the reader by drawing from eighteenth cultural forms of the visual sketch and the journalistic essay through "descriptive or essayistic stasis".[40] The sketch is transgressive as it challenges a linear idea of time by instead offering overlapping temporalities found in character description and narrative digression, which suggests time may not be moving at all. For Garcha, sketches by William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell are an "alternative fantasy of a break, or an exemption, from temporal change".[41] They rebel against the flux and instability found in a newly-industrial society that always needs to

[39] For more on the relationship between the visual and verbal sketch at the turn of the century, see Richard C. Sha, *The Visual and Verbal Sketch in British Romanticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).
[40] Amanpal Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 11. See also Kristie Hamilton, *America's Sketchbook: The Cultural Life of a Nineteenth-Century Literary Genre* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998), 18.
[41] Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, 18.

drive forward, by offering moments without any change or development. The sketch's stasis and its roots in a hand-drawn visual form stand against the idea that the printed form is inextricably tied to modernity and progress.[42] The same can be said of Irving's sketches in *Bracebridge Hall*. Irving preserves a form of narrative that itself stops the progression of time by focusing on painterly descriptions of characters, places and events while overlaying them with the meanderings and musings of a fictional persona, who provides a sense of cohesion between pieces.[43]

Irving's collections bring together stories and sketches, which formally "embody radically different conceptions of temporality and coherence", with the sketch a plotless form while the story is dependent on plot. Writing about *The Sketch Book*, Garcha claims that Irving navigates these substantially different forms by creating two separate narrators: Crayon who observes English life and Knickerbocker who writes fantastical American history.[44] However, this ignores the interconnectedness of Crayon and Knickerbocker, in particular within *Bracebridge Hall*. Both Crayon and Knickerbocker are united by a project of nostalgic storytelling that Irving constructs through scenes of

[42] Scholarship on print economy traditionally connects advances in printing technology with revolutionising the public sphere to enable exchange of progressive ideas, as seen in the Reformation, the Enlightenment and both French and American Revolutions. For overviews of these changes see, Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *Grub Street Abroad: Aspects of the French Cosmopolitan Press from the Age of Louis XIV to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

[43] For more on the picturesque at work in *The Sketch Book* see Matthew Pethers, "Transatlantic Migration and the Politics of the Picturesque in Washington Irving's Sketch Book," *Symbiosis: A Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations* 9 (2005): 3–29. Garcha references the works of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele in developing fictional personas that linked together disparate pieces of periodical journalism, such as Mr. Spectator in *The Spectator* (1711-12). Irving had already modelled his writing on Addison and Steele before his fictional collections, writing satirical columns and letters under the pseudonyms Jonathan Oldstyle in the New York *Morning Chronicle* (1802-03) and Launcelot Langstaff in *Salamagundi* (1807). Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, 27.

[44] Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel*, 44.

storytelling within the sketches and a narrative apparatus that connects sketches with stories. This creates a chain of narration that promotes Irving's spectral nostalgia for colonial community and citizenship.

Each of the tales within *Bracebridge Hall* ("The Stout Gentleman", "Annette Delarbre", "The Student of Salamanca" and "Dolph Heyliger") are narrated by guests at the Hall, who regularly meet to entertain each other with stories of adventures, horror or humour.[45] Each story follows a short scene describing the narrator about to tell the tale. Irving carefully structures these sections to move from a scene of oral narration to Crayon's "reprinted" ghost stories. In addition, although Irving claimed he did not mind which volume of the text was published first, the collection clearly structures its episodic English sketches in a loose plot and moves towards resolution in the second volume.[46] The position of the "Dolph Heyliger" sequence within the larger text mirrors the plot progression of *Bracebridge Hall*. Placed immediately before Crayon's last sketch at the Hall "The Wedding", Dolph's marriage to Maria reflects the collection's ending in which the Squire's ward Julia Templeton marries his son Guy Bracebridge. Furthermore, positioning the most complex sequence (in terms of narrative voice) at the end of the text also gestures towards Irving's developments in storytelling, in which he moves from a simple retelling of a first-person narrative in "The Stout Gentleman" to a polyvocal narrative sequence in "Dolph Heyliger".

In "Dolph Heyliger" there is a chain of narration as different characters set up the story of Dolph, Killian and the haunted Dutch clipper. This

[45] Later British editions of *Bracebridge Hall* omit these four stories and their introductory pieces, which reconstruct the text purely as a travelogue focused on rural English life.
[46] Irving to Ebenezer Irving, 29 January 1822, 661.

matryoshka-like narrative passes through and around several narrators and storytellers: Crayon, Knickerbocker, Pompey, John Josse Vandermoere, Antony Vander Heyden and Mynheer Selyne. In "The Historian", Crayon agrees to read a story aloud to his fellow quests, before re-introducing the reader to Knickerbocker and his project of reclaiming Dutch American history. Following this, within "The Haunted House"—the manuscript that Crayon has reprinted—Knickerbocker reminisces on a childhood encounter with Pompey, a free African American, who tells the young boy fearful stories of the possessed property accompanied by "such awful rollings of his white eyes" (*BH* 302). Pompey does not expand on his stories; he is swiftly killed off and absorbed into the supernatural legacy of the haunted house, and Irving replaces him with the "pleasant gossiping" Vandermoere who promises more frightening stories than Pompey (*BH* 303). However, Irving evades Vandermoere's voice and substitutes it with Knickerbocker's retelling. Further in "Dolph Heyliger" and "The Storm-Ship", the narrative passes from Knickerbocker to Vander Heyden telling a story about the haunted ship, taken from the work of early Dutch American poet Selyne. Knickerbocker republishes this story but it is not clear whether these are Vander Heyden's words, that of the poet, or Knickerbocker himself.

Cynthia Schoolar Williams claims that the successive narrators create a "vulnerable chain of transmission", which deliberately includes narrative dead ends, to show the lack of cultural legitimation in this history of a New York village.[47] But I contend that Irving repeatedly mediates his narratives to support a specific type of history he wishes to pursue tied to a specific storytelling

[47] Cynthia Schoolar Williams, *Hospitality and the Transatlantic Imagination, 1815-1835* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 115.

market. From *A History of New York* onwards Irving creates a folk history that is predicated on oral narrative and the circulation of quasi-supernatural occurrences. Traditional histories such as the satirical object of *A History*, Samuel L. Mitchill's *Picture of New York* (1807), exclude these events, and focus instead on detail and statistics.[48] In the late eighteenth century, an Enlightenment school of historiography conceived history as a series of "exemplary narratives" which aimed to "discover 'the constant and universal principles of human nature"'. According to Hannah Spahn, in the 1800s this view of history began to shift into "Romantic" historiography, one that prioritised the testimony and lived experiences of individuals and communities.[49] Historiography divested its didactic futurity in order to connect with the experiences of the past, as Irving's faux history of New York employs mutable myth, folklore and fiction to create communal "Romantic" history and recreate communal experiences. In all of Knickerbocker's texts, Irving creates entire Dutch American families and communities as "an alternative set of ancestors for nineteenth-century, republican New Yorkers". [50] For this genealogy to continue, Knickerbocker's stories depend on the futurity of multiple overlapping narrators and the perpetuation of oral storytelling. Oral culture provides a necessary flexibility and possibility for this alternative history, which is lost in fixing the voice in print. The embedded oral forms of narration that Irving seeks to replicate in *Bracebridge Hall* simultaneously reach farther and farther back in time to pre-colonial American history in

[48] For more on Mitchill and other early national histories of New York see Andrew Burstein, *The Original Knickerbocker: The Life of Washington Irving* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 70–71.
[49] Hannah Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson, Time, and History* (Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 107.
[50] Elizabeth L. Bradley, *Knickerbocker: The Myth Behind New York* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 5–6.

Antony's recounting Native myth, and at the same time reach forward, as each narrator or storyteller is succeeded by another, ending with Crayon but no doubt to be retold again by both Crayon's audience at the Hall and Irving's readers.

The division between print and voice is clearest in Irving's fiction when Crayon encounters a speaking book in "The Mutability of Literature", an enchanted daydream in *The Sketch Book*. Reading in Westminster Abbey, Crayon considers its library "a kind of literary catacomb, where authors, like mummies, are piously entombed and left to blacken and moulder in dusty oblivion" (*SB* 106). The talking book he converses with speaks with "rather quaint and obsolete" language and "barbarous" pronunciation (*SB* 107). Crayon mocks the quarto when it says, "I was considered a model of pure and elegant English", by having to provide a translator's note, "(I should observe that these remarks were couched in such intolerably antiquated terms that I have had infinite difficult in rendering them into modern phraseology)" (*SB* 109). The talking book is stuck in the fixed world of print with its vocabulary and elitist ideology. It breaks out "into a plethoric fit of laughter" at the idea of Shakespeare—"a vagabond deer-stealer! … a man without a learning!"—as the nation's bard, which reflects its own historical immovability (*SB* 112-3). In sketches such as "The Mutability of Literature" and "The Art of Book-making" Irving is self-conscious about his position and legacy as an author, and is anxious that his fiction could too be relegated to a forgotten catacomb.[51] By

[51] In his letters to friends and family, Irving was self-aware of his reputation and his financial dependency on print, for example he wrote to his brother in 1821, "I have fagged hard to get another work underway, as I felt that a great deal depended upon it, both as to reputation and profit". Irving to Peter Irving, 6 September 1821, in *Letters: Volume 1, 1802-1823*, 648.

providing scenes of storytelling and multiple narrators, Irving hopes his work will be repeated and become part of a national heritage. I contend that by returning to oral culture within his printed text, Irving claims legitimacy for folk history and seeks to dispel anxieties about the legitimacy of his own work. Situated within oral culture, albeit an oral culture that has been selectively constructed and edited within print, it deserves to be retold and passed through generations.[52]

Furthermore, Irving seeks to imitate the oral form through print. As the introduction discussed, the printed text connects a population across larger geographical spaces through the proliferation and circulation of newspapers, pamphlets, magazines and books. To draw on Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983), print publishing aims to make individuals aware that they a part of a much larger national community, with a shared vernacular and, by extension, shared values. [53] Irving's written representation of the natural overlapping and mediation of voice found in oral storytelling imitates the intimacy of face-to-face verbal contact only found in small communities and, tellingly, lost in this larger imagined community connected by national and regional printed forms.

For Irving, storytelling creates an anti-individualist society because it is

---

[52] The legacy of Irving's supernatural tales of the Hudson Valley continues to this day. For more on the afterlife of "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" see Judith Richardson, *Possessions: The History and Uses of Haunting in the Hudson Valley* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 64–74.

[53] Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London; New York: Verso, 1991), 44. As Trish Loughran's recent work illustrates, early national and antebellum pamphlets, magazines and journals "fantasized" that these connections could be made in print; the texts imagined national unity even if their circulation was limited to the Northeast and instead addressed fragmented "locally bound and locally defined communities". Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770-1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 26, 22.

dependent on a shared bond between the speaker and the listener and shared experiences of performance. When Crayon remarks in "The Historian" that "this is a story-telling age", he reflects on the popularity of the oral tale during the early nineteenth century.[54] Storytelling unites people of different ranks and ages within communities on both sides of the Atlantic. Crayon is a liminal figure himself, a foreign outsider who resides with an English family; through storytelling he is incorporated within the Bracebridge community, acting as both listener and speaker. Storytelling is citizen building because it asks the listener to consider alternative viewpoints, engage with complex emotional territory, and broaden their own experiences. Within scenes of supernatural storytelling this is especially relevant. In "St. Mark's Eve" Crayon remarks that he "never knew the most gay or the most enlightened of audiences, that were not, if the conversation continued for any length of time, completely and solemnly interested" in ghost stories (*BH* 103). Sasha Handley comments that ghost stories in eighteenth-century England were "embedded within working patterns and life-cycle structures" of town and village life, sustained through oral heritage and the growing circulation of printed pamphlets and periodicals.[55] In *Bracebridge Hall*, the ghost story acts the same way; it is woven into quotidian communal life and considered as a necessary part of civic life.

In particular, Crayon draws attention to the suspension of disbelief that

[54] Irving's letters attest to his own role as a storyteller. When composing *Bracebridge Hall* he wrote to Thomas Storrow that he had received a "new stock of stories" while staying in Edgbaston and had relayed them to "the most experienced little story mongers in all Birmingham", his nieces. Irving to Thomas W. Storrow, 1 February 1822, in *Letters: Volume 1, 1802-1823*, 663.

[55] Sasha Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World: Ghost Beliefs and Ghost Stories in Eighteenth-Century England* (London; Brookfield, VT: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), 209.

ghost stories and supernatural tales encourage. Reminiscing on popular superstitions "brings up with it a thousand delicious recollections of those happy days of childhood, when the imperfect knowledge I have since obtained had not yet dawned upon my mind, and when a fairy tale was true history to me". He regrets that he no longer lives in an age "when the fictions of poetry were believed". Unlike Brown, who seeks to dispel superstition and irrationality in *Wieland*, Crayon recognises the importance in taking pleasure in the "pleasant errors" of superstitious thoughts and supernatural daydreams, which provide a respite from quotidian reality (*BH* 282). For Brown, the ventriloquial voice disrupts the text and the middle-class white citizen's belief in the authenticity of oral communication and the reliability of the senses. In contrast, Irving utilises oral narratives to recreate the experience of hearing a supernatural tale and create authenticity within his writing. In *Bracebridge Hall*, supernatural tales offer an escape from the "cold realities of morning"—the constant drive of progress, work, politics, the instability of the financial market—that contribute to an increasingly fractured and individualist society (*BH* 282). To return to the world of the supernatural is to return to communal "structures of feeling" predicated on shared acts of imagination and emotional exchange.[56]

While this storytelling apparatus is most apparent in *Bracebridge Hall*, it provides a frame for reading the earlier "Rip Van Winkle" because the passing on of stories rescues the displaced Rip and propagates a nostalgic community found in the Hudson Valley. In the short story, Rip is threatened with ostracism from the Sleepy Hollow village to which he has returned after a

[56] Tamarkin, *Anglophilia*, xxviii.

twenty-year supernatural absence. In this time the Revolutionary War has taken place, seemingly bringing about complete change to the community. Rip's despairing cry of "Does nobody know Rip Van Winkle!" voices a social anxiety that he is a self that no longer has a place within a cohesive whole (*SB* 38). Within the town, Rip is a foreign body, accused of being non-American (a spy, a refugee): he is also a superfluous figure, whose position, as well as name, has been usurped by his now adult son, Rip Jr. He is another liminal figure who experiences a disconnection and exile from community, and must negotiate his place when returning to this transforming community.

Crucially, Irving employs scenes of storytelling to rescue Rip and put him back into the structures of the town, after the local sage Peter Vanderdonk verifies Rip's story of being spirited away. This corroboration exists in Vanderdonk's own fantastical tale, inherited from a historian ancestor, "that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings", including the ghost of Hendrick Hudson, who Rip encounters before his disappearance (*SB* 38). After Vanderdonk's intervention, Knickerbocker's narrative jumps forward in time, briefly covering Rip's return to family and community, much in the same way the narrative at the end of "Dolph Heyliger" jumps to Dolph's marriage and his successful communal leadership years later. Ringe argues that the town has completely changed in the face of the Revolution and for him, this Dutch American form of community, which I outlined earlier, has gone.[57] However, I contend that Irving presents the town as a hybrid of change and stasis and that these colonial structures still exist, rendering the village a space of nostalgia where the past and present coexist. Sleepy Hollow is a bustling

[57] Ringe, "New York and New England," 466.

village, consumed with the election fever of 1792, but it welcomes back Rip and allows him to continue the role he played before his disappearance. He seemingly slips back into village life, resuming "his old walks and habits" and taking "his place once more on the bench at the inn door", which remains a space for communion and gossip, despite its new name "The Union Hotel" reflecting the nation's radical change (*SB* 39). The village remains a nostalgic space for Irving, a place where communal colonial values and structure remain, even after the Revolution.

Setting up his stories of pre-Revolution America amongst the circulating gossip and unfamiliar terminology and politics of a new nation, Rip becomes "a chronicle of the old times 'before the war'". Concluding the tale, Irving focuses on Rip's role as a storyteller, as he narrates his supernatural disappearance and reappearance "to every stranger that arrived at Mr. Doolittle's hotel". "Rip Van Winkle" comes full circle as Rip resumes his role as a supernatural storyteller and entertainer, passing on stories that become embedded in community so that "not a man, woman, or child in the neighbourhood, but knew it by heart" (*SB* 39).[58] The neighbourhood is therefore united by the shared experience of hearing Rip's story. These are stories to be passed on over and over, first through the universal experience of oral storytelling and then through the print media of Crayon's travelogue.

In *Bracebridge Hall*, Irving engages in spectral nostalgia, selectively editing America's colonial past and populating colonial spaces with ghostly

[58] Lloyd Pratt writes that Rip fulfils both "modern" and "premodern" roles in becoming the town's colonial chronicle and supernatural storyteller. Pratt's argument supports my reading that Sleepy Hollow is a space of partial change and partial stasis, where the past and present coexist. Lloyd Pratt, *Archives of American Time: Literature and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 50.

figures to create nostalgia for colonial forms of citizenship and community. Building upon recent scholarship to further reveal the under-acknowledged Native influences on Irving's fiction, this chapter has examined Antony Vander Heyden as a racially liminal figure who moves between white settler and Native groups. Antony occupies a fantastical space where the dispossessed can voice their grievances. A man "out of time", his advocacy of "manly accomplishments" within the wild landscape challenges the drive towards professionalism and individualism in Irving's America. As a storyteller, mediating and ventriloquising the story of Killian Vander Spiegel's lost wealth, Antony sets up a folklore legacy, which leads to Dolph's financial success and propagates a patriarchal communal structure. This reading extends to the encompassing English sketches, in which Irving romanticises rural and hierarchical communities and figures, such as the Squire and gypsies, are romanticised as fading relics of an unreachable Elizabethan past. The Bracebridge estate provides an alternate vision of community and citizenship, to which Irving offers access through the sharing and repetition of communal rituals, most notably the oral culture of vocal storytelling. The voice is integral to transmitting a patriarchal legacy and enshrining a colonial vision of communal "structures of feeling".[59]

The formal qualities of this hybrid collection of sketches and tales, which are set within an apparatus of multiple storytelling narrators, propagate Irving's nostalgic project and the communities he values. Irving's depiction of, and dependency on, oral culture seeks to resolve issues of legitimacy for both folk history and his own literature. In *Bracebridge Hall*, the supernatural offers

[59] Tamarkin, *Anglophilia*, xxviii.

fantastical scenes to explore citizenship and Irving utilises it to discuss regional, national and transnational communities. His scenes of recitation, and the apparatus of Irving's storytelling itself, offer an alternative, nostalgic form of citizen-building, in which imaginary events, fables, folk lore and supernatural storytelling unite communities and engender shared experiences. In the following chapter, I turn to Robert Montgomery Bird's *Sheppard Lee*, another fantastical tale in which a white man temporarily transitions between races to exist on the outskirts of society. Through the conceit of a body-hopping protagonist in Jacksonian America, the supernatural is again used to navigate dramatically shifting social structures.

Chapter 3

"What had become of me?": *Sheppard Lee*'s Blackface Transformation

In Robert Montgomery Bird's fantastical *Sheppard Lee: Written by Himself* (1836), Sheppard, a disembodied ghost, enters the bodies of six recently deceased men (a merchant, a dandy, a moneylender, a Quaker, a slave and an aristocrat) and reanimates their corpses. In doing so, he takes on the thoughts, feelings, behaviours and, crucially, voices of each previously living man before returning to his original life. Unlike Carwin, Nick and Vander Heyden from my previous chapters—who Brown and Irving associate with non-white figures through appearance, voice and behaviour—Sheppard experiences a complete racial transformation, and temporarily lives as a slave for several months. During his eighteen-month body-hopping adventure, he travels between his own enduring self and the character of each new incarnation during these extreme transformations. In the novel, Sheppard is a "liminal persona" because, in his journey out of and back into his body, he transitions between these fixed conditions of "legal status, profession, office or calling, rank or degree" noted by Victor Turner, continually acquiring then losing the personality traits of each incarnation.[1]

Edgar Allan Poe's 1837 review of the novel for *The Southern Literary Messenger* critiqued this liminality in Sheppard's fluctuating transformations. As he put it: "The chief source of interest in such narrative is, or should be, the contrasting of … varied events, in their influence upon a character *unchanging*—except as changed by the events themselves". He criticises Bird

[1] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 95.

for depicting a mutable protagonist who "very awkwardly, partially loses, and partially does not lose, his identity at each transmigration". This decision, he argues, fails to depict different social experiences in America, an object that could be better served "without any reference to a confused and jarring system of transmigration, by the mere narrations of seven different individuals".[2] Poe's own use of metempsychosis in a number of his tales, such as "Ligeia" (1838) and "Metzengenstein" (1832), is actually in line with Bird's representation, but in this review Poe prefers the representation of metempsychosis found in his tale "Morella" (1835), in which a distinct unchanging spirit travels between bodies. His review does not acknowledge that it is precisely this shifting between Sheppard's self and the selves of six different men that is the central source of entertainment in the novel, as Sheppard experiences extreme, and often comic, changes in character.

In the last five years, scholarship on this unusual novel has flourished. While largely focused on Bird's representation of Tom the Virginia slave and his relation to contemporary abolitionist and anti-abolitionist media, this criticism has also considered how Bird incorporated his medical training in the novel.[3] Yet much less attention has been given to the theatrical influences on

---

[2] Edgar Allan Poe, review of *Sheppard Lee*, in *Essays and Reviews: Theory of Poetry, Reviews of British and Continental Authors, Reviews of American Authors and American Literature* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 401–2.

[3] Jordan Stein, Nancy Buffington and Sarah N. Roth all examine Bird's focus on the abolitionist pamphlet the Virginia slaves find and that causes their rebellion. Sari Altschuler, Justine Murison and Matthew Rebhorn take a medical humanities perspective on Sheppard's transformations. See Jordan Alexander Stein, "The Whig Interpretation of Media: *Sheppard Lee* and Jacksonian Paperwork," *History of the Present* 3, no. 1 (2013): 29–56; Nancy Buffington, "Fictions of the South: Southern Portraits of Slavery," in *A Companion to American Fiction 1780 - 1865*, ed. Shirley Samuels (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 378–87; Sarah N. Roth, "The Politics of the Page: Black Disenfranchisement and the Image of the Savage Slave," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 134, no. 3 (2010): 209–33; Sari Altschuler, "From Empathy to Epistemology: Robert Montgomery Bird and the Future

Bird's novel, despite Bird's career as a successful playwright in the early 1830s. In this chapter, then, I will examine Sheppard's racial transformation and his racially liminal voice through the lens of blackface minstrelsy. Growing in popularity in northern cities in 1830s, the transgressive spectacle of racial cross-dressing directly influenced Bird's fiction. He was surrounded by a culture of racial performance and social stereotype, which he filtered into *Sheppard Lee* through exaggerated descriptions of the physical appearances and voices of different regions, classes, nationalities and races.[4] Reading the novel alongside early blackface minstrelsy reveals *Sheppard Lee* and its representation of contemporary plantation slavery as a more complex performance of blackness that is decidedly aware of its white voice underneath.

Spaces of performance, such as the carnival and stage, are liminal zones of transformation and ambiguity, in which masquerade, makeup and costume blur and transgress class, race and gender stratification.[5] On the antebellum stage, blackface transformations simultaneously fortified and demolished racial boundaries by both emphasising and engulfing the performer's whiteness. In this respect, *Sheppard Lee* is textual blackface, and can be read within a genre

---

of the Medical Humanities," *American Literary History* 28, no. 1 (2016): 1–26; Justine S. Murison, "Hypochondria and Racial Interiority in Robert Montgomery Bird's *Sheppard Lee*," *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 64, no. 1 (2008): 1–25; Matthew Rebhorn, "Ontological Drift: Medical Discourse and Racial Embodiment in Robert Montgomery Bird's *Sheppard Lee*," *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 61 (2015): 262–96.

[4] Although not discussed in this chapter, Bird also draws on the conventions of eighteenth century comic fiction. In his introduction to the 2008 edition of the novel, Christopher Looby makes clear the influence of picaresque fiction on the novel's style and plot: the creation of social caricature or stereotypes; the movement of a central protagonist through varied landscapes of American society; and the exaggeration of regional, national, racial and class dialects. Robert Montgomery Bird, *Sheppard Lee: Written by Himself*, ed. Christopher Looby (New York: New York Review Books, 2008), xxxvii-xli (hereafter cited in text).

[5] Here I draw on work by Joseph Roach, who argues that circum-atlantic performances, such as the theatrical racial cross-dressing of "Black Zulus" at New Orleans carnivals, are liminal spaces of lawlessness and timelessness that transgress set social boundaries. Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 18–19, 181.

of nineteenth-century texts that feature white figures disguised or masquerading as African Americans, including Ormond in Brown's *Ormond*, Devil-Bug in George Lippard's *The Quaker City* (1845) and Black Guinea in Melville's *The Confidence-Man* (1857).[6] In *Sheppard Lee*, entering a black body and mind is a fascinating and transgressive spectacle because it dares readers to imagine and identify with a wholly alien existence. Tom's behaviour and appearance transposes contemporary blackface guises and theatrical racial stereotype onto the page. Scholarship of the last two decades from Dale Cockrell, W. T. Lhamon Jr., Eric Lott, Matthew Rebhorn and John Strausbaugh positions early blackface as an ambiguous, hybrid and potentially radical performance in which part of the entertainment value came from the audience's awareness that a white man chose to dress, dance and sing as a black man. Unlike its later iterations, 1830s minstrelsy was raucous, transgressive, teasing and satirical.[7] Early blackface performers, such as Thomas Dartmouth "Daddy" Rice, fashioned a familiar yet outré black figure, Jim Crow. His entertaining dancing and lyrics of escape and trickery created a racist yet liberating guise for white desires to escape from the social conformity expected of white citizens into a life of laziness and play.

---

[6] As discussed in Chapter 1, Ormond disguises himself in "the complexion and habiliments of a negro" to gain employment as a chimney sweep. Brown, *Ormond, Or the Secret Witness*, 154. For a discussion of blackface influences on Devil-Bug see Timothy Helwig, "Denying the Wages of Whiteness: The Racial Politics of George Lippard's Working-Class Protest," *American Studies* 47, no. 3/4 (2006): 87–111. For a reading of Black Guinea as blackface performance see Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 61–62.

[7] In positioning blackface as a working-class musical tradition, Strausbaugh calls the 1830s its "rock & roll years". John Strausbaugh, *Black Like You: Blackface, Whiteface, Insult & Imitation in American Popular Culture* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 57.

As in blackface, Sheppard's supernatural racial transformation is a paradoxical space of what Lott terms "interracial identification", in which desires for and fears of blackness coexist.[8] Despite Sheppard's repeated claims of Tom's difference, he coexists with the slave figure through slippages in his first-person narrative. Like Benjamin J. Doty's recent article, this chapter identifies that "blackface minstrelsy provides the representational foundation of Lee's portrayal of blackness".[9] However, whereas Doty views blackface as Bird's satire on antebellum theories of embodiment, which "reveals a more complex, ambivalent interaction between literature and medicine", I contend that Sheppard's racial transformation satirises and challenges prevalent white civic values.[10] I argue that Sheppard's enjoyment of slavery has the same transgressive power as blackface performance. His happiness as a white man in slavery challenges ideals of white identity formation through hard work, control of financial capital and ownership of property. At the same time, Bird's audacious experiment with inhabiting blackness coexists uneasily with prevalent ideas in contemporary race science of the black man as savage, violent and subhuman, to be feared and controlled. The fluidity of a white man becoming a slave is countered by the threat of racial movement in the opposite direction and fears that African Americans could have upward social mobility, as seen in Tom's slave rebellion. In *Sheppard Lee*, blackness takes over the white body and its narrative voice yet is ultimately contained—just like the minstrel takes off their makeup—as Sheppard returns to his original body and embraces social conformity. To read *Sheppard Lee* as a blackface novel enables

[8] Lott, *Love and Theft*, 130.
[9] Benjamin J. Doty, "Satire, Minstrelsy, and Embodiment in *Sheppard Lee*," *Early American Literature* 51, no. 1 (2016): 133.
[10] Ibid., 153.

us bring to the fore the complexities and paradoxes of Sheppard's supernatural leap into blackness.

In the act of speaking as Tom, remembering and writing first-person experiences of slavery, the previously white spoken and written "I" or voice of the text temporarily turns black and white and black selves coexist. Sheppard's racial transformation both dares the reader to identify with an alien black existence and—by moving in and out of blackness as easily as putting on and washing off burnt cork—seeks to contain the threat of black social mobility while employing it to satirise Jacksonian citizenship. In this textual blackface, Bird reveals a liminal self that dances along the margins of whiteness to perform desires for black identification and anxieties over white citizenship in the antebellum period.

*

Sheppard Lee begins as an account of an unsuccessful New Jersey landowner who squanders his wealth and loses his acreage due to his overseer's mismanagement and exploitation. To extricate himself from this situation Sheppard resorts to searching for mystical treasure buried in the village woods, an incident that results in his death when he stabs his foot with a trowel. Fortunately, his misadventures have a silver lining: he discovers the ability to will his now disembodied spirit into the bodies of the recently deceased. Thus his adventures begin, taking him from New Jersey to Philadelphia and Virginia, in the guise of six different characters who exist as socioeconomic types defined by their profession or social position: John H. Higginson, a successful and gouty brewer; Isaac Dulmer Dawkins, a penniless dandy on the make for a wealthy wife; Abram Skinner, a miserly moneylender with scheming sons;

Zachariah Longstraw, a Quaker whose charitable intentions repeatedly end in his downfall, finally kidnapped and transported into the South; Tom, a lazy and happy Virginia slave who participates in a violent rebellion; and Arthur Megrim, a dyspeptic mad aristocrat who thinks himself to be, by turns, furniture, animals, and the Emperor of France. Sheppard's entire journey is a liminal process, starting with his death in New Jersey woodlands—the separation of his spirit from his corpse and of Sheppard from his community—and concluding when he returns to his body and reintegrates into his small community as a reformed man eighteen months later. Each of Sheppard's incarnations represents a fixed socioeconomic type or condition; profession (merchant), rank (aristocrat) or legal status (slave) easily demarcates each man. During each incarnation, Sheppard submerges within each new character to varying degrees, taking on the thoughts, behaviours and emotions of each man to the point where he does not remember any previous existence. For example, when becoming Skinner, Sheppard observes: "In entering his body, I became, as I have mentioned repeatedly before, the subject of every peculiarity of being that marked the original possessor" (212). Repeatedly, Sheppard describes the original owner of the body as his "prototype", rendering himself a copy that acquires the identity of the previously living man. Sheppard's own sense of self in the course of the narrative's events can therefore be imagined as a wave; in the troughs he has no recollection of his life, and only faintly resides within each character in order to record events; during the peaks, which occur at the beginning and end of each incarnation, he remembers who he is, in order to move between bodies.

Sheppard Lee is the fourth of six novels published between 1834 and 1839. Before and after his short yet prolific career in fiction, Bird had a varied professional life.[11] Shortly after training as a physician at Pennsylvania College, for example, he turned to playwriting in 1827. Bird completed nine dramas between 1827 and 1834, of which three tragedies—*The Gladiator* (1831), *Oralloossa* (1832), and *The Broker of Bogota* (1834)—were performed, with celebrity actor Edwin Forrest in the lead roles. In creating his stock dramatic characters, Bird was clearly aware of how spoken voice contributes to the effect of character. In a notebook for *The Broker of Bogota*, for example, he writes:

> The great, perhaps the chief, secret of effect depends upon the style of language … The secret is simple: that writer stumbles upon dramatic effect whose characters speak like men; and he fails whose personages declaim like orators and poets. … Shakespeare is a greater dramatist than others, because he is more natural … Othello speaks in a language more akin to that of our fellows than his classic shadow, Zampa.[12]

A powerful vocal performance connected antebellum audiences with non-white tragic figures, such as Othello. Critics and audiences lauded Forrest's performances of blackened figures, including the eponymous hero in John

---

[11] These novels are Mexican histories *Calavar* (1834) and *The Infidel* (1835); Revolutionary melodrama *The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow* (1835); satires *Sheppard Lee* and *The Adventures of Robin Day* (1839), and frontier romance *Nick of the Woods* (1837). Bird published a collection of sketches *Peter Pilgrim* in 1840. Frederick Bird completed and published his father's final novel *Ipsico Poe* in 1889.

[12] Robert Montgomery Bird, notebook for *The Broker of Bogota,* ca. 1834, Ms. Coll. 108, Box 4, Folder 168, Robert Montgomery Bird Papers, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania (hereafter this manuscript collection will be cited as *RMBP*). Also quoted in Clement E. Foust, *The Life and Dramatic Works of Robert Montgomery Bird* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1919), 74.

Augustus Stone's *Metamora* (1829) and Spartacus in *The Gladiator*.[13] In his diaries on *The Gladiator*, Bird praised Forrest as "undoubtedly the best man for Spartacus in Christendom", in particular because "his voice & muscle hold out to the last".[14] The tanned and muscular Spartacus was an exotic figure on the stage; a violent slave, yet one who spoke with both eloquence and raw power. In American tragedy of the period, the noble savage became a figure of antiquity, which Peter Reed terms "classical blackness", safely removed from contemporary racial issues.[15] It was customary for these characters to appear as classical figures in historical or foreign settings without a significantly blackened appearance or any distinctive ethnic accent in their voices. White actors spoke through these less-than-white bodies, while retaining classical speech, to make non-white characters more sympathetic and less threatening. The most well known example of this trend is antebellum productions of *Othello*, in which Othello was literally and metaphorically whitened. Forrest portrayed him as a noble Oriental or Moorish figure, "adjusting his color to a light tawny or a 'pale cinnamon' brown", because, in keeping with antebellum

---

[13] For more on Forrest's vocality in *Metamora*, see Matthew Rebhorn, *Pioneer Performances: Staging the Frontier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 24-47.

[14] Robert Montgomery Bird, journal entry on *The Gladiator*, 26 October 1831, Ms. Coll. 108, Box 6, Folder 182, *RMBP*. On the affect of Forrest's speech, the *New York Standard* declared, "Every action—every word—vibrates upon our feelings, and the actor is lost in the slave, the conquerer [*sic*], the dying gladiator". Unsigned review of *The Gladiator*, *New York Standard*, 29 September 1831, Ms. Coll. 108, Box 7, Folder 199, *RMBP*.

[15] Peter P. Reed, *Rogue Performances: Staging the Underclass in Early American Theatre Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 13. Bird was clearly aware of the racial connotations in *The Gladiator*, written during Nat Turner's unsuccessful insurrection. Bird noted in his diaries, "if *The Gladiator* were produced in a slave state, the managers, players, and perhaps myself in the bargain, would be rewarded with the Penitentiary!" for celebrating a rebellious slave. Although Spartacus, Turner and Tom are all rebellious slaves, there is a clear distinction between Spartacus, a blackened classical figure whose violence is distanced by location and time, and Tom and Turner, who represent contemporary fears of African American violence and sexual violation. Robert Montgomery Bird, journal entry on *The Gladiator*, 27 August 1831, Ms. Coll. 108, Box 6, Folder 182, *RMBP*.

race science, a "black hero was an oxymoron".[16] With swarthy appearance and Shakespearean speech, characters such as Othello and Spartacus could invoke a sense of cross-racial identification from the audience; with the colour barrier partially removed, theatre-goers could imagine themselves in those positions.

Against these tragic portrayals in which blackness was understated or erased in order to foster audience sympathy or admiration, stage comedies often reduced non-white figures to peripheral characters. Forrest himself began his career in comic blackface roles as a "negro dandy" in western travelling productions.[17] In Yankee comedies, conventional national, regional and social types stimulated laughter. Bird's *The City Looking Glass* (1828) features stock city gentlemen, servants, a sailor and an Irish-Southern plantation overseer all marked by their exaggerated speech; a range of distinct voices from different regions, nations and social groups that also populates *Sheppard Lee*.[18] During Sheppard's incarnation as Dawkins the reader encounters a number of these voices: the thickly inflected Irish accent of his housekeeper Nora Magee; the over-familiar and common speech of his country cousins Sam and Pattie; and his own aristocratically nasal tones. These productions were set in contemporary America and non-white characters were deliberately and distinctly African American in appearance and speech; actors used burnt cork

[16] Kris Collins, "White-Washing the Black-a-Moor: Othello, Negro Minstrelsy and Parodies of Blackness," *Journal of American Culture* 19, no. 3 (1999): 90, 89.
[17] James Rees, *The Life of Edwin Forrest* (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson & Brothers, 1874), 75.
[18] For example, the swindling dandy Ringfinger speaks with exclamatory oaths "gogs!", "zounds!" and "gadswogs!", while Tom the sailor's West Country accent is strewn with stereotypical phrases of a life at sea: "avast there, my hearty!", "shiver my timbers!". Robert Montgomery Bird, *The City Looking Glass*, ed. Arthur Hobson Quinn (New York: The Colophon, 1933).

and lard to transform themselves.[19] These marginal black characters were often involved with episodes of masquerade, and the comedy heightened by the fact that the actors themselves were in racial disguise.[20] Early national comedy, including Bird's work, deliberately employed blackness for audience amusement.

A combination of stage comic blackness, carnival and street performance, blackface minstrelsy developed as a raucous and transgressive entr'acte in the 1830s. Early minstrels exaggerated blackness to dare audiences to identify with the comic figure. Originating in northern cities, in particular New York, white musicians created entertaining black personas to popularise African American dance and song. Performers, such as Rice, were hugely popular for their comic portrayals of extravagant black characters, runaway Jumping Jim Crow and dandy Zip Coon.[21] Blackface involved the "simultaneous drawing up and crossing of racial boundaries".[22] These boundaries were indicated by the exaggerated appearance and speech of black figures to mark their difference, but repeatedly transgressed through the

[19] Yankee comedies accounted for four of the ten most-performed "legitimate blackface" productions before 1844, in which white performers appeared in place of African American actors: *The Forest Rose* (1825), *The Kentuckian* (1833), *The Green Mountain Boy* (1833) and *The Yankee Pedlar* (1834). See Dale Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 15–16.

[20] For example, both Samuel Woodworth's *The Forest Rose* and Bird's *The City Looking Glass* feature episodes of white men attempting to kiss or escort veiled black women. When the woman is revealed, the comedy stems from the man's horror at almost entering an interracial relationship. Samuel Woodworth, *The Forest Rose, Or, American Farmers* (Boston: William V. Spencer, 1855), 12; Bird, *The City Looking Glass*, 43.

[21] Rice began "jumping Jim Crow" in Kentucky in 1830, performing a lively jig, mimicking local black speech and painting his face black with burnt cork. Throughout 1832-36 he toured major U.S. cities with comic songs, dances and plays. W. T. Lhamon Jr. provides a thorough biography of the performer's career in his introduction to Rice's previously unpublished works. See W. T. Lhamon Jr, *Jump Jim Crow: Lost Plays, Lyrics, and Street Prose of the First Atlantic Popular Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1–90.

[22] Lott, *Love and Theft*, 6.

performer and audience's acknowledgement of a white man in this role. In Rice's songs and plays, Jim Crow is a trickster figure, "wheeling about" a number of national locations, outwitting both white and black characters and inhabiting both anti- and pro-slavery positions. He mocks the pretentions of black freemen in the North and beats them, striking "a Jarsey niggar,/In de street de oder day".[23] At the same time, in Jim's fantasy world, slave owners succumb to comic deaths and descend to Hell, or are outwitted by cunning black servants.[24] More than simple racist caricature, the freewheeling minstrel simultaneously frightened white audiences with the possibility of black violence or miscegenation, while attracting and fascinating them with his athleticism and virility. Lhamon Jr. interprets early blackface in a carnivalesque light as a cultural form produced for a white working-class audience. With his "zanier register" of comic songs and slapstick against authority figures, Jim Crow enabled audiences to "identify with a white man's desire for blackness".[25] Middle-class audiences that did watch Rice could find pleasure too in white performances of blackness, a transgressive opportunity for cross-class as well as cross-racial escapism. In exaggerating the performance of blackness far beyond imitation, blackface entertainers such as Rice created in the black body a liberating guise that could "wheel" about and across social and

---

[23] Thomas Dartmouth Rice, "The Original Jim Crow" (183-), reprinted in Lhamon Jr, *Jump Jim Crow*, 97.

[24] In the song "Gumbo Chaff" and the play *Bone Squash Diavolo* (1835) the master dies and goes to Hell. Rice's play *Virginia Mummy* (1835) features black waiter Ginger Blue tricking white men by masquerading as an Egyptian mummy and biting the white heroine. Matthew Rebhorn reads Ginger Blue as a racially ambiguous figure—an amalgam of black, Egyptian and Native American cultural signs and references—whose violence resists exploitation and reveals Rice's self-awareness of white commodification of black bodies. Thomas Dartmouth Rice, "Gumbo Chaff", *Virginia Mummy*, *Bone Squash Diavolo*, reprinted in Lhamon Jr, *Jump Jim Crow*, 29, 159–77, 178–209; Rebhorn, *Pioneer Performances*, 85–89.

[25] Lhamon Jr, *Jump Jim Crow*, 35. For more on the carnival influences on blackface, see Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder*, 30-61.

geographical boundaries. An anti-establishment figure, Jim had more freedom than white citizens who were expected to adhere to social norms of having a job, providing for their family and contributing to the economic and political wellbeing of the nation.

In taking Jim Crow onto the stage in farces *Virginia Mummy*, *Bone Squash Diavolo* and *Oh Hush!,* Rice's blackface and Forrest's stage drama inhabited the same performance spaces in northern cities.[26] For example, the Bowery Theatre, New York advertised that Rice would perform as the "Celebrated Jim Crow" in *Oh Hush!* for a few nights in 1834 before Forrest returned to the stage as Baptista Febra in Bird's *The Broker of Bogota*.[27] The theatre's drive towards populist and nativist productions in the 1830s made the Bowery the perfect place to see both America's leading stage actor and the increasingly popular minstrel. The two productions may have attracted different audiences in terms of taste, and possibly class—one interested in comic farce, the other interested in Shakespearian-esque tragedy—but they both marked the non-white body as a spectacular yet identifiable figure. Staging his plays in close proximity to minstrel acts, Bird was no doubt inspired by these two forms of white men performing blackness when writing his supernatural racial transformation.

For instance, he translated 1830s minstrel culture into *Sheppard Lee's* ventriloquisation of slave speech. In the novel's Virginia scenes, Bird transcribes the speech of slaves as having a "Congo tang" or pronounced

[26] Further collapsing these two distinct performance styles and spaces, Rice later wrote and performed his own blackface version of *Othello* in 1844, playing the Moor as a Jim Crow figure. See Thomas Dartmouth Rice, *Otello: A Burlesque Opera*, reprinted in Lhamon Jr, *Jump Jim Crow*, 343–84.

[27] Playbill for the Bowery Theatre (New York, 1834), Harvard Theatre Collection, The Houghton Library, Harvard University, reprinted in Ibid., 68–69.

African American vernacular accents, echoing the dialect in which blackface performers sang, spoke and wrote their lyrics and dialogue (311). In one episode, after looking at an abolitionist pamphlet, Tom's fellow slave Governor breaks into rhyming song, exclaiming:

> "Oh! de possum up de gum-tree;
> 'Coony in de hollow:
> Two white men whip a niggar,
> How de nigga holla!" (348)

The influence of blackface songs on Bird is here clear. The first two lines of Governor's verse echo lyrics from Rice's "The Original Jim Crow" ("Dere's Possum up de gum tree/ An Racoony in de hollow") and George Washington Dixon's "Zip Coon" ("O ole Zip Coon he is a larned skoler,/ Sings posum up a gum tree an conny in a holler").[28] Furthermore, Governor's burlesque of enslaved blackness, miming receiving the lash from an invisible master—"now ducking to the earth, now jumping into the air, as though some lusty overseer were plying him, whip in hand, with all his might"—mirrors the athleticism of blackface entertainers' lively jigs, the "jumping" of Jumping Jim Crow (347). This doubling back of racial performance—the black slave enacting an exaggerated blackness through a white authorial mouthpiece—continues throughout the Virginia section of the novel when Sheppard transforms into Tom.

At the beginning of Sheppard's transformation into Tom, Bird creates his own form of blackface doubleness. Like the play of racial masquerade in

[28] Rice, "The Original Jim Crow", reprinted in Ibid. 97; Thomas Birch, "Zip Coon" (New York, 1834), *The Library of Congress Music Copyright Database, 1820-1860*, http://www.loc.gov/item/sm1834.360780.

blackface minstrelsy, Sheppard is aware that he is a white man inside a black body. Upon waking as Tom, Sheppard examines his new body:

> My hand, which I had raised to scratch my head, came into contact with a mop of elastic wool, such as never grew upon the scalp of a white man. I started up in bed and looked at my hands and arms; they were of the hue of ebony—or, to speak more strictly, of smoked mahogany. I saw a fragment of looking-glass hanging on the wall within my reach. I snatched it down, and took a survey of my physiognomy. … my *face* was as black as my arms—and, indeed, somewhat more so—presenting a sable globe, broken only by two red lips of immense magnitude, and a brace of eyes as white and as wide as plain China saucers, or peeled turnips. (331-2)

These demarcations of racial appearance fed performances of blackface; drawings of Rice show him with almost pitch-black skin, bright white eyes, large red lips and tight curly hair. Bird's description of "smoked mahogany" is an analogue for the burnt cork used in blackface costume. In looking in the mirror, Sheppard, seeing his new body, reflects a mixture of curiosity and revulsion, Bird writing "Miserable me!" when Sheppard views his face. For Sheppard, an abolitionist, if not an ardent one, blackness signifies an abject existence of pain and suffering. First seeing his new appearance alone, Sheppard fears a life of brutality and cruelty and "could think of nothing but cowhides and cat-o'-nine-tails, that were to welcome me to bondage" (332). Later on, divorced from this fear of violence, the black body remains fascinating—Sheppard recalls, "having peeped at [my face] a dozen times or more, my ideas began to alter, and by-and-by, I thought it quite beautiful" (342). Like the spectacle of Rice's grotesque blackening, Sheppard's transformation is terrifying yet fascinating for the antebellum reader, as Bird's narrative moves out of the familiar experiences of white Philadelphia into the

foreign condition of enslavement. None of Sheppard's other transformations have their physical appearance mapped in such an exaggerated and attentive manner. The fascination with the body is evidently due to its position as a non-white form that signifies, for Sheppard and the 1830s audience, an alien existence.

Bird's exaggerated and caricatured description of Tom's features subscribes to the race science of the antebellum period. His focussed and detailed description as the text follows Sheppard's eyes being cast slowly over his new body echoes the scientific gaze of racial categorisation. Sheppard corrects himself to provide the exact shade of skin color— his arms, "the hue of ebony—or, to speak more strictly, of smoked mahogany"—which resembles the close and precise focus paid to appearance in antebellum descriptions of the "Negro" and other non-white physiognomies. Works by Samuel Stanhope Smith (1810), Richard Colfax (1833) and Samuel George Morton (1839) paid sustained attention to the physical appearance of different races, in particular facial features, in order to create a hierarchy of racial classification. For example, Morton, who would later become Bird's Pennsylvania College colleague, described "The Ethiopian Race" as, "characterized by a black complexion, and black, woolly hair; the eyes are large and prominent, the nose broad and flat, the lips thick, and the mouth wide", which parallels Bird's description above and the depictions of Rice in blackface.[29]

[29] Samuel George Morton, *Crania Americana: Or a Comparatif View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America* (Philadelphia: J. Dobson, 1839), 6. See also Richard H. Colfax, *Evidence Against the Views of the Abolitionists,* 25; Samuel Stanhope Smith, *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: J. Simpson and Co., 1810), 111.

Furthermore, when Bird describes Tom's mental condition, a clear connection emerges between his racial physiognomy and his interiority. From Sheppard's first transformation into Higginson onwards, Bird sets up an inextricable link between the body and the mind, with Sheppard often meditating on this relationship. As Dawkins, Sheppard states,

> I do verily believe that much of the evil and good of man's nature arises from causes and influences purely physical; that valour and ambition are as often caused by a bad stomach as ill-humour by bad teeth … those sages who labour to improve the moral nature of their species, will effect their purpose only when they have physically improved the stock. (141)

As Justine Murison has noted, this way of thinking about the body is indicative of Bird's medical training and his brief practice as a physician. Antebellum doctors believed physical ailments influenced psychological conditions and that "mind was never divorced from matter".[30] In the above quotation, this connection between mind and matter has evident links to race science; Sheppard adheres to antebellum theories of racial hierarchies to espouse a proto-eugenic approach to improving human intelligence and morality.

In Sheppard's transformation into Tom, then, Tom's biological race directly influences his mental condition. Tom's lack of memory is a key example of this influence. Like his previous incarnations, as Tom, Sheppard cannot remember any of his previous selves: "I was no longer Sheppard Lee, Zachariah Longstraw, nor anybody else, except simply Tom, Thomas, or Tommy, the slave … I had ceased to remember all my previous states of existence". However, it is only the condition of blackness that Sheppard

[30] Murison, "Hypochondria and Racial Interiority in Robert Montgomery Bird's *Sheppard Lee*," 19.

provides as a rationale for Tom's amnesia. He posits, "perhaps my mind was stupefied—sunk beneath the ordinary level of the human understanding, and therefore incapable of realizing the evils of my condition" (341). Moreover, Tom cannot even remember his own past, finding himself unable to account for his ability to read; he is demarcated from Sheppard's previous incarnations who are in possession of their memories. The explanation for this evidently stems from an understanding of "The Ethiopian Race" as ranking far below Caucasian intellect. Again, this subscribes to the racial types apparent in antebellum race science, in which African American appearance "served to mark categorically significant mental inferiority".[31] Morton's claim that African Americans were "flexible" and could "yield to their destiny, and accommodate themselves with amazing facility to every change of circumstance" is manifest in Tom's presentism, as Sheppard claims, "I could not have been an African had I troubled myself with thoughts of anything but the present" (341).[32] Mirroring exaggerated blackface stage presences and scientific racial categorisation, Tom's first person narrative challenges the reader to imagine what is at the limits of their imagination. Sheppard's racial transformation offers the possibility that the white reading audience could identify with the alien condition of black enslavement.

Through racial stereotypes of African American physique and psychology, Bird portrays Tom as completely physically and mentally different from Sheppard's white self. However, although Bird does present an

---

[31] Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind*, 73.

[32] Morton, *Crania Americana*, 7, 87. In *Crania Americana*, Morton sought to prove "Ethiopian" mental inferiority by measuring the volume within human skulls from across the world. He argued that Africans had smaller skull capacity and so their brains were less developed, which explained these characteristics.

essentialist idea of black identity, he also transgresses racial boundaries when Sheppard begins to identify with an African American experience. In his transformation into Tom, Sheppard is racially liminal when the oppositions of black and white selves temporarily coexist. He is a hybrid figure who partially internalises each of his transformations, taking on the thoughts, emotions and voice of each man, so that the first-person narrative refers to both himself and each incarnation. In this sense, Sheppard's liminality is manifest through slippages between his present narrative and Tom's interior in the course of the narrative's events. Sheppard must be present within in his incarnation as Tom in line with the novel's logic that it is Sheppard's autobiographical tale.

In Sheppard-as-Tom, Bird balances extreme racial difference with the convergence of black and white selves. The possibility of minstrelsy's "interracial identification" emerges when it becomes harder to separate the voices, memories and character of Sheppard and Tom, which overlap and intertwine on the plantation. In the limited occasions Sheppard transcribes Tom's speech, the omission of an African American vernacular accent—which all the other plantation slaves possess and Bird ventriloquises—alerts the reader to the white self within the black slave. Furthermore, Sheppard does not explain why Tom is the only slave who can decode the "mysteries of the pamphlet", or how he acquired literacy, just that, "I had a feeling in me as if I *could* read" (355, 350). This ability counters the otherwise childlike portrayal of Tom, a field hand who is happiest when galloping as a horse. Where does his literacy come from? In a blackface reading of the text, literacy is Bird's acknowledgement of Sheppard's white self as present within Tom. In the limited recordings of Tom's speech as well as his unexplained ability to read,

Tom is a hybrid of an enslaved black mind and a white self. This, in effect, is manifest in Sheppard's first-person narrative voice during his racial transmigration.

The separation between black and white selves, free and unfree selves, is left linguistically ambiguous in Sheppard's transformation into Tom. The text details Sheppard's autobiographic adventures, of course, but throughout the narrative the linguistic distinction between Sheppard recalling past events and his transmigration at the current point in the text is not always made clear. There is a confusion of first-person written voice as these multiple selves intervene in Sheppard's narration of his story. For example, after changing from Higginson to Dawkins, Sheppard uses in short succession, "I—that is John H. Higginson—", "me—that is, I. D. Dawkins—", and "my body—that is, Higginson's—" (109-10). Sheppard must distinguish the character in each instance; such is the potential confusion when writing about his transformation. However, throughout the text, the distinction between past and present selves is not always made explicit. In chapter 14 of Book III, the heading states, "A short chapter, containing an account of the Author's cousin, Samuel Wilkins, Jr." (151). The identity of the author here is confused; Sheppard is the author of his memoir, yet Samuel Wilkins is Dawkins's cousin. In the novel, the linguistic centre of first-person narrative—"my" and "I"—shifts continually, as Sheppard refers to both his own present self and his past transformations. The instability of the first-person "my" and "I" in the text linguistically represents Turner's theory of liminality as a transformative space in which the self changes. Liminality is found in the spaces of the text where the "I" of each

transformation overlaps or replaces the present "I" of Sheppard's narrative voice, meaning that both old and new selves coexist.

In narrating Sheppard's experiences as an enslaved African American, Bird creates hybrid utterances that refer to Tom and Sheppard simultaneously. We can frame them through Mikhail Bakhtin's definition of hybrid constructions as a single utterance or text that "contains mixed within it two utterances … two semantic and axiological belief systems".[33] Just as blackface minstrelsy contains both white and black selves when the white performer speaks as black, in *Sheppard Lee*, the first-person narrative contains two polar experiences and axioms, black enslavement and white freedom, in a supposedly singular narrative voice. Looking back on his time as Tom, Sheppard says, "there was less done by, and less looked for from, my master's hands, than I have ever known to be the case with the white labourers of New Jersey" (340). "My" refers to Tom's enslavement, but the "I" clearly refers to Sheppard's knowledge of white labourers in New Jersey. This doubling of the black "my" of the past and the white "I" of the present, suggests a fundamental merging of identities. Sheppard's clear and repeated assertions of Tom's differences are undermined by those moments when in one sentence he is linguistically represented as both black and white. Another day he recollects,

> I found myself, for the first time in my life, content, or very nearly so, with my condition, free from cares, far removed from disquiet, and, if not actually in love with my lot, so far from being dissatisfied, that I had not the least desire to exchange it for another. (341)

[33] Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 304.

The repeated "my" and "I" of this sentence could refer to both men: in this moment, are these feelings of contentment Tom's, or Sheppard's? I contend the latter. The past tense of "found myself" indicates that Sheppard is not making a comparison in the present, when he writes his narrative, but at the time of which he is thinking. Sheppard asserts that Tom has no memory of his previous existence as Tom or anyone else, and so should have no comparison to make. Sheppard's former life and his four previous transformations, on the other hand, have left him dissatisfied and in search of exchangeable bodies. He is present within Tom, even if he is not aware of this at the time, and so "my life" refers to his life as Sheppard, while "my lot" and "my condition" refer to Tom's enslavement.

Although Sheppard claims that as Tom he cannot remember his past white existences, from the previous statements, it is clear that he is continually present within Tom. Moreover, later Sheppard remembers his enslaved existence to write his memoir; even if the physical body of the slave has perished, the memories are sustained when Sheppard returns to his own body. By presenting the experience of enslavement in the first person, this section of the novel acts as a fictional slave narrative. In his study of non-human narrative, Jonathan Lamb identifies a connection between the it-narrative and slave narratives. Lamb argues that in both forms, "a silent acknowledgement is being made of the unusualness of the first-person narrator insofar as a statement of the obvious is required in order to affirm that it was that very person who wrote or told the story".[34] In other words, both forms employ titles that make it clear who is writing the narrative, asking the reader to believe that a lapdog or a

[34] Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 230.

hairpiece or a slave wrote the tale.[35] *Sheppard Lee*, in part an it-narrative describing the adventures of Sheppard's circulating spirit and in part a slave narrative featuring a first-person account of slavery, echoes this stylistic quality in its subtitle: *Written by Himself*. Bird originally published the novel anonymously through Harpers and Brothers instead of his usual publisher Carey, Lea & Blanchard, constructing a layer of narrative authenticity as found in slave narratives, but also daring the reader to believe this supernatural tale is true.[36]

Slave narratives proliferating in the 1820s and 1830s used first-person narratives to emphasise the humanity of ex-slaves, elevate them above the sentient property of it-narratives, and encourage identification from sympathetic abolitionist readers.[37] This is certainly the case in Richard Hildreth's pseudo-slave narrative *The Slave* (1836), another northern white-authored text in which the first-person narrator is black. *The Slave* was originally published as a truthful account by a fugitive slave, but later revealed to be a white-authored fiction. Hildreth makes his slave persona Archy Moore as white as possible in order for white readers to identify with Archy's

[35] Examples of it-narrative titles include Francis Coventry's *The History of Pompey the Little: Or, the Life and Adventures of a Lap-Dog* (1751) and Richard Fenton's *Memoirs of an Old Wig* (1815). Slave narrative examples include Olaudah Equaino's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself* (1789) and William Grimes' *Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave. Written by Himself* (1825).

[36] Even Bird's friend John Frost could not believe Bird to be the author, describing the claim as an "absurd notion". Frost to Bird, 11 February 1836, Ms. Coll. 108, Box 1, Folder 52, *RMBP*. Also quoted in Foust, *The Life and Dramatic Works of Robert Montgomery Bird*, 93.

[37] See Markman Ellis, "Suffering Things: Lapdogs, Slaves, and Counter-Sensibility," in *Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narrative in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 92–113.

emotional suffering and support Hildreth's abolitionist aims.[38] In *Sheppard Lee*'s Tom section, Bird's use of the liminal "I" dares the reader to identify with the exaggerated savage appearance and psychology of the stereotyped black slave. However, this is not due to an abolitionist purpose; instead, the figure of the happy and lazy slave is part of Bird's comic aim to challenge contemporary ideals of identity formation as tied to industry, self-possession and the pursuit of wealth.

Sheppard's slippages into an enslaved African American narrative voice challenge the white middle-class reader to not only identify with a black experience but to entertain the possibility that Tom's existence is preferable to that of the other five white incarnations, who are figures defined or driven by the pursuit of wealth. The stereotype of Tom as a happy and lazy slave sits amongst a group of characters who consist of one or two exaggerated personality traits, a collection of behaviours, thoughts and emotions delineated by their socioeconomic position.[39] In the misfortunes of Sheppard's white incarnations who are continually "on the make", Bird satirises the idea that identity is tied to the pursuit of wealth. Within a developing industrialised market economy, earning and controlling capital was central to identity formation. Jeffrey Sklansky notes that in the early national period, ownership of

---

[38] Lara Langer Cohen, *The Fabrication of American Literature: Fraudulence and Antebellum Print Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 110. For more on how abolitionist societies shaped and marketed slave narratives to appeal to white interiority see Christopher Castiglia, *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 122-25.

[39] Bird's notebooks demonstrate that he was interested in creating a set of types, not specific individuals. He lists potential characters by profession alone—"the genteel forger" and "the physician"—and others by religious or political views—"a bigoted Christian" and "a legislator from Maine"—rather than providing individual names. Robert Montgomery Bird, unpublished notes on *Sheppard Lee*, ca. 1836, Ms. Coll. 108, Box 11, Folder 259, *RMBP*. Also listed in Christopher Looby's introduction to *Sheppard Lee* (xxvi–xxvii).

property was necessary for men to contribute to the politics of the new nation. Americans cemented "the bond between selfhood—or, in the language of the early republic, independence or liberty or virtue—and property".[40] Embodying this connection, Skinner the moneylender has a pathological obsession with finance. He asks himself "what am I worth? how much more can I make myself worth?"; his selfhood exists purely as a financial concept, as "worth" equates to monetary not moral value (200). In Sheppard's final transformation, Megrim, Bird pulls apart the idea that identity is attached to social position. Megrim believes he is inanimate objects and animals; his madness completely disconnects the bond between ideas of the self and property. Throughout the novel Sheppard takes ownership of others' bodies as a vehicle for upward social mobility and his pursuit of happiness. He is a bodysnatcher and ties financial potential and use to these bodies. However, his possession offers the frightening possibility that white citizens could themselves become the property of others, an idea I explore further in my next chapter on Poe's medical experiments.

This connection between identity and ownership of the self, property and others is a concept reserved for white citizens; blackness denotes an inability to achieve the ideals of independence, ownership and democratic participation. The scenes in Philadelphia feature several characters obsessed with their social position, which they frame in the language of race. When Longstraw encourages striking needlewomen to go into domestic service, they respond, insulted, "he wants to make niggur servants of us! *us*, that is freeborn American girls!" (280). By the early nineteenth century the word "servant" had clear links to African Americans, both those enslaved and those who made up

[40] Sklansky, *The Soul's Economy*, 37.

the majority demographic of domestic servants, from which white workers attempted to distance themselves. In a society where "free citizen" implied "white citizen", Frances Trollope noted, "It is petty treason to the republic to call a free citizen a *servant"*.[41] Profession had clear racial connotations, which equated the performance of domestic labour with being less than white. Servant girls inhabited a racially liminal position, and were associated with slaves by belonging to a "master" too. A particular kind of job was therefore seen as a transformation into being less than white because it suggested dependency as opposed to self-ownership.

In contrast to the formation of independence and freedom through owning the self and securing capital, Tom exists as a piece of property, owned by "Massa Maja Jodge" (343). Sheppard's happiness in enslavement challenges antebellum ideals of property-owning middle-class white citizens. Originally fearing enslavement, Sheppard soon realises the idyllic conditions of his plantation. Throughout his work, Bird ventriloquises slaves as content servants, such as the loyal coachman Richard in *The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow*.[42] In *Sheppard Lee*, Sheppard's inherited slave, Jim Jumble, is so happy with his position that when Sheppard offers to free him,

> he burst into a passion, swore he would not be free, and told me flatly I was his master, and I should take care of him: and the

[41] Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (New York, 1839), 45, quoted in David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 73. Roediger traces how Northern white workers started using "boss" instead of "master" in order to distinguish themselves from African Americans. Ibid., 52, 80.

[42] Refusing a bribe, Richard exclaims, "Lorra, massa, can't do that … no tell on young misses. Brought up a genman, massa; and no tell secrets out the house". Robert Montgomery Bird, *The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow. A Tradition of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, 1835), 155.

> absurd fool ended by declaring, if I made him a free man he would have the law of me, "he would, by ge-hosh!" (20)

Jim's desire to stay in bondage is due to an understanding of "the difference between living, on the one hand, a lazy life, without any care whatever, as my slave, and, on the other, labouring hard to obtain a precious subsistence as a free man" (20). Jim reflects a common argument in anti-abolitionist writings that maintained the working white man had a harder life than the dependent slave.[43] Both Jim and Tom enjoy a leisurely life with little work and no punishment. Tom's group do not recognise physical violence enacted on slaves as part of their reality. In response to the abolitionist pamphlet, which depicts slaves beaten and in chains, Governor exclaims, "An't I slave?", which inverts the affecting abolitionist cry "Am I not a man and a brother?" and defines his own experience of slavery (351).

Prior to his transformation, Sheppard originally fears becoming Tom, viewing it as a desperate step to avoid his execution as Longstraw—"It is better to be a slave than a dead man" (326). This seems ironic because the slave, a possession instead of a possessor, is as politically dead as a deceased white property owner. Revising his original abolitionist stance, Sheppard ponders, "It may be however, that there is nothing necessarily adverse to happiness in slavery itself, unaccompanied by other evils" (342). Sheppard recalls that as Tom, "of one thing, at least, I can be very certain. I never had so easy and idle a time of it in my whole life" and he claims to be "contented with my servile

[43] For example, in J. P. Kennedy's plantation romance *Swallow Barn* (1832), slave-owner Meriweather espouses that slaves "are required to do less work than any other labourers in society, they have as many privileges as are compatible with the nature of their occupations: they are subsisted in general as comfortably, nay, in *their* estimation of comforts,—more comfortably than the tillers of the soil of other nations". J. P. Kennedy, *Swallow Barn: Or, a Sojourn in the Old Dominion*, rev. ed. (New York: G. P. Putman & Company, 1853), 457.

condition" (342, 344). Throughout the text Sheppard is plagued by the stresses and "disquiet" of his Philadelphian transformations; in comparison his time in enslavement is desirable as it frees him from his cares (341). If personal selfhood and citizenship is tied to accumulating capital and owning property in the antebellum period, Sheppard is happier in the opposite situation, happier being property, without the worries of citizenship. Bird's textual blackface dares the middle-class white reader to identify with a black existence, to go against the axiom of citizenship tied to white and middle-class social markers. In becoming Tom, Sheppard finds "everything black about himself".[44] In other words, he finds his own desires for laziness, inactivity and play that the African American slave represents. Inhabiting a paradoxical position just like early minstrels, Sheppard's liminality demonstrates white desires for blackness, a desire to exist outside the market-driven pressures on individuals, that Higginson, Dawkins and Skinner comically succumb to, while at the same time presenting African American slaves as unintelligent and savage.

Bird clearly ridicules yet fears the possibility that a slave could have political agency leading to political power. When Tom appears as "something of a coxcomb", Bird returns to blackface types. Before church, preening Tom wears his master's old coat with "a ruffled shirt, and a white neckcloth, and a pair of leather gloves" whist carrying a "peeled beechen wand" as a cane (342). In this guise he mirrors Zip Coon, the blackface dandy that Rice and Dixon portrayed as foolish and proud.[45] Through Tom's pretensions, Bird ridicules black aspirations of social mobility that genteel clothing and mannerisms

[44] Doty, "Satire, Minstrelsy, and Embodiment in *Sheppard Lee*," 144.
[45] In addition, Bird would have been familiar Edward Williams Clay's cartoon series *Life in Philadelphia.* See introduction, n. 34.

represent. Before the uprising, Sheppard vigorously dismisses Tom's idea that he could be a president or king as "sentimental notions" and "stupid ambition" (357). Tom becoming president is almost as unrealistic as Sheppard's transformation into a black man, and yet both characters believe their situations possible. The image of a black president was troubling enough for many white readers, but the prospect of a black king threatened the entire democratic foundation of the nation when the slaves wish to become authoritarian masters themselves. In their rebellion, the slaves use violence not only to secure their escape but also to "exterminate all the white men in Virginia" and take their daughters and wives (360). The self-appointed king of the slaves, Governor, threatens, "I lick any nigga I like! … I shall hab my choice ob de women: what you say *dat*? I shall hab Missa Isabella faw my wife!" (361).[46] Tom's aspirational realisation that he has the freedom to be a "great personage" poses the threat of radical social fluidity and miscegenation (357). Throughout the novel, social position is shown to be shifting and liminal in Sheppard's transformations and circulation through antebellum society. Tom's belief in the potential of his own social mobility further threatens the idea of a stable and hierarchical society.

The threat of Tom's social mobility and the prospect of black governance reflect Bird's personal anxieties over emancipation. Bird repeatedly returns to the threat of black power and the loss of white freedom in his personal notes,

[46] Bird loosely based Governor on Georgia slave Essex, whose story Bird briefly records in a journal entry while visiting Savannah. The escaped Essex "killed every body (white and black)" and attacked young women. Leading the slave insurrection in *Sheppard Lee*, Governor threatens sexual violence and pursues the master's daughters to their deaths. Tom is struck dumb with horror at the thought of "brutal murderers" targeting "innocent, helpless maidens" (362). Robert Montgomery Bird, journal entry, Savannah, 20 April 1833, Ms. Coll. 108, Box 24, Folder 330, *RMBP*.

concerned over increases in the black population.[47] Although supportive of abolition, calling slavery a "moral cancer … eating its way into the vitals of this otherwise healthful country" in a letter to his brother, Bird asks what should be done with a free black population. Contending "there should be no negroes in the country", he formulates a plan for a domestic Liberia colony. Firmly segregationist, Bird argues that freed slaves should be transported past the Rocky Mountains and governed by a white head of state. When the population are able "to take care of themselves" in a few generations, America should grant this colony independence and set a "treaty of eternal amity". Concluding the letter, Bird wonders if it "would be easier or more effectual … to murder 'em all", an exclamation that reveals the extent to which he saw black social mobility jeopardising the freedom and prosperity of the white population.[48]

Threats of black social mobility and racial violence are in partnership with anxieties that white citizens could lose their social position and freedom at the hands of white and black Americans. Sheppard's movement into Tom is not the first time in the text that a white man is transformed into a less-than-white figure. As with Dominicus Pike in Hawthorne's "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe", who I discuss in Chapter 5, acts of physical blackening mark Longstraw's exclusion from the community. A group of youths he scolds pelt him with mud and two wrestlers—whose paid fight he interrupts—tar and

[47] In one such note, Bird calculates the growth of black and white populations, exclaiming that by 1900, the black population could number at least "10 of 66 millions!!" Robert Montgomery Bird, unpublished notes on slavery, ca. 1840, Ms. Coll. 108, Box 23, Folder 305, *RMBP*.

[48] Bird to Henry D. Bird, n.d., Ms. Coll. 108, Box 22, Folder 296, *RMBP*. In another segregationist letter to a friend, an anxious Bird declares that the possibility of black suffrage in Pennsylvania "sharpens my desire to be off". Bird to John C. Groome, 20 January 1837, Ms. Coll. 108, Box 1, Folder 62, *RMBP*.

feather him (279, 283). Later, slave catchers kidnap and transport him down to Virginia. Through conflicting rumour and gossip generated by the southern slave catchers, surrounding slaves and passing travellers, he is transformed into "a roaring lion of abolition" (314). In taking the place of the missing slave Longstraw is subsequently blackened. He is silenced, unable to correct the rumours, kept in bondage and threatened with execution; the same treatment reserved for the runaway. Furthermore, in a reversal of racial hierarchy the local group of slaves set up a lynching after the crowd condemn Longstraw to death for being a "cussed bobolitionist" (325).

Bird briefly returned to these fears of black social mobility threatening white citizenship in *The Adventures of Robin Day*. Like *Sheppard Lee*, *Robin Day* follows a downwardly mobile young man who navigates turbulent social conditions, this time during the War of 1812. Moving through the early national city, southern plantations, the frontier and the Gulf Coast, Robin repeatedly transforms through a picaresque series of accidents and incidents, inhabiting different social statuses (a gentleman, a soldier, a "Hindoo" slave, a pirate). The fear of white unmaking and degradation is palpable throughout the text. In Philadelphia, the "almost a citizen" Robin is knocked about by free black porters who shout at him, "Git out of my way, will you?"[49] Angered by the arrogance of the "true aristocracy of the town", Robin is equally astounded by the "general submissiveness" of genteel white citizens who meekly submit to the porters' yells.[50] Integrated society threatens to invert racial hierarchies, leading to white deference for black tyrants—the feared outcome of

[49] Robert Montgomery Bird, *The Adventures of Robin Day* (New York: John Polhemus, 1877), 90–91.
[50] Ibid., 93.

emancipation that Bird outlines in *Sheppard Lee*.

Finally returning to his body after one last transformation, Sheppard finds his financial situation greatly improved. His brother-in-law has managed the estate, while his former corrupt overseer has left Sheppard a generous donation. In this neat conclusion, Sheppard does not grapple with his traumatic memories of the disastrous bloody slave rebellion nor what it means that he believes he lived as a slave for many months. Instead, liminality is temporary; one moves forward into a new self just as the blackface performer easily washes off the burnt cork and returns to their free white self. Turner views the liminal process as one of reflection, during which the liminal persona gains insightful knowledge from their transformational experience. He writes:

> Knowledge or "gnosis" obtained in the liminal period is felt to change the inmost nature of the neophyte, impressing him, as a seal impresses wax, with the characteristics of his new state. It is not a mere acquisition of knowledge, but a change in being.[51]

Sheppard's "change in being" manifests in becoming less concerned with money and position than before his supernatural journey. He learns from all his negative experiences of the past eighteen months "that there is nothing peculiarly wretched in my lot, and that I can be happy or not, just as I may choose to make myself" (416). Sheppard's message at the end of the novel when he returns to his body—"to make the best of the lot to which heaven has designed me, and to sigh no longer with envy at the supposed superior advantages of others"—is an appreciation of a stable identity, and a fixed social position and body, which act against and limits Tom's aspirations (415).

[51] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 102.

Sheppard's enjoyment of slavery challenged the civic ideals of property, industry and responsibility, but these tenets return once he re-establishes his privileged social position. The "moral" of Sheppard's tale reinforces the idea of static social positions, of contentment with what one has—"my estate is small, and it may be that it will never increase. I am, however content with it; and content is the secret of all enjoyment" (418, 424). This ultimately seems unrealistic in the world of the text, in which Sheppard's own journey, whether supernatural or hallucinatory, is set amongst the potential for actual rapid, fluid and, in the case of Tom's attempt, violent, social movement. Bird's exercise in supernatural racial transformation, in particular his racially liminal narrative voice, is an audacious attempt to inhabit an alien experience across the heavily demarcated racial divide. However, like the cross-racial escapism of Jim Crow, Sheppard's transmigration is ultimately transitory, an experiment that entertains, terrifies and challenges the white antebellum reader before returning to the safe confines of social conformity. Bird's radical racial performance ultimately contains its unruly blackness to secure white prosperity and self-possession. If a white man can turn black, social position and civic expectations become topsy-turvy, an almost unimaginable inversion of the racial hierarchy that ultimately prevents affiliation across the antebellum colour-line.

As I discuss further in my next chapter, Sheppard's possession of dead bodies for his personal gain sits in an antebellum context of growing medical and scientific experimentation on the human body. Near the conclusion of Sheppard's body-hopping travels, Tom is executed for his failed slave rebellion. Unable to escape Tom's body before death, Sheppard is hanged and buried, before a group of doctors exhume and examine him. "Desirous to show

their skill in anatomy", the medical students source Tom's cadaver and two other slave corpses for practise (371). Lacking legal possession of their own bodies in life, and with no protection after death, the slaves are prime targets for medical bodysnatching, a practice that targeted the nation's noncitizens: African Americans, Native Americans, the itinerant and the institutionalised. In front of a dozen "respectable gentlemen", the doctors attempt galvanic reanimation, resuscitating the corpses and enabling Sheppard to escape into another body before the dissection (372). Later, Sheppard finds that his original body has been stolen and embalmed by German doctor Feuerteufel "for the especial benefit of science and the world". When confronted with his own exploited corpse, Sheppard is horrified that *his* body could be treated with such little dignity. His "sorrow and affliction" compel him to reclaim his body, his estate and by extension, his property-in-himself (406). In a novel in which bodies are acquired and discarded in Sheppard's pursuit of wealth and social ascendancy, the body of medical and scientific experiment, which educated white men control and manipulate, is a stark reminder of Sheppard's loss of self and the vulnerability of white, as well as black, unprotected bodies after death. In the following chapter I examine how Poe employs medical experiments on dying and dead white men to explore and exorcise these fears of fragile white self-possession and autonomy.

Chapter 4

"I say to you that I am dead!": Protesting Cadavers in Edgar Allan Poe's "Loss of Breath" and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar"

In my previous chapter, I argued that Robert Montgomery Bird uses the supernatural to imagine the possibility of racial transformation and assuage the threat of rapid racial and social mobility. In this chapter, I contend that for Edgar Allan Poe, the dying and dead body offers an opportunity to both explore and exorcise fears of social exclusion and loss. Poe uses death as a means to examine marginal states of being beneath full citizenship. In subjecting his protagonists to near-death or fatal experiences, Poe asks what it means for citizens to lose their self-possession and instead become the property of others. Bricked up in walls or hidden under floorboards, Poe's dead bodies are continually violated and exploited. In particular, inappropriate burial and exhumation in Poe's tales reflect pressing antebellum fears of medical graverobbing—a trade in dead bodies reliant on the corpses of the nation's noncitizens: African Americans, Native Americans, the itinerant, and the institutionalised. In this chapter I turn to two of Poe's texts that feature medical experiment and dissection, "Loss of Breath" (1835) and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845). In these short stories, dead or dying bodies are subject to the control of the doctor or medical researcher, who threatens or negates their self-possession. The body as subject of medical experiment serves as a stark reminder of the loss of self-ownership and the vulnerability of unprotected bodies after death.

In his work, Poe continually blurs and transgresses the boundary between life and death through several characters who sit across this border. Death is not just a single decisive moment but also an incremental liminal process. Characters display signs of consciousness while physically dead, like Monos who narrates his own transition into the afterlife in "The Colloquy of Monos and Una" (1841), and Vankirk in "Mesmeric Revelation" (1844) who holds a conversation after dying. Conversely, characters are treated as corpses while alive, such as the cataleptic narrator in "The Premature Burial" (1844), and the eponymous "Berenice" (1835), who are both mistaken as dead by other characters: they are subsequently interred, and their graves disturbed.[1] Furthermore, Poe charts an antebellum preoccupation with reanimating life or communicating with the dead through the galvanic battery or mesmeric trance, asking the reader at what point death truly occurs if the seemingly dead still have coherent voices. Mr. Lackofbreath and Ernest Valdemar are liminal figures because they simultaneously appear as both living and dead. Lackofbreath, who inexplicably and suddenly loses his respiration and voice, appears as a dead body and is treated as such because he cannot speak. However, he is a living conscious man who attempts to escape terrifying yet humorous scenarios when travelling through dissection room, gallows and tomb. Valdemar, a dying man suspended in a mesmeric state, impossibly

[1] In addition, Poe repeatedly invokes the trope of the dead woman who will not remain dead. Although I am not writing about Poe's conception of the beautiful yet terrifying dead woman in this chapter, stories such as "Berenice", "Morella" (1835), "Ligeia" (1838), "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) and "Eleonora" (1842) further evince Poe as a writer continually and obsessively transgressing the borders of life and death. Scholars routinely discuss Poe's women as marginalised antebellum figures that the author employs as gothic trope. Instead, in this chapter I address those characters symbolically marginalised through death, Poe's white men. For recent work on Poe's female corpses see Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 330–36; Coviello, *Intimacy in America*, 72–77; Norman, *Dead Women Talking*, 22-35.

proclaims his own death after doctors declare him dead and therefore shows signs of conscious life while his body decays. As bodies used for medical education, these men share the same fate as socially dead and marginal groups medical schools usually acquired for dissection and experiment. The two men's proximity to death and states of powerlessness renders them less than white.

Under the doctor's gaze, white male citizens are reduced to parts; their bodies are the means to the end of medical discovery. In the antebellum period, the doctor became a figurehead of middle-class masculinity, who observed, manipulated and managed the bodies of others. In publishing medical journals and pamphlets and speaking at public lectures, these professional figures had prominent and respected public voices. Amid Jacksonsian public distrust of educated professionals and elitist qualifications, middle-class doctors feared medicine could become a classless field, diluted by untrained physicians, quackery and alternative treatments such as homeopathy.[2] Their attachment to scientific rationality and rigor as a marker of professionalism bolstered the middle-class male's claim of self-possession and civic authority.[3] In a context of debates over human dissection in the 1830s and 1840s, Poe's medical experiments reveal anxieties that a white male citizen could be exploited, lose

[2] Richard Hofstadter summarised Jacksonian anti-intellectualism as a "distrust of expertise", a "desire to uproot the entrenched classes", and a doctrine that "important functions were simple enough to be performed by anyone". Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage, 1962), 155–6. For more on antebellum alternative medicine, see James C. Whorton, *Nature Cures: The History of Alternative Medicine in America* (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2002), chaps. 2–4.

[3] Dana Nelson's work documents the formation of white male middle-class identity through medical and scientific professionalism. As a means of establishing autonomy and power, middle-class masculinity tied itself to discourses of "rational objectivity" and the "scientific, civic management" of the natural world and non-male and non-white bodies. Nelson, *National Manhood*, 103.

possession of his body and become subject to the volition of another professional white male.

The able, white and male body in the mid-nineteenth century marked the legal boundary of citizenship. I argue that Poe's stories of human experimentation discover the limits of personhood when such citizens are no longer able bodied.[4] I define personhood as the experience of being an individual, having autonomy and a "sense of self", and demonstrating self-determination to make and fulfill decisions.[5] Although this is a universal ideal, it existed as a gendered, ableist and racialised concept in the antebellum period. Only able-bodied white men were afforded the full rights of citizenship—physical, legal and economic freedoms—that allowed them to fully actualise the concept of personhood. For Rosemarie Garland-Thompson, physical disability represents a "subjected body susceptible to external forces: property badly managed, a fortress inadequately defended, a self helplessly violated". Garland-Thompson's discourse of ownership and estate acknowledges the loss of "property-in-oneself" the disabled person represents.[6] Poe's dying white men are also physically damaged and vulnerable selves shaped by external forces; the scientific professional's manipulation negates their self-possession and self-

[4] Here I draw on the work of legal historian Barbara Young Welke, who ties citizenship to "able white men alone" as "fully embodied legal persons". Those outside of this category existed on the "borders of belonging" in early national and antebellum society. Barbara Young Welke, *Law and the Borders of Belonging in the Long Nineteenth Century United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2.

[5] Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Papers: Volume 1, Human Agency and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 85.

[6] Garland-Thompson cites crippled Ahab in *Moby-Dick* as an example of disability signifying self-determination's failure. With his prosthetic leg, Ahab is not a "self-made man, but a whale-made man" vulnerable to, and shaped by, external forces. In Poe's "Hop Frog" (1849), the eponymous dwarf jester can also be read as a disabled figure of unruliness and chaos, "a dangerous force unleashed on the social order". Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 45, 36.

determination. Poe uses medical experimentation upon Valdemar and Lackofbreath's vulnerable bodies to reveal and attempt to contain his anxieties of fragile white male citizenship during the antebellum period. The dead and dying are conscious, speaking beings whose voices inexplicably come from within the coffin or beyond the grave. These liminal voices articulate experiences of discorporation—the exclusion from a community and the loss of the rights and privileges of the white male citizen. In speaking of and protesting their suffering, these voices undermine the expectation of an autonomous and self-possessed antebellum citizenship.

Lackofbreath and Valdemar communicate liminal whiteness by resisting or protesting the exploitation they experience as dying or dead medical subjects. In searching for their speech or inexplicably talking from beyond the grave, the two men articulate the frightening possibility that anyone, including middle-class white men, can encounter the bodysnatcher's shovel or medical student's scalpel. Starting with "Loss of Breath", I argue that the breathless Lackofbreath becomes socially dead at the same time as he loses his voice and is mistaken for being physically dead. Throughout the text, Lackofbreath seeks to regain his lost breath, voice, and social status by performing white male citizenship in his overly wrought educated narrative voice. In the second part of the chapter I discuss Valdemar's inexplicable protestations during his mesmeric trance. Exclaiming and protesting his suffering, I argue that Valdemar's voice disrupts the white medical community and his vibrating black tongue confounds the narrator's rational approach. Writing a faux medical case record, Poe pushes the boundaries of what the reader can accept as real by showing the limits of rational medical discourse.

*

In the last twenty-five years attention to Poe's representation of race has grown. Instead of dismissing Poe as an otherworldly figure who "fled" from pressing national issues such as citizenship and slavery, recent criticism has sought to elucidate how Poe filtered these contemporary discussions into his fiction.[7] For Toni Morrison in *Playing in the Dark*, "no early American writer is more important to the concept of African Americanism than Poe". In situating "images of impenetrable whiteness" against Africanist presences, Poe's work demonstrates that white American writers depend on blackness to simultaneously threaten and strengthen white character and shape national literature.[8] An edited collection *Romancing the Shadow: Poe and Race* (2001) furthered Morrison's work to discuss how Poe expressed anxieties of white fragility and black and Native violence through literary form and style.[9] As Teresa Goddu notes, however, the danger in taking Morrison's call too literally to pursue a "singular hunt" for racial figures and non-white signifiers has "constrained Poe studies" to produce scholarship too reliant on Poe's use of

[7] Excluding Poe from his seminal study of American literature in the mid-nineteenth century, F. O. Matthiessen contended that Poe deliberately avoided interrogating antebellum democracy by escaping into "fantasies and grotesques". Furthermore, Poe enthusiasts have sought to distance him from debates over race. Joan Dayan notes that the Poe Society asked her to remove "the dubious part on slavery" from her 1989 Annual Poe Lecture on Poe's love poems and fans personally critiqued her poor taste in connecting his poetry to slavery. F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), 468; Joan Dayan, "Amorous Bondage: Poe, Ladies, and Slaves," *American Literature* 66, no. 2 (1994): 239–40.

[8] Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, 32, 33.

[9] For example, Betsy Erkkila's essay examines Poe's symbolic "fetishization of whiteness and purity" in his poetry as a response to fears of black violence and miscegenation, while Leyland Person considers Poe's racial signifiers within the "complex aesthetic surface of his fiction", such as the gothic genre and the first person psychological narrative, that actively obfuscate race. Betsy Erkkila, "The Poetics of Whiteness: Poe and the Racial Imaginary," in *Romancing the Shadow: Poe and Race*, ed. J. Gerald Kennedy and Liliane Weissberg (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2001), 52; Leland S. Person, "Poe's Philosophy of Amalgamation: Reading Racism in the Tales," in *Romancing the Shadow*, 205–24.

symbolism, instead of recognising "the nexus of multiple cultural discourses" Poe sits across.[10]

Although critics pay considerable attention to otherness—namely, non-white and female characters—they attend less to Poe's white male characters as racial figures, and in particular in regards to the formation of the citizen and his personhood. Joan Dayan in part concurs with Goddu, arguing that the binary reading of "racist or nonracist Poe" is too reductive and distorts his fiction.[11] She asks that critics read against this binary to consider Poe's more nuanced representation of citizenship and personhood, or characters on the "margins of civilisation", where rights and privileges are "compromised or threatened"—in other words, scenarios in which white characters become less than white, what I have termed liminal whiteness.[12] In the past few years, scholarship has returned to Dayan's discussions of personhood, and by extension, citizenship. Animal studies works by Coleen Glenney Boggs, Dominic Mastroianni and Christopher Peterson read Poe's texts as limning the threshold of what it means to be human.[13] Concurrently, scholarship on Poe's depictions of prisons and

[10] In particular, the Tsalal islanders in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, the black cat in "The Black Cat" and the orang-utan in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" as figures of slave rebellion. Teresa A. Goddu, "Rethinking Race and Slavery in Poe Studies," *Poe Studies* 33, no. 1–2 (2000): 15.

[11] Joan Dayan, "Poe, Persons and Property," *American Literary History* 11, no. 3 (1999): 412. For example, there has been much debate over whether Poe wrote a pro-slavery review of James K. Paulding's *Slavery in the United States* while editor of *Southern Literary Messenger* in April 1836, and to what extent this influenced his portrayal of black characters. For a summary of this debate see, Terence Whalen, "Average Racism: Poe, Slavery, and the Wages of Literary Nationalism," in *Romancing the Shadow: Poe and Race*, 3–40.

[12] Dayan, "Poe, Persons and Property," 408, 405–6.

[13] These authors not only draw on Dayan's Poe scholarship from the 1990s, but are also in conversation with her more recent work *The Law is a White Dog*, which intersects animal studies, law and literature to theorise "negative personhood", experiences when "living, willful, sentient, believing persons" are treated as and transform into "inanimate, rightless objects". Dayan, *The Law Is a White Dog*, xii, 33; Colleen Glenney Boggs, *Animalia Americana* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Dominic Mastroianni, "Hospitality and the Thresholds of the Human in Poe's

asylums reads them as spaces of white exclusion and marginalisation.[14] This chapter builds on these works on Poe's carceral imagination, to focus on medical exploitation as another narrative device Poe uses to discuss liminal whiteness. Employing antebellum medical science as a frame enables us to read Poe's anxieties concerning fragile citizenship when white male characters lose their abilities, faculties and vitality, and therefore their social rights and privilege.[15]

During the late-eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth century, a drive towards medical professionalism increased the desire for and procurement of cadavers. In order to distinguish medicine and surgery as science rather than trade—that is, as a discipline that required detailed study of the human body and the application of practical skills—the body, living or dead, became a site of knowledge, from which much could be learned. "The exemplary methodology of medical science", dissection offered students tactile knowledge of human anatomy and provided surgeons with bodies for practise.[16] Medical students and teaching staff expected schools to provide cadavers for dissection and often complained about shortages in the pages of

---

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym," *Studies in American Fiction* 40, no. 2 (2013): 185–202; Christopher Peterson, *Bestial Traces: Race, Sexuality, Animality* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

[14] Erin Forbes tracks depictions of social death, namely incarceration and slavery, in Poe's tale of living death, "The Premature Burial". Aaron Matthew Percich reads asylum tale "The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether" as a commentary on antebellum prejudice against less-than-white Irish immigrants. Erin E. Forbes, "From Prison Cell to Slave Ship: Social Death in 'The Premature Burial,'" *Poe Studies* 46 (2013): 32–58; Aaron Matthew Percich, "Irish Mouths and English Tea-Pots: Orality and Unreason in 'The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether,'" *Poe Studies* 47 (2014): 76–99.

[15] Peter Coviello notes that Poe's characters who are close to death "become slave-like, alarmingly *less* white" because they lose control of their own bodies and faculties. Coviello, *Intimacy in America*, 72.

[16] Michael Sappol, *A Traffic of Dead Bodies: Anatomy and Embodied Social Identity in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 53.

medical journals.[17] Supplies were severely limited and so schools often relied on graverobbers. In an inaugural lecture to Pennsylvania College medical students, Bird bemoaned that public distaste for dissection and a lack of legislation meant that the anatomist was "in almost constant fear of the *penitentiary*" for engaging in this illicit trade.[18]

To avoid prosecution, graverobbers and medical students (who were sometimes the same person) targeted the poor, the homeless, and the institutionalised, itinerant workers, sailors, African Americans, Native Americans and recent immigrants. States trafficked socially dead cadavers to supply medical schools across the nation, in particular from northern cities into the South.[19] The practice was public enough in some cities that Harriet Martineau's *Retrospect of Western Travel* (1838) observed, "In Baltimore the bodies of coloured people exclusively are taken for dissection … because the

---

[17] For example, in an 1840 essay Dr. Andrew Boardman complained, "Not *a single subject* was provided for dissection during the *whole session*" of an anatomy course, although students had paid $40 each to secure bodies. Letters and lectures calling for access to cadavers were reprinted in journals such as *The American Medical Library and Intelligencer*. Andrew Boardman, "An Essay on the Means of Improving Medical Education and Elevating Medical Character," in *Medical America in the Nineteenth Century: Readings from the Literature*, ed. Gert H. Brieger (London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1972), 26.

[18] Robert Montgomery Bird, *The Difficulties of Medical Science: An Inaugural Lecture, Introductory to a Course of Lectures* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Medical College, 1841), 17. There were a number of public riots against medical dissection in New York, Massachusetts, Ohio and Vermont. See, Table 4.1 "Crowd Actions Against American Medical Colleges, 1765-1884", in Sappol, *A Traffic of Dead Bodies*, 107.

[19] For more on medical experiment on and dissection of African Americans in the South see, Robert Blakely and Judith M. Harrington, eds., *Bones in the Basement: Postmortem Racism in Nineteenth-Century Medical Training* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998); Stephen C. Kenny, "The Development of Medical Museums in the Antebellum American South: Slave Bodies in Networks of Anatomical Exchange," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 87, no. 1 (2013): 32–62; Todd L. Savitt, "The Use of Blacks for Medical Experimentation and Demonstration in the Old South," *The Journal of Southern History* 48, no. 3 (1982): 331–48. In addition, there was an adjacent trade in non-white cadavers and skeletons for anthropological study, as seen in the work of Samuel George Morton, which also relied on unprotected burial sites. See Ann Fabian, *The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America's Unburied Dead* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

whites do not like it, and the coloured people cannot resist".[20] In the 1830s and 1840s, legislation passed in some states bolstered educational access by allowing medical schools to secure bodies from prisons, poorhouses and asylums, reinforcing the link between social death and post-mortem exploitation.[21]

A body of literature in the mid-century reflects this white anxiety regarding medical bodysnatching. As well as Poe's tales and Bird's *Sheppard Lee*, which I discussed at the end of Chapter 3, George Lippard's *The Quaker City* and J. H. Robinson's *Marietta* (1846) feature doctors and students reliant on stealing poor and vulnerable white bodies.[22] Broadly, the "completely disposable dead" were bodies unclaimed by friends or family, left unsecure in municipal spaces or housed by the state, and thus considered acceptable for

---

[20] Harriet Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travel* (London, 1838), I, 140, quoted in David C. Humphrey, "Dissection and Discrimination: The Social Origins of Cadavers in America, 1760-1915," *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 49, no. 9 (1973): 819. The illicit trade in bodies was well known in Baltimore, with reports of disturbed graves and stolen body parts appearing in city newspapers. A Baltimore resident, Poe channelled stories of resourceful dentists into "Berenice", in which the obsessive narrator disturbs Berenice's premature grave to extract all her teeth.

[21] Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Michigan introduced legislation to regulate access to cadavers. For example in Michigan, physicians could acquire the bodies of all criminals who died in prison or were executed. See, Table 4.2 "Selected American Anatomy Legislation, 1789-1944", in Sappol, *A Traffic of Dead Bodies*, 123.

[22] In *The Quaker City*, Devil-Bug stalks Philadelphia to procure fresh cadavers for the mysterious doctor Ravoni, describing with glee the "jolly business" of "mash[ing] the coffin lid into small pieces with a blow o' the spade" and "drag[ging] the stiff corpse out from its restin' place". In *Marietta*, doctors and graverobbers discuss the best bodies to procure for experiment. Medical student Levator cannot bring himself to dissect a female cadaver and pays the bodysnatchers to return her to the grave. In addition, similar debates over the legality of dissection took place in early nineteenth century Britain, and filtered into British literature. In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), the scientist depends on dissecting rooms and charnel houses to source his body parts. American editions were published in 1833 and 1845. George Lippard, *The Quaker City, Or, The Monks of Monk Hall: A Romance of Philadelphia Life, Mystery, and Crime* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 368; J. H. Robinson, *Marietta, or the Two Students. A Tale of the Dissecting Room and "Body Snatchers"* (Boston: Jordan & Wiley, 1846); Elizabeth Young, *Black Frankenstein: The Making of an American Metaphor* (New York: NYU Press, 2008), 245n46.

dissection.[23] Ironically, the disposable deceased, who seemed to lack importance or respect, became incredibly valuable for the medical profession. In *Sheppard Lee*, Bird satirises the transformation of bodies into economic resources. When searching for a new corpse to inhabit, Sheppard posits that each dead body "could be converted into five tons of excellent manures; the whole number would therefore produce just one hundred and fifty millions of tons … This, therefore, would be a highly profitable way of disposing of the mass of mankind". Sheppard's scenario positions bodies as raw materials with "great usefulness and value" for the economic good of the nation.[24] Stolen bodies signal the terrifying possibility that a human being could have more value or worth in death—as educational property or resource—than in life. In "Valdemar", the narrator celebrates the fact that Valdemar has "no relatives in America who would be likely to interfere" with the experiment, or claim his corpse.[25] His dying, and later, dead body, is the narrator's to do with as he pleases. Similarly in "Loss of Breath", an opportunistic publican finds the "dead" Lackofbreath without friends and sells his body to a local surgeon. For white citizens, the dissection table carried great stigma because it meant they had died without friends or finances to protect their body after death. The narrator in "The Premature Burial" describes the horror of being buried "as a dog — nailed up in some common coffin … some ordinary and nameless *grave*", because he has lost his friends' protection.[26] Furthermore, the intra- and

[23] Thomas W. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015), 325.
[24] Bird, *Sheppard Lee*, 228.
[25] Edgar Allan Poe, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," in *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Thomas Ollive Mabbott, vol. 3, *Tales and Sketches, 1843-1849* (New York: Random House, 1978), 1234 (hereafter cited in text as *V*).
[26] Edgar Allan Poe, "The Premature Burial," in *Tales and Sketches, 1843-1849*, 967–68.

inter-state circulation of corpses had frightening resemblances to the slave trade, compounded by the fact that a large number of cadavers were African Americans who "cannot resist". To be dissected after death was to be treated in the same way as the noncitizen, therefore negating the rights and privileges the white citizen had enjoyed during life.

In "Loss of Breath", Poe illustrates this unscrupulous desire for cadavers with a "dead" protagonist who survives dissection. Inexplicably losing his breath while shouting insults at his new wife the morning after their wedding, Lackofbreath sets out to regain his breath and falls prey to bodysnatchers and dissectors who believe him to be dead. Alongside "How to Write a Blackwood Article" and "A Predicament" (1839), "Loss of Breath"—subtitled "A Tale Neither in Nor out of Blackwood's"—clearly parodies the "extravagancies" of popular sensation tales in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.[27] Mr Blackwood in "How to Write a Blackwood Article" advises aspiring author Zenobia, "should you ever be drowned or hung, be sure and make a note of your sensations", which she duly does when narrating her own beheading in "A Predicament".[28] Similarly, Lackofbreath is able to record and narrate multiple fatal situations, "exposing the crudeness and absurdity of the literary bodies commonly consumed by American readers" in medical journals and sensational tales. Readers encountered strange and grotesque bodies in medical cases reprinted in journals such as the *American Medical Library and*

---

[27] Poe to John P. Kennedy, 11 February 1836, in *The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. John Ward Ostrom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), 1:84. For more on *Blackwood's* sensation writing see Bruce I. Weiner, "Poe and the Blackwood's Tale of Sensation," in *Poe and His Times: The Artist and His Milieu*, ed. Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV (Baltimore, MD: The Edgar Allan Poe Society, Inc., 1990), 45–65.

[28] Edgar Allan Poe, "How to Write a Blackwood Article," in *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Thomas Ollive Mabbott, vol. 2, *Tales and Sketches, 1831-1842* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1978), 340.

Intelligencer.[29] Of being hanged Lackofbreath comments, "to write upon such a theme it is necessary to have been hanged. Every author should confine himself to matters of experience".[30] Miraculously surviving being hit by a coach, disembowelled and disfigured by an anatomist, mistaken for a fleeing convict, and hung from a gallows, Lackofbreath perseveres as a revenant, lumbering from one dangerous scenario to the next. Poe's *Blackwood's* parodies operate in a similar manner to Charles Brockden Brown's gothic scenes of ventriloquism and spontaneous combustion discussed in Chapter 1. Both use inexplicable bodily capabilities to chart the unreliability of sensory experience. Recording their observation and sensations, Zenobia and Lackofbreath's consciousness during these impossible events satirises the medical community's adherence to empiricism and its dismissal of traditional religious or supernatural explanations.

However, although Poe wrote "Loss of Breath" as satirical fantasy, these literary styles do not completely obfuscate the real anxieties over fragile white citizenship in the antebellum period. Poe employs the walking dead Lackofbreath to explore the possibility of white male powerlessness.

---

[29] William Etter, "'Tawdry Physical Affrightments': The Performance of Normalizing Visions of the Body in Edgar Allan Poe's 'Loss of Breath,'" *American Transcendental Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (2003): 5. As well as recording routine medical observations and procedures, the *American Medical Library and Intelligencer* featured cases of monstrous births, snakes in stomachs and people who lived without eating, and tales of infanticide, strangulation and insanity. *American Medical Library and Intelligencer* 1, ed. G.S. Pattison and Robley Dunglison (Philadelphia: Adam Waldie, 1838), https://archive.org/details/americanmedicali13738dung.

[30] Edgar Allan Poe, "Loss of Breath," in *Tales and Sketches, 1831-1842*, 69 (hereafter cited in text as *LB*). "Loss of Breath" was originally published as "A Decided Loss" in *Saturday Courier*, 10 November 1832. It later appeared in *Southern Literary Messenger* in September 1835 with several additions. This chapter uses the 1835 edition. In the 1832 edition, dissection takes place after Lackofbreath is hung; in the 1835 edition it takes place before. The 1832 edition ends with Lackofbreath subjected to galvanic experiment, whereas in 1835 edition ends with Lackofbreath recuperating his lost breath and returning home. I discuss this change of ending later in the chapter.

Lackofbreath captures his liminal state in an early realisation that he is "alive, with the qualifications of the dead—dead, with the propensities of the living—an anomaly on the face of the earth" (*LB* 63). His "qualifications of the dead" are inextricably tied to his lost breath and voice, despite the fact that he remains a walking and thinking person ("the propensities of the living"), who retains his mental faculties. J. Gerald Kennedy notes this "coterminous relationship" between language and life, summarising that "the loss of one implies the surrender of the other".[31] Speaking is what marks humans as living coherent beings. Furthermore, it is not just life itself that ceases when Lackofbreath loses his voice, but a specific socially privileged life. In a society where the voice marks an autonomous self who can speak for himself and participate in a civic group, Lackofbreath is unable to voice his identity as a citizen and escape these scenarios of manipulation and exploitation. Simultaneously dead and alive, yet unable to speak, Lackofbreath is transformed into one of America's routinely disenfranchised noncitizens.

When travelling in the stagecoach into the city, fellow passengers are angered that "a dead man had been palmed upon them during the night for a living and responsible fellow-traveller" (*LB* 66). A dead man cannot pay his share of the fare; he cannot fulfil his civic role. If, as the passengers assume, he has been put on the coach already dead, he cannot have any friends or family—nobody to speak for him—and so becomes a dead body appropriate for exploitation. Beginning the dissection, a local physician "discover[s] signs of animation" but continues to "remove several of [Lackofbreath's] viscera for private dissection". An apothecary appears, also believing Lackofbreath to be

[31] J. Gerald Kennedy, *Poe, Death and the Life of Writing* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1987), 42.

dead, and begins to perform galvanic experiments. When Lackofbreath attempts to show he is living, "kicking and plunging with all might and making the most furious contortions", and trying to converse, the apothecary assumes that the reactions are caused by the galvanic battery (*LB* 67). In this case, the new science intended to increase understanding of life and death in fact prevents the apothecary realising that Lackofbreath has survived breaking his neck, fracturing his skull, and being disembowelled. Only the voice will suffice as evidence of life. His body taken to a garret after dissection, Lackofbreath is able to escape, yet a crowd mistake him for a criminal fleeing execution. Again, unable to speak, Lackofbreath cannot prove his identity. He jokes, "of course nothing could be said in my defence"—not just legally, but physically (*LB* 69). Without the voice, Lackofbreath once again cannot defend himself from becoming another noncitizen—a convict.

Throughout the tale, Lackofbreath attempts to recuperate his voice and regain his social position through a series of masculine performances that cement the link between the voice and white male citizenship. Lackofbreath attempts to reproduce the civic identity he has lost through three different manifestations of white middle-class masculinity—physical prosthesis, oration, and a highly educated narrative voice. First, he assumes that he can recapture his breath in "tangible form", and searches for a vapory hidden in his closet or drawers. When searching for a supply of breath, he comes across "a set of false teeth, two pairs of hips, an eye" (*LB* 64). Through these prostheses, Poe imagines the possibility that social position can be physically rebuilt. Poe returns to this idea in "The Man That Was Used Up" (1839), in which the severely injured General A. B. C. Smith—whose organic body has been almost

completely destroyed by Indian violence—rebuilds his reputation as a decorated military leader through prosthetic eyes, teeth, wig, shoulders and limbs. Crucially, by inserting a "singular looking" mechanical palate, he regains his vocal "rich melody and strength".[32] The force of character that his voice conveys can be emulated through this motorised supplement. However, Poe casts doubt on this white masculine power. Although General Smith asserts his reputation through the success of medical technology, he is physically dependent on a black manservant Pompey to literally assemble his white manhood.

Unable to procure synthetic breath, Lackofbreath attempts to find a use for his bizarre breathlessness. Fortunately, he is not completely silenced.

> I discovered that had I, at that interesting crisis, dropped my voice to a singularly deep guttural, I might still have continued to hear the communication of my sentiments; this pitch of voice (the guttural) depending, I find, not upon the current of the breath, but upon a certain spasmodic action of the muscles of the throat. (*LB* 63)

Lackofbreath's muscular production is akin to ventriloquism, a practice that—as discussed in Chapter 1—carried clear connotations of non-white Native American culture. In producing these "frog-like and sepulchral tones", Lackofbreath is able to perform the popular Indian drama *Metamora* (1829). He recollects, "in the accentuation of this drama, or at least of such portion of it as is allotted to her hero, the tones of voice in which I found myself deficient were altogether unnecessary … the deep guttural was expected to reign monotonously throughout". Lackofbreath matches his vocal rendition with physicality, performing exaggerated gestures—"the showing my teeth—the

[32] Edgar Allan Poe, "The Man That Was Used Up," in *Tales and Sketches, 1831-1842*, 388, 389.

working my knees"—to successfully hide his breathlessness (*LB* 65). As discussed in my previous chapter, audiences celebrated Edwin Forrest's muscular and raw performance of the Wampanoag king, in which he created a racially ambiguous yet powerful stage masculinity.[33] William Etter claims that Lackofbreath's acting reveals "the threat of skipping across racial boundaries from Anglo American to Native American", which further marks Lackofbreath as a dysfunctional antebellum body.[34] While I agree with Etter, I would add that Lackofbreath's performance is also an attempt to affirm his status as educated white male. Metamora's dialogue is not the actual voice of a Native American, but white playwright John Augustus Stone's artistic representation. Lackofbreath's oration divests the play of its original tragic racial meaning, because he transplants Metamora's voice into everyday conversation, finding that "any portion … would apply equally well to any particular subject" (*LB* 65). Recitation of dramatic passages and recalling cultural references were key markers of eloquent white citizenship.[35] "Native" performance and speech therefore contributes to vocal white masculinity.

Poe's protagonist blends these discourses of the rough theatrical persona and the well-read gentleman. *Metamora* sits amongst an excess of intellectual and cultural references that Lackofbreath employs in his written narrative. He follows almost every event or thought with a classical, Biblical or artistic allusion. For example, after his disembowelling he cites, "but as the loss of his ears proved the means of elevating to the throne of Cyrus, the Magian or

[33] See Chapter 3, n. 13.
[34] Etter, "Tawdry Physical Affrightments," 17.
[35] For example, as discussed in Chapter 1, Theodore Wieland spends hours "conning and rehearsing" the speeches of Cicero in the family temple, to further his classical education. Brown, *Wieland*, 27.

Mige-Crush of Persia, and as the cutting off his nose gave Zopyrus possession of Babylon, so the loss of a few ounces of my countenance proved the salvation of my body" (*LB* 68). These references simultaneously evince Lackofbreath's familiarity with Herodotus' *Histories* while also ridiculing his self-elevation to a great historical personage. When Lackofbreath is hanged, his thoughts rapidly span politics, law, philosophy, art and literature. He is ultimately overcome by these references: "Then came like a flood, Coleridge, Kant, Fitche, and Pantheism—then like a deluge, the Academie, Pergola, La Scala, San Carlo, Paul, Albert, Noblet, Ronzi Vestris, Fanny Bias, and Taglioni" (*LB* 79). Throughout the tale, his written voice is a composite. Attempting to assert his intellectual persona and re-establish his autonomous civic identity, he can do so only through listing, referencing and ventriloquising the works and words of others.

Ultimately, Lackofbreath can only regain his voice by taking it from someone else, reasserting his masculine and social dominance. Executed and left in a tomb, he begins to break open caskets and becomes a graverobber himself, picking up and ventriloquising the bodies he finds. Fortunately, he meets his vocal counterpart—Mr Windenough—who has been cursed with too much breath and cannot stop talking. Windenough—former suitor to Mrs Lackofbreath—is desperate to expel his pent up breath and launches into a long diatribe explaining his circumstances. His loquacious body is another one that does not meet antebellum expectations, and when he has an epileptic fit, he is mistaken for dead, just like Lackofbreath. Windenough's speech breaks down into contradictory exclamations and meaningless repetitions, "horrible!—wonderful!—outrageous!—hideous!—incomprehensible!—et cetera—et

cetera—et cetera—et cetera—". This empty language parodies the ideal eloquent male citizen who converses in order to demonstrate that he has something valuable to say, a social expectation I will return to in Chapters 5 and 6 when discussing conversation in Hawthorne and Melville. Throughout his monologue, Windenough instructs Lackofbreath to be silent, becoming increasingly agitated: "no reply, I beg you—one person is enough to be speaking at a time … not a word I beseech you … hold your tongue I tell you" (*LB* 73). Conversation here becomes a vocal duel with both men desperate to talk and silence the other—Windenough because he has to keep talking and Lackofbreath because he wants his faculties to return. Taking control of the dialogue with his sepulchral and croaky tones, Lackofbreath dominates Windenough, harshly castigating him for his choice of words: "'hold my tongue,' to be sure!—pretty conversation indeed, to a gentleman with a single breath!—all this, too, when I have it in my power to relieve the calamity under which thou dost so justly suffer" (*LB* 73-4). Wielding this reparative power, he provokes "apology upon apology" from Windenough, who submits to Lackofbreath's plans to exchange breath (*LB* 74).

Lackofbreath and Windenough enter into an agreement to create two balanced speaking bodies. Unlike the 1832 version, which ends with Lackofbreath's galvanic awakening, the 1835 version ends with Lackofbreath recovering his voice through his own actions. The change of ending attempts to resolve Lackofbreath's prior unmaking by showing him actively regain his social status through a transaction he directs, which Poe frames in economic terms. Lackofbreath recalls, "my acquaintance delivered me the respiration; for which (having carefully examined it) I gave him afterward a receipt" (*LB* 74).

He refuses to provide full details of how this exchange physically occurs. He admits, "I am aware that by many I shall be held to blame for speaking, in a manner so cursory, of a transaction so impalpable" (*LB* 74). We are asked to take him at his word for this seemingly impossible end to his fantastical journey. Etter argues that this neat conclusion "defuses the conceptual and social chaos by a physically abnormal individual".[36] However, I would contend that Poe simultaneously contains this chaos while leaving doubt that these scenarios of vulnerability and manipulation can ever be remedied; it is only through supernatural luck that Lackofbreath returns to full health and full citizenship. Although Poe's hyperbolic and picaresque style attempts to ridicule and exorcise fears of discorporation, Lackofbreath's treatment after "death" is a genuine and terrifying prospect in the antebellum period. Lackofbreath's living death, although comical, signals a precariousness in which social rights and privileges can be easily lost. In Poe's later works, these fears become much harder to contain as Poe refuses to incorporate the liminal white figure back into society.

In "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar", Poe uses liminal whiteness to provide a far more pessimistic view of fragile white male citizenship. A text centred on an inexplicable voice, "Valdemar" is often discussed in regards to Poe's approach to authorship and writing. Poe's mesmerism tales show him exploring how fiction—and writing as a whole—operates amongst new scientific developments.[37] Furthermore, structuralist and post-structuralist

[36] Etter, "Tawdry Physical Affrightments," 16.

[37] Adam Frank reads animal magnetism as an analogy for the telegraph and contends, "mesmerism offered Poe a way to theorize what a medium for writing could be or do" during the emergence of electrical communication. Thinking specifically about Poe's philosophy of the "single effect", Bruce Mills argues that the short story form "would not have emerged without the psychological (and mesmeric) truths that legitimized the

critics employ Valdemar's inexplicable voice to exemplify their arguments regarding language, life and the self.[38] Yet much less attention has been given to the exploitative relationship between narrator P— and Valdemar, or to reading Valdemar as a figure of loss, exclusion and suffering.

"Valdemar" is on its face a strange scientific story about an unnamed narrator inducing a mesmeric state in a dying man, with inexplicable supernatural results. Valdemar is another "case" in the unnamed narrator's continuing interest in mesmerism, and it is established early on that this factual account is born of a desire to dispel unscientific and "unpleasant misrepresentations" of what occurred (*V* 1234). Perhaps it is printed in one of the medical journals Poe satirises in "Loss of Breath". When the narrator claims, "there had been a very remarkable and most unaccountable omission:—no person had as yet been mesmerised *in articulo mortis*", he aspires to fill empirically a gap in contemporary studies on mesmerism (*V* 1233). Mesmerism, or animal magnetism, first appeared in the work of late eighteenth-century German doctor Franz Mesmer. He theorised that magnetic fluid in the body could be controlled to heal illness and mental agitation, such as hysteria. French mesmerist Charles Poyen introduced the practice to the United States in

---

form's brevity, its concentration of narrative choices, and its peculiar repetition of sensation". Adam Frank, "Valdemar's Tongue, Poe's Telegraphy," *English Literary History* 72, no. 3 (2005): 636; Bruce Mills, *Poe, Fuller, and the Mesmeric Arts : Transition States in the American Renaissance* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 66.

[38] Notably, Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida disagreed on Valdemar's proclamation "I am dead!" In "Analyse texteulle d'un cone d'Edgar Poe" (1967, trans. 1977), Barthes read the "impossible utterance" as a "blind spot of language structure", whereas Derrida argued "I am dead" made grammatical sense, even if not physically possible. Valdemar's ability to use language to express "I am dead" marks his status as living. Roland Barthes, "Textual Analysis of a Tale by Edgar Poe," trans. Donald G. Marshall, *Poe Studies* 10, no. 1 (1977): 10; Jacques Derrida, "Discussion: Barthes—Todorov," in *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism & The Sciences of Man*, ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, paperback ed. (Baltimore, MD; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 156.

the mid-1830s, delivering lectures and writing pieces for the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*.[39] By the time of Poe's tale, mesmerism was increasingly used in America to treat illness and induce altered states of consciousness, including clairvoyance. For example, in the mid-1840s mesmerist Phineas Quimby rose to prominence for his partnership with teenager Lucius Burkmar. Under Quimby's hypnosis Burkmar could read minds and diagnose and treat illnesses.[40] In Poe's "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains" (1844) and "Mesmeric Revelations", mesmeric patients Bedloe and Vankirk both display altered states of consciousness: Bedloe has an out-of-body past life experience; Vankirk produces long clairvoyant statements on the nature of God and the soul.

Having read Charles Hare Townshend's comprehensive *Facts in Mesmerism* (1844) and attended lectures by prominent mesmerist Andrew Jackson Davis, Poe was well aware of mesmerism as scientific enquiry and medical practice.[41] In his earlier tale of mesmerism, "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains", Dr. Templeton uses the practice to treat his patient Bedloe's neuralgia. By contrast, in "Valdemar", the narrator engages in pure experiment, professing no hope of curing the ailing man. For the narrator's experiment, it is imperative that Valdemar is terminally ill and cannot be saved; from the outset he views Valdemar as a dead body. Although P— is not a physician himself, he has the full co-operation of Valdemar's doctors; he claims that D— and F—

---

[39] Eric T. Carlson, "Charles Poyen Brings Mesmerism to America," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 15, no. 2 (1960): 121–32.
[40] See Whorton, *Nature Cures*, 115-19.
[41] Poe praised Townshend's work in his November 1846 marginalia. Steve Carter cites Rev. Gibson Smith's *Lectures on Clairmativeness, or Human Magnetism* as an additional influence on Poe. This pamphlet was published in mid-June 1845 and received a frontpage review in the *New York Tribune*, and it contained a report of mesmerism used to stave off decomposition for five years. Edgar Allan Poe, "Marginalia, November 1846," in *Essays and Reviews*, 1404–12; Steve Carter, "A Possible Source for 'The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar,'" *Poe Studies* 12, no. 2 (1979): 36.

"opposed no objection" to his experiment. On the contrary, they encourage his mesmerism. Their curiosity is "greatly excited" and by the latter stages of the experiment, they are in collaboration with the narrator, deciding how to continue (*V* 1238). As I detailed earlier, experiments on the human body contributed to the growing professionalism and legitimacy of medicine. The doctors in "Valdemar", knowing that Valdemar is hours from death, and that they are absolved of the physician's healing responsibility, turn their attention to satisfying medical curiosities about the bodily effects of mesmerism.

The narrator's mesmeric experiment echoes the power relationship between the doctor and patient. This hierarchical relationship depended on the submission of the mesmeric body to the magnetiser's control, just as a patient submits to the physician's instructions or manipulations, or as a dissector completely controls a cadaver.[42] In Poe's mesmerism tales, the patient or subject is under the complete control of the doctor or researcher. In "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains", Bedloe's will "succumbed rapidly to that of the physician … sleep was brought about almost instantaneously by the mere volition of the operator".[43] Valdemar's body, initially resistant to the narrator's passes, becomes more receptive the closer he is to death, and P— recalls, "his arm very readily, although feebly, followed every direction I assigned it with mine" (*V* 1238). Valdemar loses possession of his own body and is subsumed into the narrator's research agenda. The mesmeric body loses its autonomy and becomes just as pliable as the cadaver. When he is suspended and observed in

[42] Stephanie Browner discusses this patient-doctor relationship further in her work on Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark" (1843) and "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844). Stephanie P. Browner, *Profound Science and Elegant Literature: Imagining Doctors in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 39-69.

[43] Edgar Allan Poe, "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains", in *Tales and Sketches, 1843-1849*, 941.

this liminal state for several months, the white middle-class Valdemar becomes one of the many marginalised bodies laid open and experimented on in the antebellum period.

Valdemar is so thoroughly diseased that he blurs the boundary between a body and a corpse: we could be reading an autopsy. When the narrator sees his friend on the night before his experiment, he describes the dying Valdemar in dense medical detail. The text becomes an imitation of a pathologist cutting through the body. Parts of Valdemar's lungs are in a "semi-osseous or cartilaginous state" and "entirely useless for all purposes of vitality", and there are places in which "permanent adhesion [of the lung] to the ribs had taken place". The deterioration of his body takes place with "very unusual rapidity … the adhesion had only been observed during the three previous days". He is decaying in front of the doctors' eyes: his cheekbones break through his skin and his pulse is "barely perceptible" (*V* 1235). Valdemar is subject to not only a medical experiment, but also a kind of living dissection. He is so corpse-like that his body functions the same way as a cadaver in medical science: it is there to educate. These professional medical men exemplify a "disembodied and disinterested observing subject, surveying, evaluating and categorizing local others".[44] The body of scientific experiment, living or dead, is a source of knowledge that only men of science can read and comprehend. The emotion that P— may feel in seeing his dying friend is completely absent, replaced by this objective medical surveillance, what Michel Foucault calls the "medical gaze".[45] Medical student Mr L—l's presence evinces the pedagogical nature of

[44] Nelson, *National Manhood*, 124.
[45] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock Publications, 1973), 8.

the experiment. His role is not only as a "reliable witness", but also as a note taker, aiding his own education as well as providing the narrator with memoranda (*V* 1236).

The narrator and medical professionals continually survey Valdemar, which Poe replicates through dense descriptive passages of the mesmerism's effect. Towards the end of the tale, P— states, "From this period until the close of last week—*an interval of nearly seven months*—we continued to make daily calls at M. Valdemar's house, accompanied, now and then, by medical and other friends" (*V* 1241). His peculiar state renders Valdemar a medical specimen and entertaining curiosity. The semi-public display of Valdemar's almost-dead body in front of an educated white audience has clear parallels with both public autopsies and the burgeoning freak show in the antebellum period. The case of Joice Heth illuminates how the cadaver could function as a continually looked-upon site of both knowledge and entertainment during this period. In 1835, P. T. Barnum purchased Heth, an elderly black woman, and claimed she was George Washington's 161-year old "mammy" at venues across New England. Blind and paralysed, she existed as a living corpse that Barnum displayed as a supposed relic of colonial America. A source of "sensation among the lovers of the curious and the marvellous", she was also examined by "the most learned and scientific men in this country" who sought to verify and explain her age. Upon her death in 1836, she was publicly autopsied in Manhattan's City Saloon to 1500 paying spectators. The report later reached an audience of several thousand through northern newspapers. The autopsy proved Barnum a liar—Heth "could not have been more than *seventy-five*, or, at the utmost, *eighty years of age!"*—and the newspapers felt it

in the public interest to reprint the detailed intimate descriptions of her corpse being opened up and inspected.[46]

Heth's body was paraded around while she lived, displayed publicly upon her death and further publicised through the print media. Her exhibition and subsequent autopsy sit at the interstice of popular culture and medical education. Heth's corpse became a resource for professional men to stake their claim on medical science; in the City Saloon and across the pages of New York newspapers, each scientist and editor "pick[ed] apart the body to enhance his cultural prestige".[47] Their respected public spoken and written voices depended on Heth's continued silence; they inscribed their racialised medical theories onto her dying then dead body. For Garland-Thompson, Heth is the first American freak, "the direct antithesis of the able-bodied, white male figure upon which the developing notion to the American normate was predicated".[48] The white middle-class "normate" male, such as the doctor, displaced their fears of post-mortem loss of personhood onto African American and other marginal cadavers, bodies to which the state already denied selfhood to while alive. In the case of Valdemar, these anxieties are not deflected onto the black

---

[46] *The Life of Joice Heth, the Nurse of Gen. George Washington, (the Father of Our Country,) Now Living at the Astonishing Age of 161 Years, and Weighs Only 46 Pounds* (New York, 1835), 10, 8, *Documenting the American South*, University of North Carolina, http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/heth/heth.html; "Dissection of Joice Heth—Precious Humbug Exposed," *New York Sun*, 26 February 1836, *The Lost Museum Archive*, City University of New York, http://lostmuseum.cuny.edu /archive/dissection-of-joice-heth-precious-humbug.

[47] Benjamin Reiss, *Showman and the Slave: Race, Death, and Memory in Barnum's America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 155.

[48] Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies*, 59. In his work on Poe, Paul Gilmore connects Barnum's non-normate racialised freak show to discourses of race, commodity and disability in "Hop Frog". Paul Gilmore, *The Genuine Article: Race, Mass Culture, and American Literary Manhood* (Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 2001), 98-124.

body, but reflect back onto the dying body of the white male middle-class citizen.

As he approaches death, Valdemar himself becomes blacker, an effect of his body's decay and disease. He takes on a "leaden hue", his eyes are "utterly lustreless", and the ossification turns his internal organs black and putrid (*V* 1235). In his proximity to death *and* blackness, Valdemar is treated by the white rational community purely as a medical specimen. The image of a group of educated white men surveying and manipulating a prone body is deeply uncomfortable. Anatomised and surveyed, Valdemar is dehumanised and reduced to a utility by and for a community of professional and rational white men. Rather than acting as a stand-in for systematically scientifically and medically exploited African Americans, Valdemar's decaying and observed body offers the reader the terrifying possibility that the educated, middle-class white male citizen could experience the "normate" American's ultimate fear—the loss of personal will, self-possession and autonomy, which the non-white body represents.

As the white body of the educated, genteel Valdemar grows darker in appearance and stranger in action, the narrator's reactions to him notably shift away from the scientific rationale of the text's opening. Blackness permeates Valdemar's white body to render him repulsive. When the doctors and narrator see the black tongue, so visible against Valdemar's cadaverous white skin, they are horrified:

> The upper lip, at the same time, writhed itself away from the teeth, whist it had previously covered completely; whilst the lower jaw fell with an audible jerk, leaving the mouth widely extended, and disclosing in full view the swollen and blackened tongue … so hideous beyond conception was the appearance of M. Valdemar at

> this moment, that there was a general shrinking back from the region of the bed. (*V* 1239)

At this point in the text, Valdemar begins to substantially unnerve the rational community surrounding him, with his decaying body so unusual (even for those accustomed to death) that it is beyond the narrator's cognitive capability to imagine such an appearance. The phallic black tongue is so alarming because it is so visible, "in full view", whereas previously it has been concealed. The exposure of the uncanny tongue—familiar because it is part of human anatomy, unfamiliar because it appears in such a distorted and discoloured manner—uncovers the universal truth of the body's vulnerability and decomposition after death. Like Valdemar's earlier living autopsy, in which his individuality is stripped away to render him just another cadaver, the black tongue presents the material self that is vulnerable to manipulation and surveillance by other citizens.[49] At the same time, the vibrating tongue is the first sign of Valdemar's body acting independently from the narrator's control and defying his rational approach, in order to voice and protest his liminal state.

When Valdemar apparently begins to speak, and the tongue itself produces hideous utterances, the narrator's alarm increases. Detailed passages describe the voice emanating not from Valdemar's vocal organs, but his extended, vibrating black tongue and "distended and motionless jaws":

> In the first place, the voice seemed to reach our ears – at least mine – from a vast distance, or from some deep cavern within the earth. In the second place, it impressed me (I fear, indeed, that it will be

[49] Similarly, Browner reads the autopsy as an uncanny act because it reveals "some deeply shared though rarely seen human form" that usually lies hidden beneath epidermal markers of individuality. Browner, *Profound Science and Elegant Literature*, 58.

> impossible to make myself comprehended) as gelatinous or glutinous matters impress the sense of touch. (*V* 1240)

The cavernous timbre of Valdemar's voice again suggests a ventriloquial source that cannot be mapped onto the human body and defies the medical community's rational logic. The narrator's synaesthesia is the only way he can communicate a sense of what he hears, but this does not provide an explanation of the voice's origin. Again, he struggles to apply his cognitive rational abilities to process the circumstances, or to find the appropriate lexicon to convey events, later claiming that the sound is "indescribable" (*V* 1240). His medical gaze, which has previously penetrated Valdemar's diseased body, cannot successfully read or comprehend what is now in front of him.

The narrator takes pains to explain that what he heard was not nonsensical ravings or death rattles but clear "syllabification" (*V* 1240). For P—, there is a clear dissociation between what he can see (a dead body with extended mouth and swollen tongue) and what he can hear (distinct words). After his tongue begins to vibrate, the voice inside Valdemar says:

> "Yes;-no;-I *have been* sleeping-and now-now-I *am dead*".
> No person present even affected to deny, or attempted to repress, the unutterable, shuddering horror which these few words, thus uttered, were so well calculated to display. (*V* 1240)

Valdemar's unheimlich disembodied voice leads to the narrator's cognitive dissonance, manifest in physical form. In other words, confronted by the seemingly impossible talking corpse, who is simultaneously alive and dead, P— cannot rationally comprehend what he encounters, and it provokes an uncontrollable physical response, his "shuddering". His horror cannot be

articulated, whereas Valdemar, inexplicably, *does* articulate his own personal torment.

Unlike Poe's earlier "The Premature Burial", in which a man shouts, "I am alive" to save himself from dissection after mistakenly being declared dead, Valdemar proclaims the very opposite.[50] Kennedy claims that in contrast to P—'s detached rational narrative voice, Valdemar "inton[es] words empty of human content".[51] I counter that, although beyond rational comprehension, Valdemar's speech clearly verbalises human consciousness and desires for self-possession. The voice articulates Valdemar's position: trapped between life and death in a dysfunctional and diseased body; treated as an object, but with an active mind inside. Valdemar speaks of a desire to be free from its bondage; he pleads for release from his entrapment in the corpse-body, saying, "yes:—asleep now. Do not wake me!—let me die so!" (*V* 1238). Saying "I am dead" is Valdemar's attempt at regaining self-determination and articulating his personhood by directing the experiment to its end.

"The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" is not Poe's only tale in which a highly unusual corpse defies a group of professional educated men. In "Some Words with a Mummy" (1845), a group of Egyptologists reanimate with galvanic batteries the mummy Allamistakeo after thousands of years of entombment. The mummy begins to converse with an unexpected eloquence, shocking the scientists that a savage, non-white corpse could not only speak so well, but profess his culture, science and society greater than theirs, "gleefully

[50] Poe, "The Premature Burial," 961.
[51] Kennedy, *Poe, Death and the Life of Writing*, 208.

pok[ing] holes in elite white male privilege".[52] The humour of Allamistakeo's teasing and the white professionals' umbrage is absent in "Valdemar", replaced with horror. Whereas Allamistakeo's resistant voice is well expressed in its criticism of the white scientific community, Valdemar's inexplicable speech becomes increasingly violent and less eloquent in its articulation. His inexplicable utterances grow in anger towards the end of "Valdemar", and he shouts, "for God's sake!—quick!—quick!—put me to sleep—or, quick!—waken me!—quick!—*I say to you that I am dead!*" (*V* 1242). The exclamatory voice urges the narrator, who controls Valdemar's physical body, to give him his freedom in death.

Just as the narrator and medical observers attempt to comprehend what they have heard and seen, the reader also questions if what they read can be possible. Poe sets up what Jonathan Elmer calls the "lure", a key part of the hoax genre in which the author provides just enough factual information to place the reader in the world of the text and convince them the following events are real.[53] In "Valdemar", Poe builds a convincing biography for Valdemar—"the well-known compiler of the 'Bibliotheca Forensica,' and author (under the *nom de plume* of Issachar Marx) of the Polish versions of 'Wallenstein' and 'Gargantua'"—and he redacts the names of those involved, as if real people (*V* 1234). He alludes to existing media coverage, claiming his narrative is a scientific rebuttal of "a garbled or exaggerated account" already in circulation (*V* 1233). Furthermore, in the British reprint, face and fiction intertwine, as

[52] Marcia D. Nichols, "Poe's 'Some Words with a Mummy' and Blackface Anatomy," *Poe Studies* 48 (2015): 2. See also Nelson, *National Manhood*, 204–16.
[53] Jonathan Elmer, *Reading at the Social Limit: Affect, Mass Culture, and Edgar Allan Poe* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 182. In a letter to Arch Ramsay, Poe labelled the tale a hoax and warned him against believing it. Poe to Arch Ramsay, 30 December 1846, in *The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*, 2:337.

Valdemar's letter alerting the narrator to his imminent death begins "My dear Poe". The tale's altered title and appearance as a medical pamphlet in Britain shows the extent to which some publishers and readers believed the case to be real.[54] Using these markers of factual writing, Poe continually pushes the limits of what the reader will accept as true. However, these limits are completely overwhelmed in the text's sensational and horrific conclusion.

In both "Loss of Breath" and "Valdemar", Poe satirises audience expectations of death. Lackofbreath stages his own "death" on the gallows, bragging, "my convulsions were said to be extraordinary. My spasms it would have been difficult to beat" (*LB* 69). He gives the audience the convincing yet dramatic death they want to see, performing paroxysms that cause gentlemen to swoon and ladies to be "carried home in hysterics", while at the same time he continues to live (*LB* 70). In "Valdemar", Poe exaggerates the grotesque dying body already enjoyed by readers in tales such as "The Fall of the House of Usher". Although the narrator attempts to avoid sensational "garbled and exaggerated accounts", he sets up the gruesome climax as something truly beyond rational comprehension, for which "it is quite impossible that any human being could have been prepared". The tale ends:

> As I rapidly made the mesmeric passes, amid ejaculations of "dead! dead!" absolutely *bursting* from the tongue and not from the lips of the sufferer, his whole frame at once—within the space of a single minute, or even less, shrunk—crumbled—absolutely *rotted* away beneath my hands. Upon the bed, before that whole company, there lay a nearly liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putridity. (*V* 1243)

[54] Edgar Allan Poe, *Mesmerism "in Articulo Mortis": An Astounding & Horrifying Narrative, Shewing the Extraordinary Power of Mesmerism in Arresting the Progress of Death* (London: Short & Co., 1846), 5.

Here, the narrator continues to attempt descriptive observation, although events have long since departed from the expectations of a medical case study established in the beginning of the account. As descriptive terms overlap themselves ("shrunk—crumbled—absolutely—*rotted*"), the narrator (editing the quick notes of Mr L—I) attempts to describe the state of Valdemar's corpse using a rational observational vocabulary. Once again the rational voice of medical discourse experiences a lexical failure. The narrator's attempts to describe him using any kind of vocabulary, let alone an observational one, are insufficient. Valdemar's putrefied remains are, as Jacques Lacan contends, "something for which no language has a name".[55] Valdemar's protestations are so extreme that they cause the body itself to completely rupture and disintegrate. The body's rapid and grotesque decomposition destroys any post-mortem knowledge the narrator and medical professionals might have hoped to garner, and the experiment is plunged into total chaos as a "nearly liquid mass" surrounds the onlookers. The body of evidence, in which the rational community invested so much, has perished. Unlike General A. B. C. Smith in "The Man That was Used Up"—whose body is all but destroyed but can be supplemented with prosthesis—Valdemar's body is completely obliterated. There is nothing constructive remaining: in fact, there is only total destruction. Whereas Smith's commanding voice is dependent on his mechanical palate and bodily reconstruction, Valdemar's body is contingent on his voice; it is the forceful power of his final utterances that obliterate his body.

---

[55] Jacques Lacan, "XVIII - Desire, Life and Death," in *The Seminars of Jacques Lacan: Book II - The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 231.

This sensational ending gives voice to fears of discorporation by destroying the white male citizen, but does so almost as farce. Calling the ending a "Bronx cheer", Elmer contends that Poe blows a raspberry at his readers, revealing the text's fantastical corporeality, which they may have earlier believed to be real, and daring them to find pleasure in the grotesque body horror. Elmer identifies a "masochistic pleasure" that comes from encountering "sudden nosebleeds, liquefying corpses, exploding heads".[56] Valdemar is an abject out-of-control body leaching into the world, causing the reader to be both drawn towards him and repelled by his rotted form. The threat of the vulnerable white male citizen cannot be separated from the pleasure the reader gains from reading about bodily destruction. Behind this gore, which is both entertaining and revolting—and entertaining *because* it is revolting—are legitimate fears of exploitation and manipulation, which Poe deliberately chooses not to resolve. In the tale's horrific climax, Poe asks if these anxieties of loss of self-possession, which Valdemar represents, can be contained within horror fantasy. Despite its claim to medical factuality, the text's dependence on a fantastical and grotesque climax does not adequately contain these fears, and they remain hanging in the ether like Valdemar's final explosive utterances. The reader is left with this anxiety after the gruesome ending has faded.

This chapter has employed antebellum medical experiment as a frame for reading liminal whiteness in Poe's "Loss of Breath" and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar". In tales of medical exploitation, Poe discorporates his protagonists to show the limits of white male personhood, lost when self-possession is negated at the hands of fellow white male citizens. By depicting

[56] Elmer, *Reading at the Social Limit*, 124–25.

the liminal space between life and death, Poe offers the possibility that consciousness—represented through an enduring voice—can still exist within a clinically dead body. In doing so, he voices anxieties over white men being reduced purely to bodies and material resources—just like the nation's noncitizens who filled America's dissecting rooms—as opposed to fully autonomous and self-possessed citizens. While in "Loss of Breath" the voice and selfhood are regained through oral and written performances of masculine citizenship, in "Valdemar" this loss of selfhood is not recuperated but instead violently protested and destructively uttered. Whereas Lackofbreath asserts his identity through an educated narrative voice, in "Valdemar" education cannot help the narrator adequately comprehend the dysfunctional body he encounters. Valdemar's inexplicable utterances resist the professional, middle-class male's empirical worldview and undermine rationality as a tenet of white citizenship. In my next chapter, I examine how Hawthorne employs the liminal white figure to satirise and question another tenet of white citizenship—respectability.

Chapter 5

"A respectable narrative": Enchanting Orality in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" and "Feathertop"

In the previous chapter I examined how, in Edgar Allan Poe's medical cases, inexplicable voices protest the destruction of white male citizenship. In this chapter I argue that Nathaniel Hawthorne shows how white civic identity depends on the voice. In her study of Hawthorne's civic vision, Lauren Berlant states, "being an American citizen wasn't 'natural' for white men, but it involved the possession of a gendered and racialized body".[1] Not "natural" or intrinsic, this social self is therefore liminal and in a process of constant creation, building and transformation. The white male body came to represent a cultural ideology of expected behaviours and values, such as autonomy, rationality, industry, and, the focus of this chapter, respectability. I argue that this tenet of citizenship is inextricably tied to vocal performance, a category that includes tale-telling, public oration and genteel conversation. In the short stories "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" (1834) and "Feathertop" (1852), Hawthorne employs scenes of storytelling and conversation to mock pretentions of respectability, Hawthorne satirises white middle-class tenets of citizenship by employing enchantment—the construction of magical creatures and stories—to reveal the white male citizen to be another illusory construction. Through enchantment, I argue, he reveals respectable men to be empty or false constructed selves.

---

[1] Lauren Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 11.

My focus on enchantment employs both of its distinct yet intertwined meanings. First, enchantment refers to a process of magical transformation, the breathing of life into inanimate objects. In his supernatural short stories, Hawthorne continually blurs the boundaries of the animate and inanimate. Transformed bodies and enchanted objects, conjured to life or altered through art or magic, populate his fiction. For example, "The Prophetic Pictures" (1837), "The Artist of the Beautiful" (1844) and "Drowne's Wooden Image" (1844) all feature artistic creations imbued with life, while the collections *A Wonder-Book for Girl and Boys* (1851) and *Tanglewood Tales* (1852), and the short stories "The Snow-Image" (1850) and "Feathertop" centre on liminal human figures generated through magic. These acts of creation extend to storytelling—the creation of new worlds, characters and events through written or spoken language. Hawthorne is repeatedly self-reflexive and aware of fiction as an act of world creation. In the titles of collections such as *The Story Teller* (1834), *Twice-Told Tales* (1837) and *Legends of the Province House* (1838), he acknowledges the creative act he performs of breathing life into New England history.

Second, enchantment is the bewitching effect that objects, people, stories—and literature itself—have on people. Rita Felski defines enchantment as the "antithesis and enemy of criticism" because it involves the suspension of disbelief and the banishment of doubt; it is replaced by captivation and enthrallment.[2] In this chapter I argue that enchanting someone is a vocal act because it is inextricably tied to storytelling and conversation. Etymologically rooted in the voice, enchantment is a form of incantation that attracts and

[2] Rita Felski, *The Uses of Literature* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 56.

fascinates listeners. Both the stories I examine in this chapter feature liminal characters who present themselves as respectable men and who seek to enchant others through their speech. These men present to the world an "outward demonstration of inner virtue" through vocal performance, to audience including customers in a tavern or strangers on the street.[3] In "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe", pedlar Dominicus Pike orally constructs a tale of cross-racial and cross-class murder that will interest an audience and enable him to become a successful, respectable man. In "Feathertop", the scarecrow is a bundle of twigs, straw and clothes enchanted into a genteel youth by an old witch's magic. Polite speech contributes to Feathertop's respectable façade, and his genteel mannerisms captivate the townspeople and blind them to his true form.

Enchantment in Hawthorne's works is inextricably tied to his theory and practice of the romance—that is, the art of enchanting his readers. In his romances, Hawthorne seeks to enchant his readers. Showing the influence of mesmerism on his writing, he casts a spell on the reader by fixating on aspects of setting, appearance or character to reveal a deeper meaning behind every object.[4] In the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), he sets out his craft: he will detail "local manners" and "the characteristics of a community" in order to reveal a much deeper and secretive "truth of the human heart".[5] In *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), he suggests that the romance is a liminal genre—it offers "an available foothold between fiction and reality"—that enables him to

[3] Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 49.
[4] Samuel Coale, "The Romance of Mesmerism: Hawthorne's Medium of Romance," in *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, ed. Harold Bloom, updated ed. (New York: Chelsea House, 2007), 93–95.
[5] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics; Oxford University Press, 2009).

discuss the truth of the human condition, personal relationships and the role of the individual in society. An "atmosphere of strange enchantment" is necessary for the romancer to create characters that "have a propriety of their own" and can successfully represent the social conditions and qualities he seeks to portray.[6] Hawthorne enchants readers with his portrayals of community and citizenship in order to awaken them to the "great invisible fluid of human sympathy"—these interpersonal bonds felt between characters and shared with the reader.[7] In this chapter I examine how Hawthorne portrays acts of enchantment in his comic short fiction. By mocking examples of oral enchantment as manipulative performance, Hawthorne's comedy satirises constructed white masculinity and reinforces his vision of literary enchantment to engage the reader with the world.

In Hawthorne's fiction, which continually probes the role of the individual in society, concepts of citizenship are clearly rooted in gendered and racialised bodies. As with the discussions on Poe I highlighted in the previous chapter, in the last three decades scholarship has pressed Hawthorne's personal writings and fiction back into the surrounding social context.[8] For example,

---

[6] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance* (Oxford; New York: Oxford World's Classics; Oxford University Press, 2009), 2. In *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) Hawthorne uses similar terms to describe romance as a space where "the Actual and the Imaginary may meet". Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics; Oxford University Press, 2007), 30.

[7] Coale, "The Romance of Mesmerism," 99. As such, Hawthorne's fictions of enchantment fit with recent scholarship on the role of critique as enchantment. *J19*'s forum on enchanted critique features essays by Nancy Bentley, Lloyd Pratt, Caleb Smith, Emily Ogden and Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, which call for the return to enchantment when encountering nineteenth-century literature. They call for scholarship that allows for imaginative connections with the nineteenth century and values "non-secular" ways of seeing the world, such as spiritualism. See "Forum: In the Spirit of the Thing: Critique as Enchantment," *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 1, no. 1 (2013): 147–78.

[8] From Herman Melville onwards, a tradition of critique frames Hawthorne's dark romanticism as disconnected from contemporary social issues and instead concerned

critics have read *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Marble Faun* (1860) as meditations on slavery.[9] Like Poe, Hawthorne largely elides non-white characters but instead fills his work with symbols—Mr Hooper's shroud in "The Minister's Black Veil" (1836), and Georgiana's dark blemish in "The Birth-mark" (1843), for example—that critics have understood as markers of racial significance. For many, Hawthorne's darkness represents not only the nation's sublimated Puritan guilt but also the persecution and enslavement of African Americans.[10]

---

with more universal themes such as human fallibility, morality and guilt. Melville wrote that Hawthorne's blackness "derives its force from its appeals to that Calvinistic sense of Innate Depravity and Original Sin, from whose visitations, in some shape or other, no deeply thinking mind is always and wholly free". In *American Renaissance*, F. O. Matthiessen claims Hawthorne does not seek to explain pressing antebellum social debates but instead illuminates "what is essentially human". Harry Levin argues that Hawthorne's allegorical fictions takes readers on a "cosmic adventure in introspection" to examine individual psychology and inner darkness. Similarly, when making a New Criticism case for Hawthorne's indispensability, Lionel Trilling argues Hawthorne's psychological ambiguity and darkness makes him truly modern. Herman Melville, "Hawthorne and His Mosses," in *The Complete Shorter Fiction*, 238; Matthiessen, *American Renaissance*, 320; Levin, *The Power of Blackness*, 100; Lionel Trilling, *Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966).

[9] Andrew Delbanco and Jean Fagan Yellin connect *The Scarlet Letter* to abolitionist debates and campaigners, including Hawthorne's friend Margaret Fuller and Salem's active female anti-slavery society. For Fagan Yellin, Hawthorne channels "the institutional violation of an individual, the problem central to the notion of slavery" into the exiled mother. Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet reads miscegenation and slavery as "the unnamed phantoms" haunting *The Marble Faun* in the figure of racially ambiguous Donatello, while Nancy Bentley reads his racial indeterminism "heighten[ing] the rich indirection of Hawthorne's romance method". Hawthorne himself was indifferent on slavery and wary of abolitionist agitation. In his preface to Horatio Bridge's *Journal of an African Cruiser* (1845), he praises Bridge as "neither an Abolitionist nor a Colonizationist", and similarly in biography *The Life of Franklin Pierce* (1852) he sides with Pierce's Southern sympathies. Andrew Delbanco, *The Abolitionist Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 26-28; Jean Fagan Yellin, *Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1989), 137; Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet, *The Poetics and Politics of the American Gothic,* 65; Nancy Bentley, *The Ethnography of Manners: Hawthorne, James, Wharton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 36; Horatio Bridge, *Journal of an African Cruiser*, ed. Nathaniel Hawthorne (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1968), vi.

[10] Jason Haslam summarises racial interpretations of "The Birth-mark", arguing that Georgiana's blemish and her husband's reaction reflect prevalent race science and ideology. John Birk reads Hooper as an analogue for both abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and black slaves, and argues that Hooper's black veil reflects antebellum ostracism of both abolitionists and African Americans. Jason Haslam, *Gender, Race,*

Beyond this colour symbolism, I argue that Hawthorne continually engages with questions of race and citizenship through his white male characters. In particular, through characters such as Mr. Higginbotham, Pike and Feathertop—liminal figures in proximity to states of physical and social death—Hawthorne examines how citizenship is built and lost, and reveals it to be a constructed state dependent on expected white civic and personal values, including respectability.

These texts explore liminal whiteness through the relationship between silenced and speaking bodies, as seen in the doubling of Mr. Higginbotham and Pike, and the transformation from a silent into a speaking body, as seen in the enchanted Feathertop. While criticism in the past decade has addressed "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" in relation to contexts of race, class, print journalism and the pedlar figure, it tends to gloss over the importance of Higginbotham's less-than-white silenced corpse and its relation to Pike's loquaciousness.[11] Pike's oral narrative constructs his "respectable" identity that depends on Higginbotham's imagined and continuing death. However, Higginbotham's discorporation has an ambiguous and contagious power. Through Pike's repeated meditations on Higginbotham's corpse, the pedlar becomes another liminal figure who imagines himself as both within and on the margins of society. In the second part of this chapter I turn to "Feathertop", a

---

and American Science Fiction: Reflections on Fantastic Identities (New York; London: Routledge, 2015), 48–51; John F. Birk, "Hawthorne's Mister Hooper: The Veil of Ham?," *Prospects* 21 (1996): 1–11.

[11] See Michael C. Cohen, "Peddling Authorship in the Age of Jackson," *English Literary History* 79, no. 2 (2012): 369–88; Teresa A. Goddu, "Hawthorne and Class," in *What Democracy Looks Like: A New Critical Realism*, ed. Amy Schrager Lang and Cecelia Tichi (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 131–43; Leland S. Person, "'Mr Higginbotham's Catastrophe': Race and Class Conflict in New England," *Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* 38, no. 1 (2012): 1–18; Peter West, *The Arbiters of Reality: Hawthorne, Melville, and the Rise of Mass Information Culture* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2008).

New England fairy tale about a witch who conjures an enchanted scarecrow to perform as a gentleman. I further existing scholarship on the text's relationship with spiritualism and mesmerism to argue that Hawthorne employs spiritualism, itself a reanimation and re-construction of the dead through living mouthpieces, to emphasise the constructed nature of white male citizenship.[12] In his inexplicable ability to speak, Feathertop performs respectability, revealing it to be a façade, but nonetheless one that attracts and enchants the community.

*

In "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe", travelling tobacco pedlar Dominicus Pike hears that "an Irishman and a nigger" have murdered local trader Mr. Higginbotham of Kimballton the night before.[13] Pike weaves the news into a story, embellishing and exaggerating the details to audiences along his path to Parker's Falls. During his journey to town, both a local farmer and an "Ethiopian" tell him they have witnessed Mr. Higginbotham alive (*H* 191). Nevertheless, he confidently retells the story to a large group in the town, before Mr. Higginbotham's niece and lawyer appear to confirm the trader is still alive. Chased out of town, Pike strives to find Higginbotham to determine the truth of the matter. The story of the murder turns out to be a "riddle": three men set out to kill Higginbotham but two attempts were abandoned in the two previous evenings (*H* 198). Pike arrives at the Kimballton estate just as Higginbotham's Irish servant makes a third attempt on his life. He saves the elderly trader and the text concludes years later with Mr. Higginbotham

[12] See Ellen Weinauer, "Hawthorne, Melville and the Spirits," in *Hawthorne and Melville: Writing a Relationship*, ed. Jana L. Argersinger and Leland S. Person (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 297–320.
[13] Hawthorne, "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe," 189 (hereafter cited in text as *H*).

bequeathing his fortune to Pike, who sets up a "large tobacco manufactory" in the narrator's village (*H* 199).

The mystery and intrigue of the story relies on racial violence and the ambiguity between white and black marginal groups. David Roediger's work on white working-class identity in the nineteenth century is useful in pointing towards the collapse of racial binaries, which meant the white working classes, especially the Irish, could be seen and spoken of as black. Roediger writes, "'White niggers' were white workers in arduous unskilled jobs or in subservient positions".[14] Therefore, as Teresa Goddu claims, we can read Higginbotham's alleged assailants, the Irishman and the black man, as racially marginalised representatives of Parker's Falls' white working-class population.[15] Their crime enacts a violent (if only imagined) class and racial upheaval in the community. In employing representatives of the white working class instead of white working-class figures themselves, Hawthorne satirises the sensational print journalism that traded in racial stereotype to attract readers.[16] In addition, the murder-by-proxy allows the white working class to project their aggression through darkened figures and enjoy the fantasy of class retribution without guilt.

Beyond this link between non-white figures and the working class, this blackening extends to Higginbotham himself. Goddu contends that the repeated detail of yellow skin, shared by descriptions of the Ethiopian and

---

[14] Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 145.

[15] Goddu, "Hawthorne and Class," 135. Adding to Goddu's work, Leyland Person further discusses the relationship between free blacks and Northern white working classes in the text. Person, "Mr Higginbotham's Catastrophe," 6–9.

[16] Critics view the *Parker's Fall Gazette* as closely resembling the *Salem Gazette*, which covered Captain Joseph White's sensational murder in 1830. Hawthorne was familiar with the murder, which was originally attributed to two African Americans. For more on the case's appearance in print journalism and its impact on Hawthorne see West, *The Arbiters of Reality*, 23–41.

Higginbotham, constitutes a "racial fluidity" between blackened and working-class figures and the white capitalist. This fluidity represents the "the deeper fear of the tale"—the fragility of class structure and economic role reversal.[17] However, the logic of Goddu's argument leaps from physically and politically different bodies linked by yellow skin to an argument of symbolic race reversal, which potentially discounts the nuances of citizenship and noncitizenship at work in the text. The fluidity that Goddu identifies may be better described as liminality, suggesting the potential for Higginbotham's white body to convey the disenfranchisement of blackness and marginality through his dual in-and-out status as both powerful white man and powerless silenced corpse. I argue that looking past this symbolic doubling of racial imagery of skin, Higginbotham's continuing narrative presence as a silent dead body renders him liminal and makes this a story about the voice's relationship with citizenship.

For the majority of the text Higginbotham is present only as a dead body; Hawthorne only briefly conveys his living status as "part owner of the slitting mills, and a considerable stockholder of the cotton factories". Pike repeatedly tells the story of Higginbotham's hanging corpse to a number of audiences and the *Parker's Falls Gazette* describes "dreadful details" of his corpse, including "the mark of the cord round the dead man's neck" (*H* 193). Even after Mr. Higginbotham's niece and lawyer confirm that he is alive, Hawthorne still describes him in liminal terms. When Pike visits Kimballton the toll-gatherer tells of his meeting with Higginbotham earlier in the evening: "Says I to myself, to-night, he's more like a ghost or an old mummy than good

[17] Goddu, "Hawthorne and Class," 135.

flesh and blood" (*H* 198). When Pike does reach Higginbotham's orchard, he finds the trader "trembling beneath" the St. Michael's pear tree, a doubling of the original image of the traveller's narrative: "They strung him up to the branch of a St. Michael's pear-tree, where nobody would find him till the morning" (*H* 199, 189).[18] In this repetition, he is once again both alive and dead. Represented as both corporeally dead (mummy, corpse) and spiritually dead (ghost), Higginbotham is between the state of life and death by appearing as both, at times simultaneously, in the text.

Having been imagined as dead, and written and spoken into the afterlife, the living Higginbotham is in effect rendered a noncitizen as he becomes a figure of hearsay and gossip. In Chapter 1, I discussed how Frank Carwin's ventriloquism creates its own truth: his mimicry of Clara creates a narrative of secret romance that Pleyel believes to be true. In "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" Pike does the same; by repeatedly speaking about Higginbotham as a corpse, Higginbotham exists in the text as a dead man. The narrative repeatedly conjures the image of Higginbotham's corpse to reduce him to purely a body. He has no voice and no recorded dialogue throughout the text. He is unable to represent himself, but the voices of others (his aunt, his lawyer, Pike) represent him. Higginbotham is spoken of but cannot speak for himself. Furthermore, the narrator, a "wandering story teller" in a village tavern, silences him, not recording his voice when he is given the

[18] Today, this image of a body hanging from a tree has connotations of lynching but as Michael J. Pfeifer argues, lynching was more common in the southern states and western frontier, and most prevalent from the 1850s onwards. However, this public display of Higginbotham's body in the orchard, and then its further publicising in the newspaper, recalls public displays of punishment in colonial America and the early republic, which were meted out to "other" the offender's deviancy. In the description of the attack, Higginbotham has been "othered". Michael J. Pfeifer, *Roots of Rough Justice: Origins of American Lynching* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 7-11.

opportunity to speak.[19] When Pike rescues Higginbotham at the end of the story, he asks, "you're an honest man, and I'll take your word for it. Have you been hanged or not?" (*H* 199). However, the narrator provides the explanation instead of giving voice to Higginbotham. The trader is completely voiceless, silenced by layers of narrative even when saved from death. This silence continues as the story concludes soon after the narrator's explanation, by jumping a number of years forward to Higginbotham's actual death. He remains passive; his remaining power resides no longer in acts of manufacture, but in the money he bequeaths to his niece. By being rendered a silenced body, Higginbotham's position as a citizen is made uncertain.

Pike exploits the image of Higginbotham's corpse to construct his own identity; his self-making depends on Higginbotham's un-making. The pedlar employs the image of Higginbotham's corpse not only to make financial gains, selling his wares as he tells the tale of Higginbotham's murder, but also to conjure his own narrative of a respectable identity. In contrast to Higginbotham's silence, Pike is loquacious. The narrator introduces him as a gossiper, "always itching to hear the news and anxious to tell it again" (*H* 188). When Pike realises he is "the first bearer of the intelligence", the narrator notes that the story "had grown so far that it took him half an hour to tell", highlighting the creative effort he undertakes to put on a performance of his oral narrative (*H* 190). Goddu claims Pike "is fully invested in the capitalist

[19] Hawthorne originally published "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" as "The Story Teller. No. II. The Village Theatre" in *The New-England Magazine*. It was intended as part of a collection of oral tales, *The Story Teller*, but on advice of his publishers, Hawthorne dismantled the frame and some of the stories appeared in subsequent collections. Remaining fragments of *The Story Teller* frame were published as "Passages from a Relinquished Work" in *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Passages from a Relinquished Work," in *Tales and Sketches*, 176.

structure"; he employs the elaborated catastrophic tale to sell more tobacco to his gossip-hungry audiences.[20] Pike makes financial gains exploiting the fear of racial violence in his story, just as he uses the image of the Native American on his cart to peddle tobacco. In the first half of the text this is true: Hawthorne writes, "our friend did not hesitate to introduce the story at every tavern and country store along the road, expending a whole bunch of Spanish wrappers among at least twenty horrified audiences" (*H* 190). He is not only selling a tale but also selling tobacco, its social use well suited to the gossip he brings. However, the telling of the tale balances Pike's financial drive with his desire to construct a "respectable" identity, a quality that is not tied exclusively to financial success.

When he first tells the story, Pike cannot "avoid filling up the outline [of the story], till it became quite a respectable narrative" (*H* 190). The word "respectable" here has two meanings: it means both that the narrative is impressive or considerable in length, and that it is admirable or estimable and deserves respect from the audience. By significantly extending the tale to "half an hour", Pike employs the story to construct his identity as a respectable man (*H* 190). According to Joyce Appleby and Daniel Walker Howe, respectability was a key tenet of self-making and self-fashioning in the early nineteenth century. In *Inheriting the Revolution* (2009), Appleby argues that for the generation born in the decades after the Revolution, "a new character ideal was created: the man who developed inner resources, acted independently, lived virtuously, and bent his behaviour to his personal goals—not the American

[20] Goddu, "Hawthorne and Class," 135.

Adam, but the American *homo faber*, the builder".[21] From the new republic onwards, "a sprawling, inclusive American middle class composed of families known for their respectability … came into power".[22] Respectability is firmly linked with the financial success and the stability of the middle class. However, Howe contends that this idea of self-making, or to adapt Appleby's term, self-building, was not strictly limited to the middle class: "It is unduly patronizing to assume that working-class people who professed the values of respectability cannot really have meant to do so, or must have been the victims of false consciousness".[23] While he is clearly interested in making financial gains, I suggest Pike's story-telling is an attempted act of self-making into a respectable man; that is, someone who is valued not just for his contributions to the trading of goods and information, but as a man who tells the truth. This reflects Pike's class concerns, and his yearning for a respectability that is detached from—but secretly dependent on—wealth. However, the "truth" that Pike seeks to tell is dependent on the continued silencing of Mr. Higginbotham and other voices in the text.

Work from Appleby and Howe evince that respectability is not a matter of birth but a result of effort—it has to be cultivated through repeated interactions with other people, in both private and public spaces. Tellingly, Howe states, "what distinguished the self-made man was that his identity was a voluntarily chosen, conscious construction, not something that had to be

---

[21] Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution*, 11. As Pike makes reference to the railroads ("Ill news flies fast, they say … but this beats railroads"), we can locate the text as set approximately between late 1820s and early 1830s, therefore fitting Pike into the period Appleby discusses (*H* 189).
[22] Ibid., 21.
[23] Howe, *Making the American Self*, 125.

achieved by an individual in isolation".[24] In this way, acts that engage with the community, for example telling stories, are central to the making of the self. However, as opposed to Washington Irving's use of oral culture, which posits storytelling as a collaborative act between speaker and listener that strengthens civic structures of feeling, storytelling for Pike is ultimately a self-centered means of building and "selling" his respectable self to those he encounters. Authorship—creation and control of a narrative—is central to Pike's idea of a respectable self, as he privileges his voice over the voices of others to shape the murderous tale.[25] Pike uses Higginbotham's corpse as a tool for gaining cultural capital, which is part of his self-making as a respectable man.

Returning "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" to its original *The Story Teller* framework emphasises the relationship between selling stories and achieving economic and cultural success. The frame narrative reinforces the self-serving nature of storytelling exemplified by Pike. Like Irving's "Dolph Heyliger", "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" also contains layers of narrative voices, each one serving a distinct purpose. The reader encounters Hawthorne's voice, the Story Teller's narration and finally Pike's voice. In "Passages from a Relinquished Work", the tale's introductory frame, the Story Teller relays audience reactions to him telling the tale of "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe".

---

[24] Ibid., 136.

[25] This is especially so for the pedlar figure, who to Michael Cohen represents "a particular kind of trade specializing in the retail of words—authorship". Cohen, "Peddling Authorship in the Age of Jackson," 370. Bookseller and agent Parson Weems is another pedlar figure who traded on anecdotal histories to gain readers. Writing to publisher Mathew Carey weeks after George Washington's death in 1799 he exclaimed, "Washington, you know is gone! Millions are gaping to read something about him. I am very nearly primd and cockd for 'em". His Washington biography aimed to entertain and educate an audience with a collection of anecdotes and apocrypha. Letter quoted in Scott E. Casper, *Constructing American Lives: Biography & Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 70.

Like the pedlar, the Story Teller in the tavern also uses the sensational story of Mr Higginbotham's apocryphal death to entertain, charm and amuse his audience, and in turn, make himself a living. However, unlike Pike, who believes he is telling the truth, the Story Teller knows that what he says is a construction deliberately designed to enchant an audience. He counters claims that "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" is a "famous tale … which had been received with rapturous applause" by admitting the tale has "an unfilled plot" and he has not decided whether Higginbotham should live or die until he gets on stage.[26] Like Pike's narrative, "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" is itself a liminal, shifting tale. It is a rumour which has become successful through word of mouth. Furthermore, its orator orchestrates his vocal and physical "mimicry and buffoonry" to ensure that the audience are so "ineffably delighted" and laugh so much that "the benches broke beneath them, and left one whole row of my admirers on the floor".[27] The hyperbole with which the Story Teller describes the audience's reactions renders him another authorial figure, like Pike, who invests too much in the power of his voice. "Passages of a Relinquished Work" sets up the reader to laugh at Pike for blindly tying his reputation to Higginbotham's death and believing that his own tale is true.

However, even as the reader is meant to laugh at Pike, the figure of the dead man returns throughout the text as a reminder of the frightening possibility of silence and powerlessness. The sensational fear of the tale—racial and class upheaval—that Pike sells on his journey is actually most acutely felt by Pike himself as he attempts to make himself a respectable man and negotiate his class position. Pike employs the image of a murdered successful white man

[26] Hawthorne, "Passages from a Relinquished Work," 184.
[27] Ibid., 186.

to tell and retell an entertaining story, but this image of symbolic exclusion from the body politic haunts him throughout the text. Higginbotham's murdered body is a frightening reminder of the powerlessness that Pike contemplates throughout the text.

Pike wrestles with a fear of unmaking, centred on his repeated contemplation of the hanged body. When telling the story near Parker's Falls, an old farmer challenges Pike by testifying he met Mr. Higginbotham earlier that day. Pike is shaken when realising his story may not be true—not because it would lose him trade, but because it would render him a liar. It would destroy the story that Pike has crafted into a "respectable narrative", and which he has closely tied to his own sense of self. Upon hearing the farmer's testimony, Pike is "down in the mouth" and retreats to bed:

> Here was a sad resurrection of old Mr. Higginbotham! The pedlar had no heart to mingle in the conversation any more, but comforted himself with a glass of gin and water, and went to bed where, all night long, he dreamed of hanging on the St. Michael's pear-tree. (*H* 191)

At this point in the text, Higginbotham's corpse begins to unnerve Pike and interrupt the progression of his narrative. Pike's sense of self is clearly dependent on Higginbotham's continuing death. In subconsciously imagining himself as the hanging man in Higginbotham's place, Pike becomes Higginbotham's double, a motif that continues throughout the text. By transforming into a dead man himself, Pike too becomes liminal, suggesting that the possibility of discorporation, which Higginbotham embodies, is contagious. Pike's dream exposes his uncertainty and fear—the hanged white body expresses the fragility of citizenship and the un-making of a self-made

man. Pike requires his story to be true; for it to be false would leave him mute, unable to perform his story and command attention on his journey to Parker's Falls.[28] Pike's loquacity, the root of his constructed respectability, depends on the silencing of Mr Higginbotham.

When Pike faces alternative testimonies and competing voices that could undermine his oral authorship, the image of Higginbotham's corpse resurfaces in his imagination. His uncertainty manifests again through Higginbotham's hanged corpse when he encounters the "Ethiopian", who confesses, "there was no colored man! It was an Irishman that hanged him last night, at eight o'clock. I came away at seven!" In response Pike muses, "unhang the old gentleman! It's a sin, I know; but I should hate to have him come to life a second time, and give me the lie" (*H* 192). Once again he fears being exposed as a liar and hopes for the trader's demise to avoid that exposure; his glib and humorous acceptance "It's a sin, I know", acknowledges that his wish for Higginbotham to be dead is wrong. This admission makes explicit that Pike's constructed identity is contingent on the continuing perception of Higginbotham's death; Pike employs Higginbotham's corpse as a means of self-making. In reaction to the threat of counter-narrative, Pike employs the Ethiopian's confession to instil doubt in his story, not being "too positive as to the date of the direful fact, and also to be uncertain whether it were perpetrated by an Irishman and a mulatto, or by the son of Erin alone". He distances himself from the narrative, calling it "a report generally diffused" (*H* 192). Crucially, in adding this disclaimer and instilling doubt into the story,

[28] As I will turn to later in the chapter, this fear is actualised when the mob of Parker's Falls turn on him for lying and he faces the threat of public torture.

Pike aims to make the tale more believable for his audience. Pike presents his crafted narrative as truth, continuing to construct himself as a respectable man.

Upon finding the story of Higginbotham's murder printed in the *Parker's Falls Gazette* the following morning, Pike believes his narrative to be validated as truth. However, as Cohen claims, "by the 1830s orality and print could sometimes seem indistinguishable".[29] This blurring of voice and written word in mass-produced print media exposes the *Gazette* as another piece of sensationalist gossip that, despite dealing in gruesome details, is no more authoritative than Pike's traveller's tale. Daily penny presses in the second quarter of the nineteenth century regularly covered local crime news in great detail, and "defined themselves as an alternative police force" by investigating victims and suspects. However, this was balanced by the need to attract a growing working-class readership and the public's "demand for titillation", which sensational crime news satisfied.[30] In the text, accurate reporting has been sacrificed for increasing readership through the story's "dreadful details". The *Gazette* news story is not based on viewing the corpse, interviewing police or visiting Mr. Higginbotham's niece, but on hearsay; perhaps the writer was present for Pike's tale or they too encountered the traveller at the beginning of the text (*H* 193). Financial success for the *Parker's Falls Gazette* is dependent on the grisly details of Mr. Higginbotham's death, just as it is for Pike trying to sell tobacco with his stories. The newspaper's reliance on gossip and rumour reveals the penny press to be closely aligned with orality and therefore just as vulnerable to fabrication as Pike's tale.

---

[29] Cohen, "Peddling Authorship in the Age of Jackson," 369.
[30] Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page*, 53.

Pike's belief in the accuracy of the newspaper vanquishes his own doubt in his oral narrative: "in his vanity of heart, [Pike] forgot his intended precaution, and mounting on the town pump, announced himself as the bearer of the authentic intelligence which had caused so wonderful sensation". Much more than a gossip, Pike becomes "the great man of the moment … with a voice like a field preacher" (*H* 193). The narrator's ironic description of Pike ridicules the pedlar, both for being foolish enough to believe the *Gazette* and for his pride in needing to tell everyone he is the source. His faith in the newspaper may be misplaced but its descriptive written detail of Higginbotham's murder bolsters Pike's construction of his respectable self. In Pike's privileging of oral narrative, however incorrect, Higginbotham is once again silenced. On his way out of town later, Pike reflects, "the paragraph in the *Parker's Falls Gazette* would be reprinted from Maine to Florida, and perhaps form an item in the London newspapers" (*H* 196). Higginbotham will die over and again as the print news spreads, and his corpse will become a permanent fixture, with the account of his murder turned into a written artefact, even after Pike is discredited. What begins as a fluid and developing oral tale ends as a concrete written text and a permanent artefact of Mr. Higginbotham's "catastrophe".

Pike's fear of being exposed as a liar is realised when Mr. Higginbotham's niece and lawyer arrive in Parker's Falls, because their testimonies refute Pike's claims. The crowd fully accept Higginbotham's resurrection, and in their anger at being misled they turn on Pike, discussing "whether to tar and feather him, ride him on a rail, or refresh him with an ablution at the town pump" (*H* 196). Hawthorne also incorporates tarring and

feathering in another early text "My Kinsman Major Molineux" (1831), in which a large group of newly independent Bostonians publicly punish a colonial official.[31] Similarly to Longstraw's "trial" by a mob of pro-slavers in *Sheppard Lee*, the threat of extrajudicial punishment has the potential to render Pike powerless and voiceless by debasing him for his delinquent vocal behaviour. To be publicly and violently reprimanded would undo Pike's attempts at self-making as a respectable man who trades fine tobacco and important news. However, this threat of torture transforms into a comic event: Pike avoids the tar and feathers and is struck in the face by mud and waste hurled by the local schoolboys. Out of town, the "stains of undeserved opprobrium" from the mud brush off and he is simply a "funny rogue" (*H* 196). The ease with which the dirt comes off and Hawthorne's somewhat ironic description of Pike suffering "undeserved opprobrium" mocks Pike's obliviousness to his vanity and desire, almost desperation, for an audience. Although peddling fabricated gossip, Pike frames himself as the victim of slander when called a liar, and is treated as such by the townspeople. However, even this temporary blackening of Pike's face and threat of public violence once again aligns Pike with the blackened, publicised body of Higginbotham and highlights the dangerous proximity to becoming a noncitizen, ostracised through association with socially and politically excluded figures.[32]

---

[31] Philip McGowan argues that Molineux's blackened body "is an instantaneous sign of debasement" and he connects the humiliation of public punishment with the persecution of black Americans. Philip McGowan, *American Carnival: Seeing and Reading American Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 41.

[32] For Hawthorne mutilated, darkened and blemished faces acts as markers of social exclusion, ostracism and exile, as seen in Mister Hooper and Priscilla's veiled faces in "The Minister's Black Veil" and *The Blithedale Romance*, Georgiana's blemished cheek in "The Birth-mark", and Lady Eleanor's disfigured nose in *Legends of the Province-House*.

The pedlar's investment in the tale takes on much greater significance for his own sense of self after leaving Parker's Falls. In the face of the niece and lawyer's contradictory testimony and written evidence, Pike continues to privilege his own narrative. Hawthorne writes: "the circumstantial evidence appeared so strong that Dominicus doubted whether the autograph produced by the lawyer, or even the niece's direct testimony, ought to be equivalent" (*H* 197). His refusal to accept Higginbotham's autograph as proof reaches comic fantasy when he believes that it could be "deemed the more probable case" that Higginbotham "was so absorbed in worldly business as to continue to transact it even after his death" (*H* 195). Pike's weighing up and then dismissal of the niece's eloquent eyewitness testimony and the legal paper, in favour of "circumstantial evidence" from the traveller and the Ethiopian's whispered and stammered fragments of speech, further positions him as a figure of comic ridicule for vainly prioritising evidence that supports his own narrative over a logical consideration of events.

However, shaken by the possibility that his story could be false, Pike once again meditates on the image of Higginbotham's corpse. He exclaims aloud,

> "May I be hanged myself … if I'll believe old Higginbotham is unhanged till I see him with my own eyes, and hear it from his own mouth! And as he's a real shaver, I'll have the minister or some other responsible man for an indorser". (*H* 197)

This exchange of dead bodies indicates that Pike's sense of self is so enmeshed with the narrative he has created, that he commits to a figure of speech—"May I be hanged myself"—that would erase him. His labelling of Higginbotham a "shaver" further aligns the two men in the narrative, as Pike is himself

described at the beginning of the text as "keen at a bargain … who, as I have heard them say, would rather be shaved with a sharp razor than a dull one" (*H* 188). Pike's exclamation silences Higginbotham again, for if Pike does find him alive, he will need another person to support his testimony. He is unwilling to accept Higginbotham's voice as sufficient testimony, even though he directly asks him, "have you been hanged or not?" (*H* 199). Once in the Kimballton estate orchard, he again exclaims, "for the soul of me, I cannot get by this gate! … I never shall be my own man again till I see whether Mr. Higginbotham is hanging on the St. Michael's pear-tree!" (*H* 198). This uncertainty unnerves Pike, who is "trembling" as he speaks. Once again he closely aligns the images of his own self and Higginbotham's corpse; Pike projects his own anxieties of unmaking onto Higginbotham. His sense of self becomes inextricably linked not just to whether what he has been saying to others is true, but whether his belief in the "circumstantial evidence"—at the expense of witness testimony—is true.

The story's dramatic climax rewards Pike's investment in his own voice and therefore negates the crisis of self he experiences up until that point. Upon seeing Mr. Higginbotham, still alive but under attack from his Irish servant, Pike transforms into "a champion, blindly obeying the call of fate, like the heroes of old romance" (*H* 199). The narrator clearly mocks Pike for his self-aggrandisement as both a respectable newsman and heroic saviour. Pike defeats Higginbotham's attacker and the narrator reveals the mystery of the tale. Despite repeated contemplation on his own unmaking, the tale does not record Pike's response to knowing that the story in which he has invested is untrue. The narrator completely obscures Pike's previous turmoil and transforms the

tale into chivalric adventure to emphasise Pike's obliviousness to the trouble he has caused. Here, Pike is able to write himself into a new heroic narrative that ends in family and fortune. Restored to his position as a successful white capitalist (a status lost during Pike's tale) Higginbotham transfers his wealth to Pike years later when he "capped the climax of his favors, by dying a Christian death, in bed". Pike goes on to set up a "large tobacco manufactory" in the narrator's hometown (*H* 199). This financial transaction is the ultimate economic reward Pike receives for his investment in the tale—he "gets the girl, the money, and the last laugh".[33] Like Dolph Heyliger's marriage to Marie Vander Heyden in Irving's "Dolph Heyliger", Pike's marriage to Higginbotham's niece ensures that wealth is transferred in a traditional manner, rather than violent inter-class robbery. Furthermore, in marrying into the Higginbotham family and inheriting its fortune, the doubling of Pike and Higginbotham resolves in Pike becoming Higginbotham's surrogate son, in the same way that Dolph becomes Antony Vander Heyden's successor in Albany. In repeatedly privileging his individual voice, Pike finds financial and reproductive success and transforms into a "self-made man". This denouement reveals that the real entertainment of the narrator's story is not just Higginbotham's murder, which is shown to be false, but also Pike's foolishness for believing in and helping to spread the rumour.

Whereas Higginbotham transforms from living to dead man through Pike's oral narrative, in "Feathertop" the scarecrow is brought to life and sustained through a supernatural voice. Unlike Higginbotham, whose status is fragile because he can no longer speak for himself, Feathertop is treated as a

[33] Goddu, "Hawthorne and Class," 137.

gentleman because he, however inexplicably, can speak for himself and produces polite conversational speech. First published in *The International Magazine* in February and March 1852, "Feathertop: A Moralized Legend" was written between Hawthorne's novels depicting spiritualism and mesmerism, *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Blithedale Romance*. All three texts draw on the practice of spirit-rapping, which was increasingly popular in the early 1850s. In March 1848, Rochester teenagers Margaret and Katherine Fox claimed to have communicated with a local dead man through a series of knocks and raps. By 1850, the sisters were on tour and demonstrating their powers to the public.[34] Progressing beyond raps, mediums channelled loved ones and celebrity spirits through writing, speaking, dancing and music. Similarly to mesmerist trances, in which the subject gave up autonomy to enable the mesmerist to manipulate their body, at spiritualist séances successful mediums lost control of their bodies to fully allow spirits to enter and control them. In *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Blithedale Romance*, predatory men exploit this passivity to bend the will of receptive, submissive women and silence or control their voices. In *The Blithedale Romance*, the waif-like Priscilla is an archetypal female medium known as The Veiled Lady. It is rumoured she is held captive by the curse of the veil "in a bondage which is worse than death", and the magician Westervelt dominates her.[35] Similarly, in *The House of the Seven Gables,* Phoebe is able to perceive supernatural

[34] The sisters held private and public séances in New York in 1850, attracting writers such as James Fenimore Cooper and William Cullen Bryant. I discuss the figure of the medium further in Chapter 6. Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 16.
[35] Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, 112–13.

presence "with almost the effect of a spiritual medium".[36] Her receptivity entrances the mysterious mesmerizer Holgrave, who wishes to conquer and control her.[37]

Ellen Weinauer extends spiritualism's influence on Hawthorne to "Feathertop" and contends the short story "conjure[s] forth meaningful and substantial anxieties" regarding "self-sustaining manhood". For Weinauer, "Feathertop" is similar to Hawthorne's mesmeric and spiritualist romances in its focus on the limits of personhood when autonomy is lost. As a possessed creature, Feathertop transgresses "conventional binary limits" between "the 'sovereign' and the 'slave,' the 'man' and the 'not-man'".[38] I agree that Hawthorne employs spiritualism to question autonomous male citizenship; Feathertop is not a self-fashioned man like Pike, but depends on external forces to sustain him. Echoing the language of attraction and control in *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Blithedale Romance*, Mother Rigby has a "magnetic potency" over the scarecrow that "must inevitably be obeyed".[39]

Familiar with both animal magnetism and spiritualism, Hawthorne (and critics such as Weinauer) often conflate the two phenomena in his work.[40] Both involve passivity of the individual body, which is open to human manipulation.

---

[36] Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*, 96.

[37] Paul Gilmore contends that Hawthorne employs the "spiritual electricity" of mesmerism and the telegraph in *The House of the Seven Gables* to reproduce a "techno-utopian" vision of America where everyone is connected, which "threatens to violate the innermost self". Paul Gilmore, *Aesthetic Materialism: Electricity and American Romanticism* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 79.

[38] Weinauer, "Hawthorne, Melville and the Spirits," 312.

[39] Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Feathertop: A Moralized Legend," in *Tales and Sketches*, 1108 (hereafter cited in text as *F*).

[40] In one journal entry, he references Charles Poyen, the French practitioner who introduced mesmerism to America and who was active in the Boston area. Visiting Horatio Bridge, Hawthorne writes, "Once he offered to magnetize me, in the manner of Monsieur P—". Nathaniel Hawthorne, journal entry, 14 July 1837, in *Passages from the American Note-Books of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Boston: James Osgood and Company, 1873), 62.

However, for Hawthorne the difference between spiritualism and mesmerism, I contend, is the performative and constructed nature of the spiritualist medium, who speaks as someone else, as opposed to the mesmerised patient, who retains their identity. Feathertop's supernatural construction and his enchanted performance of a specific identity—the gentleman—clearly ridicules the constructed nature of the respectable white male. In an 1851 letter to W. B. Pike, Hawthorne recognises spiritualism as a performance:

> I have heard and read much on the subject, and it appears to me to be the strangest and most bewildering affair I ever heard of. I should be very glad to believe these rappers are, in any one instance, the spirits of the persons whom they profess themselves to be, but though I talked with those have had the freest communication, there has always been something that makes me doubt.[41]

Hawthorne wants to be enchanted and believe in this communication, but for him mediums are performers; they are not "whom they profess themselves to be". Mediums claimed to not only channel the spirits of loved ones through possessed speech and automatic writing, but also the spirits of celebrity ghosts, including recently deceased presidents and global historical figures.[42] Shaker communities claimed Native American spirits inhabited their bodies and made them dance and sing, while some spiritualist circles witnessed their members speaking in indigenous tongues. If true, the dead's possession of the medium

---

[41] Hawthorne to W. B. Pike, 14 July 1851, in *The Letters, 1843-1853,* eds. Thomas Woodson, L. Neal Smith, and Norman Holmes Pearson, vol. 16 of *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, ed. William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1985), 466.

[42] Quaker abolitionist Isaac Post channelled spirits from Washington, John Calhoun, John Quincy Adams and James Polk to protest slavery. In magazine and newspaper accounts of spiritualist circles, mediums claimed to be figures such as Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. See Isaac Post, *Voices from the Spirit World: Being Communications from Many Spirits. By the Hand of Isaac Post, Medium.* (Rochester, NY: Charles H. McDonell, 1852); S. B. Brittan, ed., *Spiritual Telegraph* (New York: Partridge & Brittan, 1853), 1:177–78.

suggested a dangerous fluidity or "polymorphousness" of identity across lines of race, religion, class and gender.[43] For sceptical Hawthorne, however, if the phenomena is untrue, then spiritualism involves the construction and ventriloquising of new personas and identities, a concern that Feathertop embodies when he demonstrates how man can be built and brought to life through vocal acts.

In "Feathertop", an enchanted talking scarecrow bewitches the residents of a nearby town. Set in seventeenth-century New England, witch Mother Rigby transforms the scarecrow into a living man in order to play a trick on local Judge Goodkin. With the help of the Devil she dresses Feathertop in gentlemanly clothes and supplies him with a pipe, which he must puff on to stay alive and produce speech. In town his exotic appearance intrigues the inhabitants and his genteel speech and mannerisms captivate Judge Goodkin's daughter Polly. Upon looking in a mirror, they both realise Feathertop's true form of "sordid patchwork" and a horrified Polly faints (*F* 1120). Distraught, Feathertop escapes back home and after lamenting his creation he discards his pipe to willingly self-destruct.

A story centred on the physical construction of a gentleman, like Poe's "The Man that was Used Up", "Feathertop" reflects antebellum anxieties about male self-possession and economic character. Identifying this discourse, Monika Elbert argues that Feathertop "embodies all the contradictory and self-limiting poses of the gentleman in search of selfhood in the marketplace".

---

[43] Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 21. For discussions of Shaker performances and Indian spirit guides see Bennett, *Transatlantic Spiritualism and Nineteenth Century American Literature*, 83-113; McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past*, 66-93.

Feathertop is an adolescent figure "who needs to find himself", but caught between Old and New Worlds he is unable to participate in the marketplace and inevitably returns to Mother Rigby's matriarchal domestic space.[44] However, I contend that, rather than just a tale of failed economic masculinity, "Feathertop" is primarily concerned with another key tenet of masculine citizenship: respectability. The constructed and enchanted scarecrow, who ultimately chooses to self-destruct, comes to represent the emptiness behind respectability's façade.

Turning to Hawthorne's notebooks helps to evince this reading of "Feathertop". Hawthorne draws on Ludwig Tieck's 1835 fairy tale *Die Vogelscheuche* (*The Scarecrow*), employing an American setting to instil it with satirical purpose.[45] In an 1849 journal entry, Hawthorne sketches an idea for "Feathertop" and notes the scarecrow will act as "the symbol of a large class" of men. Behind "some characteristics, some tokens" of humanity, Hawthorne plans to reveal him as "a thing of mere talk and clothes, without heart, soul, or intellect".[46] Hawthorne's pointed attack on the dandies and gentlemen around him shows Feathertop's performance of genteel masculinity intended as specific satire against the façade of respectability.[47] In the text, Mother Rigby deems Feathertop too life-like to stand in a field all day, and decides to send him out in the world "among the other men of straw and empty

---

[44] Monika M. Elbert, "Hawthorne's 'Hollow Men': Fabricating Masculinity in 'Feathertop,'" *American Transcendental Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (1991): 180, 177.
[45] Alfred A. Kern, "The Sources of Hawthorne's Feathertop," *PMLA* 46, no. 4 (1931): 1253–59.
[46] "Passages from Hawthorne's Note Books," *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1866, 692.
[47] In his biographical research, Alfred Kern claimed that Hawthorne was in particular attacking wealthy merchant Richard Rogers, the "prototype for the empty-headed dandy", who was responsible for Hawthorne losing his Salem Custom House position in June 1849. Alfred A. Kern, "Hawthorne's Feathertop and R. L. R.," *PMLA* 52, no. 2 (1937): 507.

fellows". She plays a joke on the town, wanting to see how far a "mere thing of sticks, straw and old clothes" can make it in the world by convincing others he is a respectable gentleman (*F* 1105). Like Irving's "Dolph Heyliger", Hawthorne employs a colonial tale to discuss white male citizenship in the antebellum period.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, respectability was a personal value or quality that could be attained through public-facing acts. In the colonial period, one avenue for achieving respectability was through consumerism—the outward-facing consumption and display of goods, including attractive clothing, which showed a person's good taste and education. Alongside clothing and possessions, polite mannerisms and refined speech showcased respectability, and implied wealth.[48] As Christina J. Hodge writes, by the turn of the nineteenth century, "gentility was synonymous with respectability, ease, and moral good".[49] By taking on these behaviours and appearances, non-elite citizens and families strove to be seen as equal to the gentry. Performances of respectability afforded social power and moral authority. The assumption was that this refined façade would reflect a worthy character.

Feathertop is a liminal white character, crossing the boundary between human and non-human and slipping between racial categories. Like Mr. Higginbotham, the liminal Feathertop has a racially ambiguous body, which is reflected in his clothing and appearance. He wears:

---

[48] This included standards such as dressing for formal occasions, setting the table for dinner, and ascribing social and household roles to family members. Christina J. Hodge, *Consumerism and the Emergence of the Middle Class in Colonial America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), xvii–xviii. See also Richard Lyman Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993); Woodruff D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800* (New York; London: Routledge, 2002).

[49] Hodge, *Consumerism and the Emergence of the Middle Class in Colonial America*, 17.

> A pair of scarlet breeches, once worn by the French governor of Louisbourg, and the knees of which had touched the lower step of the throne of Louise le Grand. The Frenchman had given these small clothes to an Indian powwow, who parted with them to the old witch for a gill of strong water, at one of their dances in the forest … [Mother Rigby] put her dead husband's wig on the bare scalp of the pumpkin, and surmounted the whole with a dusty three-cornered hat, in which was stuck the longest tail feather of a rooster. (*F* 1105)

Feathertop's body contains fragments of Old and New World masculine types—the European aristocrat and the colonial settler—mediated through the Native racial other. Like Poe's General A.B.C. Smith, Feathertop is another physical composite whose construction is closely tied to Native figures. The circulation of clothing comes to represent the amalgam of American identity forged through immigration and colonial-Native trade.[50]

Furthermore, Feathertop's less-than-white "shrivelled, yellow face" and "yellow visage" have clear racial connotations and recall the ambiguous doubling of Higginbotham's hanging corpse and the Ethiopian in "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" (*F* 1107). However, Hawthorne's use of yellowness differs in each text and elicits different responses from characters within. Whereas the yellowness of Mr. Higginbotham and the Ethiopian comes to represent domestic fears of racial and class transgression, Feathertop's yellowness projects outwards to exotic lands. His yellow visage is a safe foreignness compared to the threatening presence of African American violence and violation of white Americans imagined in "Mr. Higginbotham's

[50] Holly Blackford argues that the scarecrow's sartorial "hybrid composition" reflects Hawthorne combining European fairy tales to form American fiction that is "no longer recognizable and locatable" as European. Holly Blackford, "Transformations of E. T. A. Hoffman's Tales from Hawthorne to Oz," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fairy Tale*, ed. Maria M. Tatar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 220, 222.

Catastrophe". The townspeople speculate on Feathertop's geographic and therefore racial origin; they are "all astir" to find out his name and locate his identity. Seeing his tanned skin, one resident posits, "most likely, he is from the Havana, or from some port on the Spanish main … Those settlers in Peru and Mexico have skins as yellow as the gold which they dig out of their mines" (*F* 1115). Others guess he is Dutch, German or French nobility. When they view him, they do not see a collection of hand-me-downs but a richly embellished and expensive ensemble, including "a pair of splendid scarlet breeches" and "a gold-laced hat, set off with a snowy feather" denoting nobility (*F* 1114). In his perceived connection to wealth and foreign courts, Feathertop becomes an aristocratic diplomat in the eyes of the community. One woman responds, "yellow or not … he is a beautiful man! –so tall! so tender! Such a fine, noble face, with so well-shaped a nose, and all that delicacy of expression about the mouth!" (*F* 1115-16). Feathertop's appearance of gentility erases any concerns about him appearing less than white.

It is Feathertop's mannerisms and polite speech that beguile the population; without these he would remain a mannequin. He becomes a man through speech. Feathertop's possessed pipe supplies him with life, breath and a particular kind of voice that replicates genteel speech. Attaching the pipe to the scarecrow, Mother Rigby confers manhood on Feathertop by instructing him to speak. He replies, "Mother … be not so awful with me! I would fain speak; but being without wits, what can I say?" (*F* 1110). Feathertop's response, like the dead Valdemar proclaiming his own death, is an inexplicable and paradoxical utterance. He speaks to say he does not have the wits or brains for substantive speech, yet he has the capability to voice this self-aware

statement. When he does talk further, empty phrases comprise his speech. Hawthorne writes,

> Neither did it lack words proper for the occasion: "Really! Indeed! Pray tell me! Is it possible! Upon my word! By no means! Oh! Ah! Hem!" and other such weighty utterances as imply attention, inquiry, acquiescence, or dissent on the part of the auditor. (*F* 1112)

Hawthorne's ironic use of "weighty" reveals Feathertop's polite speech as a flimsy façade; these are rehearsed exclamations produced without a conversational partner present. They are exclamations and do not convey any substance. Mother Rigby orders Feathertop to have "a hundred such set phrases, and five hundred to the boot of them" (*F* 1110). Like Mr. Windenough in Poe's "Loss of Breath", whose speech breaks down into repeated exclamations, Feathertop's repetition of such phrases only emphasises that they are ultimately meaningless and robotic.

Physical gestures and mannerisms supplement and enhance Feathertop's vocal performance of genteel masculinity. Mother Rigby remarks when he talks, "and thou didst put thy hand to the left side of thy waistcoat as if thou really hadst one!" (*F* 1110). Combined, these mannerisms and his polite speech intrigue and enchant the townspeople. This performance of genteel masculinity acts as a form of cultural currency, like Pike's tale-telling, that convinces people Feathertop is a respectable man. The residents believe, "there needed no other proof of his rank and consequence than the perfect equanimity with which he comported himself" (*F* 1116). The "unspeakable majesty" of his walk and his "politeness and grace of manner" are enough (*F* 1115). The townspeople subscribe to the belief that his outside reflects his inner worth and

character. They project their own vision onto Feathertop; he is an empty figure that they can fill with desires to encounter an exotic yet noble visitor.

The townspeople's reactions show their enchantment, an overwhelming of critical faculties and a return to the emotional and irrational. Feathertop's pipe not only supplies him with life and speech, but also alters how others perceive him. The narrator questions whether Feathertop has actually transformed or if the illusion is only in eyes of deluded men. The pipe's smoke has hypnotic qualities that convince the townspeople Feathertop is finery and manners, not rotten wood and rags. The residents' magnetic connections to Feathertop cannot be rationally explained; one local remarks, "Bless my wits, what is the matter with me?" as Feathertop dazzles and bewitches them (*F* 1116). His speech further impresses the residents and constructs the façade of a dashing and respectable gentleman. In response to the lady who praised his "delicacy of expression", Feathertop replies, "so do your eyes, fair lady … Upon my honor, they have quite dazzled me". In an "ecstasy of delight", the woman comments, "was ever so original and exquisite a compliment?" (*F* 1116). The irony is that remarking on dazzling eyes is not original but a romantic cliché and, as such, is another rehearsed phrase. Similarly, Polly Goodkin is quickly besotted: "No matter what Feathertop said, his words found depth and reverberation in her ear" (*F* 1120). Hawthorne omits the scarecrow's dialogue because it is without substance; the reader is invited to imagine Feathertop's empty aphorisms to Polly, casting a spell on her and overwhelming her ability to see him as an inanimate construction.

Hawthorne's self-aware construction of a seventeenth-century gentleman is written at a moment when citizens were becoming more cautious

of gentility. The ideology that a man or woman's appearance and behaviour reflected their good character led to a proliferation of instructive guides on the "complex code of genteel conduct"—how to speak and behave in polite company and in public.[51] By the 1850s, people were more aware that these gestures were performative, especially when practised by strangers, and so could be exploited to mask inner corruption. While middle-class young men strove to be seen as respectable and display their social worth in the city, the confidence man utilised the same enchanting gestures to gain their trust and embroil them in schemes of hustling, gambling or fraud. Guides warned young men to be wary of strangers who were too generous or friendly.[52] Hawthorne's scarecrow is an analogue for the empty-headed dandy but his codes of gentility and respectability signal for the antebellum reader a corrupt and manipulative masculinity. In the figure of Feathertop, Hawthorne asks readers to see through the construction and performance to recognise the danger of blindly submitting to the enchanting gentleman stranger.

While Feathertop enchants the majority of the town's residents, Hawthorne offers a few "dissenting voices". A dog "after snuffing at the heels of the glistening figure" lets out "an execrable howl", while a young child "squalled at the fullest stretch of his lungs, and babbled some unintelligible nonsense about a pumpkin" (*F* 1116). The ones who are physically unable to speak eloquently, who like the scarecrow inhabit a place without coherent speech, recognise that Feathertop is similar to them and see through his shimmering artifice. Judge Goodkin too is significantly unnerved. Recognising

[51] Karen Haltunnen gives examples of conduct and etiquette literature from this period, such as *A Manual of Politeness* (1837) and George Winfred Hervey's *The Principles of Courtesy* (1852). Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 196, 96.
[52] Ibid., 8.

Feathertop as a supernatural manifestation from the dancing demonic figures on his never-extinguished pipe, Goodkin views the confident creature as "a thorough and practised man of the world, systematic and self-possessed" (*F* 1119). What is so disturbing for Goodkin is that Feathertop's self-possession is so convincingly and artfully constructed, practised and performed. In his eyes,

> every motion and gesture of the distinguished Feathertop came in its proper place; nothing had been left rude or native in him; a well-digested conventionalism had incorporated itself thoroughly with his substance and transformed him into a work of art. Perhaps it was this peculiarity that invested him and a species of ghastliness and awe. It is the effect of anything completely and consummately artificial, in human shape, that the person impresses us as an unreality and as having hardly pitch enough to cast a shadow upon the floor. (*F* 1119)

Feathertop is so terrifying and ghastly because he is an uncanny physical and vocal subject. His impeccable mannerisms and eloquent voice are familiar to Goodkin as that of a gentleman, yet they become strange, as they are too perfect and well rehearsed, which brings into doubt his humanity. Like the confidence man, he appears as too much of a gentleman for it to be sincere expression of good character. It is unnerving for Goodkin that a stranger can perform whiteness so convincingly, because it reveals the construction of white citizenship itself. Feathertop is able to command attention and respect without being a man of substance or worth; in his brief journey into town he succeeds in enchanting the community purely on a performance of empty words and gestures.

Subtitled a "Moralized Legend", the short story begins as a satire on constructed white masculinity, yet—perhaps belying Hawthorne's humorous aims—it ends by offering a sincere message on the place of the marginal figure

within local and national communities. Hawthorne fulfils his notebook plan to reveal the scarecrow as "a thing of mere talk and clothes", when, looking in a mirror, both Polly and Feathertop recognise his true fragmented form. Horrified Polly shrieks and faints upon the revelation of his monstrosity; the enchanting spell he has cast over her is broken. Feathertop sees "not the glittering mockery of his outside show, but a picture of the sordid patchwork of his real composition, stripped of all witchcraft" (*F* 1120). His chance to assimilate in human society ruined, the disgusted Feathertop runs back to Mother Rigby and proclaims, "I've seen myself, mother! I've seen myself for the wretched, ragged, empty thing I am! I'll exist no longer!" (*F* 1121). He laments his grotesque form as empty, yet it is not the patchwork itself that is empty, but the performance of gentility produced through the life-sustaining pipe, which results in a façade of polite speech and manners. Ultimately, Feathertop's only human aspects are his awareness that he has been rejected by "a human value system that reads appearance as an index of worth", and his desire to transcend his true ragged body to be part of that system.[53] While Hawthorne planned in his 1849 notebook to show the scarecrow without a heart, Feathertop has too much heart. After his self-destruction, Mother Rigby chooses not to reassemble Feathertop, claiming, "he seems to have too much heart to bustle for his own advantage in such an empty and heartless world" (*F* 1122). Stripped of his enchanting power over others, Feathertop is too sensitive and vulnerable for the real world, which judges men on how they dress, speak and walk, as opposed to the substance of their speech.

[53] Martin A. Berger, *Sight Unseen: Whiteness and American Visual Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 30.

As satirical pieces, both "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" and "Feathertop" ridicule the emptiness behind respectability and question the limits of enchantment itself. Through each story Hawthorne continually asks the reader if they can believe what they read, hear or see. In "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe", the reader is expected to laugh at Pike for his self-aggrandisement and for foolishly believing rumour and tabloid print. In "Feathertop" the narrator interjects self-reflexively to note the fantastical and unbelievable nature of his story and its protagonist.

> Upon my word, if the legend were not on which I heard on my grandmother's knee, and which had established its place among things credible before my childish judgment could analyse its probability, I question whether I should have the face to tell it now! (*F* 1108)

The narrator's reference to childhood enchantment in part disregards the story and mocks those who believe in it. At the same time it recalls Hawthorne's 1851 children's work, *A Wonder-Book for Boys and Girls*, in which he rewrites Greek myths, such as King Midas' cursed golden touch. Wonder or enchantment is a means for Hawthorne to impart moral lessons on his young readers.[54] Hawthorne's fiction suggests the possibility that readers "might be enchanted not only into submission, but also into other postures" that engage in the world around them.[55] While charting the dangers of manipulative enchantment that wills others to submit blindly, in "Feathertop" Hawthorne calls for a form of literary enchantment that allows for awe and enjoyment.

---

[54] Hawthorne wrote to J. T. Fields that he would "purge out all the old heathen wickedness, and put in a moral wherever practicable". Hawthorne to J. T. Fields, 23 May 1851, in *The Letters, 1843-1853*, 437.

[55] Caleb Smith, "From the Critique of Power to the Poetics of Justice," *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 1, no. 1 (2013): 161.

However, this enchantment needs to enable readers to retain their critical faculties to engage with his satire on constructed white male citizenship.

As I have discussed in this chapter, in these short stories the voice is central to the construction of the respectable white male citizen. The voices of liminal white men, who either transgress human/non-human boundaries or are proximal to physical death, reveal the respectable man as both an enchanting and captivating concept and a flimsy façade based on either clichéd speech or fabricated gossip. Both texts are haunted by fears of un-making and ask what happens to the unmade or failed gentleman. For both Feathertop and Pike, the answer is self-destruction, revealing fears and fragility behind Hawthorne's comedy. In my final chapter I return to the relationship between empty or wordless voices and personhood to examine Herman Melville's interrogation of speech in his later fiction.

Chapter 6

"How can I speak to thee?": The Muted and Wordless Voice in Herman Melville's *Pierre* and "Bartleby the Scrivener"

Throughout this thesis I have shown how the voice of the liminal white figure, in a variety of representations, often questions and disturbs ideals of antebellum white citizenship. Carwin and Nick's ventriloquial cries in *Wieland* and "Somnambulism" undermine expectations of rational republican citizens who can distinguish fantasy from reality. Similarly, M. Valdemar's explosive utterances protest the white scientific community's desire for knowledge and overwhelm the narrator's attempt to rationally process his experiment. Antony Vander Heyden protests the increasing professionalisation of white male citizens and the destruction of colonial communal structures, and Washington Irving offers oral storytelling as a means of rescuing and propagating these structures of relation and feeling. In his radical transformations, Sheppard Lee's racially hybrid narrative voice undermines white civic attachment to industry and hard work. And in my previous chapter I discussed how Hawthorne satirises speech as a marker of respectability in the figures of Dominicus Pike and Feathertop. Turning to Herman Melville, unusual vocal utterances in his work act to firmly challenge the ideal of the white antebellum citizen. Melville differs from the other authors in this thesis because his later fiction features characters who deliberately withdraw their speech or evade language to express their liminal position in antebellum society.

In this chapter I suggest that one of the ways the voice can disrupt is through wordlessness and muteness and I examine Melville's use of ineffable

and inscrutable speech in his later fiction. In a development from my five previous chapters that show authors employing an abundance of the spoken and written voice to express liminality, in this chapter I trace a move towards muteness to communicate marginality. Odd forms of speech permeate Melville's fiction. From the strange language of Polynesian natives in the early *Typee* (1846), to the bizarre mimicry of a trickster conman in *The Confidence-Man* (1857), and the stuttering of his final prose work *Billy Budd* (1888-91), Melville populates his texts with characters possessing unusual and often disruptive voices. Many of Melville's prose works attach peculiar vocal utterances to non-white or "not quite white" protagonists.[1] I narrow my focus on Melville by examining two texts that involve not quite white, or liminal white characters, on the interstice between life and death: the unintelligibly singing Isabel Banford in *Pierre: Or, the Ambiguities* (1852) and the muted Bartleby in "Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street" (1853). Previous criticism on Melville has tended to focus on race or voice separately, but bringing these two texts together enables a reading of antebellum whiteness through examining speech, which, as discussed throughout this thesis, is central to forming and expressing white civic identity.

As I have shown in the previous chapters, depicting characters as dying or ghostly often denotes "dispossession, privatization, amnesia, and unfreedom".[2] In their proximity to death and to states of powerlessness, Bartleby and Isabel are less than white. Thinking about these characters as less

[1] I take the term "not quite white" from Matt Wray's *Not Quite White*. Wray conceives that white Americans from lower-working class and impoverished backgrounds occupy a "dangerous threshold state" that blurs the racial binary of white and black, threatening essentialist ideas of race. The racial epithets "lubber", "hillbilly", "redneck" and "white trash" denote their social marginality. Wray, *Not Quite White*, 2.
[2] Castronovo, *Necro Citizenship*, 3.

than white moves away from binary readings of black versus white to consider characters that are between states of full citizenship and slavery, who exist on the margins of society. Melville uses the liminal figure's voice to communicate this marginality. In his spectrality, Bartleby effects a haunting upon the lawyer-narrator. His repeated verbal refusals and withdrawals from conversation challenge the narrator's conception of citizenship tied to sociality and self-making. In *Pierre*, Isabel inhabits a social and spiritual limbo. She is an otherworldly figure who narrates a deprived and excluded upbringing disconnected from her own history and identity. Pierre's illegitimate half sister spends her youth in asylums and workhouses after her mother dies and her father—Pierre Sr.—abandons her. Meeting her half brother, she relies upon cries, singing and a spirit-possessed guitar to give voice to her isolation and suffering.

Unlike some of the liminal protagonists I have discussed earlier in this thesis— Irving's Antony Vander Heyden and Bird's Sheppard Lee—Melville's protagonists do not experience liminality as a temporary state. As Victor Turner argues, during liminal rites subjects are stripped of all social position and ties, debased and cast out of the local community. This period is often marked by symbols of death and decay.[3] A liminal figure such as Sheppard experiences this only temporarily during his eighteen-month supernatural journey of radical social movement. Bird's text concludes with Sheppard returning to his body and with his economic and social position reinstated. Antony meanwhile employs a frontier wilderness lifestyle to mark himself as a temporarily marginalised white man outside the progression of professional economic

[3] Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 95.

masculinity. On his homecoming to Albany, he returns to a comfortable and domesticated lifestyle that reinforces his position as a wealthy citizen and leader of the community. For Bartleby and Isabel, on the other hand, their liminality is a permanent state; the outsider status they speak of is an extended liminal period, which leads to their death.

Bartleby and Isabel communicate liminal whiteness through selective muteness, inscrutable statements and wordless cries. Created in the same two-year period, both figures not only disrupt ideals of white citizenship but convey Melville's ongoing struggle with language and text in the 1850s. After a brief discussion of scholarship on race in Melville, I will start with *Pierre* and argue that the socially dead Isabel is a marginalised figure born into silence and a world without speech or language. Within her narrative Melville explores how one can move beyond language to testify to suffering. Furthering recent work on mesmerism and spiritual connectivity in *Pierre*, I situate Isabel within the early Spiritualist movement in the 1850s.[4] Straddling the physical and spiritual worlds, she communicates with her dead mother through a possessed guitar and gives voice to their joint story of suffering and exclusion through unintelligible singing and music. In response to her utterances, Pierre's conception of the upstanding antebellum citizen unravels. He believes his half sister depends on him to rescue and legitimise her through marriage, and he attempts to position her into respectable society, of which she has never been a part. Absconding to New York, Pierre increasingly views authorship as a means of self-making and an expression of his autonomy. Isabel's otherworldy cries and periods of wordlessness and Pierre's inability to convey himself through literature puts

[4] Gilmore, *Aesthetic Materialism*, 86-107.

forward a claim that some things cannot be adequately expressed through language and the written form.

In the second part of this chapter I then discuss Bartleby's inscrutable statements and his withdrawals from conversation. Refusing to work, converse or even eat, the cadaverous Bartleby's passive resistant rejection—"I [would] prefer not to"—challenges the narrator's values of white citizenship understood as industry, sociality and self-possession.[5] Specifically, Bartleby fails to embody the values the narrator attaches to the "model citizen" of antebellum society, the young professional clerk.[6] The narrator increasingly views the copyist as a dependant whom he must support. I argue that a logic of human ownership pervades this short story. In no longer fitting the expectations of a citizen, the narrator views Bartleby as his ward, his property, and finally, as a piece of text. The lawyer in "Bartleby" attempts to understand Bartleby's refusals by writing the copyist as a dependant character in his own literary sketch, an endeavour that can never be fully realised, as Bartleby's speech remains inscrutable.

Both the lawyer and Pierre are figures of authorship: the narrator in "Bartleby" uses writing to understand and inscribe the character of others, whereas Pierre attempts to use authorship as a means of autonomous self-making. As well as employing the muted voice as a vehicle for communicating marginality, Melville's use of wordless voices, refusals and silences challenges the literary text. In *Quiet Testimony*, Shari Goldberg contends that Melville's

---

[5] I use [would] because some variants of Bartleby's statement appear as just "I prefer not to".

[6] Michael Zakim, "Producing Capitalism: The Clerk at Work", in *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Michael Zakim and Gary J. Kornblith (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 224.

texts "feature the world's silences as stubborn and unyielding, and they problematize the idea that the text could reverse this essential condition".[7] This chapter builds on Goldberg's work by considering two texts that show Melville experimenting with language and speech in fiction in relation to resistant and inscrutable voices. He moves increasingly towards an interrogation of language in his later fiction, doubting if it can be a sufficient means of communication.[8]

*

The majority of criticism on race in Melville's prose focuses on interactions between white and non-white characters. Scholars have repeatedly interrogated Melville's philosophical and aesthetic responses to expansionism, colonialism and slavery.[9] There are numerous texts that lend themselves to these readings. Melville's sea narratives are full of interracial encounters, from white sailors living amongst South Pacific natives in *Typee*, *Omoo* (1847) and *Mardi* (1848) to the multiracial environments of merchant, Navy, whaling and slave ships in *Redburn* (1849), *White-Jacket* (1850), *Moby Dick* (1851) and "Benito Cereno" (1855). In *Moby Dick*, Melville describes the sailors as "federated along one keel", forming cross-racial partnerships in order to maintain the *Pequod*.[10] At the same time, characters and readers cannot escape the metaphysical horrors of race. Pip, Ahab's black cabin boy, goes mad from the realisation that, in his

---

[7] Shari Goldberg, *Quiet Testimony: A Theory of Witnessing from Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 88.
[8] Nina Baym, "Melville's Quarrel with Fiction", *PMLA* 94, no. 5 (1979): 910.
[9] See Carolyn Karcher, *Shadow over the Promised Land: Slavery, Race and Violence in Melville's America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980); Wai-Chee Dimock, *Empire for Liberty: Melville and the Poetics of Individualism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); Eric J. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1993), 135-83; Maurice S. Lee, *Slavery, Philosophy, and American Literature, 1830-1860* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 133-64.
[10] Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, ed. Tony Tanner (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics; Oxford University Press, 1998), 106.

native Alabama, his blackness would mark him as human property worth less than a whale killed on the expedition. After nearly drowning, his speech breaks down into manic cries in which he describes himself as a runaway slave: "Pip! Pip! Pip! One hundred pounds of clay reward for Pip; five feet high—looks cowardly—quickest known by that! Ding, dong, ding! Who's seen Pip the coward?"[11] Pip desires to become permanently attached to his white superior; he asks that his hand be riveted to Ahab's and invites the captain to "use poor me for your one lost leg; only tread upon me, sir; I ask no more, so I remain a part of ye".[12] Pip's plea for Ahab to physically subsume him conveys the uncomfortable truth that white citizens' freedom and self-determinacy, encapsulated by Ahab's obsessive quest for the whale, is predicated on the subservience of millions of non-white Americans and their exclusion from those rights.

Christopher Freeburg, who argues that blackness is both a racial marker and a psychological concept for Melville, attends to this dependency on and fear of blackness for white selfhood. He contends that encounters with blackness inflict psychological trauma on Melville's white protagonists. These white protagonists experience "psychic and physical disruptions that turn into prolonged and sustained feelings of paralysis and suffering".[13] As a not quite white protagonist, Bartleby's interactions with the narrator in "Bartleby"

---

[11] Ibid., 462.
[12] Ibid., 471.
[13] In considering blackness in relation to psychological darkness, Freeburg draws on the work of Harry Levin, who argues in *The Power of Blackness*, that Melville's blackness represents a "sombre" vision of the nation against the "American thesis" of "practical and prosperous culture". Freeburg develops this approach by mapping psychological and epistemological crises onto Melville's portrayal of colonialism and slavery. Levin, *The Power of Blackness*, 39; Christopher Freeburg, *Melville and the Idea of Blackness: Race and Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3.

prompt the same psychological reactions as these interracial encounters. A figure such as Bartleby is not black, but not quite white. Graham Thompson has argued that Melville depicts white working bodies as off-white to "push against the discourse of whiteness" in the antebellum period. These less than white bodies cannot appear as fully white because as poor menial and manual workers they are disconnected from middle-class white men. In "Bartleby" and "The Tartarus of Maids" (1855) the narrators exclude pallid and pale workers from the idealistic vision that all white men and women are united across the nation.[14] In fact, these not quite white working bodies show that whiteness is stratified by class and social position and is dependent on excluding and "othering" the working class, women and immigrants. Building on this scholarship, I contend that Melville's depiction of off-whiteness extends beyond racialised concepts of the working body to a broader model of qualities required to be an antebellum citizen, including autonomy and sociality, therefore enabling a joint discussion of Isabel and Bartleby.

The lawyer narrator in "Bartleby" and Pierre Glendinning in *Pierre* demonstrate a republican ideal that the citizen was autonomous and self-determined. Colin Dayan terms this ideal a "civil body", one that controls itself, contributes to society and is afforded personal freedoms by the state.[15] The citizen was able to determine their future, earn capital and continually self-improve, which was a gendered and racialised concept. Whiteness denoted a

[14] Graham Thompson, "'Through Consumptive Pallors of This Blank, Raggy Life': Melville's Not Quite White Working Bodies", *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* 14 (2012): 40. For additional discussions of Melville's white working bodies portrayed as less than white see, Jeannine Marie DeLombard, "White-Jacket: Telling Who Is - and Aint - a Slave", in *The New Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville*, ed. Robert S. Levine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 51–67; Jonathan Elmer, *On Lingering and Being Last: Race and Sovereignty in the New World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 78-117.
[15] Dayan, *The Law Is a White Dog*, 41.

"property in one-self"—autonomy—and made one fit for citizenship. As I discussed in the introduction, those who had property in one-self had a voice—both metaphorically through voting, and literally through public speaking and published writing. Those who did not or could not control their finances or themselves—women, children, and in particular slaves—were "*insufficiently self-possessed*."[16] They inhabited the status of "dependant" and were looked after by the husband, the father or the master. They did not speak for themselves; they were prohibited from voting and often excluded from public speaking and print. In the eyes of the lawyer and Pierre, their not quite white counterparts lack property in themselves and the men view Bartleby and Isabel as racially liminal dependants. Those who are not civil bodies end up as haunting, incorporeal figures. Melville portrays both Bartleby and Isabel as otherworldly liminal figures, in between the physical world and the afterlife.

In *Pierre*, Isabel appears as if from beyond the grave. A poor seamstress, this sallow and olive-skinned character first emerges at the Miss Pennies' sewing circle, which Pierre and his mother Mary attend. After haunting Pierre with a piercing shriek upon seeing him, she then tells Pierre through a letter and a spoken narrative that she is his father's illegitimate daughter. Melville depicts her as both a "suffocated" cadaver with a "death-like beauty" and as a supernatural figure who "wholly soared out of the realms of mortalness".[17] In her narrative in Books VI and VIII, broken memories of her upbringing emphasise the indeterminacy of her mortal status. Like a dream sequence, Isabel's narrative jumps and cuts in time and space as she grapples

[16] Coviello, *Intimacy in America*, 33.
[17] Herman Melville, *Pierre: Or, The Ambiguities* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 112, 142 (hereafter cited in text as *P*).

with her loss of memory—"the stupor, and the torpor, and the blankness, and the dimness, and the vacant whirlingness of the bewilderingness" (*P* 122). She spends her youth trapped in a nightmare, a gothic dilapidated "wild dark house" surrounded by "ghostly pines" that she fears will "reach out their grim arms to snatch into their horrid shadows" (*P* 114). In his portrayal of Isabel, Melville draws on transatlantic gothic fiction. Her "death-like beauty" echoes Poe's contention that "the death, then, of a beautiful woman is unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world": Isabel is beautiful because she appears dead and unchanging.[18] The claustrophobia and imprisonment of a young woman refers to Poe's inappropriate burials of Madeleine Usher in "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) and the wife in "The Black Cat" (1843), as well as the trapped and suffering women in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847).[19]

A haunting incorporeal figure, Isabel fails to embody the model antebellum woman. In Chapter 1, I discussed the ideal republican woman who was responsible for morally educating her male relatives to engage in civic matters. Clara Wieland and Constantia Davies in *Wieland* and "Somnambulism" initially serve as prime examples of the rational and constant republican daughter or sister who guides her family through the tumultuous and uncertain new national landscape. By the mid-nineteenth century, gendered distinctions of separate public and private spheres further formalised expectations of female behaviour. Subordinate in civic matters and represented

[18] Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition", in *Essays and Reviews,* 19.
[19] Melville's friend Evert Duyckinck reviewed *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* in *The Literary World.* Hershel Parker suggests that Melville translated Duyckinck's comments on the "hideous inhumanities" of *Wuthering Heights* into the "horrible and inscrutable humanities" of Isabel's gothic childhood. Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography* (Baltimore, MD; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 2:55–56.

by her husband or father, the antebellum woman did not have the same expectations of self-making, autonomy and industry placed on her as the white male citizen. Instead, manifestos on True Womanhood, such as Catharine Beecher's *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841), laid out the female duty to "have a superior influence" over "all questions relating to morals or manners" in the family.[20] Women were responsible for "the formation of the moral and intellectual character of the young".[21] In providing her family with Christian education, the antebellum True Woman shaped her male relatives into active and engaged citizens, who would vote on behalf of her interests. The antebellum woman's gendered citizenship was inextricably tied to the domestic sphere and her identity depended on her place in the family, a philosophy inculcated in women since childhood. However, it is clear that from the account of her upbringing, that Isabel is completely disconnected from the family sphere and cannot fulfil these roles.

Isabel's incomprehension of language and initial inability to vocalise her suffering reflects her lack of place within a family structure, and therefore her loss of identity. The blankness in Isabel's memory corresponds to the pervading silence of her upbringing. The gothic house is "dumb as death" as the old man and woman with whom she lives never speak to her (*P* 115). Without speech and the interpersonal connections that come with it, Isabel cannot understand the world around her. In their silence, the man and the woman are the same inscrutable forms as the motionless green foundation

[20] Catharine E. Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy, For the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and at School*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1848), 33. Books such as Beecher's contributed to a Cult of True Womanhood, which urged women to conform to this religious and domestic model. See Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1966): 151–74.
[21] Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, 33.

stones that trap Isabel in the nightmarish house. When she says of the couple, "I knew not whence they came, or what cause they had for being there", she records her lack of comprehension at her own place in the world, as well as the other inhabitants of the house, because she defines herself in relation to these figures (*P* 116). Hers is a "realm beyond language".[22] In silence, Isabel is an unformed self. Without the voices of the past, "No name; no scrawled or written thing; no book … no one memorial speaking of its former occupants", Isabel has no place in the world. Orphaned through the death of her mother and her father's abandonment, history is lost to her. She says, "no grave-stone, or mound, or any little hillock around the house, betrayed any past burials of man or child" (*P* 115). In contrast, Pierre's patrilineal history is set down in detail at the beginning of the novel and enshrined in the family estate. Isabel asks, "what was it to be dead? What is it to be living? Wherein is the difference between the words Death and Life? Had I been ever dead? Was I living?" (*P* 124). These questions encapsulate Isabel's liminal state—cut off from her genealogical ties she is socially dead and therefore excluded from the freedom and rights of the living.

Isabel struggles with verbal expression throughout the text. We can see this in two ways. The first is her desire for silence. Several times she acknowledges she does not know how to tell Pierre about her upbringing, exclaiming "I have no tongue to speak to thee … how can I speak to thee?" (*P* 113). She repeatedly tells Pierre to be silent and allow her to be silent, instructing, "let me be still again, Do not speak to me" and "speak not to me; it is too much … do not speak to me" (*P* 124). Her feelings overwhelm her ability

[22] Priscilla Wald, "Hearing Narrative Voices in Melville's *Pierre*", *Boundary 2* 17, no. 1 (1990): 111.

to verbalise her experience. Some things must rename nameless and unexpressed. For example, she refuses to name one of her childhood dwellings as an asylum, saying, "that word has never passed my lips, even now, when I hear the word, I run from it" (*P* 121). Isabel's youth spent in the asylum further reveals language to be insufficient. The exiled and disowned inmates express themselves through "hand-clappings, shrieks, howls, laughter, blessings, prayers, oaths, hymns, and all audible confusions". One inhabitant simply mutters "Broken, broken, broken" on repeat, while others "could not, or would not speak, or had forgotten how to speak" (*P* 120).

The second way this struggle with language manifests is through the "effortful" way she narrates her story to Pierre.[23] Isabel breaks down language into its smallest components, questioning the very meaning of words. For example, the word "father" does not carry any familial significance for her because she has been cut off from normative ideas of family. When she does meet Glendinning Sr., she interprets "father" to mean "general love and endearment … little or nothing more", with no connection to paternity, genealogy or inheritance (*P* 145). Isabel manipulates language in her attempts to express her marginality. For example, referring to the gaps in her memory she says, "now the wide and vacant blurrings of my early life thicken in my mind" (*P* 117). Here, Isabel creates an impossible image through the juxtaposition of an empty and formless object becoming thicker. The letter she writes to Pierre is imbued with her broken physical voice, containing exclamations and outcries. It is an embodied document; the paper appears to be

[23] Wendy Stallard, "Melville and Isabel: The Author and the Woman Within in the 'Inside Narrative' of *Pierre*", in *Melville & Women*, ed. Elizabeth Schultz and Haskell Springer (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2006), 129.

bleeding when the ink stained by her tears blurs and runs down the page. She writes, "—Oh, my brother, my dear, dear Pierre,—help me, fly to me; see I perish without thee;—pity, pity,—here I freeze in the wide, wide world;—no father, no mother, no sister, no brother, no living thing in the fair form of humanity, that holds me dear" (*P* 64). The oral quality of her writing is clear in the fragmentation and repetition that signify her overwhelming outpouring of emotion that cannot be contained on the page.

When language is inaccessible or insufficient, non-verbal communication replaces it as a mode of expressing suffering, exclusion and marginalisation. Instructing Pierre to listen to her guitar, Isabel says of her story, "for not in words can it be spoken" (*P* 126).

> "Mother—mother—mother!"
>
> Again, after a preluding silence, the guitar as magically responded before; the sparks quivered along its strings; and again Pierre felt as in the immediate presence of the spirit.
>
> …
>
> Pierre felt himself surrounded by ten thousand sprites and gnomes, and his whole soul was swayed and tossed by supernatural tides; and again he heard the wondrous, rebounding, chanted words
>
> "Mystery! Mystery!
> Mystery of Isabel!
> Mystery! Mystery!
> Isabel and Mystery!
> Mystery!" (*P* 150)

Isabel is a spiritualist figure, channelling her mother's spirit through an enchanted guitar. As discussed in the previous chapter, the medium inhabited a liminal position, straddling the boundaries of life and death and exposing that border to be permeable as communication crossed between the material world and the afterlife. A dark-haired, dark-eyed young woman in a trance-like state,

Isabel's appearance fits the image of female mediums in the 1850s, notably the Fox sisters, who I mentioned in Chapter 5. The enchanted guitar was a recurring motif of spiritualist writings, with mediums recording occurrences of spirits playing the instrument to astounded observers.[24] Isabel personifies the guitar, claiming, "the guitar was speaking to me, the guitar was singing to me, murmuring, and singing to me … the guitar was human" (*P* 125). Melville's awareness of this cultural phenomenon clearly shapes his portrayal of Isabel. *Pierre* draws on the gothic romance of *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), in which Hawthorne frames characters in contemporary discussions of spiritualism and mesmerism.[25] Like Isabel, Phoebe Pyncheon is an exotic figure, with "brown ringlets" and skin "the clear shade of tan", who is able to perceive supernatural presence "with almost the effect of a spiritual medium". As discussed in the previous chapter, her receptivity entrances the mysterious mesmeriser Holgrave, who reflects, "there is no temptation so great as the opportunity of acquiring empire over the human spirit; or any idea more

[24] Possessed guitars feature in accounts of spiritualism by William Coggeshall and Joel Tiffany, both published in 1851. Hawthorne also used the trope of enchanted instruments in *The House of the Seven Gables*, in which the ghost of Alice Pyncheon haunts a coffin-like harpsichord, "playing sadly and beautifully" whenever a Pyncheon relative dies. William Turner Coggeshall, *The Signs of the Times: Comprising a History of the Spirit-Rappings, in Cincinnati and Other Places: With Notes of Clairvoyant Revealments* (Cincinnati, OH: W. T. Coggeshall, 1851), 98–99; Joel Tiffany, *Lectures on Spiritualism: Being a Series of Lectures on the Phenomena and Philosophy of Development, Individualism, Spirit, Immortality, Mesmerism* (Cleveland, OH: J. Tiffany, 1851), 205; Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*, 83.

[25] Furthermore, Melville had visited a Shaker community in Hancock, Massachusetts in July and August 1850. After his visits he read a Shaker narrative, which describes the members singing "melodious and heavenly songs" as they channelled spirits. *A Summary View of the Millennial Church, or United Society of Believers, Commonly Called Shakers*, 2nd ed. (Albany, NY: C. Van. Benthuysen, 1848), 88, quoted in Merton M. Sealts, "Melville and the Shakers," *Studies in Bibliography* 2 (1949): 108.

seductive to a young man than to become the arbiter of a young girl's destiny".[26]

In channelling messages from beyond the grave, the medium had to become a passive vessel and lose their personal autonomy. As one member of a Philadelphia spiritualist circle wrote in 1851, "the person to be prepared must give up all self-control, all resistance, and resign himself to the entire direction and control of the spirits".[27] We can see this in Isabel's trance-like state; she loses herself to the power of her mother's spirit. Isabel's utterances seemingly come without thought or rational processing. Whereas Hawthorne exposes the potential sexualised dangers of female passivity through Holgrave's thoughts of control, Melville presents Isabel's mediumship as an opportunity for communication, in particularly for young women who spiritualists viewed as the most appropriate vessel for channelling spirits.[28] In submitting to the power of her mother's spirit, Isabel enters into a conversation with her. Isabel's murmuring, singing and playing communicates both their stories of suffering and marginalisation.

Isabel's mysterious voice and powerful story irrevocably change Pierre and alter his perception of the world. From his first encounter with her he is transfixed. Her "long-drawn, unearthly, girlish shriek" causes an emotional reaction framed through touch. Isabel's voice "split its way clean through his heart" and has "taken hold of the deepest roots and subtlest fibres of his being"

---

[26] Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*, 80, 96, 195.
[27] *A History of the Recent Developments in Spiritual Manifestations, in the City of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: G. S. Harris, 1851), 11.
[28] As I discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, Poe and Hawthorne depict mesmerism and spiritualism as a threat to human autonomy in "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar", *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Blithedale Romance*. Ann Braude argues the American public perceived adolescent girls as the most "plausible" mediums because of their innocence and passivity. Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 23.

(*P* 45). After hearing her shriek, Pierre's rational self is "audaciously encroached upon by bannered armies of hooded phantoms, disembarking in his soul, as from flotillas of spectre-boats" (*P* 49). In her musical spirit performance Isabel conjures an intense supernatural environment. Her "rebounding" and resonant chants and murmurs, as well as the vibration of the guitar strings, create an "architecture of sound" that again, Pierre perceives through touch.[29] In these synesthetic moments, he feels "swayed and tossed" by her cries and drawn closer by her "extraordinary physical magnetism" (*P* 151).[30]

Upon hearing Isabel's unintelligible voice, Pierre invests "infinite significancies" in her shrieks, singing and murmurs (*P* 126). Her voice communicates to him a deeper and higher meaning. From her first shriek Pierre connects her voice to abstract values of "Truth, Love, Pity, Conscience" (*P* 49). After reading her embodied letter—which speaks to him not just in Isabel's voice, but also reanimates his father's mysterious dying cry, "my daughter! My daughter!"—Pierre's perception of his place in the world entirely alters. His "whole previous moral being was overturned" and he is aware, through Isabel's revelation, "that for him the fair structure of the world must, in some then unknown way, be entirely rebuilded again, from the lower-most cornerstone up" (*P* 87). His long-held belief that his father was a respectable gentleman is undone. Depicted through pure white imagery, Pierre's father represents an unattainably untainted ideal of antebellum citizenship. A notable example is

[29] Michael Jonik, "Sensation" (paper, Keywords: Nineteenth-Century American Studies in the Twenty-First Century, British Association of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Symposium, University of Warwick, 7 November 2015).
[30] For discussions of magnetism and electricity in *Pierre* see, Gilmore, *Aesthetic Materialism*, 86-107; Sam Halliday, *Science and Technology in the Age of Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, and James* (Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 99-101.

Glendinning Sr.'s shrine on the family estate. Within "stood the perfect marble form of his departed father, without blemish, unclouded, snow-white, and serene, Pierre's fond personification of perfect human goodness and virtue". In his static stone form, the dead father represents the "abstract body" of the ideal antebellum citizen; he retains his "reputation as a gentleman and a Christian", a devoted husband, and "virtuous" father (*P* 68).[31] Unchanging, he can only be "uncorruptibly safe in heaven" after being "so beautiful on earth" (*P* 69). However, after hearing Isabel's shriek and reading her lachrymose letter, Pierre recognises that the pure marble is a façade and that behind the perfect statue are the "specks and flaws" in his father's character that resulted in the abandonment of Isabel and her mother (*P* 68).

In his new perception of the world, Pierre's resolve that the world must be "entirely rebuilded" centres on both his ownership of Isabel and his own self-making. In thrall to the power of Isabel's voice, which has revealed the true nature of the world to him, Pierre sacrifices his own respectability by abandoning his fiancée Lucy Tartan for Isabel. He determines to rewrite family history, foreclosing Isabel's illegitimacy within a new narrative of marriage. This "strange and extraordinary" plan will remedy Isabel's exclusion from her father's inheritance. Pierre becomes not only a husband to his half sister, but also a father, replacing Glendinning Sr.'s love, which Isabel must continue to keep secret, with his own. As brother, husband and father, he becomes the only source "of constant love and sympathy and close domestic contact of some one of her blood" (*P* 174). As I have argued throughout this thesis, white citizenship is not only tied to self-ownership but also ownership of property.

[31] Castronovo, *Necro Citizenship*, 8.

Both Irving's Dolph Heyliger and Hawthorne's Dominicus Pike become successful through property inheritance rooted in traditional genealogical means. Pierre marries Isabel so she has a claim on the Glendinning name and its Saddle Meadows estate. As Cindy Weinstein notes, Pierre sees the world through blood relations, to the point where these relations are inescapable.[32] He often calls his mother "sister" and his fiancée Lucy "cousin". Pierre's marriage to Isabel compounds these collapsed and corrupt relations. This intra-family marriage terminates the genealogical line and warps the transferral of property between generations, which is central to Pierre's concept of self and family.

These collapsed familial relations and bloodlines clearly have racial connotations. As work by Jeffory Clymer, Carolyn Karcher, and Robert Levine has argued, the emergence of racially ambiguous illegitimate children connotes the fear and shame of miscegenation in anti-slavery campaigns.[33] I would not go so far to say that Isabel is a slave analogue in the novel, but the logic of human ownership and the destruction of traditional family structures perpetrated in slavery certainly translates into anxieties about property and relations between the middle-class Glendinning family and the less than white marginal Isabel. Mary Glendinning is appalled at the elopement, not only

---

[32] Cindy Weinstein, "We Are Family: Melville's *Pierre*", *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* 7, no. 1 (2006): 19. Christopher Castiglia adds to this argument by reading Pierre as a narcissist "who turns everyone into a version of himself by generating (fictional) family relations". Castiglia, *Interior States*, 239.

[33] Clymer states that *Pierre* "reprises the interracial incest plots that filled antislavery novels and stories". Karcher and Levine trace the presence of miscegenation in the novel to Pierre's slaveowning grandfather. Karcher argues the suggestion of Pierre's blood relation to his grandfather's horses represents "the illegitimate mulatto children fathered by slaveholders", which is a precursor for the warped familial relations through the novel. Levine contends that the novel's "miscegenated (and unknown) genealogies" extend beyond Isabel to Pierre himself, locating blackness at the heart of the model antebellum family. Jeffory A. Clymer, *Family Money: Property, Race and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 74; Karcher, *Shadow over the Promised Land*, 101; Robert S. Levine, "Pierre's Blackened Hand," *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* 1, no. 1 (1999): 34.

because Pierre has broken his promise to Lucy, but also because his choice of bride is so lowly. Not knowing Isabel's true identity, Mary mutters to herself, "oh! oh! oh! Thus ruthlessly to cut off, at one gross sensual dash, the fair succession of an honorable race! Mixing the choicest wine with filthy water from the plebeian pool, and so turning all to undistinguishable rankness!" (*P* 192). Mary uses the language and imagery of miscegenation to discuss class, exemplifying how white people on the thresholds of citizenship could be construed as less than white in the antebellum period. In order to preserve his father's reputation and at the same time afford Isabel the privileges of the Glendinning name, Pierre's new narrative of cross-class elopement mars his own reputation and the respectability of the elite white family.

Pierre conceives of himself through property relations as someone who can give his dependant Isabel security and prosperity. He bolsters his self-image as the model white male citizen who cares and provides for his dependants. He sees himself returning Isabel to the family structure needed for her to fulfil her gendered civic role. At the same time, the discovery of his father's adultery spurs Pierre to attempt to define himself as an independent, self-made man in the city. Absconding to New York with Isabel, Pierre endeavours to forge his identity "outside of the syntax of a market economy's version of property relations"; this is exemplified in his dramatic change in attitude towards writing.[34] Just as he rewrites family history to forge a respectable narrative for Isabel, a key facet of Pierre's self-making and autonomy is attached to writing itself. Hershel Parker makes a case for excluding the authorship "subplot" from the novel, arguing that Melville added

[34] Jeffory A. Clymer, "Property and Selfhood in Herman Melville's *Pierre*", *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 61, no. 2 (2006): 173.

these strands later in a deliberate attempt to create a failed novel and to attack the unkind literary marketplace.[35] However, I contend that Pierre's changing conception of authorship is a necessary element of the text because it is inextricably linked to his new perception of the world after he encounters Isabel. For Pierre, authorship transforms from a means of cultivating gentlemanly accomplishment into a Romantic calling. Critics praise his earlier works for their genteel taste, such as a "long and beautifully written review" that claims, "this writer is unquestionably a highly respectable youth". He is happy to supply sonnets for ladies' scrapbooks and write pieces for magazine publication, such as "The Tropical Summer", that display his "Perfect Taste" (*P* 245).

Once in New York, Pierre begins to see authorship as a transcendental calling and a means of expressing higher truths. It is a marker of his complete autonomy and independence as an antebellum citizen. Pierre has several moments of solitary contemplation, in which he examines his relationship with the literary marketplace. He seeks to disengage from expectations of the professional writer, declining invitations to speak in public and refusing to provide a daguerreotype because "every body has his portrait published, true distinction lies in not having yours published at all" (*P* 254). The idea that everything—even artistic persona—is for sale in the city, is a "horror" for Pierre.[36] In a radical conversion, he detests his previous writing as "Trash!

[35] After signing a book contract with Harper Brothers in February 1852, Melville then added 150 pages of "Pierre-as-author" plot to the novel. In the 1995 Kraken/Harper Collins edition, Parker seeks to restore the text to its original shorter state. Parker, *Herman Melville*, 2:85–88; Herman Melville, *Pierre, Or The Ambiguities*, ed. Hershel Parker (New York: Harper Collins, 1995).

[36] As Jeffory Clymer notes, Melville also figures this relentless marketisation through tropes of prostitution. Isabel offers to figuratively sell her body parts to financially support Pierre. Human interactions are reduced to exchanges of both property and

Dross! Dirt!" (*P* 272). Viewing himself as an artist following a higher calling, he commits himself to conveying the truth through literature. He intends to "gospelize the world anew, and show them deeper secrets than the Apocalypse!—I will write it, I will write it!" (*P* 273).

In Pierre's new vision of authorship, writing is a process of complete "self-examination".[37] By finding an individual and authentic authorial voice, Pierre stakes a claim as an independent, self-made—or self-written—man. As discussed in the previous chapter, in "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe", forging a narrative is part of Pike's aim to build a respectable identity. However, whereas Pike attaches his narrative to financial success—selling his story and tobacco at the same time—Pierre actively seeks to write himself as an autonomous man away from the literary marketplace and to define himself apart from economic exchange. He is instead consumed by "the primitive elementalizing of the strange stuff, which in the act of attempting that book, have upheaved and upgushed in his soul" (*P* 304). In the scenes of writing in the New York Apostles apartment, Pierre increasingly struggles to write anything that adequately expresses his pursuit of higher truths. In his effort to write his body is in turmoil. It unconsciously repels the written page itself as "the pupils of his eyes rolled away from him in their own orbits" (*P* 341). What Isabel's narrative demonstrates to Pierre and the reader is the insufficiency of language. The further Pierre retreats into his own trance-like state—"suspended, motionless, blank"—the more he sees "the everlasting elusiveness

property-in-oneself. Clymer, "Property and Selfhood in Herman Melville's *Pierre*", 193.

[37] In his study of professionalism in Melville's fiction, John Evelev claims that Pierre's investment in professional authorship offers him "unprecedented authority … counterbalanced by a moral demand for self-examination". John Evelev, *Tolerable Entertainment: Herman Melville and Professionalism in Antebellum New York* (Amherst; Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 166.

of truth, the universal lurking insincerity of even the greatest and purest written thoughts" (*P* 341, 337). Like Bartleby, who I turn to shortly, Pierre transforms into a silent figure who can no longer write. Haunting the text since Isabel's introduction, silence and wordlessness pervade, until by the end of the novel Pierre can no longer express himself. He cannot escape the genealogical mess he has created. On first encounter, Isabel's attractive "death-like" appearance draws on Poe's philosophy of poetical beauty. However, by the end of the novel she transforms into Poe's motif of the undying madwoman—like Madeleine Usher—who haunts the male protagonist. Seizing his hand and offering her body parts for his, Isabel attempts to fasten herself to him and assert her position over Lucy, who has left Saddle Meadows to live with them (*P* 349). Questioning Isabel's claims that she is truly his sister (a claim he has fully believed since her arrival), and contemplating the impossible situation of living with both Isabel and Lucy, Pierre retreats into silence. He is left without language; his feelings are "entirely untranslatable into any words that can be used" (*P* 353).

*

Throughout *Pierre*, Melville reflects his protagonists' struggle with expression by testing the capabilities of language itself. He continually invents new words in *Pierre*. However, the majority of these words are formed through adding prefixes and suffixes, creating plurals or making gerunds.[38] In this overwrought text, examples include "upheaved", "upgushed", "significancies", "rebuilded", "blurrings" and "whirlingness". Melville breaks language down into its smallest linguistic units of meaning, experimenting with different

[38] Howard Faulkner, "The Ambiguousnesses: Linguistic Invention in *Pierre*", *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* 12 (2010): 44–47.

combinations. In this sense, these words are not entirely new forms of expression, but instead words are deliberately manipulated to show the limitations of language. Furthermore, in Melville's repetitions, etymologically related words or synonyms "pile up without accreting meaning", which shows the redundancy of the written word.[39] In his move to short fiction, Melville continues to experiment with the boundaries of language and the meaning of speech. Turning to "Bartleby the Scrivener", Melville writes another character with inscrutable vocal utterances. In willingly restricting his speech, limiting his vocabulary to repeated statements and rejecting conversation, Bartleby disavows expectations of the professional male citizen and as a result the patriarchal narrator turns him into a dependent figure.

Like Isabel, Bartleby is an otherworldly figure, a copyist whom the narrator describes as "the strangest I ever saw or heard of".[40] Bartleby is an apparition, one day appearing in the Wall Street office to respond to the narrator's job advert. The unnamed successful Wall Street attorney regards himself as an "eminently *safe* man" for dealing with "rich-men's bonds and mortgages and title deeds" (*B* 18). Hiring Bartleby after his own promotion, the narrator hopes the copyist—"a man of so singularly sedate an aspect"—will be a calming and regulating influence on his existing inefficient clerks Turkey and Nippers. At first Bartleby "gorge[s] himself" on copying, working "silently, palely, mechanically" day and night on the lawyer's documents (*B* 24). But when asked to check his copies against the other clerks, Bartleby responds "in a

[39] Weinstein reads these interrelated repeated phrases as linguistically representing the inescapable overlapping family relations in the novel. Weinstein, "We Are Family", 22.

[40] Herman Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener", in *The Complete Shorter Fiction* (London: D. Campbell, 1997), 18 (hereafter cited in text as *B*).

singularly mild, firm voice … 'I would prefer not to'" (*B* 25). From that moment, Bartleby repeats "prefer not to" and variations of this polite refusal at nearly every request, question or instruction, ceasing work yet not leaving the office when eventually fired by the narrator. He begins to haunt the office.

Figured as a dying man, a corpse and ghost, Bartleby evades categorisation as either living or dead as he occupies the interstice between these two states. Withdrawn from work, sociality and physical sustenance—his only meals consisting of ginger biscuits—Bartleby is slowly dying. At the same time, the narrator frequently refers to Bartleby as a ghost or corpse. He appears with a "cadaverously gentlemanly *nonchalance*" and like a dead body "laid out … in its shivering winding sheet" (*B* 32, 33). Later the lawyer corrects himself, calling Bartleby "this man, or rather ghost" (*B* 43). Convinced the copyist will never leave, the narrator briefly imagines bricking up Bartleby's corpse in the office.[41] This image reinforces a sense of the space as haunted; in the future Bartleby's corpse will remain in the office and he will repeat his occupation as a literal ghost. Like a poltergeist, Bartleby refuses to leave and according to a tenant, "persists in haunting the building generally, sitting upon the bannisters of the stairs by day, and sleeping in the entry by night" (*B* 45). The Wall Street office becomes a haunted house containing a ghost who cannot be reasoned with, and who forces out the living residents. Unable to remove the scrivener through reasoning, bribes or demands, the narrator flees to a new office instead of having Bartleby arrested, while the same remaining tenant complains that "every body is concerned; some clients are leaving the offices", unnerved and deterred by Bartleby's immovable wane presence (*B* 45).

[41] This image references the gothic trope of burials in walls and floors, as seen in Edgar Allan Poe's short stories, which I will return to later in the chapter.

Both theorists and literary critics have attempted to pinpoint what Bartleby's refusals represent. Scholars in Marxist theory, queer theory, post-structuralism, and disability studies, to name just four approaches, have sought to interpret the scrivener's inaction.[42] For example, in *Passive Constitutions* (2007), Branka Arsić layers interpretation upon interpretation to provide 7½ different analyses of Bartleby.[43] Arsić is comfortable in offering these sometimes contradictory readings at the same time, which leave Bartleby as a somewhat empty, floating signifier instead of a figure rooted in the antebellum world. In these multiple discussions of Bartleby, Arsić and other critics have tended to not give much consideration to race and its relationship with the voice. I argue that returning to the voice—the perplexingly absent centre of the text—makes Bartleby more than simply empty. A literary successor of Frank Carwin in *Wieland*, who I discussed in Chapter 1, Bartleby is liminal and evades categorisation because he refuses to explain his actions. He is open to so many divergent yet coexisting critical approaches.[44] However, whereas Carwin's voice is disruptive because it is so limitless, as shown through his ventriloquism that transgresses boundaries of gender, race and class, Bartleby deliberately limits his voice, perplexing and frustrating those around him.

---

[42] The body of "Bartleby" criticism is vast but examples of these approaches can be found in Louis K. Barnett, "Bartleby as Alienated Worker", *Studies in Short Fiction* 11, no. 4 (1974): 379–85; Graham Thompson, *Male Sexuality Under Surveillance: The Office In American Literature* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003); Giles Deleuze, "Bartleby; Or, The Formula", in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 68–90; Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "The Cultural Logic of Euthanasia: 'Sad Fancyings' in Herman Melville's 'Bartleby,'" *American Literature* 76, no. 4 (2004): 777–806.

[43] Branka Arsić, *Passive Constitutions, Or 7½ Times Bartleby* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

[44] Dan McCall terms the overflowing of scholarship as a "Bartleby industry". Dan McCall, *The Silence of Bartleby* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1989), x.

Carwin's mimicry presents an overflowing of identity whereas Bartleby clearly lacks identity. In his refusals, which are polite variations of saying "no", Bartleby is a negative entity. His continual silences negate work and community to the extent that the narrator no longer views him as a white citizen.

Bartleby's statement "I would prefer not to" is a declaration of two possible futures. It means both "I do not want to but I will" or "I do not want to and I will not". In the words of Giles Deleuze, Bartleby's ambiguous opinion "ravages language as a whole".[45] Crucially, Bartleby destroys meaning by using the polite "prefer" instead of angry or aggressive language to voice his refusal and resistance. "Prefer", a "queer word" according to Turkey, is a strange piece of vocabulary that is out of place in the office (*B* 36). It is a polite declaration of opinion unexpected in a space where set tasks are carried out by those paid to follow instructions and orders. It denotes personal choice where choice should be irrelevant. For the employer it is irrelevant whether the employee prefers one task or another; he expects the worker to do what he has been paid to do or to leave. The text's narrator is unnerved because he expects that any refusal to work would be voiced in "anger, impatience or impertinence", not mildness (*B* 25). As a striking worker, Bartleby should say "I will not" forthrightly instead of "I would prefer not to".

Bartleby's polite expression of preference, telling us that he has the choice to work or not is an act of "passive resistance" (*B* 28). As a veil for "no", it shuts down any further conversation. The narrator always gets the same answer behind each response and he cannot advance in understanding why

[45] Deleuze, "Bartleby; Or, The Formula", 73.

Bartleby refuses. When the lawyer asks, "*why* do you refuse?" the response "I would prefer not to" is again ambiguous as it can mean either "I do not want to tell you" or "I do not want to refuse" (*B* 26). This polite illogical response prevents the conversation progressing. Its politeness clearly reveals Bartleby's negative face—that is to say, his disregard for how the other participant in the conversation feels.[46] These negative facing statements are declarations of independence and disengagement. For Bartleby, all statements are vocal detractions from the narrator and the workplace, and their repetition shows that he is unaltered by how the listener receives his opinion. Even a positive variation of this declaration ("I would prefer to be left alone here") displays his negative face and is another way of saying "go away", heedless of the narrator's response (*B* 36). Melville presents Bartleby's physical face as emotionally blank, "leanly composed", "dimly calm" and without "a wrinkle of agitation" (*B* 25). Bartleby's choice not to emote corresponds with his vocal disengagement from the feelings of those around him.

This "queer word" infects the office, until the narrator, and his other clerks import the word into their own speech. Turning the word into a threat of violence, Nippers irascibly responds to Bartleby, "I'd *prefer* him; I'd give him preferences, the stubborn mule!" *(B* 36). This transference is not lost on the employer and his staff, who comment on the phenomenon of Bartleby having "turned the tongues" of the office (*B* 37). Turkey parrots Bartleby, facetiously replying to one request, "oh certainly sir, if you prefer that I should" (*B* 36). The narrator "tremble[s]" at the thought of having "involuntarily" used the

[46] "Positive face is defined as the individual's desire that her/his wants be appreciated and approved of in social interaction, whereas negative face is the desire for freedom of action and freedom from imposition". Richard J. Watts, *Politeness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 86.

word "upon all sorts of not exactly suitable occasions", as if infected with a contagion that could turn him into another Bartleby (*B* 36). Similar to the cries of "broken" in the asylum in *Pierre*, in its repetition "prefer" becomes meaningless; it is a virus that spreads around the office.

In his refusals, Bartleby withdraws from work, community and life itself. Naomi Reed views his repeated refusals and immovability as standing against capitalist logic that depends on circulation and exchange of goods. By stopping work and refusing to leave, like a poltergeist, Bartleby perplexes the narrator because he "cannot insert him into a system of economic calculation".[47] As a figure of both productivity and unproductivity—switching from rapid excessive copying to complete cessation—Bartleby exists at both extremes of the working spectrum.[48] Bartleby's turn to inaction is important in considering antebellum understandings of capitalism, which the Wall Street office symbolises, but it is only one facet of the lawyer's story. Work, and the failure of a white working body is a key theme in "Bartleby," but I argue it is only one aspect of a broader concern regarding white citizenship. For professional antebellum white men, the workplace was significant because it was a place to cultivate and demonstrate qualities tied to citizenship, namely self-improvement and autonomy.

In response to Bartleby's refusals, the narrator views him as a dependant who fails to embody these qualities of citizenship, specifically qualities expected of the clerk, the embodiment of the "model citizen".[49] In the

---

[47] Naomi C. Reed, "The Specter of Wall Street: 'Bartleby, the Scrivener' and the Language of Commodities", *American Literature* 76, no. 2 (2004): 262.
[48] Andrew Lyndon Knighton, *Idle Threats: Men and the Limits of Productivity in Nineteenth Century America* (New York; London: New York University Press, 2012), 33.
[49] Zakim, "Producing Capitalism," 224.

mid-century, thousands of young men travelled to the nation's urban centres in order to pursue careers in offices, banks and shops. These professions required a level of formal education and skills in arithmetic, reading and writing, which set this class of men above factory workers or labourers. However, the clerk was more than a professional figure; he was a representation of a number of personal attributes and characteristics. As scholarship from Brian Luskey and Thomas Augst reveals, clerks saw themselves as figures of self-sufficiency, who were "persistently seeking self-advancement, self-improvement, or self-gratification".[50] Leaving home to work in the city amongst strangers, clerks were the epitome of independent male citizenship. They strove to be seen by employers, clients and new acquaintances as respectable men.

Reading Bartleby against Nippers, the other young scrivener in the Wall Street office, shows two extreme formations of the clerk-citizen. Nippers is ambitious and focused on self-gratification. In the eyes of the narrator, he displays "a certain impatience of the duties of a mere copyist" and is keen to make extra money at the Justices' courts (*B* 21). He epitomises Luskey's description of young office and shop workers as "on the make". Rankled by having to take on Bartleby's work, he hisses to the narrator that, "this was the first and the last time he would do another man's business without pay" (*B* 27). Although convinced that Nippers' ambition and focus on money makes him irascible, the narrator praises him for dressing "in a gentlemanly sort of way … reflecting credit upon my chambers" (*B* 22). From the outset of "Bartleby", the unnamed narrator constructs an image of himself as a successful lawyer, who

[50] Brian Luskey, *On the Make: Clerks and the Quest for Capital in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: NYU Press, 2010), 2; Thomas Augst, *The Clerk's Tale: Young Men and Moral Life in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

prides himself on the quality of his work and the financial remuneration he receives. By name-dropping John Jacob Astor and the praise he has received from the successful late businessman, the lawyer emphasises the importance of reputation and respectability, a concern filtered through the rest of his narrative.[51] He expects his employees to follow suit. Having bribed Bartleby to leave the office with an extra twenty dollars final pay, the narrator congratulates himself on dismissing him in such a respectable and agreeable manner. He is proud of his "masterly management" of the situation and for carrying out a gentlemanly "procedure" with "no vulgar bullying, no bravado of any sort, no choleric hectoring" (*B* 39). When he returns the next day to find Bartleby still present, he berates him for breaking their agreement, stating that he thought the copyist was of a "gentlemanly organization" and would respectably acquiesce to the narrator's request (*B* 40).

Bartleby has little regard to whether people respect him or not. His lack of self-regard and aspiration challenges the narrator's vision of an educated working male citizen. While the lawyer—a member of the Manhattan elite—deprecatingly calls himself "one of those unambitious lawyers", he does so after having already secured financial success, and he expects Bartleby to wish to do the same (*B* 18). Offering to help Bartleby find new work, he suggests a number of careers—a merchant clerkship, bar-tending, collecting bills, or accompanying men travelling in Europe—all met with Bartleby's refusals "I would prefer not to", "I would not like at all", and "I would prefer to be doing

[51] Even a small detail like his attendance at Trinity Church implies the lawyer's investment in others perceiving him as respectable. Newly rebuilt in 1846, Trinity Church was a pillar of prosperity and one of the most powerful landlords in Manhattan. Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 726, 767.

something else" (*B* 46). When presented with these options, Bartleby is ambivalent about the prospects of a career—he does not like the confinement of a store nor the travelling required of a gentleman's companion. His desire to be stationary and withdraw from these career options rejects ideologies of self-making found in young professional men of the antebellum period.

Work itself was only one facet of the clerk's role as an antebellum citizen. Office and store workers saw themselves embarking on a project of self-improvement that revolved around social interactions. Societies such as the Mercantile Library Association provided opportunities for self-improvement through offering public lectures (like the ones Pierre declines), organising evening classes and hosting discussion spaces. Conversation and speaking were means of "fostering sociability" and cultivating and displaying "moral properties of middle-class taste". [52] For example, George Nayes, a clerk writing for the *Mercantile Library Reporter* in 1856, explained why he preferred conversation to reading:

> The manner, the expression, the tone, the gesture, the lively anecdote, the brilliant wit, the sharp repartee, the well-conducted argument, the working of different minds, the animation depicted on the countenance of the speakers, the natural eloquence flowing from the heart, excite a deeper interest, and make more lasting impressions of pleasure on the mind that the perusing of a book in solitude, however elegant or agreeable be the style, and however exciting or instructive be the theme.[53]

Nayes' exuberant and overflowing description of conversation reflects the excitement of young professional men who viewed conversation as both an art in itself and a performance of cultural taste and education. As I discussed in the

[52] Augst, *The Clerk's Tale,* 95, 102.
[53] George Nayes, "Good Conversation and Prose Writing", *Mercantile Library Reporter* 2 (1856): 69-70, quoted in Ibid., 99.

introduction and Chapter 5, eloquence was a key marker of respectability.[54] These young professional men wished their acquaintances to see them as men who had something valuable to say.

The office was a professional space to practise conversation and form bonds of affiliation, as it brought together individuals in "close *psychological* proximity".[55] For the narrator in "Bartleby", the office is an intimate space that provides opportunities for connection and refuge in a city of crowds and disconnection. Melville biographer Andrew Delbanco describes Manhattan in the 1850s as a city of constant noise: "the whistle of steamboats … the scrape and clang of rail trolleys … the rattle of carriages bumping over cobblestone … the hollering pushcart peddlers … the barkers in the fishmarkets".[56] When Bartleby first arrives, the narrator is pleased by the tranquillity he offers in opposition to Nippers and Turkey. When he installs Bartleby in his room, separated by a "high green folding screen" that removes the scrivener from the narrator's sight but not from his voice, privacy and society are "conjoined" (*B* 24).[57] In this partitioned chamber, with only a screen between them, conversation is always possible and the narrator has the opportunity to talk to Bartleby. The office becomes a space that provides relative tranquillity away from this bustle and is therefore open to intimate human interaction and communication. When Bartleby begins to refuse tasks the narrator sees himself

---

[54] For example, *Sheppard Lee*'s dandy Isaac Dawkins castigates his country cousins' over-familiar language and seeks to educate them in genteel eloquence. Dominicus Pike in Hawthorne's "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe", strives to achieve respectability through constructing a lengthy narrative of Higginbotham's murder, which he tells while peddling goods. In "Feathertop" the scarecrow bewitches a community with his eloquent language.

[55] Augst, *The Clerk's Tale*, 227.

[56] Andrew Delbanco, *Melville: His World and Work* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 98–99.

[57] For a discussion of how the narrator constructs and manages the physical space of the office see Thompson, *Male Sexuality Under Surveillance*, 6–9.

and Bartleby inextricably linked by a "fraternal melancholy!" as two isolated souls in the impersonal city (*B* 33). This connection leads him to attempt to forge a familial relationship—at times fraternal, at times paternal—with the copyist, a relationship that is not reciprocated.

However, Bartleby is a man who has given up not just on work but, inexplicably, on everyday human interactions. His utterances are only in response to the narrator; he does not initiate conversation. Bartleby's refusals and silences are in opposition to both the bustle of capitalism (the noises outside) and the professional social interactions expected in the workplace. He rejects expectations of the clerk-citizen in his disengagement from the workplace community and his muteness regarding his personal life and history. Never venturing outside the office or interacting with the world through newspapers and magazines, unlike the clerks Luskey and Augst describe Bartleby has nothing to talk about. With no intention to use the Wall Street office as a space of self-improvement, Bartleby has no reason to talk. Exasperated by Bartleby's desire for privacy, the narrator inquires:

> "Will you tell me, Bartleby, where you were born?"
> "I would prefer not to".
> "Will you tell me *any thing* about yourself?"
> "I would prefer not to".
> "But what reasonable objection can you have to speak to me? I feel friendly towards you". (*B* 35)

From his initial introduction of the scrivener, the narrator admits, "while of other law-copyists I might write the complete life, of Bartleby nothing of that sort can be done" (*B* 18). Bartleby arrives without a history and with no connections to the world outside of the office. Arsić and Deleuze call him an original because he is formless and undecipherable, and I would contend that

part of that unreadability for the narrator and the reader is because his personal or family history—his formation—cannot be traced.[58] Over the course of Bartleby's short employment and lengthy severance, the narrator seeks to know more about the copyist's past, to both understand Bartleby's inaction and forge a bond with him beyond that of employer-employee. Like Pierre, the lawyer collapses his relations into intimate ones and imagines Bartleby as a dependent son or brother.

This demand for conversation, in order to satisfy "feel[ing] friendly" and to form a communal bond, inverts the relationship between conversation and work seen in another of Melville's portrayal of white working bodies, "The Paradise of Bachelors and The Tartarus of Maids". Both Bartleby and the paper-mill employees in "The Tartarus of Maids" are "pallid" and "blank" workers who each carry out repetitive labour: Bartleby copying documents by hand; the "girls" processing paper pulp and folding paper for hours at a time in the New England factory.[59] At the paper-mill the workers are silent: "not a syllable was breathed" as "the human voice was banished from the spot". The women are reduced to "cogs to the wheels" of the factory machinery and in order to maintain the mechanical efficiency of the paper-mill, speech is unnecessary.[60] The conditions of the Wall Street office differ greatly from the paper-mill. Whereas the factory owner silences the "girls" and rarely interacts with them, the lawyer attempts to make the office a site of kinship and intimacy. However, Bartleby employs the oppression seen in the factory as a form of resistance. His silences reject the "intimate attachment and affiliation"

---

[58] Arsić, *Passive Constitutions*, 7; Deleuze, "Bartleby; Or, The Formula", 83.
[59] Thompson, "'Through Consumptive Pallors of This Blank, Raggy Life,'" 25.
[60] Herman Melville, "The Paradise of Bachelors and The Tartarus of Maids," in *The Complete Shorter Fiction*, 325–26.

white citizens formed through conversation.[61] It is absurd that Bartleby could have a career as a "companion to Europe, to entertain some young gentleman with conversation" when he continually rejects the bonds of familiarity and intimacy offered to him, that connect citizens across the nation (*B* 46).

Throughout the text, the narrator increasingly views Bartleby as a dependant who must be looked after because he fails to embody the autonomy and self-improvement expected of the clerk-citizen. Bartleby is a "millstone" around the lawyer's neck and at the same time a pitiable creature that the narrator can claim as his own (*B* 37). Hearing the scrivener's unreasonable and inexplicable utterances, the narrator views Bartleby as a spiritual challenge sent to better him. As in *Pierre*, ownership of others bolsters claims of self-possession and autonomy. Driven by self-interest, the lawyer converts Bartleby into a spiritual prop. He has been sent by "an all-wise Providence" to test the lawyer, so that his "mission in this world" is to house the copyist. Again, this relationship is predicated on a bond between the two men that the narrator assumes to exist. In considering their association "predestinated from eternity" the narrator firmly binds himself and Bartleby together in a relationship beyond the workplace (*B* 42). In the eyes of the narrator Bartleby is a "poor, pale, passive mortal" who "prefers to cling" to him, recalling the image of Pip riveting himself to Ahab (*B* 44). Bartleby becomes a helpless creature who is clearly dependent on the lawyer's good will to save him from a life on the streets.

The narrator's assumed ownership of Bartleby clearly marks the copyist as a racialised figure. This is not to say that Bartleby is a slave analogue or that

[61] Coviello, *Intimacy in America*, 10.

his resistance to his occupation represents a slave revolt, as other critics have done.[62] However, I would argue that the text exists within a pervading logic in which people can be turned into property, a state of dependency occupied by women, children and slaves. It is clear that Bartleby is a figure of independence, disruptively voicing his opinion. However, the narrator takes on an increasingly paternal role, reducing Bartleby to a creature who must be looked after. A man who cannot be responsible for himself is no longer a citizen. Instead the narrator makes himself responsible—albeit sometimes grudgingly—for Bartleby.

The narrator's paternalist attempt to possess Bartleby as a dependant can be seen in the connection Melville draws between the copyist and physical property. In lacking "property in one self" Bartleby becomes a piece of property. Bartleby is a fixture in the office, and Melville closely associates him with the empty white wall at which he stares because they are both immovable and blank.[63] The narrator likens him to furniture, thinking he is "harmless and noiseless as any of these old chairs" (*B* 42). Later he becomes an extension of the staircase, sitting on the banisters stilly and silently. However, perturbed by Bartleby's immovability, the narrator imagines a scenario of inheritance, in which Bartleby could "perhaps outlive me, and claim possession of my office by right of his perpetual occupancy". The narrator not only fears becoming like Bartleby himself, as shown in his copying of Bartleby's language, but that the reverse could also be true and Bartleby could usurp his social position. The prospect of a dependant—one who lacks ownership of themselves—taking over

[62] For an argument on Bartleby as a slave see Scott Donaldson, "The Dark Truth of 'The Piazza Tales,'" *PMLA* 85, no. 5 (1970): 1082–86.
[63] For a discussion of the office architecture as symbolic of Bartleby see Arsić, *Passive Constitutions*.

this professional space and "scandalizing" the narrator's reputation deeply troubles the lawyer (*B* 43).

This fear abates with another thought that rapidly kills off the seemingly immortal Bartleby. Instead of inheriting the office, Bartleby will die there, and the narrator briefly fantasises that he will "mason up his remains in the wall" (*B* 44). The image of a corpse subsumed into the built environment clearly references Poe's stories of entombment, such as "The Fall of the House of Usher", "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843), "The Black Cat" and "The Cask of Amontillado" (1846). The proximity of the buried body in Poe's stories send the murderers mad because they cannot distance themselves from the victim. Melville's narrator imagines Bartleby's death and burial to negate his threat of usurpation. However, at the same time, he continues to make a genealogical claim on Bartleby as his ward and inextricably tied to him. Assuming that Bartleby has no friends or family, the narrator takes control of Bartleby's body—dead or alive—as his own property and a part of the real estate he leases.

The narrator's final step in making the copyist a dependant is to turn Bartleby into text itself. Throughout the short story the lawyer attempts to understand Bartleby's inscrutable statements by reading his facial expressions, his movements and his possessions. For example, he invades Bartleby's desk to find clues of the scrivener's personal life but finds only a handkerchief containing his small savings. On realising that Bartleby is a blank space and that neither his possessions nor statements will reveal why he refuses, the narrator finds the impetus to fill in the blank space with his own narrative. This is most apparent in the narrator's postscript to the story, in which he relays a

rumour about Bartleby's previous employment. The narrator invests in this rumour because it provides a form of closure and explanation; it makes Bartleby's character and history legible and easier to comprehend. If Bartleby will not speak for himself to demonstrate his character or explain his behaviour, then the rumour will speak for him. This "vague report" claims that before coming to Wall Street, Bartleby previously worked at the Dead Letter Office in Washington D.C., sorting unopened lost mail. This rumour holds a "strange suggestive interest" for the lawyer because it enables him, finally, to understand Bartleby's inaction and inexplicable voice (*B* 51). The narrator constructs a narrative in which Bartleby's dealing with those hopeless correspondences heightens his own "pallid hopelessness", causing him to withdraw from work, human interactions and life itself (*B* 47).

In the narrator's eyes these letters reinforce Bartleby's position outside the community. When the narrator asks, "Dead letters! does it not sound like dead men?" he believes the answer to be yes (*B* 51). Dead letters can sound like—or denote—dead men because of the continual importance the narrator places on communication. Saturated in thousands of cut-off correspondences from tragically foreshortened relationships, the Dead Letter Office comes to symbolise disconnection, missed opportunities and the severance of bonds of affection. Men who do not participate in forming these bonds of affection, like Bartleby who refuses to converse with the narrator, fail to meet the expectations of the antebellum white male citizen. The narrator turns Bartleby into a character in his own literary sketch, fashioning an affecting backstory for the scrivener in order to explain Bartleby's muted and inscrutable voice. Of course he would become "a little deranged" (*B* 49). However, Melville ultimately

makes the truth unattainable. The narrator and the reader can never truly know Bartleby's reasons. The lawyer's final exclamation, "ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!" is again, just like Bartleby's polite preferences, an ambiguous statement. It can mean either Bartleby is the epitome of the human condition or that he is in fact the opposite (*B* 51). Bartleby's silence has become a contagion itself that disavows explanation or closure. Similar to the ending of *Pierre*, the lawyer is left with his own silence as language cannot fully explain or testify to experience.[64]

Unlike Isabel in *Pierre*, however, Bartleby inhabits a socially privileged position afforded by his race, gender and profession; he exists within the professional white male realm of the office. His refusal to speak—either to explain his behaviour or engage in societal acts expected in the office—challenges the ideal that white male citizens can and should speak for themselves. He is the most discomfiting character in this thesis because he refuses to use his voice to demonstrate the qualities of citizenship ascribed to white professional men. His continuing presence poses the question of what should happen if someone does not want to speak for themselves or withdraws from cultural expectations of citizenship. In "Bartleby", the narrator transforms Bartleby into a dependant, no longer viewing him as a citizen because he refuses to act—and *speak*—as one.

As I have shown throughout this thesis, the voice is instrumental to performing white civic values, such as self-making, autonomy, industry,

[64] As Daniel Diez Couch writes, the lawyer's narration takes on periods of silence, drawing him closer to the copyist until "a clear, absolute, distinction ceases between the employer and the employee". Daniel Diez Couch, "A Syntax of Silence: The Punctuated Spaces in 'Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street,'" *Studies in American Fiction* 42, no. 2 (2015): 177.

respectability and sociality. At the same time, the authors in this thesis employ inexplicable liminal voices to question these exclusive ideals. Melville's later fiction develops this tension to its ultimate impasse. In his fantastical examples of people on the edges of society—the shrieking otherworldly illegitimate girl, the silent cadaverous clerk—he presents muteness and wordlessness as ways to communicate marginality. Bartleby and Isabel offer the possibility that for people on the limen, their experiences could exist and be most powerfully expressed without speech.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined a recurring motif in antebellum American fiction: racialised white voices on the boundary between life and death. Characters who exist on this threshold are liminal figures, whose voices powerfully articulate marginal whiteness in nineteenth-century America. In antebellum fiction the voice establishes fundamental tenets of white citizenship; vocal acts manifest qualities such as self-making, industry, autonomy, rationality, respectability and sociality. At the same time, inexplicable voices—speaking corpses, ghosts and spectral figures, spiritualist mediums, ventriloquists, enchanted non-human bodies—repeatedly challenge these expected cultural values of white citizenship. The authors in this thesis unite dead, dying and otherworldly white characters with "socially dead" groups in the antebellum period to amplify these characters' own positions on the periphery of white communities. Liminal white characters occupy marginal positions because they do not demonstrate the expected behaviours and values of the ideal autonomous, hard working, and respectable white, middle-class citizen.

Brown, Irving, Bird, Poe, Hawthorne and Melville employ different vocal contexts to question, challenge or negate values of white citizenship. Brown communicates liminal whiteness through the quasi-supernatural phenomena of ventriloquism. His less-than-white characters' shape-shifting voices blur boundaries between indigenous and Anglo-Americans, and their inexplicable nature exposes the fragility of a white rational citizenship reliant on governing the senses. Irving, too, utilises Native allusions for liminal white men who vocally protest the transition from colonial communal "structures of

feeling" to an early national individualist "culture of capitalism".[1] His oral storytelling apparatus within and around his tales propagate spectral nostalgia for a lost vision of citizenship and community. In Bird's textual blackface *Sheppard Lee*, the racially liminal written voice mimics the radical racial doubling of early blackface minstrelsy. Sheppard's liminal voice dares the reader to identify with a black slave, and satirises white civic values of industry and self-ownership. White male anxieties of lost self-possession are also central to Poe's tales of human experiment, in which speaking dying men enunciate the fragility of white male personhood and protest their medical exploitation. These voices undermine the expectation of an autonomous, rational and self-possessed antebellum citizen, represented by the professional white male doctor. Whereas Poe articulates palpable fears of white male destruction, Hawthorne satirises the constructed nature of a white male citizenship dependent on the voice. His liminal white figures seek to enchant their listeners with fabricated gossip and clichéd genteel speech; these figures show that respectability is an illusory ideal. In contrast, Melville questions speech as a marker of white citizenship and as a means of communicating liminality. Through ineffable and inscrutable music and mutterings, characters deliberately withdraw their speech and evade language to express their liminal position in antebellum society.

Moving beyond an anthropological framework of liminality and its focus on ritualised behaviour in tribal societies, this thesis has examined liminality as both a temporary transformative experience and a permanent condition of exclusion and loss in antebellum America. As I have shown

[1] Tamarkin, *Anglophilia*, xxviii; Watts, *The Revolution Reborn*, 7-8.

throughout this thesis, literature of the early national and antebellum periods features characters continually in flux along class and racial lines. Some characters, such as Antony Vander Heyden, Dolph Heyliger, Sheppard, Lackofbreath, Higginbotham and Dominicus Pike experience liminality as a removal from society, followed by a return to its structures. On their return, they re-establish or improve their social and financial standing. Vander Heyden and Higginbotham return to their privileged positions as patriarchal propertied figures, while Dolph, Sheppard and Pike all inherit fortunes, and Lackofbreath recovers his lost voice and social standing.

At the same time, the interstice between life and death offers my chosen authors the opportunity to give voice to experiences of permanent liminality. Characters such as Carwin, Nick, Valdemar, Feathertop, Isabel and Bartleby are marginal figures who do not return to white middle-class communities because they do not demonstrate the cultural values of white citizenship. Carwin and Nick remain as wanderers on the margins of early national society because of their strange vocal abilities; Valdemar and Feathertop self-destruct after they are manipulated and controlled by others; and Isabel and Bartleby become permanent dependants whose marginality ends in death. In particular, Brown and Melville employ permanently liminal characters to ask what should happen if a white American fails, refuses or disavows the cultural expectations of citizenship, as seen in Carwin's boundary-breaking and havoc-wreaking ventriloquism and Bartleby's withdrawal from conversation. The response, from the white communities in these texts, is to view these figures as less-than-white ghosts, spectres or corpses on the edges of society and the material world. Not only do these characters have no place in early national and antebellum

conceptions of citizenship, they have no place in the physical, living world itself. Even Hawthorne's short comic fiction offers imagined death as an internalised response to white male failure. Pike visualises himself hanged when his plans for self-making are undermined, whereas Feathertop carries out his self-destruction after realising he is not a respectable gentleman but an enchanted scarecrow.

By associating white citizens with non-white noncitizens, the authors in this thesis disturb prescriptions of racial belonging and essentialist ideas of white identity. They suggest the possibility of racial liminality through not just physical appearance alone, but crucially, through changes in racially coded behaviour, which I have argued are manifest in the voice. Brown and Bird in particular show the potential for identity dislocated from race and gender. Their characters' shape-shifting ventriloquism and body-hopping suggest that white male citizens could speak like non-white noncitizens and develop the behavioural characteristics that race science ascribed to Native Americans and African Americans.

This thesis has moved away from binary readings of black or red versus white, which have been prevalent in American Gothic studies from Leslie Fiedler onwards, towards internalised manifestations of marginalisation, in liminal white figures and their inexplicable voices. In making this argument, this thesis contributes to developing criticism on the American Gothic that considers broader issues of citizenship and identity formation in gothic fiction, as opposed to tracking unconscious and uncanny racial hauntings, traditionally seen as the root of the American Gothic canon. Diverging from existing criticism on the speaking dead in nineteenth-century American literature, I have

also demonstrated that dead, dying, and supernatural white characters are associated *with* non-white and socially dead groups but speak for themselves, instead of speaking *for* these groups. They are disruptive textual presences that challenge white citizenship's cultural ideology. In speaking when and where they should not, these liminal white figures give voice to anxieties that citizenship is precarious and that the values of white citizenship can be negated.

The texts in this thesis suggest the possibility that citizens could be treated the same way as the nation's non-white noncitizens. If social position can radically change based on how someone displays values considered integral to white citizenship, then liminality is always possible and even contagious. In some texts in this thesis, authors attempt to exorcise this threat by containing radical and rapid social change within characters who can be removed or killed. For example, Sheppard contains the threat of Tom's black social mobility by moving back into his own white body and reasserting his conformity to industry and self-ownership as values of white citizenship. Similarly, Poe ends "Valdemar" by grotesquely destroying Valdemar's less-than-white disobedient corpse; it is a fantastical ending that in part ridicules anxieties over the loss of white self-possession. However, Bird and Poe both draw on pressing concerns that medical graverobbing could affect not just non-white noncitizens but the fully enfranchised white man. Both authors confirm the well-established critical link between physical death and social death. In depicting Sheppard possessing white male corpses for social mobility and Valdemar and Lackofbreath exploited as medical cadavers, the texts suggest that a white man can be owned and manipulated by another. These fantastical scenarios represent concrete anxieties about losing social position at a time when full citizenship was in flux

and vulnerable to social, legal and economic change; I have shown that these persistent concerns cannot be neatly resolved once the liminal figure voices them.

As discussed in the introduction, I selected this group of authors and characters because they are largely representative of the middle-class white male citizen in the early national and antebellum periods, who occupied an enfranchised—yet often socially and financially precarious—position. We can read liminal whiteness in a number of additional texts that fit this description. Regarding Poe and Hawthorne, their extensive collections of short fiction repeatedly chart the construction and destruction of white citizenship and its cultural ideology. For example, the liminal white voice on the threshold of life and death is central to Poe's other mesmerism tales "Mesmeric Revelations" and "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains"; both texts investigate the limits of the rational mind and ask how autonomy can be articulated when others control characters' bodies and minds. Several of Hawthorne's texts consider speech acts as performances of white citizenship's cultural ideology. For example, "Roger Malvin's Burial" (1832) centres on the oral contract between a man and his dying friend in the wilderness after a Native attack. The failure to fulfil his promise to bury Roger haunts Reuben, and this guilt alienates him from society. In "The Man of Adamant" (1837), Richard Digby disavows sociality to live as a hermit. Like Bartleby, his is a permanent self-exile that leads to death, and his transformation into a stone figure at the end of the short story is an enduring reminder of his civic failure. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter 5, *The Blithedale Romance*'s depiction of spiritualism is fertile ground to examine

tensions between autonomy and dependence in the construction of an antebellum utopian American community.

Reading outside these six authors, works by Hugh Henry Brackenridge, James Fenimore Cooper, George Lippard and Bayard Taylor feature liminal white characters and voices. In Brackenridge's *Modern Chivalry* (1792-1815), an "Indian treaty man" offers Irish manservant Teague O'Regan money to masquerade as a Native American because his "unknown gibberish … pass[es] for an Indian language".[2] Like Brown's frontier fiction, the possibility for Native transformation marks liminal white men—such as immigrants—on the thresholds of society. In his *Leatherstocking Tales* (1823-41), Cooper's Natty Bumppo is a frontier figure shaped by a Native upbringing. His dying deictic utterance "Here!" in *The Prairie* (1827) marks his cross-racial kinship with the indigenous community and their spiritual connection to the land.[3] Lippard's polyvocal novels *The Quaker City* (1845) and *The Killers* (1850) use sensationalist narratives of the penny press to dissect tensions between the mechanic class and the working class. Caretaker Devil-Bug's speech is a strange combination of the blackface minstrel and lay preacher, which evinces his liminal position in the undercommons, below civil white society. A potential companion piece to *Pierre,* in Taylor's *Hannah Thurston* (1863), both male and female mediums speak as the dead, crossing boundaries of race and gender to show the permeability of whiteness and the possibility of cross-racial consciousness.

---

[2] Hugh Henry Brackenridge, *Modern Chivalry*, ed. Edward Watts (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009), 34.
[3] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Prairie* (London: Penguin Books, 1988), 385.

Furthermore, the theme of liminal whiteness is not just restricted to male authors and characters, as I began to show in my analysis of Isabel Banford in Chapter 6. In Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok, A Tale of Early Times* (1824), for example, witch Mary Conant's "distinct but trembling" vocal invocations engage in cross-racial communication with Hobomok, a Wampanoag chief who echoes her prayers in his own devotional speech.[4] Her voice expresses her marginal experience on the edge of Puritan society as she rejects the community's religious, racial and sexual dogma to later marry a Native American. Like Irving, Child employs a historical setting and the "vanishing Indian" trope to discuss marginal white experiences in the early national period. In Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), meanwhile, both Evangeline and Augustine St. Clare figure as liminally white during their deathbed scenes. Their deathbed speeches give voice to the failure of white mastery in plantation slavery and the death of white innocence, in order to heighten Stowe's abolitionist message. In African American author Julia Collins's *The Curse of Caste; Or, the Slave Bride* (1865), Richard Tracy, the son of a slave-owner, is shot for marrying Lina, a one-eighth black woman. "Fluctuating between life and death", while he suffers from infection, his dying rants and howls protest a prevalent anti-miscegenation discourse that sought to uphold the purity of white genealogy against black pollution.[5] These socially inclusive and progressive female writers sympathetically employ the liminal white voice to mark the experiences of outsiders, those who do not fit the

[4] Lydia Maria Child, *Hobomok and Other Writings on Indians*, ed. Carolyn L. Karcher (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 13.
[5] Julia C. Collins, *The Curse of Caste; Or, the Slave Bride: A Rediscovered African American Novel*, ed. William L. Andrews and Mitch Kachum (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 45.

expectations of white citizenship by forming kinships with non-white characters. Unlike the majority of the authors in this thesis, these writers do not so much use liminal white characters to voice anxiety of white fragility, but rather question white citizenship's exclusive, dogmatic and corrupting tenets.

Furthermore, while pushing deeper into the nineteenth century is not in the remit of this thesis, it is worth noting that these concerns over liminal whiteness continue after the Civil War. The Fourteenth Amendment recognised African Americans as legal citizens and so whiteness was no longer a demarcation of citizenship. However, the cultural ideology of citizenship—a set of rights and responsibilities predicated on autonomy, rationality, industry, respectability and sociality—still upheld racial hierarchies and white social privilege and dominance. Future work could apply this thesis' framework of liminal whiteness to texts later in the century, such as George Washington Cable's Creole ghost story "Jean-ah Poquelin" (1883) and Frank Norris's narrative of cross-species metempsychosis, "Lauth" (1893), which question these cultural ideals of whiteness and voice anxieties that these values were being lost or eroded in face of expanding citizenship.

This thesis challenges the persistent belief that because whiteness is considered the normate or default position for citizenship, white able-bodied men do not ascribe to or practise identity politics. These authors and texts evince the opposite—they continually and actively discuss a specific racial and gender identity, either by questioning the tenets and values of white citizenship, or by voicing anxieties that the privileges of white citizenship can be negated. Reading the liminal white voice in antebellum fiction enables us to examine

this sustained and still prevalent racialised cultural ideology of American citizenship.

Bibliography

"A Bill to Establish an Uniform Rule of Naturalization, and Enable Aliens to Hold Lands under Certain Restrictions." New York, 1790. Printed Ephemera, Library of Congress. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbpe .21301100.

A History of the Recent Developments in Spiritual Manifestations, in the City of Philadelphia. Philadelphia: G. S. Harris, 1851.

A Summary View of the Millennial Church, or United Society of Believers, Commonly Called Shakers. 2nd ed. Albany, NY: C. Van. Benthuysen, 1848.

Achilles, Jochen, and Ina Bergmann, eds. "'Betwixt and Between': Boundary Crossings in American, Canadian, and British Short Fiction." In *Liminality and the Short Story: Boundary Crossings in American, Canadian, and British Writing*, 3–31. New York; London: Routledge, 2015.

Adams, John. *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America*. London: C. Dilly, 1787.

Adams, John Quincy. *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory, Delivered to the Classes of Senior and Junior Sophisters*. 2 vols. Cambridge, MA: Hillard and Metcale, 1810.

Aguirre, Manuel. *The Thresholds of the Tale: Liminality and the Structure of Fairytales*. Studies in Liminality and Literature 6. Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2007.

Aguirre, Manuel, Roberta Quance, and Philip Sutton. *Margins and Thresholds: An Enquiry into the Concept of Liminality in Text Studies*. Studies in Liminality and Literature 1. Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2000.

Altschuler, Sari. "From Empathy to Epistemology: Robert Montgomery Bird and the Future of the Medical Humanities." *American Literary History* 28, no. 1 (2016): 1–26.

American Medical Library and Intelligencer 1. Edited by G.S. Pattison and Robley Dunglison. Philadelphia: Adam Waldie, 1838. https://archive.org/details/americanmedicali13738dung.

"An Act in Addition to the Act, Entitled 'An Act for the Punishment of Certain Crimes Against the United States,'" 1798. http://www.ourdocuments .gov/document_data/pdf/doc_016b.pdf.

"An Act Supplementary To, and to Amend the Act, Intituled 'An Act to Establish an Uniform Rule of Naturalization; and to Repeal the Act Heretofore Passed on That Subject.'" Philadelphia, 1798. Printed Ephemera, Library of Congress. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbpe .22400500.

Anderson, Benedict R. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. rev. ed. London; New York: Verso, 1991.

Anthony, David. "'Gone Distracted': 'Sleepy Hollow,' Gothic Masculinity, and the Panic of 1819." *Early American Literature* 40, no. 1 (2005): 111–44.

———. *Paper Money Men: Commerce, Manhood, and the Sensational Public Sphere in Antebellum America*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2009.

Appleby, Joyce O. *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Arsić, Branka. *Passive Constitutions, Or 7½ Times Bartleby*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007.

Augst, Thomas. *The Clerk's Tale: Young Men and Moral Life in Nineteenth-Century America*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. "Discourse in the Novel." In *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, edited by Michael Holquist, translated by Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson, 259–422. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Barnett, Louis K. "Bartleby as Alienated Worker." *Studies in Short Fiction* 11, no. 4 (1974): 379–85.

Barthes, Roland. "Textual Analysis of a Tale by Edgar Poe." Translated by Donald G. Marshall. *Poe Studies* 10, no. 1 (1977): 1–12.

Baym, Nina. "Melville's Quarrel with Fiction." *PMLA* 94, no. 5 (1979): 909–23.

Beecher, Catharine E. *A Treatise on Domestic Economy, For the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and at School*. 3rd ed. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1848.

Bellion, Wendy. *Citizen Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Benito, Jesús. "The Crossing and the Crossed: Fear and Loathing In/Of American Cultural Interspaces." In *Mapping the Threshold: Essays in Liminal Analysis*, edited by Nancy Brendendick, 75–89. Studies in Liminality and Literature 4. Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2004.

Benito, Jesús, and Anna Ma Manzanas, eds. *The Dynamics of the Threshold: Essays on Liminal Negotiations*. Studies in Liminality and Literature 5. Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2006.

Bennett, Bridget. *Transatlantic Spiritualism and Nineteenth Century American Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Bentley, Nancy. *The Ethnography of Manners: Hawthorne, James, Wharton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Berger, Martin A. *Sight Unseen: Whiteness and American Visual Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Bergland, Renée L. *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000.

Berlant, Lauren. *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Best, Stephen and Sharon Marcus. "Surface Reading: An Introduction." *Representations* 108, no. 1 (2009): 1–21.

Birch, Thomas. "Zip Coon." New York, 1834. *The Library of Congress Music Copyright Database, 1820-1860*. http://www.loc.gov/item/sm1834.360780.

Bird, Robert Montgomery. *Sheppard Lee: Written by Himself*. Edited by Christopher Looby. New York: New York Review Books, 2008.

———. *The Adventures of Robin Day*. New York: John Polhemus, 1877.

———. *The City Looking Glass*. Edited by Arthur Hobson Quinn. New York: The Colophon, 1933.

———. *The Difficulties of Medical Science: An Inaugural Lecture, Introductory to a Course of Lectures*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Medical College, 1841.

———. *The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow. A Tradition of Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, 1835.

Birk, John F. "Hawthorne's Mister Hooper: The Veil of Ham?" *Prospects* 21 (1996): 1–11.

Blackford, Holly. "Transformations of E. T. A. Hoffman's Tales from Hawthorne to Oz." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Fairy Tale*, edited by Maria M. Tatar, 220–35. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. Unsigned review of *Bracebridge Hall*, by Washington Irving. June 1822, 686-92.

Blakely, Robert, and Judith M. Harrington, eds. *Bones in the Basement: Postmortem Racism in Nineteenth-Century Medical Training*. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998.

Blazan, Sladja. "Silencing the Dead: Washington Irving's Use of the Supernatural in the Context of Slavery and Genocide." *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 69, no. 2 (2013): 1–24.

Blumin, Stuart. *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Boardman, Andrew. "An Essay on the Means of Improving Medical Education and Elevating Medical Character." In *Medical America in the Nineteenth Century: Readings from the Literature*, edited by Gert H. Brieger, 24–36. London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1972.

Bonnett, Alastair. *Left in the Past: Radicalism and the Politics of Nostalgia*. New York: Continuum, 2010.

Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. 2nd ed. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014.

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.

Brackenridge, Hugh Henry. *Modern Chivalry*. Edited by Edward Watts. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009.

Bradburn, Douglas. *The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union 1774-1804*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

Bradley, Elizabeth L. *Knickerbocker: The Myth Behind New York*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009.

Braude, Ann. *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*. 2nd ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Brendendick, Nancy, ed. *Mapping the Threshold: Essays in Liminal Analysis*. Studies in Liminality and Literature 4. Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2004.

Bridge, Horatio. *Journal of an African Cruiser*. Edited by Nathaniel Hawthorne. London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1968.

Brittan, S. B., ed. *Spiritual Telegraph*. 2 vols. New York: Partridge & Brittan, 1853.

Brockden Brown, Charles. *Arthur Mervyn, Or, Memoirs of the Year 1793: With Related Texts*. Edited by Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008.

———. *Edgar Huntly, Or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker: With Related Texts*. Edited by Philip Barnard and Stephen Shapiro. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006.

———. *Ormond, Or the Secret Witness*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1999.

———. *Somnambulism & Other Stories*. Edited by Alfred Weber. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1987.

———. “Somnambulism: A Fragment.” In *American Gothic: An Anthology, 1787-1916*, edited by Charles L. Crow, 7–18. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999.

———. *Wieland; and Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist*. Edited by Jay Fliegelman. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

Bronfen, Elisabeth. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996.

Brooks, Daphne. *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

Browner, Stephanie P. *Profound Science and Elegant Literature: Imagining Doctors in Nineteenth-Century America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

Buffington, Nancy. “Fictions of the South: Southern Portraits of Slavery.” In *A Companion to American Fiction 1780 - 1865*, edited by Shirley Samuels, 378–87. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008.

Burrows, Edwin G., and Mike Wallace. *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Burstein, Andrew. *The Original Knickerbocker: The Life of Washington Irving*. New York: Basic Books, 2007.

Bushman, Richard Lyman. *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.

Carlson, Eric T. “Charles Poyen Brings Mesmerism to America.” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 15, no. 2 (1960): 121–32.

Carter, Steve. “A Possible Source for ‘The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar.’” *Poe Studies* 12, no. 2 (1979): 36.

Casper, Scott E. *Constructing American Lives: Biography & Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

Castiglia, Christopher. *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.

———. “Twists and Turns.” In *Turns of Event: Nineteenth-Century American Literary Studies in Motion*, edited by Hester Blum, 61-78. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.

Castronovo, Russ. *Necro Citizenship: Death, Eroticism, and the Public Sphere in the Nineteenth-Century United States*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.

Chase, Richard. *The American Novel and Its Tradition*. Reprint of 1st ed. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Child, Lydia Maria. *Hobomok and Other Writings on Indians*. Edited by Carolyn L. Karcher. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986.

Chiles, Katy L. *Transformable Race: Surprising Metamorphoses in the Literature of Early America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Clark, Jennifer. *The American Idea of England, 1776-1840: Transatlantic Writing*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013.

Clay, Edward Williams. *Life in Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: S. Hart, 1829. http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/pga.05680/.

Clymer, Jeffory A. *Family Money: Property, Race and Literature in the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

———. "Property and Selfhood in Herman Melville's *Pierre*." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 61, no. 2 (2006): 171–99.

Cmiel, Kenneth. *Democratic Eloquence: The Fight Over Popular Speech in Nineteenth-Century America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Coale, Samuel. "The Romance of Mesmerism: Hawthorne's Medium of Romance." In *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, edited by Harold Bloom, updated ed., 85–104. New York: Chelsea House, 2007.

Cockrell, Dale. *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Cody, Michael. *Charles Brockden Brown and the Literary Magazine: Cultural Journalism in the Early American Republic*. Jefferson, NC; London: McFarland & Co, Inc., Publishers, 2004.

Coggeshall, William Turner. *The Signs of the Times: Comprising a History of the Spirit-Rappings, in Cincinnati and Other Places: With Notes of Clairvoyant Revealments*. Cincinnati, OH: W. T. Coggeshall, 1851.

Cohen, Lara Langer. *The Fabrication of American Literature: Fraudulence and Antebellum Print Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

Cohen, Michael C. "Peddling Authorship in the Age of Jackson." *English Literary History* 79, no. 2 (2012): 369–88.

Colfax, Richard H. *Evidence Against the Views of the Abolitionists, Consisting of Physical and Moral Proofs, of the Natural Inferiority of the Negroes*. New York: James T. M. Bleakley, 1833.

Collins, Julia C. *The Curse of Caste; Or, the Slave Bride: A Rediscovered African American Novel*. Edited by William L. Andrews and Mitch Kachum. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Collins, Kris. "White-Washing the Black-a-Moor: Othello, Negro Minstrelsy and Parodies of Blackness." *Journal of American Culture* 19, no. 3 (1999): 87–101.

Connor, Steven. *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Prairie.* London: Penguin Books, 1988.

Couch, Daniel Diez. "A Syntax of Silence: The Punctuated Spaces in 'Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street.'" *Studies in American Fiction* 42, no. 2 (2015): 167–90.

Coviello, Peter. *Intimacy in America: Dreams of Affiliation in Antebellum Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Dain, Bruce R. *A Hideous Monster of the Mind: American Race Theory in the Early Republic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Dames, Nicholas. *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810-1870*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Davidson, Cathy N. *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Davis, Theo. *Formalism, Experience, and the Making of American Literature in the Nineteenth Century.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Dayan, Colin (formerly Joan). *The Law Is a White Dog: How Legal Rituals Make and Unmake Persons*. Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011.

Dayan, Joan. "Amorous Bondage: Poe, Ladies, and Slaves." *American Literature* 66, no. 2 (1994): 239–73.

———. "Poe, Persons and Property." *American Literary History* 11, no. 3 (1999): 405–25.

DeGuzmán, María. *Spain's Long Shadow: The Black Legend, Off-Whiteness, and Anglo-American Empire*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Delbanco, Andrew. *Melville: His World and Work*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.

———. *The Abolitionist Imagination*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Deleuze, Giles. "Bartleby; Or, The Formula." In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, translated by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, 68–90. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

DeLombard, Jeannine Marie. “White-Jacket: Telling Who Is - and Aint - a Slave.” In *The New Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville*, edited by Robert S. Levine, 51–67. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Deloria, Philip J. *Playing Indian*. New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1998.

Derrida, Jacques. “Discussion: Barthes--Todorov.” In *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism & The Sciences of Man*, edited by Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, paperback ed., 145–56. Baltimore, MD; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972.

Dimock, Wai-Chee. *Empire for Liberty: Melville and the Poetics of Individualism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Dolar, Mladen. “The Linguistics of the Voice.” In *The Sound Studies Reader*, edited by Jonathan Sterne, 539–54. Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis, 2012.

Donaldson, Scott. “The Dark Truth of ‘The Piazza Tales.’” *PMLA* 85, no. 5 (1970): 1082–86.

Doty, Benjamin J. “Satire, Minstrelsy, and Embodiment in *Sheppard Lee*.” *Early American Literature* 51, no. 1 (2016): 131–56.

Downes, Paul. “Constitutional Secrets: ‘Memoirs of Carwin’ and the Politics of Concealment.” *Criticism* 39, no. 1 (1997): 89–117.

Dunlap, William. *The Life of Charles Brockden Brown: Together with Selections from the Rarest of His Printed Works from His Original Letters, and from His Manuscripts before Unpublished*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: James P. Parke, 1815.

Eaton, Joseph. *The Anglo-American Paper War: Debates about the New Republic, 1800-1825*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Edwards, Justin D. *Gothic Passages: Racial Ambiguity and the American Gothic*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *Grub Street Abroad: Aspects of the French Cosmopolitan Press from the Age of Louis XIV to the French Revolution*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

———. *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Elbert, Monika M. “Hawthorne’s ‘Hollow Men’: Fabricating Masculinity in ‘Feathertop.’” *American Transcendental Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (1991): 169–82.

Ellis, Markman. “Suffering Things: Lapdogs, Slaves, and Counter-Sensibility.” In *Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narrative in*

Eighteenth-Century England, edited by Mark Blackwell, 92–113. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007.

Elmer, Jonathan. *On Lingering and Being Last: Race and Sovereignty in the New World*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.

———. *Reading at the Social Limit: Affect, Mass Culture, and Edgar Allan Poe*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995.

Erkkila, Betsy. "The Poetics of Whiteness: Poe and the Racial Imaginary." In Kennedy and Weissberg, *Romancing the Shadow,* 41–74.

Etter, William. "'Tawdry Physical Affrightments': The Performance of Normalizing Visions of the Body in Edgar Allan Poe's 'Loss of Breath.'" *American Transcendental Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (2003): 5–22.

Evelev, John. *Tolerable Entertainment: Herman Melville and Professionalism in Antebellum New York*. Amherst; Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006.

Fabian, Ann. *The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America's Unburied Dead*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Fagan Yellin, Jean. *Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture*. New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1989.

Faulkner, Howard. "The Ambiguousnesses: Linguistic Invention in *Pierre*." *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* 12 (2010): 41–50.

Felski, Rita. "'Context Stinks!'" *New Literary History* 42, no. 4 (2011): 573–91.

———.*The Uses of Literature*. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

Ferguson, Christine. *Determined Spirits: Eugenics, Heredity and Racial Regeneration in Anglo-American Spiritualist Writing, 1848-1930*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.

Fiedler, Leslie A. *Love and Death in the American Novel*. 1st Dalkey Archive ed. Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1997.

Fliegelman, Jay. *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, & the Culture of Performance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).

Forbes, Erin E. "From Prison Cell to Slave Ship: Social Death in 'The Premature Burial.'" *Poe Studies* 46 (2013): 32–58.

"Forum: In the Spirit of the Thing: Critique as Enchantment." *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 1, no. 1 (2013): 147–78.

Foucault, Michel. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. London: Tavistock Publications, 1973.

Foust, Clement E. *The Life and Dramatic Works of Robert Montgomery Bird*. New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1919.

Fowler, William Chauncey. *English Grammar: The English Language in Its Elements and Forms; With a History of Its Origin and Development; Designed for Use in Colleges and Schools*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1850.

Frank, Adam. "Valdemar's Tongue, Poe's Telegraphy." *English Literary History* 72, no. 3 (2005): 635–62.

Frank, Lucy Elizabeth, ed. "Introduction: Curious Dreams: Representations of Death in Nineteenth-Century US Writing and Culture." In *Representations of Death in Nineteenth-Century US Writing and Culture*, 1–14. Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub, 2007.

Frankenberg, Ruth. *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Freeburg, Christopher. *Melville and the Idea of Blackness: Race and Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Garcha, Amanpal. *From Sketch to Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Gardner, Jared. "Alien Nation: Edgar Huntly's Savage Awakening." *American Literature* 66, no. 3 (1994): 429–61.

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

———. "The Cultural Logic of Euthanasia: 'Sad Fancyings' in Herman Melville's 'Bartleby.'" *American Literature* 76, no. 4 (2004): 777–806.

Gennep, Arnold van. *The Rites of Passage*. Edited by Solon T. Kimball. Translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965.

Giles, Paul. *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formations of American Literature, 1730-1860*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

Gilmore, Paul. *Aesthetic Materialism: Electricity and American Romanticism*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008.

———. *The Genuine Article: Race, Mass Culture, and American Literary Manhood*. Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 2001.

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Glenney Boggs, Colleen. *Animalia Americana*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

Goddu, Teresa A. *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

———. "Hawthorne and Class." In *What Democracy Looks Like: A New Critical Realism*, edited by Amy Schrager Lang and Cecelia Tichi, 131–43. Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006.

———. "Rethinking Race and Slavery in Poe Studies." *Poe Studies* 33, no. 1–2 (2000): 15–18.

Goldberg, Shari. *Quiet Testimony: A Theory of Witnessing from Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013.

Gustafson, Sandra M. *Imagining Deliberative Democracy in the Early American Republic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

———. "The Emerging Media of Early America." In *Cultural Narratives: Textuality and Performance in American Culture Before 1900*, edited by Sandra M. Gustafson and Caroline F. Sloat, 341–65. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010.

Gustafson, Thomas. *Representative Words: Politics, Literature, and the American Language, 1776-1865*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Halliday, Sam. *Science and Technology in the Age of Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, and James*. Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Halliwell, Martin. *Images of Idiocy: The Idiot Figure in Modern Fiction and Film*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2004.

Halttunen, Karen. *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870*. New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1982.

Hamilton, Kristie. *America's Sketchbook: The Cultural Life of a Nineteenth-Century Literary Genre*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998.

Handley, Sasha. *Visions of an Unseen World: Ghost Beliefs and Ghost Stories in Eighteenth-Century England*. London; Brookfield, VT: Pickering & Chatto, 2007.

Harris, Cheryl L. "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993): 1707–93.

Haslam, Jason. *Gender, Race, and American Science Fiction: Reflections on Fantastic Identities*. New York; London: Routledge, 2015.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "Passages from Hawthorne's Note Books." *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1866, 682-96.

———. *Passages from the American Note-Books of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Boston: James Osgood and Company, 1873.

———. *Tales and Sketches*. New York: Library of America, 1982.

———. *The Blithedale Romance*. Oxford; New York: Oxford World's Classics; Oxford University Press, 2009.

———. *The House of the Seven Gables*. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics; Oxford University Press, 2009.

———. *The Letters, 1843-1853*. Edited by Thomas Woodson, L. Neal Smith, and Norman Holmes Pearson. Vol. 16 of *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, edited by William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1985.

———. *The Scarlet Letter*. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics; Oxford University Press, 2007.

Hedges, William L. *Washington Irving: An American Study, 1802-1832*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965.

Helwig, Timothy. "Denying the Wages of Whiteness: The Racial Politics of George Lippard's Working-Class Protest." *American Studies* 47, no. 3/4 (2006): 87–111.

Hodge, Christina J. *Consumerism and the Emergence of the Middle Class in Colonial America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Hofstadter, Richard. *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. New York: Vintage, 1962.

Holland, Sharon Patricia. *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity*. Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 2000.

Howe, Daniel Walker. *Making the American Self: Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Hsu, Hsuan L. "Democratic Expansionism in 'Memoirs of Carwin.'" *Early American Literature* 35, no. 2 (2000): 137–56.

Hughes, Robert. "Sleepy Hollow: Fearful Pleasures and the Nightmare of History." *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 61, no. 3 (2005): 1–26.

Humphrey, David C. "Dissection and Discrimination: The Social Origins of Cadavers in America, 1760-1915." *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 49, no. 9 (1973): 819–27.

Irving, Washington. *Bracebridge Hall, Tales of a Traveller, The Alhambra*. New York: Library of America, 1991.

———. *Letters, Volume 1, 1802-1823*. Edited by Ralph M. Alderman, Herbert L. Kleinfield, and Jennifer S. Banks. Vol. 23 of *The Complete Works of Washington Irving*, edited by Herbert L. Kleinfield, Henry A. Pochman, and Richard D. Rust. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978.

———. *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* Edited by Malcolm Bradbury. London: Everyman, 1993.

Jacobsen, Matthew Frye. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Janicker, Rebecca. *The Literary Haunted House: Lovecraft, Matheson, King and the Horror in Between*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, Inc., Publishers, 2015.

Jefferson, Thomas. *Notes on the State of Virginia*. London: John Stockdale, 1787.

Jonik, Michael. "Sensation." Paper presented at Keywords: Nineteenth-Century American Studies in the Twenty-First Century, British Association of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Symposium, University of Warwick, 7 November 2015.

Karafilis, Maria. "The American Novel: Beginnings through the American Renaissance." In *A Companion to the American Novel*, edited by Alfred Bendixen, 19–41. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Karcher, Carolyn. *Shadow over the Promised Land: Slavery, Race and Violence in Melville's America*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980.

Kay, Lucy, Zoë Kinsley, Terry Phillips, and Alan Roughley, eds. *Mapping Liminalities: Thresholds in Cultural and Literary Texts*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2007.

Kazanjian, David. "Charles Brockden Brown's Biloquial Nation: National Culture and White Settler Colonialism in *Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist*." *American Literature* 73, no. 3 (2001): 459-496.

Kennedy, J. Gerald. *Poe, Death and the Life of Writing*. New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1987.

Kennedy, J. Gerald and Liliane Weissberg, eds. *Romancing the Shadow: Poe and Race*. Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Kennedy, J. P. *Swallow Barn: Or, a Sojourn in the Old Dominion*. Rev. ed. New York: G. P. Putman & Company, 1853.

Kenny, Stephen C. "The Development of Medical Museums in the Antebellum American South: Slave Bodies in Networks of Anatomical Exchange." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 87, no. 1 (2013): 32–62.

Kerber, Linda. *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. Williamsburg, VA; Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture; University of North Carolina Press, 1980.

Kern, Alfred A. "Hawthorne's Feathertop and R. L. R." *PMLA* 52, no. 2 (1937): 503–10.

———. "The Sources of Hawthorne's Feathertop." *PMLA* 46, no. 4 (1931): 1253–59.

Knighton, Andrew Lyndon. *Idle Threats: Men and the Limits of Productivity in Nineteenth Century America*. New York; London: New York University Press, 2012.

Knott, Sarah. *Sensibility and the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Lacan, Jacques. "XVIII - Desire, Life and Death." In *The Seminars of Jacques Lacan: Book II - The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, translated by Sylvana Tomaselli, 221–34. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Ladino, Jennifer K. *Reclaiming Nostalgia: Longing for Nature in American Literature*. Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press, 2012.

Lang, Amy Schrager. *The Syntax of Class: Writing Inequality in Nineteenth-Century America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Laqueur, Thomas W. *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains*. Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015.

Lee, Maurice S. *Slavery, Philosophy, and American Literature, 1830-1860*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Lehuu, Isabelle. *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Levin, Harry. *The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, Melville*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1980.

Levine, Robert S. "Pierre's Blackened Hand." *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* 1, no. 1 (1999): 23–44.

Levine-Rasky, Cynthia. *Whiteness Fractured*. Abingdon, Oxon: Ashgate, 2013.

Levinson, Marjorie. "What Is New Formalism?," *PMLA* 122, no. 2 (2007): 558–69.

Lhamon Jr, W. T. *Jump Jim Crow: Lost Plays, Lyrics, and Street Prose of the First Atlantic Popular Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Lippard, George. *The Quaker City, Or, The Monks of Monk Hall: A Romance of Philadelphia Life, Mystery, and Crime*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995.

Looby, Christopher and Cindy Weinstein, eds. "Introduction." In *American Literature's Aesthetic Dimensions*, 1-36. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

Looby, Christopher. *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Lott, Eric. *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Loughran, Trish. *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770-1870*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

Luskey, Brian. *On the Make: Clerks and the Quest for Capital in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: NYU Press, 2010.

Martin, Robert K., and Eric Savoy, eds. *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1998.

Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Mastroianni, Dominic. "Hospitality and the Thresholds of the Human in Poe's The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym." *Studies in American Fiction* 40, no. 2 (2013): 185–202.

Matthiessen, F. O. *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941.

McCall, Dan. *The Silence of Bartleby*. Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1989.

McGarry, Molly. *Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

McGowan, Philip. *American Carnival: Seeing and Reading American Culture*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001.

McMahon, Lucia. *Mere Equals: The Paradox of Educated Women in the Early American Republic*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012.

Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*. Edited by Tony Tanner. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics; Oxford University Press, 1998.

———. *Pierre, Or The Ambiguities*. Edited by Hershel Parker. New York: Harper Collins, 1995.

———. *Pierre: Or, The Ambiguities*. New York: Penguin Books, 1996.

———. *The Complete Shorter Fiction*. London: D. Campbell, 1997.

Mills, Bruce. *Poe, Fuller, and the Mesmeric Arts : Transition States in the American Renaissance*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006.

Monnet, Agnieszka Soltysik. *The Poetics and Politics of the American Gothic: Gender and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2013.

Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. *White Possessive: Property, Power and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Morton, Samuel George. *Crania Americana: Or a Comparatif View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America*. Philadelphia: J. Dobson, 1839.

Murison, Justine S. "Hypochondria and Racial Interiority in Robert Montgomery Bird's *Sheppard Lee*." *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 64, no. 1 (2008): 1–25.

———. "The Tyranny of Sleep: Somnambulism, Moral Citizenship, and Charles Brockden Brown's 'Edgar Huntly.'" *Early American Literature* 44, no. 2 (2009): 243–70.

Murray, Laura J. "The Aesthetic of Dispossession: Washington Irving and Ideologies of (De)Colonisation in the Early Republic." *American Literary History* 8, no. 2 (1996): 205–31.

Nelson, Dana D. *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998.

New York Standard. Unsigned review of *The Gladiator*, by Robert Montgomery Bird. 29 September 1831.

New York Sun. "Dissection of Joice Heth—Precious Humbug Exposed." 26 February 1836. *The Lost Museum Archive*, City University of New York. http://lostmuseum.cuny.edu/archive/dissection-of-joice-heth-precious-humbug.

Nichols, Marcia D. "Poe's 'Some Words with a Mummy' and Blackface Anatomy." *Poe Studies* 48 (2015): 2–16.

Nielsen, Kim E. *A Disability History of the United States*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2012.

Nord, Deborah Epstein. *Gypsies and the British Imagination, 1807-1930*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

Norman, Brian. *Dead Women Talking : Figures of Injustice in American Literature*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013.

Ogden, Emily. "*Edgar Huntly* and the Regulation of the Senses." *American Literature* 85, no. 3 (2013): 419–45.

Olson, Roberta J. M., and Jay M. Pasachoff. *Fire in the Sky: Comets and Meteors, the Decisive Centuries, in British Art and Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Otter, Samuel and Geoffrey Sanborn, eds. "Aesthetics and Melville." In *Melville and Aesthetics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Parker, Edward G. *The Golden Age of American Oratory*. Boston: Whittemore, Niles, and Hall, 1857.

Parker, Hershel. *Herman Melville: A Biography*. 2 vols. Baltimore, MD; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Pease, Donald E., ed. "New Americanists: Revisionist Interventions into the Canon." In *Revisionary Interventions into the Americanist Canon*, 1–37. Durham, NC: London: Duke University Press, 1994.

Percich, Aaron Matthew. "Irish Mouths and English Tea-Pots: Orality and Unreason in 'The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether.'" *Poe Studies* 47 (2014): 76–99.

Person, Leland S. "'Mr Higginbotham's Catastrophe': Race and Class Conflict in New England." *Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* 38, no. 1 (2012): 1–18.

———. "Poe's Philosophy of Amalgamation: Reading Racism in the Tales." In Kennedy and Weissberg, *Romancing the Shadow,* 205–24.

Peterson, Christopher. *Bestial Traces: Race, Sexuality, Animality*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013.

Pethers, Matthew. "The Secret Witness: Thinking, and Not Thinking, about Servants in the Early American Novel." In *Class and the Making of American Literature*, edited by Andrew Lawson, 40–55. New York: Routledge, 2014.

———. "Transatlantic Migration and the Politics of the Picturesque in Washington Irving's *Sketch Book*." *Symbiosis: A Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations* 9 (2005): 3–29.

Pfeifer, Michael J. *Roots of Rough Justice: Origins of American Lynching*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004.

Pilar Blanco, María del. *Ghost-Watching American Modernity: Haunting, Landscape, and the Hemispheric Imagination*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2012.

Poe, Edgar Allan. *Essays and Reviews: Theory of Poetry, Reviews of British and Continental Authors, Reviews of American Authors and American Literature*. New York: The Library of America, 1984.

———. *Mesmerism "in Articulo Mortis": An Astounding & Horrifying Narrative, Shewing the Extraordinary Power of Mesmerism in Arresting the Progress of Death*. London: Short & Co., 1846.

———. *Tales and Sketches, 1831-1842*. Vol. 2 of *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by Thomas Ollive Mabbott. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1978.

———. *Tales and Sketches, 1843-1849*, Vol. 3 of *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by Thomas Ollive Mabbott. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1978.

———. *The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*. Edited by John Ward Ostrom. 2 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948.

Post, Isaac. *Voices from the Spirit World: Being Communications from Many Spirits. By the Hand of Isaac Post, Medium.* Rochester, NY: Charles H. McDonell, 1852.

Pratt, Lloyd. *Archives of American Time: Literature and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Ray, Angela. *The Lyceum and Public Culture in the Nineteenth-Century United States*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005.

Rebhorn, Matthew. "Ontological Drift: Medical Discourse and Racial Embodiment in Robert Montgomery Bird's *Sheppard Lee*." *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 61 (2015): 262–96.

———. *Pioneer Performances: Staging the Frontier*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Reed, Naomi C. "The Specter of Wall Street: 'Bartleby, the Scrivener' and the Language of Commodities." *American Literature* 76, no. 2 (2004): 249–73.

Rees, James. *The Life of Edwin Forrest*. Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson & Brothers, 1874.

Reid, Thomas. *An Inquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense*. 4th ed. London: T. Cadell, 1785.

———. *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, 2 vols. Dublin: L. White, 1786.

Reiss, Benjamin. *Showman and the Slave: Race, Death, and Memory in Barnum's America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Reynolds, David S. *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Ricci, David M. *Good Citizenship in America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Richardson, Judith. *Possessions: The History and Uses of Haunting in the Hudson Valley*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Ringe, Donald A. "New York and New England: Irving's Criticism of American Society." *American Literature* 38, no. 4 (1967): 455–67.

Roach, Joseph. *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Robinson, J. H. *Marietta, or the Two Students. A Tale of the Dissecting Room and "Body Snatchers."* Boston: Jordan & Wiley, 1846.

Roediger, David R. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. London: Verso, 1991.

Rosenfeld, Sophia A. *Common Sense: A Political History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Robert Montgomery Bird Papers. Ms. Coll. 108. Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania.

Roth, Sarah N. "The Politics of the Page: Black Disenfranchisement and the Image of the Savage Slave." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 134, no. 3 (2010): 209–33.

Rubin-Dorsky, Jeffrey. *Adrift in the Old World: The Psychological Pilgrimage of Washington Irving*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Rush, Benjamin. "An Inquiry into the Natural History of Medicine Among the Indians of North-America, and a Comparitive View of Their Diseases and Remedies with Those of Civilized Nation." In *Medical Inquiries and Observations*, 2nd ed., 1:1–68. Philadelphia: J. Conrad & Co., 1805.

———. *Benjamin Rush's Lectures on the Mind*, edited by Eric T. Carlson, Patricia S. Noel, and Jeffrey L. Wollock. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1981.

———. “Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic.” In *Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical*, 2nd ed., 6–20. Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1806.

Russo, James R. “‘The Chimeras of the Brain’: Clara’s Narrative in ‘Wieland.’” *Early American Literature* 16, no. 1 (1981): 60–88.

Ruttenburg, Nancy. *Democratic Personality: Popular Voice and the Trial of American Authorship*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Samuels, Shirley. “‘Wieland’: Alien and Infidel.” *Early American Literature* 25, no. 1 (1990): 46–66.

Sappol, Michael. *A Traffic of Dead Bodies: Anatomy and Embodied Social Identity in Nineteenth-Century America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Savitt, Todd L. “The Use of Blacks for Medical Experimentation and Demonstration in the Old South.” *The Journal of Southern History* 48, no. 3 (1982): 331–48.

Saxton, Alexander. *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*. London: Verso, 1990.

Schmidt, Leigh Eric. *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Schoolar Williams, Cynthia. *Hospitality and the Transatlantic Imagination, 1815-1835*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Sealts, Merton M. “Melville and the Shakers.” *Studies in Bibliography* 2 (1949): 105–14.

Seltzer, Mark. “Sayings Makes It So: Language and Event in Brown’s ‘Wieland.’” *Early American Literature* 13, no. 1 (1978): 81–91.

Sha, Richard C. *The Visual and Verbal Sketch in British Romanticism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998.

Shapiro, Stephen. *The Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic World-System*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008.

Shell, Marc. *Wampum and the Origins of American Money*. Urbana; Chicago; Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

Silyn Roberts, Siân. *Gothic Subjects: The Transformation of Individualism in American Fiction, 1790-1861*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

Sizemore, Michelle R. “‘Changing by Enchantment:’ Temporal Convergence, Early National Comparisons, and Washington Irving’s *Sketchbook*.” *Studies in American Fiction* 40, no. 2 (2013): 157–83.

Sklansky, Jeffrey P. *The Soul's Economy: Market Society and Selfhood in American Thought, 1820-1920*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

Smith, Caleb. "From the Critique of Power to the Poetics of Justice." *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 1, no. 1 (2013): 160–66.

———. *The Oracle and the Curse: A Poetics of Justice from the Revolution to the Civil War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950.

Smith, Rogers M. *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History*. New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1997.

Smith, Woodruff D. *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800*. New York; London: Routledge, 2002.

Smith-Rosenberg, Carol. *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Sondey, Walter. "From Nation of Virtue to Virtual Nation: Washington Irving and American Nationalism." In *Narratives of Nostalgia, Gender and Nationalism*, edited by Jean Pickering and Suzanna Kehde, 52–73. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997.

Soto, Isabel, ed. "Introduction." In *A Place That Is Not a Place: Essays on Liminality and Text*, 7–16. Studies in Liminality and Literature 2. Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2000.

Spahn, Hannah. *Thomas Jefferson, Time, and History*. Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press, 2011.

Stallard, Wendy. "Melville and Isabel: The Author and the Woman Within in the 'Inside Narrative' of *Pierre*." In *Melville & Women*, edited by Elizabeth Schultz and Haskell Springer, 121–40. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2006.

Stanhope Smith, Samuel. *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species*. Rev. ed. New Brunswick, NJ: J. Simpson and Co., 1810.

Stein, Jordan Alexander. "The Whig Interpretation of Media: *Sheppard Lee* and Jacksonian Paperwork." *History of the Present* 3, no. 1 (2013): 29–56.

Stern, Julia A. *Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Strausbaugh, John. *Black Like You: Blackface, Whiteface, Insult & Imitation in American Popular Culture*. London: Penguin Books, 2006.

Sundquist, Eric J. *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Sutton, Philip G., ed. *Betwixt-and-between: Essays in Liminal Geography*. Studies in Liminality and Literature 3. Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2002.

Tamarkin, Elisa. *Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion, and Antebellum America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Tavor Bannet, Eve. "The Constantias of the 1790s: Tales of Constancy and Republican Daughters." *Early American Literature* 49, no. 2 (2014): 435–66.

Taylor, Charles. *Philosophical Papers: Volume 1, Human Agency and Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

The Life of Joice Heth, the Nurse of Gen. George Washington, (the Father of Our Country,) Now Living at the Astonishing Age of 161 Years, and Weighs Only 46 Pounds. New York, 1835. *Documenting the American South*, University of North Carolina. http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh /heth/heth.html.

"The Lure of the Limen: An Introduction to the Concept, Uses and Problems of Liminality." In *The TRELLIS Papers*. Madrid: The Gateway Press, 2006.

The Monthly Magazine, and American Review. "On the Scheme of an American Language," July 1800, 1-4.

The Weekly Magazine of Original Essays, Fugitive Pieces, and Interesting Intelligence. "An Instance of Ventriloquism," 30 June 1798, 277-78.

Thompson, Graham. *Male Sexuality Under Surveillance: The Office In American Literature*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003.

———. "'Through Consumptive Pallors of This Blank, Raggy Life': Melville's Not Quite White Working Bodies." *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* 14 (2012): 25–43.

Tiffany, Joel. *Lectures on Spiritualism: Being a Series of Lectures on the Phenomena and Philosophy of Development, Individualism, Spirit, Immortality, Mesmerism*. Cleveland, OH: J. Tiffany, 1851.

Tompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction 1790-1860*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Trilling, Lionel. *Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1966.

———. *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society*. London: Mercury Books, 1961.

Turner, Victor. *Process, Performance and Pilgrimage: A Study in Comparitive Symbology*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1979.

———. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967.

———. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008.

Viljoen, Hein, and Chris N. van der Merwe. "A Poetics of Liminality and Hybridity." In *Beyond the Threshold: Explorations of Liminality in Literature*, edited by Hein Viljoen, 1–26. New York: Peter Lang, 2007.

W., D. "Account of a Singular Change of Colour in a Negro." *The Weekly Magazine of Original Essays, Fugitive Pieces, and Interesting Intelligence*, 24 February 1798, 109-11.

Wagner, Tamara S. *Longing: Narratives of Nostalgia in the British Novel, 1740-1890*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2004.

Wald, Priscilla. *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995.

———. "Hearing Narrative Voices in Melville's *Pierre*." *Boundary 2* 17, no. 1 (1990): 100–132.

Warner, Marina. *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Watts, Richard J. *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Watts, Steven. *The Revolution Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal America, 1790-1820*. Baltimore, MD; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

Weekly Magazine, Or Edinburgh Amusements. "Singular Anecdote Relative to Ventriloquism." 25 August 1774, 275-77.

Weinauer, Ellen. "Hawthorne, Melville and the Spirits." In *Hawthorne and Melville: Writing a Relationship*, edited by Jana L. Argersinger and Leland S. Person, 297–320. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008.

Weiner, Bruce I. "Poe and the Blackwood's Tale of Sensation." In *Poe and His Times: The Artist and His Milieu*, edited by Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, 45–65. Baltimore, MD: The Edgar Allan Poe Society, Inc., 1990.

Weinstein, Cindy. *Time, Tense, and American Literature: When Is Now?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

———, "We Are Family: Melville's *Pierre*." *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* 7, no. 1 (2006): 19–40.

Weinstock, Jeffrey Andrew. *Charles Brockden Brown*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011.

———, ed. “Introduction: The Spectral Turn.” In *Spectral America: Phantoms and the National Imagination*, 3–18. Madison; London: The University of Wisconsin Press/Popular Press, 2004.

Welter, Barbara. “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860.” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1966): 151–74.

West, Peter. *The Arbiters of Reality: Hawthorne, Melville, and the Rise of Mass Information Culture*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2008.

Weyler, Karen A. *Intricate Relations: Sexual and Economic Desire in American Fiction, 1789-1814*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2005.

Whalen, Terence. “Average Racism: Poe, Slavery, and the Wages of Literary Nationalism.” In Kennedy and Weissberg, *Romancing the Shadow,* 3–40.

White, Ed. “Carwin the Peasant Rebel.” In *Revising Charles Brockden Brown: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality in the Early Republic*, edited by Philip Barnard, Mark L. Kamrath, and Stephen Shapiro, 41–59. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004.

Whorton, James C. *Nature Cures: The History of Alternative Medicine in America*. Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Wills, Gary. *Inventing America: Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Wolfe, Eric A. “Ventriloquizing Nation: Voice, Identity, and Radical Democracy in Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland*.” *American Literature* 76, no. 3 (2006): 431–57.

Woodworth, Samuel. *The Forest Rose, Or, American Farmers*. Boston: William V. Spencer, 1855.

Wray, Matt. *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

Young, Elizabeth. *Black Frankenstein: The Making of an American Metaphor*. New York: NYU Press, 2008.

Young Welke, Barbara. *Law and the Borders of Belonging in the Long Nineteenth Century United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Zakim, Michael. “Producing Capitalism: The Clerk at Work.” In *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth-Century America*, edited by Michael Zakim and Gary J. Kornblith, 223–48. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.