REVOLUTIONARY NOSTALGIA: THE SEARCH FOR DEMOCRACY IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICAN ROMANTIC HISTORIES

By

Nels Evan Olson

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ABSTRACT

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My project recovers how literature, defined broadly as the art of writing intervened politically in how Antebellum Americans understood and shaped space and time in ways that cannot be accounted for by national forms. American literature of this period has typically either been understood as existing within its own sublime realm or else for the way that it reflects and reifies systems of power. I argue that the literature in the period should also be read for how it resists and refuses systems of power in politically meaningful ways. I equate the politics of literature in the antebellum era with contemporary theories that provocatively suggest that the democracy promised by the Enlightenment has not yet arrived.

The historical romance genre is typically read as enmeshed ideologically with nationalism. It's plotting of history is seen as solidifying national boundaries and associated categories of citizenship and governance. I re-invigorate the study of how American historical romances about revolutions approach history. I have broadened the scope of George Dekker's definition of the genre to include a broad range of historical narratives that all "acknowledge and demonstrate the shaping power of the forces of historical causality over character, attitude, event" (24). I study writers including Daniel Webster, Edward Everett, James Fenimore Cooper, William Prescott, John Lothrop Motely, William Wells Brown and Frances Pratt who wrote about revolutions using tropes associated with historical romance to imagine political alternatives to the Jacksonian brand of democracy that are none-the-less still undeniably democratic.

In Memory of

PROFESSOR HECTOR AVALOS TORRES
April 10, 1955 to March 8, 2010
and
CHARLIE

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INTRODUCTION

On December 11, 1831 former President and current U.S. Representative John Quincy Adams made an entry into his meticulously kept diary noting the visit of Mr. Henberger, a "German Swiss" who called in hopes that Adams could help him sell his collection of "ancient medals, coins, and gems" that he thought might be of some value to a university or museum. Adams agreed that they would be of value but then continues:

> This worthy gentleman has mistaken the taste of the country to which he brought these treasures. Democracy has no forefathers, it looks to no posterity; it is swallowed up in the present, and thinks of nothing but itself. This is the voice of democracy; and it is incurable. Democracy has no monuments; it strikes no medals; it bears the head of no man upon a coin; its very essence is iconoclastic (433).

We can read Adams' lament, at least in part, as a critique of his political rival Andrew Jackson. By 1831, Adams together with Henry Clay had formed the National Republican party in opposition to Jackson, who, in their eyes, had very much become the iconoclast in chief. To them, he personified the democratic "taste" Adams identifies. In the eyes of many of his opponents, Jackson used his presidency to systematically dismantle the authority of the federal government in favor of states' rights. American Democracy of the sort championed by Jackson in the antebellum period has typically been aligned with the ideology of classical liberalism dependent on freedom from government, whereas its opponents aligned themselves with the ideology of classical republicanism dependent on a strong state that is controlled by and supports the people. As recent historical scholarship on the American Whig party has shown, we cannot definitively claim that the U.S. Democratic Party had a monopoly on national conceptions of democracy. Long derided as elitist aristocrats, Whigs, with their projects for social improvement,

bear more than a passing resemblance to present day social democratic projects. Whigs were also among the most vocal opponents of westward expansion, slavery, and Indian removal. New England women, though denied official political participation, were often sympathetic to and politically active in the Whig cause of moral improvement.[1] Yet, in terms of the national political scene in 1831, Jackson's version of democracy, predicated on a notion of freedom as limited government, had seemingly been more successful in capturing popular taste than Adams' version of democracy predicated on a vision of freedom through the creation of a strong republican state that would foster the moral improvement of society as a whole. The years that American historians define as the Second Party System mark the historical period of this dissertation. The rift between antebellum American liberal and social minded democrats that defined the period has a central role in how I approach the texts I read for this project.

The dissertation's chronological beginning is 1824. John Quincy Adams was elected president that year in a hotly contested four-way election between Adams, Henry Clay, Andrew Jackson, and William H. Crawford. The House of Representatives decided the election in favor of Adams despite the fact that Jackson had won the popular vote. The election marked the end of the so-called Era of Good Feelings when the Democratic-Republican Party dominated national politics. Jackson would win the 1828 presidential election running on behalf of the Democratic Party which marked the beginning of the Second Party System that lasted until the collapse of the Whig Party in 1852. Adams and Clay's National Republican party and other opposition parties would form the Whig Party primarily behind what Michael F. Holt calls "an ideological mission" to oppose what they saw as Jackson's "flagrant contempt for the separation of powers and the rule of law …that early Whigs believed threatened the people's political freedom [and]

[1] See for example Sandra Gustafson (116); Michael F. Holt; and Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought* and *The Political Culture of the American Whigs*.

the Revolutionary experiment in republican self-government" (xii). The Democrats as self-professed spokesmen for the common man were decidedly more successful at mobilizing the populist sentiment of recently enfranchised white men to support their very specific agenda of expansionism, decentralized government, and a powerful executive who claimed to protect the common interests against the perceived threat of an elite ruling class. The Whigs, who were reluctant to participate in party politics to begin with, had more difficulty in solidifying opposition to Jackson authoritarianism into a cohesive movement until, as Holt writes, "the Panic of 1837 gave salience to a concomitant republican principle embraced by Whigs—the commonwealth tradition of using the state actively for the benefit of the people" (xii). A combination of the bad luck that saw William Henry Harrison die after only 30 days in office, and a party tendency for pragmatic management of sectional conflict to protect the union at the cost of pursuing their agenda for social improvement made their hold on populist sentiment short-lived. The chronological end of the dissertation is in the 1850s during the presidency of Millard Fillmore, the last Whig president. Fillmore's support for the Compromise of 1850 that included the Fugitive Slave Act marks a crucial point at which the inherent conservatism of the Whig party won out over a progressive commitment to social democracy once and for all. By the 1850's most socially minded democrats had lost faith in the ability of the Whig version of a republican state to ensure the equal rights of all people and began seeking other paths towards reanimating the ideal of social democracy.

This dissertation is particularly concerned with tracing out social democratic ideas during the era of the Second Party System that ran counter to democratic movements aimed at fostering liberal individualism. Therefore, it begins with a consideration of the culture of skepticism whose chief aim was to defeat the culture of liberal individualism that became the Whig party.

However, my objective is not in contributing to the body of scholarship that examines how this culture necessarily led to the ideological split that gave rise to the Second Party System. Rather, I see the socially minded and well organized political parties like the Whig Party and other antecedent and concomitant political bodies like the Anti-Masonic Party, the Liberty Party, the Free Soil party and even the American Anti-Slavery Society participating in what Pierre Rosanvallon calls "the immediate field of partisan competition for political power, everyday governmental action, and the ordinary function of institutions." Against this backdrop, I trace what I call democratic currents that more profoundly question how that field is organized (36). Understanding political forces as currents instead of movements emphasizes their transitory and shifting nature. Political currents often only exist as forces counter to those forces that seek to ontologize democratic ideals in various institutional forms. George Woodcock defines anarchy as "a system of social thought aiming at fundamental changes in the structure of society and particularly…at the replacement of the authoritarian state by some form of non-governmental cooperation between free individuals" (10). In this sense, then, these democratic currents may be understood as possessing an anarchic tendency that refuses any attempt to influence or control society from the outside. Although these currents often originate in what can only be described as individualistic feelings of alienation from extant social forms, they always maintain a sense of responsibility to others in a way that runs counter to the antebellum Democratic Party's doctrine of liberal individualism.

Adam's critique of prevalent democratic tastes also represents a major methodological problem facing this dissertation; how does one go about telling a history of unrealized democratic currents? Democracy is a political project with a history at least as old as Athens that, to paraphrase Jacques Derrida, would end in a force in the form of a sovereign authority that

emanates equally from the collective and individual power of the people (Derrida *Rogues*, 13).[2] Because the project of democracy has never decisively reached this end and has always lacked discernible presence in history, a history of true democracy would exist only in the traces left by political currents that never produced quantifiable results. Democracy therefore lacks the ontological authority of other historical subjects that leave more indelible traces in the historical archive, such as those that Adams says "strike metals." Always lacking any concrete being, it thus resists any act of familiar memorialization. Like any "incurable vice" democracy has only ever been felt as an urgent need for justice that must be addressed now, in the present. Yet, the urgency does indeed come from the past as a certain kind of legacy that is felt more as a kind of mourning for something that is missing, than a celebration of the immortality of some fully present thing transmitted from fathers to sons. A history of democratic currents that have not yet been realized would understand that these currents are governed by what Derrida defines as a logic of spectrality.[3] For Derrida, the specter is "a 'thing' that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other…*It is* something that one does not know, precisely, and one does not know if presently it *is*, if it exists, if it responds to a name or corresponds with an essence" (Derrida *Specters*, 6). The history of unrealized democratic currents would be traceable only in the context of a present moment that feels the force of a democratic injunction that comes from a haunted past in the name of a future that is yet to come. This history of

[2] John Dunn's *Democracy: a History* begins the story of democracy in Athens. John Keane's *The Life and Death of Democracy* traces the roots of democracy even earlier to the Mycenaean period.

[3] Ivy G. Wilson uses Derrida's concept of spectrality as the basis for his study of "the politically nonmaterial elements of democracy in the antebellum United States" (3). Primarily, he sees the concept of the shadow in antebellum African American literature as analogous to the concept of the specter, and uses the concept of the shadow to "conceptualize the residues and outlines of black subjectivity in political spaces where they are ostensibly fractional entities or non-entities" (5).

unrealized democratic currents is also consistent with what George Woodcock identifies as the anarchist's tendency to view history not as moving "as it does for the Marxist, along the steel lines of dialectical necessity" but rather "emerg[ing] out of struggle and human struggle as a product of the exercise of man's will…responding to whatever impulse…provokes the perennial urge to freedom" (27).

As Adams' meditation on democracy makes clear, the antebellum U.S. marks a historical time and place where and when many different people felt the impulse to respond to democratic injunctions. Yet, as Sandra Gustafson has forcefully argued, the historical narratives of democracy most commonly told by the field of American Studies are not entirely adequate. She claims that the narrative histories of democracy are of two main types: they either support or critique what did not exist until the twentieth century, a hegemonic form of U.S. democracy controlled by a more fully developed nation-state. The first type of narrative consists of exceptionalist U.S. national narrative histories told using a democratic rhetoric and traced through the kinds of artifacts that Adams lists. These histories tend to celebrate the U.S. nation-state as the site of democracy realized. The second type of national narrative is "designed to supplant the exceptionalist account of U.S. history" and includes those histories that "exposed the expansionist and racist underpinnings of Jacksonian democracy." These histories seek to prove that both Jackson and the antebellum Democratic Party were not any more successful in definitively producing democracy in their time than characters in any other epoch of democracy

were.[4] Gustafson points out that despite the frequent "presence [of democracy] within American Studies, the specific meanings attached to it are rarely defined" (114). For her, the lack of specificity democracy has in the period is suggestive of Pierre Rosanvallon's claim that "democracy *is* a history. It has been a work irreducibly involving exploration and experimentation, in its attempt to understand itself" (qtd. in Gustafson 114). Rosanvallon states, "The object of such a history…is to follow the thread of trial and error, of conflict and controversy, through which the polity sought to achieve legitimate form" (38). The United States in the period I have delineated is an exemplary site for tracing out heterogeneous democratic currents, rather than fully realized democratic forms, precisely because the polity had little agreement over what legitimate democratic forms were.

Gustafson suggests the spectral nature of democratic injunctions felt in the period when she observes, "the obscurity surrounding the term *democracy* in the antebellum era points to the fact that democracy was in the midst of an unprecedented conceptual elaboration in the Atlantic world" (115). Antebellum Americans were not the only people attempting democratic political projects in the nineteenth-century. There were many different democratic projects both within and outside the U.S. borders that Americans in this period were responding to and participating in. Americans commonly sought and described political affiliations using a variety of temporal

[4] See Gustafson "Histories of Democracy and Empire", 111 and 113 respectively. Gustafson argues broad narrative histories of the successes and failures of American democracy have been intrinsic to American studies since F.O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance.* She credits Michael Rogin and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg with authoring the historical narrative exposing the racism and expansionism of Jacksonian democracy in their respective books *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (1975) and *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (1985). She argues that Timothy B. Powell (*Ruthless Democracy* [2000]) tries to reinvent Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* and that Sean Wilentz (*The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*[2005] and *Andrew Jackson* [2005]) "acknowledges the severe limitations of Jacksonian inclusivity while arguing for the salient contributions of Jackson and his party to emergent democracy" (114).

and spatial scales that were not dictated by any nation-state. A recent body of nineteenth-century scholarship has described these scales in hemispheric, transatlantic, and even global terms that become visible on both local and extra-national scales of time and space.[5] An incomplete list of the scholarship of extra-national scales of affiliation would include delineations of hemispheric and transamerican scales of affiliation by Gretchen Murphy and Anna Brickhouse, delineations of transatlantic scales of affiliation by Paul Gilroy and Eric Sundquist, and delineations of global scales of affiliation by Wai-chee Dimock. These scholars take issue with the myth and symbol tradition of American Studies which sought to identify and exceptionalize essential aspects of American culture in recurring symbols, myths, and motifs in a canonized body of American literature. Whereas the myth and symbol methodology is attuned mostly to American national scales of time and space, these more recent studies of the organization of time and space in various works of American literature from the period have proven useful for tracing political affiliations formed among these various extra-national spatial and temporal fields. My readings of the texts under study here contribute to this body of work tracing extra-national political affiliations in the antebellum period.

Many scholars of nineteenth-century American literature have also turned to twentieth century political and literary theory to help articulate the way literary aesthetics can escape the logic Wai-Chee Dimock has identified whereby "[n]ationhood is endlessly reproduced in all spheres of life" (3). Sandra Gustafson in particular draws on current political theories concerning deliberation to show how nineteenth-century writers imagined the political and aesthetic possibilities of deliberative democracy. Jennifer Greiman uses twentieth century theories of

[5]Local affiliations would include the numerous postmillennial utopian communities including the well-known Brooks Farm experiment. For an overview of millennial communities see Daniel Walker Howe (*What Hath God Wrought*, 285-327).

political sovereignty to more fully articulate how popular sovereignty operated in Antebellum American democratic publics in ways that were decidedly undemocratic. Christopher Castiglia uses current theory to examine the relationship between the individual and the community in Antebellum American democracy.[6] Current political theories have helped me to read for and articulate anarchic democratic currents that retain a strong commitment to social responsibility in literature of the period. My understanding of anarchic democracies draws in particular on Derrida's insistence that democracy is irreducible to any one of its many instantiations as a system of government and Jacques Rancière's insistence that democracy is always contingent on a practice of dissensus that constitutes "a symbolic break: a break with a determined order of relationships between bodies and words, between ways of speaking, ways of doing and ways of being" (Rancière *Politics of Literature,* 11). Anarchic versions of democracy are always spectral because they operate by a logic that, as Rancière puts it, "consists in blurring and displacing the borders of the political" rather than imposing a more rational kind of logic that would seek to create new political borders. I also agree with Rancière's contention that literature, which he defines as the "art of writing," has a politics that intervenes "in the relationship between practices and forms of visibility and modes of saying that carves up one or more common worlds" (4). Rancière's definition of the politics of literature should be almost self-evident to literary scholars. However, in the study of nineteenth-century American literature, the politics of literature have most often been demystified using a critical lens that is part of what Nancy Bentley has recently described as a larger critical project in American Studies undertaken by Donald Pease's New Americanists of "historical demystication" where cultural formations like

[6] See Gustafson, *Imagining Deliberative Democracy in the Early American Republic*; Greiman, *Democracy's Spectacle: Sovereignty and Public Life in Antebellum American Writing*; and Castiglia, *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States.*

literature "were dramatically defamiliarized and revalued, dissolving the pieties of a complacent liberal history in order to expose the underlying operations of power" (148). However, I contend that in the nineteenth-century, the politics of literature, as Caleb Smith describes them, not only enchanted people "into submission but also into other postures—into protest, for example, or into dissent" (161).[7]

Romances of Revolutions

The "art of writing" in antebellum America includes many romances about revolutions that constitute a rich archive of anarchic versions of democracy in the period precisely because revolutions constitute sites of intense political currents that break with determined orders of relationships. I place particular emphasis on narratives about revolutions told in a romantic style. I seek to reclaim romanticism as indicative of a mode of political enchantment particular to literature. The revolutionary narratives I read for this dissertation do not consider revolutions as radical breaks from history that create a blank slate upon which to begin anew. Instead, they are more concerned with how anarchic democratic currents that drive revolutions disrupt and redistribute what Rancière calls the distribution of the sensible. Sometimes these romantic narratives depict revolutions as being too disruptive and sometimes the narratives depict revolutions as not disruptive enough.

Reclaiming the political potential of romanticism in American literature thus depends on broadening my critical scope beyond what has typically been considered the golden age and canonical works of American literature. Since F.O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*, the five year period of 1850 to1855 has been hailed as the period in which a great tradition of

[7] The essays I cite by Bentley and Smith were published in the forum titled "In the Spirit of the Thing: Critique as Enchantment," in *J19 The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 1.1(2013): 147-178.

American literary works emerged. In *The Emergence of Literary Narrative 1820-1860* that originally appeared as part of *The Cambridge History of American Literature* project, Jonathan Arac argues that the period between the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 marks the limited time frame within which American literary narrative developed. In his estimation, the nation had temporarily contained political divisiveness over issues of slavery and states' rights with the Compromise of 1850. Subsequently, Arac argues, writers like Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville could develop a literary paradigm establishing "romance as progress without agency" as represented especially by Hawthorne's insular narratives that imagine a private life of the mind as existing in a rarified space immune from the myriad of compromises which entrance into a politicized public sphere necessitates (232). For Arac, this private space, despite being imagined as a space of resistance through complex modes of intellectual contemplation, is in reality politically vapid because of its inherent fictiveness and its reliance on esoteric forms graspable only by an elite oligarchical reading audience afforded the time to gain such a high level of literacy. In Arac's account, then, literary narratives of the 1850's, though aesthetically pleasing, are always of little political import in terms of inspiring the action required to actually effect political change in the arena of national politics which always already over determine them. The value of this literary production is primarily in its artistic representation of the material conditions of the period. In the context of the various national crises of the 1850's, Arac leaves little possibility for politically charged narrative that falls outside of the "imaginative space opened by the articulation of national narrative" (3).

In Arac's bibliographic essay at the end of *The Emergence of American Literary Narrative,* he emphasizes work of Benedict Anderson, Fredric Jameson, and Sacvan Bercovitch for their understanding of "nationalism as produced or reinforced by various forms of writing"

(245). The primacy of the relationship between nationalism and writing is central to Donald Pease's narration of the "New Americanist" project, of which he names Arac as a central practitioner. This is the same project that, Gustafson argues, has inherent blind spots in its critical attention to the variety of different forms of democracy extant in the antebellum period I described above. A new vein of nineteenth-century Americanist scholarship has sought to address the limitations of the relationship between nationalism and print. For example, Trish Loughran has forcefully argued that Benedict Anderson's view of the relationship between print culture and nationalism is ahistorical in light of the actual material conditions of print culture in the era. "By 1850, the United States was an actual and uncomfortable *E pluribus unum,* a nation whose differences could no longer be contained in constitutional language because language itself could no longer be contained in loosely and locally organized print economies" (xx). Lloyd Pratt has argued that the national, local, personal, and literary narrative genres which Arac associates with nation building can be read as working against the homogenizing impulses of the nation, particularly in the scales of time they register (see especially 120-121). I read the romances of revolution for articulations of democracy that do not square with the Democratic Party's monopoly of the term, as well as for articulations of democracy that resist the cultural homogenization of a State-controlled democratic republic often envisioned by Whigs.

Arac's argument that romanticism is politically vapid is reminiscent of Carl Schmitt's criticism of the inefficacy of political romanticism. For Schmitt, romantics take an occasional relationship to the world. "Instead of God, however, the romantic subject occupies the central position and makes the world and everything that occurs in it into a mere occasion" (18). This "subjectified occasionalism" makes "a world without substance and functional cohesion, without a fixed direction, without consistency and definition, without decision, without a final court of

appeal, continuing into infinity and led only by the magic hand of chance" (19). For the romantic, every moment is reduced to the aesthetic judgment of the individual and becomes an occasion for a possible structure analogous to how a writer conceives of a novel. However, Schmitt argues, the romantic insistence on fantasy and irrationality makes its imagined possibilities essentially meaningless in the face of the decisions made by those with real political power. As a result, "In spite of its subjective superiority, ultimately romanticism is only the concomitant of the active tendencies of its time and environment" (162). The active tendencies are always most closely aligned with the determinative powers of the nation-state for Schmitt, and thus romanticism can only produce a tepid kind of criticism from an essentially imaginary position that in the end only results in what he calls the "absolute governmentalism; in other words, absolute passivity" of the individual (159).

To reclaim the political potential of romanticism, it is useful to return to Morse Peckham's now sixty year old historical definition of romanticism. In "Toward a Theory of Romanticism," he claims romanticism emerged in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as part of a paradigmatic shift in "conceiving the cosmos as a static mechanism to conceiving it as a dynamic organism" (9). For Peckham, this shift occurs as a product of the doctrine of dynamic organicism which values "change, imperfection, growth, diversity, the creative imagination, the unconscious" (14). However, before reaching a state of pure dynamic organicism, the romantic must also pass through a negative phase characterized "by the expression of the attitudes, the feelings and the ideas of a man who has left static mechanism but has not yet arrived at a reintegration of his thought and art in terms of dynamic organicism" (15). Peckham describes a three part transition for the romantic individual familiar from Coleridge's "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner." The transition from the first to the

second is a transition from a state of trust in God and the world of static mechanism to a spiritual death that occurs through a negative process, described as negative romanticism, which separates the romantic from the world of static mechanism. The transition from the second to the third phase is characterized as a spiritual rebirth in the secular world of dynamic organicism. Though Peckham leaves it undefined, we can conceive of a phase between the second and the third in which the romantic might imagine himself to be isolated from the worlds of static mechanism and in anticipation of a world of dynamic organicism. This would be a purely spectral space between life and death in which one both struggles between being defined by any established political ordering of society and waiting for a society of pure dynamic organicism to emerge.

To translate Peckham's romantic paradigm into a political context, the lingering effect of the world of static mechanism that is felt by the romantic as a need for order in the absence of divine authority and the doctrine of dynamic organicism that commands resistance to any artificial impositions of order form two poles that constitute the sphere of modern politics. Benjamin Arditi has characterized these two poles using Michael Oakeshott's terms of the politics of skepticism that believes governments can only hope "to keep the peace" through improving the way technologies maintain superficially imposed forms of power, and the politics of faith which maintains "the belief in the possibility of achieving perfection through human effort, or salvation without the intervention of divine province" (44). Because they are two poles of the same sphere it is neither possible nor desirable for one form of politics to win out over the other, and thus the romantic space I delineated above that exists between these two poles represents the space of the political. Peckham describes this space as existing between death and rebirth which makes it an illogical and haunted space. As I established above, democracy is the name of a specter that haunts the space of the political and resists totalization by any politics instituted in its name. As

Arditi argues, democracy has often appeared in the history of modern politics wearing a pragmatic or redemptive mask but is always haunted by a populist spirit that prevents it from being either (46-49).[8]

I thus define romanticism as one type of populist voice capable of enchanting people into democratic political action. The democratic political action that romanticism inspires is moved by the same kind of anarchic democratic currents that drive revolutions. However, the populist refusal of the extant political orders that romanticism represents is just as often conservative as progressive. A state of pure dynamic organicism where the political body operates as seamlessly as the organic body is essentially an iteration of a state of pure static mechanism and its achievement would mean the end of the political. Thus, I would amend Peckham's depiction of romanticism as always imagining a state of pure dynamic organicisim to acknowledge that the romantic imaginings of such a state are always articulated in a language that mourns the death of static materialism. I see the romantic's indecisiveness in choosing between organicism and mechanism, faith and skepticism, redemption and pragmatism, progressivism and conservatism, freedom and equality, and/or life and death as protecting what Derrida posits as a more primary sense of freedom that "without which there would be neither people nor power, neither

[8] Arditi borrows the notion of pragmatic and redemptive faces of democracy from Margaret Conovan who sees modern democracy as a point of intersection between the redemptive and pragmatic sides of politics. She argues populism appears in the gap between the two sides and functions to regulate democracy when it moves too close to one political side or the other. Arditi attempts to reformulate populism as the ghost that both haunts and accompanies democracy from the same gap. I find both formulations to be useful working definitions of populism. However I find Arditi's use of modern politics as a synonym for democracy to be troubling. Arditi also sees both modern politics and modern democracy as synonymous with modern liberalism. For example, he claims that Oakeshott's conception of the politics of faith and skepticism that serve as his poles of modern politics are interchangeable with Conovan's view that redemption and pragmatism are the two faces of modern democracy. I insist the difference between democracy and modern liberal politics must be retained. Thus, a more accurate rephrasing of Arditi's argument that populism is the specter of democracy is that democracy is the specter that haunts populist currents in modern liberal politics.

community nor force of law." For Derrida this more primary sense of freedom is itself representative of what "might be called the *free wheel*, the semantic vacancy or indetermination at the very center of the concept of democracy that makes its history turn" (*Rogues* 24). The free wheel of democracy is undoubtedly a revolutionary impulse.

Methodology

My methodology for selecting the representative texts in this study is heavily influenced by George Dekker's genre defining study *The American Historical Romance.* Though I only consider one novel in depth, the remaining cluster of orations, travelogues, short stories, novellas, and histories I include meet his requirement of historical romance in that they "acknowledge and demonstrate the shaping power of the forces of historical causality over character, attitude, event" (24). Thus, these texts offer a different perspective to one of the defining questions Dekker asks in his study. "What shape did our romancers see American history taking, and what settings did they favor for disclosing the emergence of this shape?" (8) To answer this question, Dekker sacrifices coverage of a broad spectrum of works of historical romance for a chronological study of canonical works from Cooper to Hawthorne to Faulkner. He identifies these works as the "masterpieces of the genre" (4). I take the opposite approach by seeking out a body of works that represent a more complete cross section of the range of historical romances in the finite time period associated with the rise of the genre in the United States. In including texts that use literary and romantic language but are not novels, I also challenge the parameters of the genre as Dekker defines it. In the course of my study, I have found that there is no easy answer to Dekker's question. I instead point to several different historical shapes and several different historical settings that romancers used in the antebellum

period to explore the complexity with which democratic ideals have been understood and practiced in the long history of the Enlightenment.

Dekker identifies the "pioneering of the New World wilderness and the War of Independence" as the two aspects of American history which "were supposed to give Americans the most patriotic satisfaction and which did attract the most attention from our nineteenth-century historical romancers" (6). Dekker's study has influenced significant contributions to the study of nineteenth-century historical romances about the settlement of the New World and the War for Independence that look outside his canon of historical romances. For instance, Philip Gould in *Covenant and Republic* purposely reads novels by Hawthorne's "scribbling women" in an attempt to escape Hawthorne's long shadow. He convincingly argues that the influx of historical fiction about the Puritans generated in the nineteenth-century constitutes a response by conservative New Englanders to other more radical democratic movements in the antebellum era.[9]

There are fewer sustained studies of romances of the American Revolution. Shirley Samuels' *Romances of the Republic*, which looks to historical romances of the Revolutionary War in order to explore the ways they attempt to "enact a relationship between the family and the state in America from 1790-1850's" (19), is a notable exception that I will engage with in more detail below. Michael Kammen's thesis from *A Season of Youth: The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination* (which pre-dates Dekker's book) that 200 years of narratives of the American Revolution form a conservative plot to de-revolutionize the revolution continues to have a significant influence on how American Historical Romances about the American Revolution are read. I find his assertion to be overly general, specifically upon close examination

[9]See also Stephen Carl Arch's article "Romancing the Puritans: American Historical Fiction in the 1820s" for a similar approach.

of the romantic narratives that emerged around the fiftieth anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill. I see these narratives as operating primarily in a nostalgic mood driven by the displacement associated with the gap in time from the events themselves, as well as more generally with the various mechanisms of displacement which characterize the modern era. Thus, following Svetlana Boym's definition of nostalgia, this second generation of Revolutionary War historians are often driven by a nostalgic longing for "for a home that no longer exists or has never existed" (Introduction). However, they are not sure what a new home should look like. Though later historical romances of the revolution are arguably quite conservative, literary texts from the later nineteenth-century that deploy the same romantic tropes used by earlier romancers of the American Revolution to write about other antecedent and contemporary revolutions suggest that the earlier experiments in the genre contain a radical political vein as well. For one, looking at romances of the American Revolution together with other revolutions also underscores the fact that nineteenth-century Americans understood that the American Revolution was concurrent with other political revolutions that had occurred and were continuing to occur around the world. The complex relationships that most Americans had to the idea of revolution are part of what gives historical romance its "extraordinary rich, mixed, and even contradictory or oxymoronic character" (Dekker 26). Thus, sustained reflection on the various paradoxes, contradictions, and aporias contained in these novels cannot be reconciled as mere political conservatism. Instead they offer important insights into the breadth and depth of the various instantiations of the political in the nineteenth-century. Thus, I also hope to re-invigorate studies of how romances of revolution approach history.

Finally, despite his concession of its heterogeneous character, I find Dekker's treatment of the American Historical Romance to rely too much on what Gregory S. Jay calls the "New

Determinism" of academic criticism which, as Jay puts it, has developed out of the "mistaken appropriation" of the insights of New Historicism (9).

> In some recent versions of 'political' or 'historical' criticism, the literary and cultural texts appear once more to be determined, in the last instance, by histories of a totalizing variety. Too little attention is paid to chance and heterogeneity, both within a particular work and within any given historical moment or social entity. The scheme is rather to find the ideology of 'power' necessarily determining the coherence of seemingly disparate representational practices (9).

Though Dekker acknowledges that totalizing determinations are among the inherent dangers of genre criticisms such as his, Jay's "scheme" is representative of a methodology that Dekker and subsequent scholars of the New Americanist vein have often been comfortable to deploy. One unfortunate side effect of this methodology has been the silencing of noisy and messy texts.

Jay advocates for an alternate methodology that pays attention to the instances in literary texts "where play suspends the power of determination long enough for there to be a chance that something other may be thought, written, done" (15). He associates theory with the space of play and the conclusions of historicist methodologies as practice and insists that "an asymmetry between theory and practice ought to be rigorously maintained, or else both will suffer and wither into determinations without a future" (15). I try to maintain that asymmetry in my own study. I use close reading, the stock-in-trade of literary studies, to arrive at those instances of play in the texts under study here. I use recent political theory as a guide to think through these moments with the aim of trying to think, write, or do something outside of the typical determinations and pronouncements commonly made about the literary and political culture of the nineteenth-century. In this way, I associate myself with recent literary scholars of early

American literature who have turned their critical lens upon those practices that have come to determine the field.[10]

This dissertation is divided in half chronologically coinciding respectively with the rise and fall of the Whig party. In the first two chapters, I explore the cultural significance of the American Revolution as it passed from living memory to history. Future Whigs and other socially minded democrats who had political interest in creating and maintaining a strong national union attempted to fix a shared collective memory of the Revolution that would serve to instill a shared national feeling across a disparate populace. The Bunker Hill Monument Association (BHMA), the focus of the first section of chapter one, was one of the first and most notable institutions to fix the cultural meaning of the Revolution. Examining orations delivered by Daniel Webster and Edward Everett on behalf of the Association together with the history of the construction of the monument I argue that supporters of the monument used romantic literary language typical of the historical romance to establish the revolutionary era as one of shared patriotic feelings in an attempt to create nostalgia for an idealized past that never truly existed. I juxtapose the romantic narratives of the Association against Auguste Levasseur's published account of the other major commemorative event of the fiftieth anniversary of the war, Lafayette's tour of the United States from 1824 to1825. Levasseur, a French republican who served as Lafayette's travelling secretary, gives an account of Americans who are nostalgic about the revolution, for a variety of reasons that are quite different from the collective memories which the BHMA sought to fix as truth. Levasseur waxes romantically about some of the

[10] The "Theories and Methodologies: Early American Literature" section of the October 2013 issue of *PMLA* is a representational list of scholars seeking to redefine the field. Anna Brickhouse, Joanna Brooks, Michelle Burnham, Sanda M. Gustafson, Jared Hickman, Stephanie Kirk, Lloyd Pratt, Sarah Rivett, and Phillip H. Round are all contributors.

possibilities for what the Revolution might have become to begin to envision a more democratic future.

Chapter two focuses on James Fenimore Cooper's *Lionel Lincoln, or, The Leaguer of Boston*. Published in 1825, his third historical romance about the Revolution is widely considered his biggest failure. Drawing on Jacques Rancière's theories about how literature works to redistribute the sensible world, I argue against the conventional conception of Cooper's historical romances as contributing to Benedict Anderson's notion of the imagined community necessary for nation building to claim instead that this novel sees revolution as a democratic act that divides communities. Remembering the Revolution in this way underscores Jacques Derrida's notion that democracy is always to come, or, more precisely, that democratic politics are contingent on a dynamism that resists totalization into static forms like the nation. I argue that democracy's dynamism is depicted very conscientiously in this novel and thus the common reading of this novel that it displays Cooper's ambivalence about American Democracy is incorrect.

The second half of the dissertation covers the declining years of the Whig party from President John Tyler's break from the party soon after assuming the presidency in 1841 to its dissolution over the controversies spurred by the Nebraska Act in 1854. Chapter three examines two major histories of significant early modern revolutionary events, William H. Prescott's *The Conquest of Mexico* and John Lothrop Motley's *The Rise of the Dutch Republic.* In the context of party turmoil and continued national turmoil over expansion and disagreements over state and federal authority, these two Whig historians looked outside the temporal and spatial boundaries of the United States in an attempt to examine the forebears of democratic republicanism. Prescott examines the failed, and Motley, the successful attempt of a small republic to expel the mighty

Spanish Empire. Both of these histories are typically read as epics centered on their central protagonists, Hernan Cortès and William of Orange, that serve as parables of United States history. However, by concentrating on the way both authors use a reflective mode inherited from Cooper in an attempt to create a full historical portrait, I contend that both Cortès and William of Orange can be read as tragic figures of the Enlightenment that make both of these romantic histories narratives of failed democratic opportunities. In this way, the antebellum United States is figured as the inheritor of a legacy of failed democracy rather than the historical apex of democracy resplendent.

The fourth chapter looks at two largely forgotten historical romances of the Haitian Revolution which appeared contemporaneously with *Benito Cereno*, Herman Melville's canonical parable of the Haitian Revolution. One is William Wells Brown's short historical oration *St. Domingo: Its Revolutions and its Patriots* (1854) and the other is Frances Hammond Pratt's novella *La Belle Zoa*; *or the Insurrection of Hayti* (1854). At a time when both national parties were losing favor among the general populace, these genre defying narratives use reflective modes of historical vision to establish the Haitian Revolution as a source of hospitable global civic societies that stand in stark opposition to the patriarchal and racial hierarchies in chattel slavery. Their radical political visions underscore how literature can make important democratic interventions into how we order the sensible world. Together with Chapter Three, this chapter cements my argument that American politics and conceptions of democracy were just as significantly influenced by world events as they were by domestic events, and that the history of American democracy cannot solely be tied to Andrew Jackson and the Democratic Party. Furthermore, the last chapter concludes an argument I carry throughout the dissertation:

American literature has always expressed and been influenced by global visions for the future of democracy whether or not it has been sure of what that future should look like.

CHAPTER 1

Remembering the Revolution at Fifty: Cultural Commemoration of the America Revolution

"The Walk to Bunker Hill Monument: The Correspondence and Disobedience " by H. of Newburyport, Massachusetts appeared in the May and June 1832 issue of Lydia Maria Child's children's periodical, *The Juvenile Miscellany*. It was the third installment of the serialized story of the young twins Caroline and Charles Barton of Boston. The previous installment saw Caroline leave her brother Charles at the task of weaving a watch chain out of their mother's hair to go on a walk with her friend Cornelia Ware. The two had agreed to go to Charlestown to see the monument on Bunker Hill. The narrator states, "They had both contributed their half dollars towards its completion, and perhaps on this account felt greater interest in it."

June 17, 1832 was the fifty-seventh anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill which, in conjunction with the fight at Lexington and Concord, had cemented its place in history as one of the first significant military battles of the Revolutionary War. The same day marked the seventh anniversary of the dedication of the Bunker Hill monument which had occurred on the fiftieth anniversary of the battle in 1825. The Bunker Hill Monument Association (BHMA) had successfully acquired the battlefield from the Boston Masons in March of 1824 and soon thereafter began to solicit contributions for a publicly commissioned monument. Unlike the Washington Monument in Baltimore, for which construction began in 1819 and was completed in 1829, and the monument to Joseph Warren, the hero of the Battle of Bunker Hill, which stood on the Bunker Hill memorial site prior to the formation of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, this monument was unique in that it was not dedicated to one hero, but rather to

those whom founding BHMA member Daniel Webster would name in his monument dedication address delivered on the fiftieth anniversary of the battle, "the early friends of American Independence" (Webster 10). This was the first monument to the American people, and the monument also sought to establish the local Massachusetts men and New Englanders who fought in this battle as the first generation of Americans.

Caroline and Cornelia likely would have made their contribution after the frequent contributor to *The Juvenile Miscellany*, Sarah Josepha Hale, began soliciting contributions for the monument in 1830 in her own women's periodical, *Ladies Magazine*. Contributions from the general public were only accepted by the Bunker Hill Monument Association after they were begrudgingly forced to look for contributions from sources other than their initial list of distinguished gentleman with ties to Boston and the American Northeast and the Massachusetts's General Assembly turned down their requests for funds from the state. Historian (and one time president) of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, George Washington Warren, noted that Hale's proposed fund drive was controversial among Association members. "This effort was condemned by some, because the women were 'stepping out of their sphere,' and by others who asserted that whatever the women might contribute would come out of the men, and in most cases, perhaps, out of those who had already given to the same cause" (Warren, 289). After deciding that it was "highly becoming in women to appreciate the sacrifices of the fathers of the Revolution, who themselves received the sympathy, and even the participation in those sacrifices, of their wives and daughters" and limiting the subscription to one dollar, the fund drive was allowed to commence (289). Hale made her plea to the "Ladies of New England" in a circular sent to every town in New England. In this circular she established that "the general depression of business" had stalled the completion of the monument, and that a donation would

be both an act of "*charity* by furnishing employment for industrious laborers, as well as an aid in finishing the monument to the memory of those pious patriots who, by perils and sacrifices, secured to us the peaceable enjoyment of our civil and religious privileges" (qtd. in Warren, 291). Subscriptions to the Association were limited to adult females, but children of both sexes were allowed to make donations as an opportunity "for mothers to impress on the hearts of their children the remembrance of that great event to which, as free Republicans, we should ever look back with feeling of fervent gratitude towards those who labored to secure our independence and liberty…" (291-292). The funds collected from this first subscription drive were modest, but Hale's involvement eventually would ensure the completion of the monument after she organized a Fair and Bazaar fundraising event in 1840 with the help of the same ladies of New England. It raised $30,035.53 towards the completion of the monument, and was successful largely because it was smartly held at the same time as the 1840 Whig national convention in Boston.[11]

Though construction had begun on the monument at the time of Caroline and Cornelia's visit, completion was still eleven years off. The girls wait what seems to them an almost intolerable amount of time for the draw on the bridge to Charlestown to come back down after allowing a string of vessels into the busy harbor (a delay so long, Caroline remarks, that it would have sent her intemperate brother into one of his insufferable passions had he been there). The bridge connecting Boston and Charleston was a relatively new addition; both the bridge and the busy harbor were among the effects of the rise of industry in the city that had significantly changed the landscape since 1775. The two girls are initially unimpressed by the monument. "It

[11] Joseph Michael Sommers argues in "*Godey's Lady's* Book: Sarah Hale and the Construction of Sentimental Nationalism" that Hale used seemingly apolitical sentimental literature (particularly poetry) to subversively advance her republican politics while editor of *Godey's Lady's Book.*

must be confessed they were a little disappointed when they saw only a column of stone; but they concluded it would look very different when it was finished." Caroline, who the narrator makes clear had been much better "instructed" in history than Cornelia, is then moved by the monument into an act of commemoration:

> 'Who would ever think,' said Caroline, 'that there had once been such a dreadful battle here. How calm and peaceful everything looks!' 'I suppose it was a great while ago,' said Cornelia. 'Oh, yes,' replied Caroline, 'before I was born, before mamma was born.'
>
> 'Then it must have been almost a thousand years ago,' said Cornelia, who was not quite so well instructed as her companion. 'No,' said Caroline, 'I was reading all about it the other day. It was in the year 1775. It was the second battle *we* fought with the British—the first, you know, was fought at Lexington.' 'Yes,' said Cornelia with a vacant look. 'Oh!' exclaimed Caroline, warming into enthusiasm, 'it seems to me that I can now see Charlestown all on fire!'
>
> 'Where! where!' exclaimed Cornelia; 'let us make haste home.'
>
> 'I don't mean that I really can,' said Caroline; 'Only I have read so much about it. It is not on fire now. The British burnt it, when the battle was fought.'
>
> 'What are you looking after?' asked Cornelia, as she observed Caroline stepping slowly along with her head bent forward and her eyes fixed on the ground; 'have you lost anything?'
>
> 'No,' replied Caroline, 'I am hoping to find something.' And she still persevered. 'Tell me,' said Cornelia, 'and I will help you look'.

Caroline turns out to be looking for artifacts from the battle for her brother, Charles's museum (an acquaintance had told her how he had found soldiers' buttons at Waterloo). In fact, as the

empty search proves, there is nothing there but the stone column and the images from books recalled by Caroline's imagination.

It is also clear in the passage above that while Caroline has no trouble imagining herself as part of a diachronic community with the revolutionaries who fought the battle ("the second battle *we* fought with the British"), Cornelia cannot imagine herself the same way. Caroline shows she understands what Sarah Hale meant by the dual meaning of the contribution she made to the monument: charity to the present community and a commemoration of those who founded the community. The monument triggers no historical memory for Cornelia. For her, the monument reminds her only of her immediate synchronic affiliations with other children and members of the community, who, like her and Caroline, had contributed to the monument. In this sense, the monument serves as a reminder for Cornelia of her everyday community. For her, it is likely only one of a number of cultural sites, objects, and rituals that serve as reminders that she is a member of an immediate community with others like Caroline and perhaps her mother, as well as the less immediate communities of Boston, New England, and the United States. However, because of her lack of historical instruction, the monument does not have the same fixed historical meaning for her as it does for Caroline. As a result, though Cornelia might identify as an "American," and in fact remembers this identity as a result of the monument, she does not identify as part of the same diachronic "*we"* that is signified for Caroline by the monument. The significance of the revolutionary past the monument is supposed to mark is so completely absent for Cornelia that she cannot even fathom what one could be or should be looking for there. As the story will eventually make clear, her exclusion from the diachronic community that Caroline identifies signifies a difference in the quality of their historical instruction. This difference serves as an indication of an unbridgeable difference between

Cornelia and Caroline that will eventually break up their friendship. Cornelia's poor instruction ultimately causes Caroline's mother to forbid Caroline from remaining close friends with Cornelia. Cornelia, who has become dissatisfied with Caroline's instruction as well, happily obeys her mother.

As Caroline and Cornelia's trip to the Bunker Hill monument illustrates, two generations later to many people in the Boston area the American Revolution was still prominent in their perceptions of themselves as Americans. Their story also introduces a number of concepts central to my analysis of the ways Americans sought to sometimes fix, sometimes complicate, and sometimes forget memories of the American Revolution using a variety of cultural tools including monuments, orations, fetes, and literature. The problem of which memories to fix and how to fix them became of increasing concern as the revolutionary generation aged and began to die off, and the expanding national borders invited new speculation over what America and Americans might become. From 1825-1843, the BHMA devised of and completed the Bunker Hill Monument as a way to solidify Boston in particular and New England in general as a cultural origin of the United States.[12] The dedication of the monument in 1825 also marked one of the last stops of the Marquis de Lafayette's two-year tour of the United States that was commissioned by President Monroe and Congress in part to commemorate the Revolutionary generation. Both enterprises are often read as instances of nation building that illustrate Benedict

[12] In *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America* (2002), Sarah Purcell notes that Lafayette's visit "prompted monument projects…around the country" that were typically "sepulchers designed to commemorate particular dead heroes of the Revolution" (195). The Baltimore monument to Washington first proposed in 1812 and completed in 1829 was most similar in national scope to the Bunker Hill Monument and the BHMA followed the funding and completion of that monument closely (Purcell 196, note 93). Monuments to Baron de Kalb in Camden, South Carolina, and Generals Nathaniel Greene and Kasimir Pulaski were dedicated in March 1825 in cornerstone ceremonies Lafayette participated in. For more on public memory of soldiers in the antebellum period see Robert Resch *Suffering Soldiers: Revolutionary War Veterans, Moral Sentiment, and Political Culture in the Early Republic* (1999).

Anderson's imagined-communities thesis.[13] The histories of the monument and of accounts of Lafayette's tour are rife with examples of people called together to imagine themselves as Americans. Even though both enterprises were in part politically conceived to implement an agenda of national improvement through technological modernization, economic diversity, and moral cohesion that would later be a central component of the Whig party platform, they were nevertheless received by a diverse population sharing similar patriotic feelings yet starkly different senses of national community.[14] In the context of 1820's New England, many people still considered themselves primarily as self-sufficient agrarians who did not need the federal government's help to improve themselves or instruction on how to remember their revolutionary past. Though the official events surrounding Lafayette's tour of all twenty-four states appeared very similar, they were attended by crowds that manifested not only starkly different collective character from location to location, but also aggregations of quite disparate individual

[13] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Purcell (2002) glosses how Anderson's thesis has been used and challenged in the context of public memory by American historians (6-7) including David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Tradition, 1776-1820* (1999), and Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (1997).

[14] In *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (2007) Daniel Walker Howe provides a chapter length description (243-285) on the importance the concept of moral and physical improvement had in the political culture during the so called "Era of Good Feelings" of the Monroe Presidency and the single Democratic-Republican Party. In the same chapter, he outlines how national improvement became coded as a path to individual improvement for what would become the Whig party as the Democratic-Republican Party began to splinter. John Quincy Adam's First Annual Message to Congress (December 6, 1825) linked the communication and transportation revolutions to the concept of national improvement. The "American System" as coined by Henry Clay in 1832 systemized what I have called here national improvement through technological modernization. See also Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (1979), and Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (2005), particularly181-217.

experiences and lives. Thus, these sites of commemoration in reality represented cultural collisions of communities and individuals struggling to understand themselves democratically.

All of the different narratives of the Revolution that worked to create cultural memory were thematically commemorative. According to the *OED* "commemorate" can refer both to the preservation of memory and as a call to remember. Caroline's response to the memorial as a site of cultural memory illustrates both modes of commemoration. The monument in her case successfully preserves the memory of the battle and the burning of Charlestown, yet also moves her to remember in a specific way. Commemoration differs importantly from historicism in its awareness of the contemporary relationship to the past. The past does not exist independently of the contemporary moment as is evidenced by Caroline's use of "*we."* Historicism, by contrast, is concerned mostly with an authentic past that exists independently from the present. In principal at least, there is no "*we"* in historicism; instead the relationship is primarily an estrangement from the past, much like Cornelia's relationship to the monument. Cultural memory in general and cultural formations like memorials and commemorative addresses in particular, express an obligation to the past which, as Jan Assmann writes, serves "the normative self-image of the group [which] engenders a clear system of values and differentiations in importance which structure the cultural supply of knowledge and the symbols" (131). I want to stress that particularly in democracies where sovereignty lies with the people, the structuring of the system that Assmann identifies is intensely political. My chief interest lies with the politics of commemoration as it relates to the form of the people. Historically, studies of the cultural formations in the period I have identified tend to see all acts of national commemoration as possessing an almost identical political function which in turn constitutes one clear political system. That system is typically identified as a national grouping with a conservative function of

maintaining stability through uniformity.[15] I argue the political differences in cultural formations in this period are vastly understudied, and taking them into account actually occludes the system Assmann argues is made clear by these cultural formations. In turn, we must take into account a number of competing political groupings, all of which can loosely be called both national and democratic, that occur across a number of different publics that lay claim to the idea of the nation. Yet, as I have suggested, stability and uniformity were not a part of any of these groupings which suggests that we must understand both the nation and democracy in this period as contentious, and marked by a failed series of competing attempts at community building.

Nostalgia is one of the most easily identifiable tropes of commemorative themes in narratives of the Revolution crafted in the service of cultural memory. The *OED* defines two senses of nostalgia: one as an "acute longing for familiar surroundings" such as occurs with homesickness, the other as a "sentimental longing *for* or regretful memory of a period of the past especially one in an individual's own lifetime; [or] sentimental imagining or evocation of a period of the past" (*OED*, 3rd ed.). A key difference between nostalgia and other more historical methods of remembering the past is that nostalgia tends to evoke romantic feelings of sentimentalism and imagination. Yet, as Svetlana Boym has theorized, the sentiment and imagination inherent in nostalgia still claim to be as authentic as the truths to which the most

[15]The work of Michael Kammen probably remains the most influential study of collective memory in antebellum America. *A Season of Youth: The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination* (1978), written in the context of the Bicentennial Celebration, deals specifically with collective memory of the Revolution. He argues that practically all acts of collective memory serve the conservative function of de-revolutionizing the people and bringing them in line with the morals of the bourgeois elite. Both Purcell's and Resch's studies stop around 1825 with the end of living memory of the Revolution. Purcell in particular defers to Kammen after this point (4). Kirk Savage's study of public monuments largely ignores public memory before the Civil War.

scientific of historical methodologies lay claim. Boym calls acts of nostalgia oriented towards protecting the truth, "restorative nostalgia" (xvii). The problems with the truth claims made in cultural formations like orations, monuments, fetes, and American Historical Romances have been well documented.[16] However, I contend that these cultural formations also call the truth claims in acts of restorative nostalgia into question. I will argue in the next chapter that, largely due to its free use of romantic and literary conventions, historical romance centered on the Revolutionary War hinges on calling the truth claims of restorative nostalgia into question. In that chapter, the restorative efforts of the BHMA commemorations I identify in this chapter become an important object of comparison. Here, however, I want to address the memory crisis that accompanied the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution, and analyze how memory of the Revolution was and was not important to the contrasting visions of liberal democracy and social democracy. I will then read commemorative orations written on behalf of the BHMA by Edward Everett and Daniel Webster, two of the most famous orators of their time, for acts of restorative nostalgia by which they attempt to paint the heroes of Bunker Hill as proto-Whigs in order to promote their own political agenda. I will argue that these orations exemplify important early efforts to square democratic ideals with a republican form of government in a world that had taken a sudden turn towards liberal democracy. I then argue that a central goal of Lafayette's tour was to spread a similar message of national improvement through national unity across the

[16] George Dekker defined the genre of American Historical Romance in his book, *The American Historical Romance*. See Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger *The Invention of Tradition* (1992) for a discussion of how many so called ancient national rites and rituals are relatively modern inventions. For more on the relationship between cultural commemoration and political organization in the early republican U.S. see Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic*, Jennifer Mercieca *Founding Fictions*, Ronald Formisano *For the People: American Populist Movements from the Revolution to the 1850s*, and Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin *Rude Republic: Americans and Their Politics in the Nineteenth-Century*.

United States and that Auguste Levasseur's account of the tour can be read as an archive of how the New England-centric narrative was actually received on the ground in areas of the United States that were remote from Bunker Hill. By so doing I illustrate that the irreconcilable differences between democratic ideals and republican government echo throughout antebellum political and cultural life in reverberations that we have only just begun to hear.

The Case for Fixing Memory of the Revolution

Caroline and Cornelia's reactions to the Bunker Hill Monument serve as useful illustrations of the workings of collective memory in the formation of different publics and the ways in which individuals understand themselves in relation to their publics. Maurice Halbwachs used the term collective memory as part of his work in the early twentieth century to, as Jan Assmann puts it, "shift the discourse concerning collective knowledge out of a biological framework [and] into a cultural one" (Assmann, 125). Halbwachs' work is also credited with establishing a difference between memory and history. Kirk Savage gives a useful summation. "Halbwachs insisted on a distinction between history and collective memory: history aims for a universal, objective truth severed from the psychology of social groups while 'every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time'" (Savage 2006).

Though Halbwachs generally limited his concept of collective memory to living memory, more recent scholarship has established that collective memory may also pertain to the more distant past. Jan Assmann thus makes a distinction between communicative memory and cultural memory. By his definition, communicative memory is associated with everyday communication, and does not extend temporally beyond three or four generations or eighty to one hundred years. Cultural memory, on the other hand, occurs when a group fixes memories of past events through "cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation,

practice, observance)" (129). These formalized sites of memory stabilize and objectify cultural memory so that it can be reproduced in subsequent generations in service of the concretization of group identity. Assmann explains that cultural memory tends to have a conservative function in the way that different social groups or publics define themselves. The conservatism is especially apparent in how cultural memory preserves positive and negative conceptions of a group's unity and peculiarity, and helps to settle questions of belonging and exclusion. Thus, despite being an ideological construct, cultural memory becomes to the uncritical eye an almost naturalized mode of defining and solidifying particular social groups.

In the context of the story of Cornelia and Caroline, we can see how their visit to the Bunker Hill monument forms a part of their individual memories and their understandings of their position in the various publics of which they are members. Both girls have a communicative memory of the construction of the monument because they are first hand contributors to its construction. They know that the monument and the moniker "American" both serve as cultural signifiers even though in 1832 precisely what the monument and, by extension, the battle and the war, mean to the collective identity of Americans had not yet been fixed. Significantly, both the story and the periodical it appears in are parts of the political maneuvering intrinsic to fixing the memory of the Revolution as it passed from communicative to cultural memory. They intersect with the political maneuverings of the BHMA in a matrix of similarities and differences. For example, both saw the importance of encouraging in a new generation a shared memory or history in order to create a sense of social responsibility among members of a community. Both also express concerns about what happens to the morality of a community in the absence of historical memory. Yet, Sarah J. Hale and Lydia Maria Child sought to establish women as the guardians of social morality and cultural memory, while the BHMA, at least initially, sought to

establish a version of the disinterested and benevolent Federalist natural aristocracy as guardians of the national community.

The period of the construction of the monument marks the end of communicative memories of the Revolutionary War. Veterans of the Revolution were still alive, as were people who lived through the war itself, however they and their memories were dying off rapidly.[17] As Sarah Purcell writes, "Revolutionary War veterans had always provided the backbone of Revolutionary War memory, and their passage posed the problem of how that memory would survive without them" (193). Warren notes how visitors to Bunker Hill who wished to learn more about the battle were often referred to Isaac Warren and Deacon Miller, two veterans, "and they would often repair in company, as guides of the interested traveler, to the consecrated ground" (22). However, like Caroline and Cornelia, the majority of individuals already had no immediate connection to the War and they were busy negotiating what if any meaning the Revolution had to their everyday life. A liberal democracy would have no use for memory that extends beyond the communicative realm of the everyday. The only important legacy of the Revolution would be its guarantee of freedom from the tyranny of authority such as a forced obligation to a history that is not one's own represents. Untethering from history frees society from one of the encumbrances to renegotiating and reformulating social boundaries to more easily accommodate the incorporation of new members. Yet, when carried to the extreme, a society without tethers can quickly succumb to the tyranny of the individual who protects his own interest over that of the common good.

[17]Congress passed the Revolutionary War Pension Act in 1818 to award pensions to Continental Army veterans "in reduced circumstances to memorialize, reward, and comfort them" (Reich 4). The act required testimony of service which was to be court certified. This spurred a number of memoirs and narratives by veterans of their war experience and what Purcell calls the "cult of the hoary-headed veteran" in which public commemoration of Revolutionary War Veterans became common place in acts publically commemorating the Revolution in the 1820s (188).

On the other hand, fixing the Revolution into public memory became an important concern for Americans who supported social democracy. For social democrats the social commitment inherent in a shared allegiance to history was necessary to foster an individual's sense of responsibility to the community in a way that promoted equality among all members. The benefit to fixed cultural memory is precisely the way in which it cements a society's unity and peculiarity. The link between fixing memory and nation-building is also clear. Institutions that fix memory take their place among other state institutions that bind the national community together. However, though institutions of cultural memory constitute a certain kind of social authority, their interest in fostering the positive liberty of all individuals within a community makes their authority less coercive than other state institutions whose authority is used to regulate the liberties of individuals within the community. Yet, when taken to the extreme, sites of fixed cultural memory can make the boundaries of a society overly rigid by arbitrarily creating conditions for entering a society that severely limit the equal rights of those who are not granted entry.

The simple story of Caroline and Cornelia makes the case for feeling an obligation to history, but also expresses a certain concern over societies whose boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are too rigid. It is important to the two young girls that they are able to publicly participate in acts of commemoration at the Battle of Bunker Hill as a part of establishing a public identity. However, the extent to which females could access a public dominated and policed by males is also evident in the story. Though the story begins with a reversal of gender roles (recall that brother Charles is at home weaving a watch chain while the girls are out in public), when the girls encounter a group of boys they are reminded of the danger of transgressing their sphere. The narrator points out, "cowardly as it is, boys in the streets are

sometimes rude to girls who are walking quietly." The girls lose their nerve as they walk past the boys and start running. "This was a signal to the boys, --and they all called out , 'Hunt the rabbits, hunt the rabbits!' and they all ran after them, shouting and hallooing." Attempting to assert one's rights to an identity in a pre-defined public space is truly a risky enterprise. Yet the two girls' modes of commemoration also signal a social distinction that should be made between individuals who feel a tie to the Revolutionary past and those who do not. Even 180 years later, some Americans would likely recognize themselves as part of Caroline's "we." The fact that Cornelia does not recognize herself as part of the Caroline's "we" serves as a mark of exclusion. In fact Cornelia does prove an unsuitable member of Caroline's group and, through her, the reader learns that to be part of the group, she must remember like Caroline and not like Cornelia. She also learns that individuals like Cornelia who do not remember correctly constitute a danger to society.

In the end, though both the members of the BHMA and the author of the story believed in social democracy more than liberal democracy, they also believed that social boundaries should be porous enough to allow anyone who was willing to play by the rules to have access to the benefits of society even if they were barred access to official means of political participation. Cornelia is not forever barred from entrance into the collective "we" marked by Caroline. Rather, if she were to correct her memory to include a sufficient understanding of the battle by following Cornelia's lead, she would gain entrance. Her alienation from Caroline is painted in the story more as her own failure to meet a social obligation rather than being actively barred by Caroline. Though initially the members of the BHMA imagined New England and its burgeoning industrialism to be the cultural model for the nation, in the course of the eighteen years it took to complete the monument it became more important to the member's shared political agenda of

social improvement that Americans cared as least as much for the rights of the national community as they did for the rights of themselves or their individual states. This was especially true when it came to combatting Jackson's authoritarianism. Letting go of control of the nation was perhaps a lesson learned when the founders of the BHMA had to change their version of nationalism in response to their community members' less than enthusiastic embrace of their project.

Nonetheless, the Bunker Hill Monument and Lafayette's tour illustrate both the spectrality of the democratic legacy of the Revolution, and its usefulness for imagining and re-imagining multiple forms of the nation. As David Waldstreicher cogently puts it:

> Nationalism in America hasn't been a great idea that has waxed and waned, something that people truly had or did not have. It has been a set of practices that empowered Americans to fight over the legacy of their national Revolution and protest their exclusion from that Revolution's fruits. It is not inherently reactionary or progressive; like other nationalisms, its political meanings are multiple, even contradictory, and can be shown to have changed radically over time. (3)

In the context of the era of the construction of the Bunker Hill monument, the concept of American nationalism therefore had important political weight, but no single ideology of American nationalism had gained sway over the majority of the American public. Instead, national feeling was splintered across different local and regional spaces so that, as Purcel has argued, "nationalism seemed simultaneously tied to localism and sectional pride" (172). Thus, local national feelings could vary quite significantly from place to place, and true national feeling that extended beyond one's own immediate community was rare. Further compounding the problem was the fact that the federal government did not have a fully developed

infrastructure capable of sponsoring or enforcing any particular official nationalism.[18] Instead, debates over what American nationalism should be played out in a variety of local arenas and led to a variety of different narratives of what it meant to be "American." The loudest debates in the historical record revolve around the issue of sovereignty, primarily between the people (configured by Democrats as the several states) and the federal government. As Howe points out, debates over slavery, tariffs, the Second National Bank, voting rights, Indian removal, and whether the country's economy should be primarily agrarian or primarily industrial all revolved around the issue of sovereignty (*What Hath God Wrought*, 367-410). Americans' loyalty to the national community, then, typically only extended as far as the national community was recognizable in the terms of their own local community.

The Bunker Hill Monument is significant in that it is one of the first instances of a monument to a heroic people instead of a heroic person. The monument, in fact, replaced a rather modest monument to General Joseph Warren, hero of the Battle of Bunker Hill, erected by Charlestown Masons in 1794. Joseph Warren was seen as embodying the best of the spirit of Boston revolutionaries, particularly because he had lost his life in the battle. In his commemorative address at the occasion of the dedication of the Warren monument, Worshipful Master John Soley, Jr. used a common Federalist argument to establish the proper reverence a republican people should have to great men. "Nations in all ages have endeavored to perpetuate the brilliant actions of their heroes: thereby to inspire the living with a spirit of emulation and to discharge the obligations they owe to those deeds of valor by which their rights were secured"

[18] Trish Loughran in *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770-1870* (2007) examines how a coherent national infrastructure "was theorized from a condition of absence…that nevertheless called forth the material world we live in today" (xix). Taking the beginning and ending dates of her title the 1820s would mark the half-way point between the absence and material realization of the nation.

(qtd in Warren, 10-11). Paying tribute to the people who fought in the battle rather than the heroes who led them would have been inappropriate in 1794. John Resch has established that prior to the end of the War of 1812, the Revolutionary War victory was typically credited to people like Warren as opposed to the regular soldiers of the Continental Army. In fact, the typical Federalist position was that a standing army was undemocratic and formal recognition either through public memorial or pension was tantamount to aristocratic government, and thus not fitting to a republic (2, 80-1). The monument's stated goal of commemorating common soldiers, both living and dead, marks a turn towards democracy, but at the same time creates a specific heroic public identity of the people that is to be emulated and respected in the manner Soley identifies.

As I will show with the commemorative addresses delivered in conjunction with the dedication, fundraising, and completion of the monument, the public identity the BHMA sought to create would transform the myth of New England yeomanry into the myth of American citizenry. In the minds of the BHMA, when gazing upon the Bunker Hill monument, anyone should be able to imagine him or herself as one of the common soldiers who, out of his own free will, sacrificed his own individual good for the good of the whole. Purcell notes that the founders of the BHMA sought to seize on the fact that "no monument existed that captured the 'national sentiment' of gratitude for the Revolutionary War" to argue that, "the Bunker Hill monument was to be a matter of particular regional pride, but at the same time [establish] that New Englanders were uniquely qualified to represent the Revolutionary War memory of the entire nation" (196). The commemorative orations tell of how at the onset of the Revolution, a yeoman class (both farmers and artisans) forged a common self-interest of defending their liberty against

a tyrannical aristocratic class.[19] The tightness of their bond reflected a desire among the New England elite for a seamless heterogeneous economy worked by a sovereign people of homogenous moral character. The realization of this desire was paramount to the realization of Clay's American System and would eventually become central to the Whig party platform. In other words, by the particular narrative the movement was intended to commemorate, which marked Boson as the origin of the Revolution and, by proxy, the origin of the Republic, the BHMA members served their own particular political interests in establishing a New England-centered industrial economy. The story of the self-sacrificing yeoman as American can alternately be interpreted very broadly and very narrowly. As we have seen, at the broadest level, the story allows for all men to understand themselves as Americans through their self-sacrifice, yet it also allows all women to see themselves as the guardians and moral instructors of the national family.[20] Contributing to the monument allows Cornelia and Caroline to imagine themselves as equal to any other American hero. Sarah J. Hale could imagine herself contributing equally to the nation with the dignitaries whose contributions the male leaders of the BHMA initially sought to solicit. The ease and frequency with which people could and did imagine themselves as inheritors of this narrative and others like them is frequently seen as an effect of the democratization of the United States. Purcell aptly identifies how the ability for anyone to pay public gratitude to the heroic people of the Revolution "elevated the people almost as much as the heroes" in a democratic turn of Soley's commemoration of Warren.

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[19] Several heroes of Revolutionary Boston were derived from the artisan class such as Joseph Warren and Paul Revere.

[20] Michael Warner makes a similar argument about the ease with which one extrapolates him or herself into the "We the People" cause in the preamble of the constitution. See Warner, *Letters* 111-112.

As the history of the building of the monument itself reveals, however, the initial attempts by the BHMA to narrate a solidly unified American public sponsored by the elite members of society smacked of aristocracy to many in the community. Especially in the wake of the panics of 1832 and 1837, the people were suspicious of efforts to cement the unity and peculiarity of American national identity by any outside authority, and were slow to support the association despite public enthusiasm for commemoration of the revolution. It was not until Sarah Hale could break into the boys club of the BHMA and allow women to become equal contributors to men that the Association could garner the public support to get the monument completed.

Oratory and Monument

In addition to holding the distinction of being the first American literary genre, oratory is certainly the canonical genre of commemoration.[21] John Quincy Adams in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory* (1810) even went so far as to claim that in the United States, demonstrative oratory, the branch of Aristotelian rhetoric that includes commemoration, had been refined in America to a degree not evident in Europe and not seen since the ancient Greeks and Romans.[22] "On the anniversary of our independence every city and almost every village of this Union resounds with formal discourses, strictly belonging to the demonstrative class of the ancients. There are many other occasions public and private, upon which we are accustomed to

[21] Oratory has long been given a position of prominence in the development of the literary culture of New England especially in relationship to Emerson and the Concord Transcendentalists. See for example Lawrence Buell's chapter "New England Oratory from Everett to Emerson" and the collection edited by Clark and Halloran. Scholarship of the last fifteen years has worked to establish how what James Perrin Warren called the "Culture of Eloquence" extended beyond New England and the white male middle and upper classes. See for example Eastman, and the collection edited by Gustafson and Sloat.

[22] See also Buell, 139.

assemble in churches, and hear orations of the demonstrative kind" (179-80). Oratory, or eloquence (as the art of oratory was called), was considered foremost among the literary arts in its use of language to inspire social change through creating a sense of political affiliation between otherwise autonomous subjects. As Wendell Phillips wrote in 1830, "Is not poetry rather that excitement of feeling that ends in itself, --is it not affective, sublime indeed, but somewhat abstract? While Eloquence is the same feelings urged forward to action, excited by intense, perhaps often personal, instinct" (qtd. in. Buell, 9). Eloquence was used both to encourage a monolithic notion of the People that extended beyond one's local affiliations, and to debate the desired attributes of this monolithic People of the United States. Thus though by 1825 there was a certain amount of faith in the possibility of a unified sense of the "American People," who the people actually were and what their character should be was defined, contested, and redefined in countless different orations delivered in countless different public milieus. Commemorative addresses were frequently printed, and public orators often penned their speeches with their print audience in mind.[23]

The founding members of the BHMA would also be heavy hitters in the reorganization of Jefferson's Democratic Republican Party, John Quincy Adam's National Republican Party, and the remnants of the Federalist Party into the American Whig Party between 1828 and 1834. Founding members included William Tudor, the co-founder of the *North American Review*, a major Whig party organ, Edward Everett, another editor of the *Review*, a Harvard professor, and Massachusetts' delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives from 1825-35, and the famed Massachusetts politician and Jackson foe, Daniel Webster. These men together with the rest of

[23] For a discussion of the print life or oratory see *A History of the Book in America Volume 2* (2010) in particular, Chapter 3 part 1, "Print and Politics," by John L. Brooke, and Chapter 12, "Reading for an Extensive Republic," by Robert A. Gross.

the BHMA sought to establish and protect what they saw as a patriotic imperative established by the men who fought and died for the rebellion at Bunker Hill: true Americans willingly sacrifice themselves to the American cause. They maintained that subsequent generations of Americans should remember the sacrifice of their fathers and be willing to make similar sacrifices in the interest of the preservation of the nation. In order to capitalize on the fervor of patriotism inspired by the Marquis de Lafayette's tour in 1824, General William Sullivan prepared an address on behalf of the BHMA that was included in a letter sent to all of the towns in Massachusetts to solicit contributions to the Monument.

> What of gratitude, reverence, and affection do we not owe, fellow citizens, to our countrymen who assembled and met the British on Bunker Hill on the seventeenth of June! It is to their manly resistance that we owe the precious blessings we call our own,--ALL, ALL that we hold dear….It is in honor of that *glorious day* that it is now proposed to raise a monument worthy of those we commemorate, and to remind successive generations of the deeds of our Fathers, and to evince the just and heartfelt gratitude of the present time…. Such a monument will not only carry down to distant ages the memory of illustrious deeds: it will also remind the generations, as they rise, of the origin of their social rights; it will proclaim to them, with awful grandeur, the sacred duty of preserving *unimpaired* the FREEDOM which was purchased with PRECIOUS BLOOD. (qtd. in Warren, 84-7)

Sullivan's address is a prime example of the link between commemorative address and the Bunker Hill Monument. As in this instance, addresses were typically written down and circulated in much the same way as other printed material. The letter was probably read at public gatherings in various towns throughout New England. Commemorative address was the chief

mode through which the BHMA sought to preserve and create the memory they intended the monument to signify. Here, the address evokes sentimental images of the sacrifice of the soldiers. The sacrifice is refigured as a debt of gratitude owed by the audience. A monetary contribution to the memorial becomes one repayment of this debt, the memorial itself is to become both the surrogate carrier of the burden of remembering and an emblem of the origin of "ALL we hold dear." A five dollar contribution even assured official membership to the BHMA ensuring the name of the contributor would be preserved as part of the legacy of Bunker Hill which here is posited "the GREATEST EVENT in the history of civil liberty" (qtd. in Warren 86). The truth of the event and what it symbolizes is defined and made permanent for the future in the form of an obelisk created by an imaginative and sentimental nostalgia for a past that (if it ever existed at all) was rapidly becoming lost as veterans with direct memory of the event were dying and the site of the Charlestown battlefield was literally becoming erased as a result of the urban sprawl of Boston.

The BHMA used Daniel Webster's skills in eloquence to great service in their quest to build and define the monument. Though the Whig party did not exist as a named political party until about 1834, Daniel Walker Howe has argued "there is a special appropriateness in treating Whiggery as a culture rather than merely as a party, because the culture was more powerful than the party" (*Political Culture,* 3). Thus, culturally, we see attitudes that would give rise to the Second Party System that divided the Democratic - Republican Party into the Whig and Democrat Parties in the wake of the contentious 1824 election. Tying the beliefs of nineteenth-century Whiggery to those of the Whigs of the American Revolution was a chief ideological concern, and Bunker Hill would frequently factor into the building of this ideology. During the same Whig convention in 1840, at which Sarah Hale conducted her fundraising drive, Whigs

gathered on Bunker Hill to adopt a declaration "condemning 'party spirit' and 'irregular ambition.'" They defended "liberty of speech and of the press," and professed to " believe, especially, in the benign influence of religious feeling and moral instruction on the social, as well as on the individual, happiness of man'" (qtd in Howe *Political Culture*, 2). These ideals of the Whig party stated in 1840 were very much in line with the restorative cultural memories the BHMA had created in the process of constructing the monument.

Daniel Webster's address at the dedication of the monument on June 17, 1825 was instrumental in framing the restorative truths from the battle that constituted the legacy of all Americans. The themes Webster established in this address were recycled for the next eighteen years as the BHMA repeatedly tried and failed to raise the funds necessary to complete the monument. Ironically, Webster's restorative nostalgia eventually resonated more with the women of Massachusetts than the men. By the time he joined the BHMA, Daniel Webster was no stranger to the power of eloquence to inspire a sense of national affiliation. He had already delivered a very successful and widely reprinted commemorative address at Plymouth Rock in 1820. A little more than a year after his equally well-received commemorative address at the dedication of the Bunker Hill Monument, he gave another popular address in commemoration of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams after their deaths on July 4, 1826. Each of these addresses is characterized by lessons in popular history infused with Whiggish politics stressing the importance of the preservation of the Union at all costs through support for projects and laws intent on modernizing the United States.

Webster's first Bunker Hill Address, consistent with Boym's theorization of restorative nostalgia, was much more concerned with establishing the true meaning of the battle than recounting the specifics of the battle itself. The address opens with a statement solidifying the

place of the audience in a teleological history of "Americans." "We see before us a probable train of great events; we know that our own fortunes have been happily cast; and it is natural, therefore, that we should be moved by the contemplation of occurrences which have guided our destiny before many of us were born, and settled the condition in which we should pass that portion of our existence which God allows to men on earth" (8). Webster situates the current audience in a predestined coordinate on a progressive historical timeline that was promised by the events in Boston and would be achieved at some later point in the future. Later he remarked "The occasion does not require of me any particular account of the battle of the 17th of June, 1775, nor any detailed narrative of the events which immediately proceeded it" (17). Clearly, the order of the day was, as Webster's biographer Robert Remini puts it, "the creation of a national as opposed to a sectional or state, 'feeling'." (244). Webster continually appealed to his audience as Americans, rather than Bostonians or New Englanders, and reminded them that the "noble sentiments" that inspired "the most indignant patriotism" of Revolutionary Boston "were not confined to our immediate vicinity. In that day of general affection and brotherhood, the blow given to Boston smote on every patriotic heart from one end of the county to the other. Virginia and the Carolinas, as well as Connecticut and New Hampshire, felt and proclaimed the cause to be their own" (18). Thus the first truth that Webster espouses is that such a thing as an American feeling exists and the sharing of this feeling across all regions, all people, and all time is a patriotic duty essential to the progress that drives history towards its destiny. The feeling is also bigger than any one generation and any one individual, and just as those first Americans did, the charge of current Americans is to drive the progress ever forward.

Webster next sought to establish the difference between revolutionary Americans and revolutionaries of other nationalities. He began by reflecting on all that the American Revolution

set in motion. He noted that fifty years later, Americans were better off largely because of improvements in industry and commerce. These improvements were a direct result of the liberation of all men which the revolutions of the eighteenth century allowed. "Energy of mind, genius, power, wheresoever it exists, may speak out in any tongue, and the world will hear it" (22). He specifically named "improvements" in manufacture and commerce that have augmented the quality of life for all individuals. Webster was also careful to clarify that "the great wheel of political revolution began to move in America" (23). He continued, " Here, its rotation was guarded, regular, and safe" yet when transferred to the "other Continent" it became corrupted as it "whirled along with fearful celerity; till at length…it took fire from the rapidity of its own motion, and blazed onward spreading conflagration and terror around" (22). The temperance with which political revolution proceeded in America marked a chief difference between Americans and other members of the "civilized and Christian world," i.e. the European continent (22). Americans, in contrast to those who conducted "political revolutions elsewhere…had long been in the habit of exercising a great degree of self-control…understood the doctrine of the division of power among different branches," and had a character that was "sober, moral, and religious." Thus the Americans' revolution never devolved into senseless violence. "In the American Revolution, no man sought or wished for more than to defend and enjoy his own. None hoped for plunder or for spoil" (24). In Webster's narration, the American Revolution was a very moderate and very slow revolution that did not depend on the eradication of an old order, but its ordered reorganization into a new order by a people of strong moral character. Just as significantly, Webster allowed Americans to imagine themselves as totally different from their European forbearers. Even if the American character evolved from English or European principles, the Revolution had set Americans apart once and for all.

The third aim of Webster's address was to establish that the ideals of the Revolution had not yet been totally accomplished. Even though there had been much progress in fifty years, there was still a long way to go. He ended the address by calling on those present to continue to maintain the steady pace of the revolution. "And let the sacred obligations which have devolved on this generation, and on us, sink deep into our hearts. Those who established our liberty and our government are daily dropping from among us. The great trust now descends to new hands" (25). The address ends with a call to duty in which we can clearly read the central tenets of Whiggish culture. Howe notes that historian Major Williams "perceptively" cast the difference between Democrats and Whigs in terms of continuity across space versus continuity across time. "Democrats were primarily interested in the quantitative expansion of American society through *space*, while the Whigs were concerned with it qualitative development through *time"* (20-21). After stating that the previous generation had won the "laurels in the war for independence," Webster goes on to recast the revolution for the present age. The end of the address is clearly a call for the qualitative development of society through time.

> But there remains to us a great duty of defence (sic) and preservation; and there is opened to us, also, a noble pursuit, to which the spirit of the times strongly invites us. Our proper business is improvement. Let our age be the age of improvement. In a day of peace, let us advance the arts of peace and the works of peace. Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered. Let us cultivate a true spirit of union and harmony. In pursuing the great objects which our condition points out to us, let us act under a settled conviction, and an habitual feeling, that these twenty-four States are one country. Let our conceptions be

> enlarged to the circle of our duties. Let us extend our ideas over the whole of the vast field in which we are called to act. Let our object be, our country, our whole country, and nothing but our country. And, by the blessing of God, may that country itself become a vast and splendid monument, not of oppression and terror, but of Wisdom, of Peace, and of Liberty, upon which the world may gaze with admiration for ever! (28)

Moral and economic improvement was at the center of Whig politics. As Howe notes, one useful distinction between nineteenth-century Whigs and Democrats defined by historians is their different conception of the role of the state. Whig policies are often in line with the creation of a positive liberal state whereby the federal government is responsible for the general improvement of the entire population. On the other hand, Democrats sought a negative liberal state in which the state allows men the maximum amount of liberty for self-improvement. Though Howe points out that such a distinction tends to overshadow the conservatism of Whigs, they in the end did not believe in "the redistribution of wealth or diminishing the effect of the privileged" (20), the distinction remains important here. The deference Webster demands to "our country, our whole country, and nothing but our country" also demands deference to the federal government because, in Webster's estimation of history, trusting in the mechanisms of a representative government that gets its authority from the general populace leads to the greatest improvement of the people. When trusting too much in the fallibility of any one individual's leadership "the people are disconnected from the State; they are its subjects, it is their lord" (25). In Webster's vision of a "true spirit of union and harmony," we also see the seeds of what Howe identifies as a Whig vision of "a society that would be economically diverse but culturally uniform" as opposed to the Democrats which preferred "the economic unity of a society of small farmers and artisans, but were more tolerant of cultural and moral diversity" (*Political Culture,* 20).

The BHMA sought to instill the necessity of cultural uniformity in the monument itself. Cultural uniformity is in fact central to the idea of the public monument itself. In the opening years of the nineteenth-century, monuments were commonly labeled anti-democratic. Kirk Savage writes, "In the founding years of the United States, many argued that democracy and the spread of literacy had made commemorative rituals and monuments obsolete, a leftover from the days of monarchy and superstition" ("History" 1). The Washington Monument in Baltimore was the other major public monument commissioned in the era. This monument, like the older tradition of monarchical monuments, was designed to commemorate the achievements and preserve the memory of George Washington as the father of the country. Like the BHMA, the Washington Monument did not receive state or federal money. The committee in charge of the Washington Monument eventually decided to fund it through public lotteries authorized by the Baltimore State Assembly. The BHMA was insistent that the public fund the monument out of their patriotic feeling. Though the association was successful in awakening patriotic passions, these passions usually did not lead to open wallets.

Thus, the Bunker Hill Monument is significant for its place among early "democratic" public monuments in that it was meant primarily to commemorate "the people" of the revolution rather than exceptional individuals like Washington. In the United States, the Reconstruction era is generally pinpointed as the locus for the rise of the democratic public monument. Kirk Savage writes that particularly because of the end of chattel slavery in the post-Civil War Era, the image of "the people" who possessed the sovereign will of the nation became increasingly fractured:

> 'The people' now included slaveowner and slave alike, multiple and opposing histories united under the same banner of the nation. While the democratization of monumental space tied it ever more closely to the image of the people, the question of who constituted

> the national people grew ever more divisive. Ultimately the [Civil War] turned on the question of who belonged to the nation: who had a claim on the national possession of liberty, and what did the possession imply. The monuments of the war inevitably forced these issues to the surface; representational decisions had to be made, and they had public consequences. At the very time, therefore, that a resurgent nationality was sparking a new monumental era, the meaning of nationality was changing in dramatic and unpredictable ways. (Savage *Standing Soldiers*, 5)

The dramatic and unpredictable fracture in the meaning of nationality that Savage observes in the Reconstruction period is in fact a characteristic of all democratic nations. As I have suggested here, "multiple and opposing histories united under the same banner of the nation" have been a feature of any community that has adopted the moniker "American," and debates over the nature and composition of "the people" are an intrinsic characteristic of all political forms assembled under the banner of democracy. Though there is a long and bloody history which indelibly ties issues of race to issues of democracy, especially on the U.S. stage, the core conflict the end of chattel slavery represents in defining political personhood in the American Republic is far from exceptional in terms of the political history of nations which aspire to democratic ideals.

For the BHMA, the most salient feature of the impetus towards democratic public monuments was the desire to make the dynamic political forces intrinsic to the concept of the demos into the stable people intrinsic to a Republic. In essence, the conservative impulse behind cultural formations like monuments is to make a stable republic out of a volatile democracy. And it is perhaps the difference in vision between the authorizing people as volatile or stable that is the most important difference between the oft-twinned concepts of democracy and republicanism in the American scene. Savage writes, "Public monuments were meant to yield resolution and

consensus, not to prolong conflict. The impulse behind the public monument was an impulse to mold history into its rightful pattern. And history was supposed to be a chronicle of heroic accomplishments, not a series of messy disputes with unresolved outcomes" (Savage, "History" 4). Democracy runs counter to the historical impulse Savage describes here. In this sense at least, John Quincy Adams was correct that democracy has no monuments, because democracy does not desire singular teleological historical narratives. Rather, democracy thrives on conflict and dissensus. The molding impulse Savage describes is a strictly Republican one.

Therefore, I contend the Bunker Hill Monument is more appropriately seen as intrinsic to Whig political culture's celebration of republicanism than to any idea of democracy. The Whig notion of a culturally solidified people, however, was also not impervious to democratic counterattacks that came from corners not necessarily occupied by Jacksonian Democrats. The history of the construction of the monument serves as an archive of constant conflict over the meaning of "the people," and the same time period between the monument's dedication and its completion also shows a decisive shift in the BHMA's vision of what the people should and did look like. The shift was a result of both material conditions, such as the need for the funds to finance the completion of the monument, and the rapid modernization of Boston and Charlestown that was then in progress. The result was a semantic problem over who exactly the sovereign people signified. Sarah Purcell underscores the instability of the signifier "the people" across time even when concretized in stone in her study of the changing meaning of the Bunker Hill Monument. She writes that an art installation at the monument in 1998 illustrates that, "[t]he meaning of a monument is never fixed, but rather is always determined by an intersection of architectural intentions, viewer reactions, and historical interpretation. The Bunker Hill Monument has been a site of dialogue between past and present, local and national, male and

female, partisanship and impartiality almost since its inception" (Purcell, "Commemoration" 57). Interestingly, Purcell's earlier work attempts to establish the original signification of the monument, the commemoration of fallen Revolutionary War soldiers, as fixed in time. To my mind this is a symptomatic oversight of how signification can vary synchronically as well as diachronically.

The progress of modernity was a phenomenon that was a constant concern to the members of the BHMA. Many, such as Webster and Everett, saw modernization as the path for the United States to establish itself as a global power. Yet, at the same time, the rapid modernization of the national infrastructure also fed the democratic tendency towards heterogeneity and multiplicity. Modernization, like liberal democracy, tends towards being ahistorical in its valuation of constant change over honoring tradition or valuing the past. Though Whigs valued modernization as a tool for improvement, they also feared that it lacked a moral base.[24] Thus, in terms of their political agenda, establishing Massachusetts as an origin for the nation was important not only in terms of Revolutionary War history, but also in terms of establishing an origin around which the people in an expansive nation could share fellow feeling and their moral core. The rapid changes brought about by modernity also plagued the monument itself. In his history of the BHMA, Warren details how the rapid transition of Charlestown from a rural town to urban center had a profound effect on the monument's construction.

Caroline and Cornelia were not the only Bostonians in the 1830's that were left unimpressed by the monument. Following the initial interest in the monument at its dedication, fund raising to complete it proved very difficult. In the rural towns surrounding Boston, fundraising drives went largely unheeded. On May 23, 1825 Otis Corbett regretfully submitted

[24] For more on the moral basis of the Whig party and its relationship to the Second Great Awakening see Howe, *Political Culture of the American Whigs,* and *What Hath God Wrought*.

only $170.75 to the BHMA, the entirety of his more than year-long fundraising effort in Worcester. His letter blames the local clergy "whose opposition was proclaimed from the sacred desk" (qtd in Warren, 230). Warren goes on to explain that at this time "[a]lthough there was great contentment, and the appearance of thrift" most families were still self-sufficient and bartered for the goods they needed and thus had little need of currency. Most of their currency went to the church. Monetary donations to the monument meant money out of the pockets of the rural clergy whose average salary was only $400, "a scanty sum with which to rear a family, and yet the parishes thought it was a great deal of money" (Warren 232). Lottery schemes were proposed and voted down by the state legislature on numerous occasions. In 1829, the directors of the BHMA "designated prominent gentlemen in the different towns and in the wards of the city…to solicit subscriptions" by circulating an address written by the Revolutionary War veteran General Henry Dearborn months before his death. The address included the overtly restorative claim that "on [Bunker] Hill, our Revolution was really achieved" (qtd. in Warren 235). Warren writes that there was no response to this call. In 1831, at the annual meeting of the association the governance of the BHMA was taken over in a coup by the Anti-Masonic Party because of what Warren describes as "their repugnance to the fact that the ceremony of laying the corner-stone of the Monument was performed by the Grand Master of Free Masons" (247). The take-over stalled progress on the monument for yet another year.[25]

Edward Everett's elocutionary skills were called upon by the BHMA several times. At the 1830 annual meeting, an address penned by Everett was ordered to be printed and circulated

[25] Ronald P. Formisano writes extensively about Anti-Masonry. See pages 65-158. For more on the Anti-Masonic Party see Wilentz, Howe (*Political Culture* and *What Hath God Wrought*), Holt (*Political Parties* and *Rise and Fall*), Altschuler and Blumin *Rude Republic*, and Lynn Parsons *The Birth of Modern Politics: Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams, and the Election of 1828*.

around the state. The subject of the address was the necessity for the state to join with private citizens in generating the money necessary for the completion of the monument. Everett's plea went unheeded by the Legislature. In 1831, Everett addressed the Anti-Masonic controlled board to plea for the retainer of the fifteen acres of Bunker Hill the Association had bought. The board, concerned about the Association's close ties to Masonry, wanted the land reduced to the five acres the BHMA had originally been authorized to take under eminent domain. In the address, Everett pled that the men (several of them likely Masons) who had advanced money towards the purchase of the land, would not enforce their claim. He also claimed the incorporation of Boston and Charlestown into one city was imminent, and preserving the land would help it become "as attractive a spot for a promenade as any in the world" (Warren 250). The address ended with a patriotic plea. Warren writes that even though it was successful in "awaken[ing] patriotic emotions for the moment, it did not serve to induce (the Anti-Masonic members) to make the trifling pecuniary sacrifice to preserve entire the memorable field" (253).

Everett was again called upon to address a special meeting of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association on behalf of the BHMA at Faneuil Hall on May 28, 1833 in hopes of gaining their support for the monument. Warren claimed that it was one of the most thrilling speeches that Everett delivered on behalf of the association. In this address, desperation to complete the monument had led Everett to frame his argument in practically existential terms in hopes of overcoming the general apathy towards the monument. "I am asked what good will the Monument do? And, I ask, What good does anything do? What is good? Does anything do any good?" (Everett 335). His answer was that the Monument would provide much needed moral improvement to supplement economic and technological improvement. In addition the monument would help ensure that the moral character of the people would remain uniform

through time, from the Revolutionary fathers to generations yet to come. He argued that improvements such as railroad and canals lead to economic improvements which in turn lead to wealth and prosperity for individuals. But, he also argued, though these improvements do practical good, they do not do moral good:

> I say that generous and patriotic sentiments; sentiments, which prepare us to serve our country, to live for our country, to die for our country, --feelings like those, which carried Prescott, and Warren, and Putnam to the battle field are good,--good humanly speaking of the highest order. It is good to have them, good to encourage them, good to honor them, good to commemorate them;--and whatever tends to cherish, animate and strengthen such feelings does as much right down practical good as filling up low grounds and building railroads (336).

He went on to put a premium on moral improvement, saying that any improvement in one's physical opinion is only worthwhile insofar as it leads to "intellectual and moral improvement" (336). Everett went on to argue that the monument did more to encourage fellow feeling among Americans across time than even history books could. Though books provide a chronicle of past events, visiting the actual site of those events, "speaks to the heart. The American who can gaze on it with indifference, does not deserve the name of American" (339). He ends the address by establishing that finishing the monument to assure a site that Americans for generations to come would be able to share in the patriotic feeling was a filial duty of all national sons. "THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS' BLOOD CRIES TO US FROM THE GROUND. It rings in my ears. It pleads with us, by the sharp agonies of their dying hour; it adjures us to discharge the last debt to their memory" (342). Here Everett seeks to establish as a truth that the freedom the men of Bunker Hill fought for was essentially the creation of a positive liberal state in which men of

identical moral fabric would improve themselves together. By 1833, this was a vision that was starkly at odds with Jacksonian Democrats who would have had little interest in a shared moral core and thus constitutes a rather contentious claim about who real Americans are. Jackson and the Democracy, as his party grew to be named, had proven more successful than the Whigs at capturing public sentiment. Though the addresses delivered on behalf of the BHMA were continually well received by the public, the people seemed to have little use for the monument itself. Instead maximizing individual sovereignty seemed to be tribute enough to the legacy of the Revolution.

The address was successful insofar as the Mechanics Association eventually agreed to partner with the BHMA. The partnership, however, proved to be more symbolic than profitable. The vice-presidency of the BHMA was reserved for the President of the Mechanics Association, and the Mechanics Association oversaw the building of the monument through the creation of a Building Committee overseen by an Executive Committee that immediately proceeded to make a lengthy report that estimated a fifty percent increase in costs over the architect Salomon Willard's estimate. Private subscriptions continued to be virtually non-existent, and the two associations squabbled for the next six years over the best way to raise the money. Finally, in 1838, in the aftermath of the Panic of 1837, the association sold off ten acres of the battlefield to the town of Charleston and various developers. Only the summit of the hill was preserved for the construction of the monument. Townspeople were not happy with the slow pace of the building either, and, until Hale's successful fundraising effort in 1840, they almost succeeded in having the monument torn down.

In the end, the women of New England were the audience most receptive to the rhetoric of the BHMA. The opportunity for women to publicly pay gratitude to the heroes of the

Revolution translated into an opportunity for political enfranchisement. The daughters of the Revolutionary mothers were happy to take on the responsibility of the moral instruction of the nation. Ensuring the completion of the monument became important to upholding that responsibility.[26] In November of 1840, Mary Otis, the Treasurer of the Bunker Hill Monument Fair held during the Whig Convention of the same year, paid $30,035.53 to the BHMA. Warren describes the public contribution of these women as follows. "May the women of the country—without whom indeed there would be no country—aim to elevate Public Sentiment, which is the ultimate and supreme ruler, and to set up a high standard of virtue, self-denial, and right-living, so that the nation, under their refined influence, and guided by the teachings of the Saviour of mankind, may become the resplendent Light of the World!" (314).

Another effect of Hale's fundraising efforts was that the architect Solomon Willard could finally put technology to work for the monument. He used a steam engine to lift the blocks of the monument rather than horse power. Warren writes, "It was a novel sight to behold the immense blocks of stone gracefully moving upwards toward their places, propelled by that mysterious and newly adopted force" (303). The history of the construction of the monument itself echoes the vexed relationship of democracy, modernity, and history that would be a central concern to the Whig party under the Second Party System in the United States. Lafayette's tour of 1824 and 1825 would prove a much more successful venue for inviting the people to commemorate the Revolution by exercising maximum individual liberty. Yet, turning to an examination of the tour, it becomes evident that the various democratic currents that existed among different locales of

[26] In "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment--An American Perspective" Linda Kerber writes extensively on the concept of Republican motherhood. See also *Mere Equals: The Paradox of Educated Women in the Early American Republic* by Lucia McMahon.

the United States in 1824 and 1825 were no more reconcilable to what became the Democratic party.

Many self-identified Americans in other parts of what was and would become regions of the United States had little interest in and were decidedly at odds with New England-centered stories of the Revolution. Andrew Jackson's ability to seize on the paranoia of a newly liberated class of traditionally underrepresented white men towards the Yankee elite helped him carry the popular election in 1824 and got him elected president in 1828. Southerners like William Gilmore Simms were busy spinning their own narratives in which the Revolution was won when radically liberated southern cavaliers were forced off their plantations to battle a government that encroached on their individual rights. These narratives celebrated the autonomous plantation system as the most American model of civic society and in turn an agrarian economy that relied on slavery as the most American of economic models.[27] Following the War of 1812, the U.S. population began to move in large numbers to the northwest and southwest frontiers. The settlers of these areas brought their cultures with them, and the northwestern areas typically recreated Yankee culture with emphasis on communal living and public improvement, while the "Butternuts" in the southwestern region self-fashioned themselves following a more Southern

[27] William Gilmore Simms wrote eight novels about the Revolution set in South Carolina starting with *The Partisan* in 1835. He was also an accomplished historian of the Revolution. See, for example, Busick. The present study, it should be noted, is heavily centered in the Northeast and particularly New England in terms of the texts under consideration. As such, it is outside the scope of this study to address the variety of Southern narratives about the Revolution that provide a counter-narrative to the Yankee Bunker Hill narrative. These narratives predictably seek to shape the legacy of the Revolution as protection of states' rights, a weak national government, and the creation of a people who should have unfettered sovereignty over their property. Several of these narratives were also intrinsic to the formation of the Jacksonian Democratic Party and the common narrative of the so called rise of Democracy in the United States whose monopoly over the concept of democracy I am challenging in this study. Masahiro Nakamura thoroughly compares Simms conservatism to the individualist ideology of writers from the North in *Vision of Order in William Gilmore Simms: Southern Conservatism and the Other American Romance.*

brand of individualism and minimal government intervention. In in-between regions like Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio, Butternuts and Yankee were interspersed in pockets leading to much cultural and political contention. The frontier was also home to Native American tribes with varying degrees of autonomy, French settlements dating back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and freed slaves who were trying to become established in the relatively more tolerant West.[28] All of these groups had various degrees of local clout and imagined themselves as American. Individual narratives were passed down through families, and in recreated social imaginings; often, these people had direct ties to the American Revolution.

Accounts from Auguste Levassuer's journal of Lafayette's tour provide several examples of Americans from far outside the BHMA's scope using collective memory of the Revolution as part of their public identity. Though Americans like those in the Native American tribes living on the outskirts of Kalkaska, Illinois lacked cultural and financial capital of Northeastern white gentlemen to promote a nation building program to support their particular ideological conceptions of "America," they nonetheless actively interpreted and critiqued the scripted national narratives these elites created. Lafayette, as a public figure who encompassed the ideals of both the American and French Revolutions, was receptive to these alternative narratives in ways that other stalwarts from the Federalist era were not. He often publicly acknowledged the legitimacy of a variety of collective memories of the Revolution during his tour. Thus, Levasseur's accounts of his tour provide a rich archive of narratives of the Revolution that were very different from those espoused in the commemorative orations of Webster and Everett. My

[28]The classic work of the role of the frontier in the formation of American cultural identity is of course Frederick Jackson Turner's *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. For recent revisions of Turner's frontier thesis see Weeks and Van Atta who include an excellent survey of secondary sources . See Howe *What Hath God Wrought* especially pages 135-142, for an extended discussion of the cultural effects of the Great Migration as well as the Yankee and Butternut divide. Also see Watts, Gray, and Clayton.

interest is in identifying how the narratives of the Revolution that constitute what one study of Lafayette's tour of the United States calls "the response of *articulate* Americans" which include "political leaders, public speakers, and writers" were often shaped in response to the debate over who and what an American should denote (Loveland 4, emphasis mine). Though their adequate recovery is outside the scope of this project, shedding light on unexpected sites of collective memory also marks a call to recover these narratives of the Revolution that pointed to ideas of democratic political action drowned out by more articulate Americans speaking more conscientiously to the historical record.

The popular fetes that often marked the occasion for popular oration were common commemorative acts that participated in fixing the cultural memory to be represented by monuments. At those occasions, people were free to celebrate their own understanding of their American identities, while also being often subjected to ideologically charged orations that were meant to shape their understanding of being an American by those who had significant interest in swaying the majority of public opinion. Thus, the study of Lafayette's tour also serves as a contribution to the body of scholarship that maintains oratory and fete created narratives as central to imagining national communities as print culture. Yet, I also want to establish that the line between print culture and other cultural acts of commemoration are often blurred if non-existent. As the story of Catherine and Cornelia suggests, Americans actively participated in public events of commemoration in manners as vastly different as the ways readers engage literary texts. Thus, an equally important aim here is to explore the ways in which increasingly democratized communities interact with scripted cultural events. Doing so contributes to our understanding of the multitude of ways in which democratic communities imagine themselves in

excess of and against the more official nationalisms we are accustomed to reading for in this period.

Lafayette's Tour and Counter-Democratic Currents

In what remains the only book length cultural analysis of Lafayette's tour, Anne Loveland's stated concern is not the "flesh-and-blood" Lafayette, but the "romanticized and idealized personage found in American mythology, and, even more, with what it reveals about the people who created it" (4). She argues that by the 1820's Lafayette's image in America had "crystalized" which indicated that Americans share "a collective American response to Lafayette and his career" (4-5). Her evidence, as I stated previously, is gleaned from "the response of articulate Americans" who in their writings and orations sought to idealize Lafayette as the embodiment of liberty. This image, she goes on to establish, is one of "model patriot, servant of America, and agent of the American mission" (26), and an "embodiment of republican virtue… at a time when Americans were greatly concerned about their own seeming lack of it" (34). Loveland's reading of Lafayette as a member of the pantheon of American founding fathers harkens back to the golden age of Federalism when reformed natural aristocrats driven by a dispassionate interest in the cause of natural liberty steered the ship of the American republic. Her dissociation of the mythological Lafayette from his "flesh-and-blood" materiality establishes him as an icon through which Americans of the Early Republic imagined themselves, as Benedict Anderson describes, in "communion" with fellow-members of the nation they have never met.[29]

[29] See Anderson (6).

Indeed, if assessed with a lens tinged by Ernst Renan's definition of the nation, the tour does appear as an early manifestation of homogenous American nationalism.[30] During his one year visit of the United States from August 14, 1824 to September 9, 1825 at the formal invitation of the U.S. Congress, Lafayette visited all twenty four states and was feted as a hero by patriotic throngs of Americans in all of them. However, a more careful consideration of the politics surrounding the tour as well as the materiality of the tour itself suggests that the images of Lafayette, like the nation who celebrated him, were far from crystallized. Historian Sylvia Neely links Lafayette's tour politically to the delivery of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823. Neely argues that in the wake of European anti-revolutionist sentiment brought about by Napoleon's defeat by the Holy Alliance and the subsequent Bourbon restoration in France, the Monroe administration was concerned about the possibility of European encroachment in the New World. She writes, "Monroe feared that, after crushing revolutionary movements in Europe, the monarchical parties would turn their attention to America, return South America to Spanish rule, and try to overthrow the North American republic, [in Monroe's eyes] the source and ally of these revolutionary movements" (163). The Monroe Doctrine, in fact, was born out of a proposal by British foreign minister George Canning to issue a joint statement against European encroachment into South America. John Quincy Adams, Monroe's Secretary of State, who was fostering his own presidential ambitions for the 1824 election, did not want to be seen forming an alliance with the British as he already faced accusations from his political enemies that he was "a British-loving Federalist" (Neely 163). Monroe also argued that the United States needed to become more involved with European politics by expressing support for the Greeks in their War for Independence from the Ottoman Empire (164). Adams eventually succeeded in reining

[30] See Ernest Renan "What is a Nation? (1882)

Monroe in and it was Adams' separate sphere policy that was espoused in Monroe's address to Congress in December of 1823.

One month later, Monroe's enthusiasm for American involvement in European politics would seem to have waned when he publicly opposed a resolution in favor of official recognition of the Greeks defended by Senators Daniel Webster and Henry Clay. In Webster's speech in support of the resolution, he criticized the Holy Alliance and suggested that "the United States was as logical a target for their doctrines as any of the countries in Europe" (167). However, Neely argues Monroe still hoped to keep the possibility open for the U.S. to change its official policy towards Europe. His likely support for the resolution to invite Lafayette that was adopted in the same session was at least in part a symbolic show of American support to revolutionary movements in Europe.[31]

Like his friend James Monroe, Lafayette also believed that the American Revolution was the origin of subsequent democratic revolutions throughout the world. A staunch supporter of republican liberty, Lafayette had lost favor in the context of the new French royalist government. He openly supported the Greek and South American revolutions to the displeasure of the Holy Alliance. After openly criticizing France's support of the Spanish monarchy during the Spanish Revolution of 1820, he lost his seat in the Chamber of Deputies in 1824. The success of the Spanish mission garnered a great deal of favor for the royalist French government at home. Neely writes, "[a]t the nadir of his political fortunes, having failed to rouse the country to rebel against the Bourbon regime, to win reelection, or to defeat the powers of the Holy Alliance in any country, Lafayette once again turned to the United States" (155). Thus despite continuous

[31] Neely notes that Lafayette's political and financial problems in France delayed his departure from early 1824, which marked the height of "enthusiasm over the Greek cause" to the late summer. By that time, Monroe may have been second guessing his original support for the visit. See Neely 169-170.

descriptions of him as a disinterested member of the pantheon of founding fathers by his American hosts, Lafayette had clear political ambitions for his tour. Neely adeptly describes the meaning of the trip for Lafayette:

> The trip was much more than a return to old haunts for Lafayette, much more than a chance to greet old friends and reminisce about youthful adventures. It was a means of continuing French political struggles on a new front. By focusing European attention on the United States, the most important republic in the world, he could hope to breathe new life into the almost moribund cause of liberty and constitutional government. (155-156)

Similarly, Neely suggests that if American fears over European encroachment came to fruition, "Lafayette could help to rally the American people to greater exertions should it prove necessary. As the most visible opponent of the system of 'privilege' in Europe, his visit could demonstrate forcefully the need to do battle with that system" (169).

Lafayette was accompanied to the United States by his son, George Washington Lafayette, and his travelling secretary, Auguste Levasseur. Levasseur was tasked with keeping a journal of Lafayette's tour and he and George sent regular packets of newspaper articles to liberal journalist Jean-Pierre Pages de 1'Ariege in France who was to have them published. However, the French government strictly censored accounts of the trip in the newspapers, so Pages de l'Ariege arranged to have them published in book form (Neely 157). Levasseur's journal was published both in Paris and in translation in New York and Philadelphia in 1829 as *Lafayette in America in 1824 and 1825; or, Journal of a Voyage to the United States.* The French government was displeased with Lafayette's regained popularity and his political maneuvering. During the tour, Lafayette made frequent mention of his political agenda in most of his official appearances on the tour. For example, he reported in a letter to his family that in response to

Henry Clay's welcome speech before Congress, he was sure "to speak of South America; the new independent republics show a great deal of kindness toward me. I try to be as useful to the Greek cause as I can, and as much as the policy of the United States toward Europe permits. There is another interest which I do not abandon, but it is the most difficult to serve loudly" (qtd. in Neely 162). The last interest was in the abolition of slavery, a cause that Lafayette promoted carefully but certainly did not hide his feelings about during his tour. Neely concludes that Lafayette's politics would have been well known to the American politicians who invited him and so they "surely realized that he would use the forum of the United States to promote them. It seems likely that the invitation was issued not in spite of, but because of, his well-known principles" (162). The U.S. government even provided an American ship for his passage. Thus, though not as overt as a bilateral agreement with the British or a resolution in favor of Greece would have been, Lafayette's tour seems to have contradicted the official policy of neutrality in European affairs. In addition, by reawakening the liberal movement in France the tour can be read as a political intervention against European monarchism and the holy alliance and in favor of democratic republicanism. Neely summarizes, "[D]espite the Monroe Doctrine's insistence on neutrality in European affairs, there were many Americans who were eager to do more. The government judged it foolhardy to get involved, but the invitation to Lafayette was a sign of this longing to do more" (171).

Thus, Lafayette's political motives were too great for him to be understood, as Loveland would have it, as merely a disinterested relic from a bygone era to be used in hopes of "engendering 'national feeling' or a consensus on the republican principles born out of the Revolution" in the midst of "anxiety over the apparent disintegration of the republican consensus" in the mid-1820s (43-44). Though he fell more on the conservative end among

French revolutionaries during his own country's revolution, he represented a more radically democratic aspect of the American Revolution that was still alive and well during his visit to the U.S. Lafayette's biographer Lloyd Kramer argues that this aspect has been forgotten as a result of twentieth century studies of Lafayette influenced largely by official French dismissals of him during the end of his life that emphasize his "mediocrity and insignificance" (275). Instead, Kramer emphasizes his "optimism about the future of democratic politics."

> Lafayette and his fellow revolutionary actors believed in every case that the political struggles of the day would lead to a better, freer future. Indeed, from the perspective of our more cynical, ironic era, the most remarkable ideological feature of this "age of the democratic revolution" may well appear in its optimism about the value of political action and in the expectation that political ideals (for example, individual freedom, democratic government) can be put into practice through new political movements or institutions. (276)

Following Kramer, I argue Lafayette's tour should be read for its hopes of keeping the principles of the Revolution alive through fostering democratic ideals among disparate groups of Americans rather than as part of a conservative plot to, as Michael Kammen put it, de-revolutionize the revolution.

Auguste Levasseur's narrative gives a thorough account of the vibrancy of different democratic ideals in various locales throughout the United States in 1824 and 1825, as well as a snapshot of a specific moment of Loughran's identification of "the unfinished work of U.S. nation building as it proliferated both as an ideology and as a set of material practices in the years between the Revolution and the Civil War" (xvii). 1824 and 1825 mark a turning point in what historians term the rise of American democracy. John Quincy Adams' controversial

election as president marked the end of the so called "Era of Good Feelings" and the beginnings of what would become the American Democratic Party. However much in hindsight Andrew Jackson's eventual election to President in 1828 seems like a foregone conclusion, in 1824 it was not. Jackson and the Democratic Party he founded did not yet have a monopoly on democracy, and it would take considerable effort and organization by Jackson and his allies before they were able to sway popular support. As Howe observes:

> Although it responded to the democratization of American life, the Democratic Party was not the spontaneous creation of a mass movement from the bottom up. There were "bottom up" movements in the young republic— among them Antimasonry, nativism, sabbatarianism, and the early labor movement— but the Democratic Party was not among them. The national party convention, for example, invented by the Antimasons, was adopted by the Democrats and later the Whigs in order to unify the respective parties and validate their leadership, not because of grassroots demand for it. (488-489)

Thus, remnants of a variety of different kinds of democratic currents that had very little to do with Andrew Jackson or what would become the American Democratic Party pepper Levasseur's account of the tour. Their expression, because they were witnessed in conjunction with Lafayette's visits, are linked in some way to collective memory of the Revolution, both communicative and cultural. Yet they do not necessarily coincide with Whiggish calls for a nation unified by a common core either. Reading for these expressions of democracy that have been forgotten in the wake of a what has become a corrupted version of democracy coopted by the U.S. nation state can help to restore a certain optimism about the possibility for unimagined democratic futures that are not dominated by the nation, as Kramer suggests. Both Lafayette's and Levasseur's positions as figures tapped into international democratic currents help to

illuminate democratic tropes that in their local expressions, counter the ideological and material practices of U.S. nation building on a broader political level.

Levasseur had his own political agenda to promote with the publication of his journal. Forced to resign from the French infantry after he was found to be involved with the Carbonari uprisings in 1821 and 1822, he had his own reasons for seeking reentry into public life in royalist France (Neely 157). In fact, Levasseur could be trusted as Lafayette's travelling secretary because of his liberal politics (Franklin, *"*Everything was Subordinated*"* n.p.). Levasseur withheld publication of the journal until 1829 because he wanted to wait until he was no longer employed by Lafayette so that he could use the publication of the account to advance his own entrance into French intellectual life (Franklin, n.p.). In the preface he nods towards his political agenda when he writes, "I need not say that in offering to my friends and the public, the details of a triumph, which honours the nation that decreed it, as much as the man who was its object, the recital of which, I hope will one day prove to be the greatest encouragement that can be offered to the sincere friends of a wise liberty" (Vol. I, iii). This would have been a provocative statement in 1829 royalist France both for its statement of support for Lafayette and its acknowledgement of republican minded friends of liberty. The addition of the adjective "wise" is perhaps a knock against more radical and violent revolutionaries.

Alexis de Tocqueville's account of his tour of America in 1831 and 1832 which formed the basis for his canonical study of the political culture of antebellum America, *Democracy in America* provides a useful counter against which to read Levasseur's account of Lafayette's tour. Levasseur, de Tocqueville, and Lafayette shared similar political leanings and all three looked to America for answers to the social and political problems facing France of their day. However, de Tocqueville's visit was sponsored by the new French constitutional-monarchy known as the July

Monarchy that was instilled as a result of the Second French Revolution in 1830.[32] Thus, the two tours occurred during very different political backdrops in France. In the United States, Andrew Jackson was nearing the end of his first term and for better or worse had become the figurehead for popular sovereignty in the U.S. Thus, the concept of popular democracy had become a subject approached by the political elite with great trepidation. As a result, Kramer notes, whereas Levasseur's story of democracy in America was infused with "greater optimism about the consequences of legal and political equality in democratic society," Tocqueville, on the other hand, "tended to describe America according to various neo Federalist theories, which meant that his narrative was often more abstract than empirical and more concerned with the dangers of radical equality than with the dangers of political inequalities or exclusion" (195, 198).[33] Levasseur's narrative is thus a celebration of American popular democracy, and Tocqueville's narrative is more a critical analysis of it. In this sense, Tocqueville authorized a restoratively nostalgic memory of a singular legacy of the American Revolution such as that which the BHMA tried to create, whereas Levasseur did not feel the need to reconcile multiple and often contradicting legacies of the Revolution in the interest of promoting maximum democratic liberty and equality.

Sarah Purcell's identification of moments of public gratitude in celebrations of the Revolution as a trope indicative of "the powerful influence and status of the democratic audience, which was supposed to stand in for the American nation itself and had been growing in

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[32] Lafayette had been instrumental in the establishment of this "republican-monarchy" which he saw as both a compromise between more radical republicans and the bourgeois power holders of French society and a graduated step to what he hoped would be the ultimate abolition of monarchism once France was ready. See Kramer 227-252.

[33] Kramer makes an extended comparison in the chapter "Lafayette, Tocqueville, and American National Identity" (185-226).

influence since the late 1780's" proves a useful methodology for identifying democratic moments in Levasseur's narrative. We have already seen how Sarah Hale seized on an opportunity for public gratitude as a way to gain political influence in a hegemonic, male dominated public with her fundraising efforts to build the monument. However, Purcell sees the fact that " 'the people' felt themselves more at home at Revolutionary War commemoration in the 1820's…as a precursor to a democratic Jacksonian society of participatory politics" (174). For Purcell, Jackson and the Democracy of the 1830s and 1840s becomes the dominant lens for interpreting democratic currents in the 1820's. Thus, unsurprisingly, she finds that "public memory of the Revolutionary War in the 1820's defined a new commercialized, democratic nation, but one that kept its eyes on the past for inspiration" that predicts the course Jacksonian democracy would take (173). Though these kernels of The Democracy are undoubtedly extant, there are kernels of other democratic movements present too. In Levasseur's narrative, there are a number of instances of public gratitude that suggest other democratic feelings that cannot be reconciled with what became the United States Democratic Party that dominated federal politics through much of the next 30 years.[34] Though within the limited space of this chapter there is inadequate space to fully develop a cohesive picture of these democratic currents, my goal here is to point to some manifestations of democracy that run counter to those that would become more fully engrained in the nation-state as it gained strength both ideologically and materially. Levasseur allows himself to get swept up by these countercurrents to imagine a new political subject position for those, like himself, who feel marginalized by current configurations of the

[34] One of the most often cited instances of public gratitude that helped marginalized groups gain public recognition, which is curiously omitted from Levasseur's narrative, occurred during Lafayette's visit to Yorktown, Virginia. Lafayette recognized James Armistead Lafayette, a freed slave who had served as a spy for Lafayette during the Revolution. The two embraced and the incident was reported in the *Richmond Gazette*. See Purcell (191) and Kimball (60).

political. The same countercurrents and political sentiments also figure into the literary and historical narratives I address in later chapters.[35]

Following his six-day stay in New York after his arrival in Staten Island, Lafayette and his entourage made the five-day trek to Boston. After touring Bunker Hill, Levasseur set out to "collect details relative to the history and present situation" of Massachusetts which he presents in the subsequent chapter. In his own account of the first skirmishes of the Revolution in and around Boston, Levasseur is most impressed with the seemingly universal commitment to Liberty that existed among the citizens of Boston. He notes the great numbers of citizens who responded to "the patriotic call" to efficiently organize to address their grievances following the Boston Massacre in 1770. Like Webster in his address, Levasseur seeks to divine a lesson to be inherited from this generation. However, unlike Webster who celebrates American respect for law and order and who makes the building of the nation-state synonymous with revolutionary ideals and moral improvement, Levasseur turns the lesson to be, above all, about the preservation of and deference to liberty. Levasseur recounts that upon arriving in Boston, Lafayette was introduced to a young man who presented the infantry sword Lafayette had issued to the young man's recently deceased father. The young man wished to present the sword to Lafayette as a gift, but Lafayette returned it to the young man immediately telling him, "Take it, guard it carefully in order that it may in your hands be used to preserve the rights it has so gloriously contributed to acquire in the hands of your father" (38). For Webster, and the BHMA, the rights

[35] Sean Wilentz in *Chants Democratic: New York City & the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (1984) does an admirable job of chronicling several of the democratic movements organized by the working class in New York during what is commonly called the Age of Jackson that would challenge Purcell's characterization of democracy in the 1820's. He provides an even more expanded catalog of democratic movements in *The Rise of American Democracy*, see especially pages 181-520. However, his primary adjective for describing democracy in the period is as growth towards a teleological end (see the Preface, especially pages xvii-xix).

that come with individual liberty were already guaranteed to the sons of those who fought and won the Revolution. The sons are charged with using their freedom to the glory of the nation. Lafayette and Levasseur both had witnessed first-hand in France how the nation-state could quickly become antithetical to the rights of the individual, and thus citizens must always be zealous in the protection of their rights. Levasseur was clearly impressed with how the citizens of Boston had, since regaining the city in March 1776, kept "[t]he town and province forever freed from the presence of the enemies of liberty" (59). However, it is always the citizens and not the government that protects these rights. Levasseur notes that though the "general welfare of the people" fostered by the free society "contributes to augment between all classes that equality which the constitution establishes between individuals, in the eye of the law" barriers to absolute equality still remain inculcated in the state constitution (60). The barrier, he writes, is a remnant of the "religious tyranny of the first settlers" that excludes non-Christians from holding government office. Levasseur laments, "We can scarcely comprehend how, in a society so free and enlightened,… the state still can continue to refuse the services of a virtuous man, because the individual may be a Jew or a Mussulman" (61). The state, as always, remains a barrier to democracy. The citizens are what keep a society free. Thus, communicative memories of the revolution, that is, memories of individuals, not those cultural memories which have been crafted and propagated by the state, become a way to safeguard a "free and enlightened" society. He deems the remarkable "care with which the Americans preserve all the monuments [here referring to relics as opposed to public monuments] of the revolution" as "praiseworthy since it contributes to feed the sacred fire of love of liberty, by which they are animated" (67). In the translation, it is not clear whether "they" refers to Americans or the monuments. Perhaps it should be read as an endorsement of living monuments where relics keep multiple memories of

the past alive by the stories they inspire. Instances such as that with the young man in Boston, where individuals, often veterans themselves, approach to tell their story in order to express their gratitude to Lafayette in the midst of larger official celebrations sponsored by state officials are the most poignant stories related by Levasseur in his narrative. By the end of the second volume, he forgoes description of most official events because of their monotonous similarities.

Barriers to the achievement of liberty and equality for all that are written into the constitutions of various states form the basis for most of Levasseur's critiques of American institutions. The republican federal government, which he seems to take as the most democratic, for the most part remains blameless. State sanctioned slavery is the most egregious offense. Yet, even here, Levasseur blames the state more than he does any prejudice held by the people. In telling a history of Virginia, he blames the fact that Virginia, despite its natural resources, has not become "the richest and best peopled state in the union" because of slavery (203). He writes, "the smallness of the villages, and the poverty of the cultivation, will not disappear, until Virginia, comprehending her true interests better, and placing them in harmony with the principles of liberty and equality so clearly established in her declaration of rights, and so vigorously defended by her arms, shall have finally abolished negro slavery" (203). Levasseur finds slavery's continued existence a mystery. He finds very little popular sentiment in favor of slavery, having "traversed the 24 states of the union, and in the course of a year hav[ing] had [multiple] discussions on the subject [of slavery], I declare I have found but a single person who seriously defended this principle" (204). Like in Massachusetts, he can only conclude that the "frightful evil" of old prejudices had been so ingrained into state institutions that it led to them "becoming fixed in the manners of the citizens" (205). Later, again citing slavery as the cause, he names North Carolina "the least advanced of all the states" (vol. II, 37). He finds slavery allowed

"some traces of aristocracy" to still be found in the state constitution" (ibid). Yet again, it is the corrupt state and not the citizens that are to blame. He observes, "The inhabitants of North Carolina, from their patriotism, are unquestionably worthy to form a part of the great confederate family of the United States" (38). Thus, in Levasseur's estimation, it is the states' rights and not the overreaching power of the federal government that is anti-democratic. This is a critique that counters one of the central tenants of Jacksonian Democracy. Yet neither can this be squared with the eventual Whig platform, for it is still the influence of the people over the federal government rather than the influence of the federal government over the people that maximizes democratic potential.

Levasseur suggests that the cause of the undemocratic prejudices intrinsic to the various state governments is the result of a longer history of European anti-democratic prejudice. In the examples above, the bias and tyranny inculcated in state constitutions are said to have originated with the original European settlers. The plight of Native Americans is especially suggestive of the European origin of these prejudices. While in New Hampshire, Levasseur meets his first Indians. He is unimpressed.

> I confess that I found nothing in them which corresponds with my ideas of these children of nature. Their dresses had no other character than that of misery; crosses and chaplets had taken the place of their beautiful head-dresses of plumes, their furs and their arms; their drunk visages had nothing of that noble expression which is said so particularly to distinguish the savage man: at first their manners appeared affectionate, but it was soon evident that they were only servile or interested…In a word it appeared to me that these poor wretches had only changed superstitions, and that civilization had brought them its vices without any of its benefits. (Vol. I, 74)

Levasseur seems to find the root cause of their plight to be the fact that they lived in Canada in "the vicinity of the English" and "loved the French very much" (75). However, this expressed love of the French represents a certain ironic twist of the trope of popular gratitude. The exchange of their superstitions signified by the Indians' Catholic relics as well as the evidence of over indulging their vices suggests the corrupting influence of the French. Thus the Indians love of the French is more for providing them with the means to indulge themselves than for their liberating influence. However, before Levasseur can develop whatever point he may be trying to make, he continues on with his narrative. The translator of Levasseur's journal, naturalist John D. Godman, M.D., in seeming displeasure with Levasseur for leaving his thought incomplete, inserts a note in which he comments on the frequency with which Europeans commit the same error in expecting the "aborigines of America" to resemble the mythological "children of nature." In fact:

> the unvarnished truth is the best of the known tribes exhibit specimens of humanity in its extreme degradation from a more perfect condition…Inevitably destined to extinction, they appear, like another coloured race, to be suffering under the infliction of a tremendous temporal punishment for some ancient national crime. Such a conclusion is at least strongly borne out by the history of this continent, and we have already lived to see Spain beginning to receive her reward for the part she played in the dreadful tragedies by which this history is decorated; must not the day of retribution for the United States also arrive? (note, p. 74)

By Godman's estimation, the injustice which the degradation of Native Americans and African Americans represents is part of the history of the continent itself. Godman undoubtedly takes the history of the continent to begin with European contact. Thus, he seems to be establishing that

the history of Europe in the New World, an undoubtedly progressive history of modern improvements to all aspects of European society through Enlightenment ideals, is also a history infused with "dreadful tragedies" resulting from a legacy of racism and injustice tied to the legacy of European monarchism. These tragedies continue to inhibit the progress of democracy not just in the New World, but in the Old World as well. European prejudice thus inhibits the progress in both hemispheres in the same way that Levasseur says slavery inhibited Virginia from becoming the "best peopled and richest state in the Union" or that the various prejudices contained in the constitutions of the several states inhibit the realization of democracy in the United States. Further, in what is perhaps a world view that corresponds with the ideology undergirding the Monroe Doctrine, Godman seems to see the United States as the inheritor of English imperialism in the New World. England's twin imperial power, Spain, has received her reward. England-cum-the United States is poised to be next.

Levasseur seems to embody a certain amount of shame for Europe's propagation of the injustice of Native American and African American degradation, but he also at points imagines that the political situation in France subjects French subjects to a similar state of degradation. Later on in the tour during an unscheduled visit to Kaskaskia, Illinois, Levasseur's encounter with Native Americans living in the area led him to imagine existence in a degraded state as constituting a powerful political position. The history of the town of Kaskaskia offers a snapshot of both the triumphs and tragedies in the long history of New World colonization, and serves as an ideal setting for turning degradation into political action. Kaskaskia was first settled in 1703 by French missionaries who sought to convert local Native American tribes to Catholicism. Desirably situated near the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, it served as a regional center of trade throughout the colonial era. Once the capital of French Upper Louisiana and an

important supplier of crops like wheat and corn to New Orleans, it was lost to the British as a consequence of the French and Indian War and became part of Virginia. It was the site of one of the western most battles of the Revolution when Virginia General George Rogers Clark took the city from the British in 1778.[36] Kaskaskia later served as the territorial capital of Illinois until 1818 and then state capital until 1819. The introduction of steamboats to the Mississippi River again brought economic growth to the town and a renewed connection to New Orleans as well as points east. However, the same technological innovations that brought wealth to the area eventually led to its downfall. The environmental effects of steamboats, particularly the deforestation of the banks for wood to fuel the engines, destabilized the banks of the river. The town was relocated after the Great Flood of 1844 when the original town became an island. Another large flood in 1881 destroyed the remnants of the old town and changed the flow of the Mississippi. The relocated town never recovered its former glory and was practically deserted by the mid-twentieth century.[37]

When Levasseur visited the town in 1825 the people who greeted him were representative of its colonial history. Levasseur is initially astonished by the "variety and fantastic appearance" of the crowd that greeted them.

> Beside men whose dignity of countenance, the patriotic exaltation of expression, readily indicated them to be Americans, were others whose coarse dresses, vivacity, petulance of movement, and the expansive joy of their visages, strongly recalled to me the peasantry of my own country; behind these,…stood some immovable, impassable, large, red, half

[36] See Nester.
[37] See Norris.

> naked figures, leaning on a bow or a long rifle: these were the Indians of the neighbourhood. (Vol. II 130-131).

After first greeting some local Revolutionary veterans, the entourage is introduced to one of the groups of French peasants who, Levasseur learns, are French because they "are acquainted with France only by tradition of the reign of Louis XIV," the King of France when the region was first settled. He names them Canadians despite the fact they live in the area. He learns they have no knowledge of the French Revolution or the "convulsions during the last forty years" and are surprised to learn of how Napoleon "had successively destroyed our liberty, and paralyzed the exercise of our rights" (132). The Canadians lament that their compatriots from "Grand France" are "to be pitied more than the negro slaves of Louisiana" (133). The comparison embarrasses Levasseur. He states, "my national vanity suffered singularly to hear ignorant Canadians express sentiments of pity for my countrymen, and draw a parallel to their disadvantage between them and miserable slaves; but these sentiments were too well founded to admit of my complaining, and I was silent" (133). The comparison allows Levasseur, despite his guilt, to begin to imagine a parallel between himself as a French citizen and the degraded races of African Americans and Native Americans. They are all victims of the "deadly tragedies" that are byproducts of European progressive history.

Levasseur is next introduced to a group of Indians and talks with a mixed blood Kickapoo and Canadian who lived among them. His attention is soon drawn to "a little man" whose face was "bloated by intemperance" who identifies himself as a member of the Miami tribe. The man laments the fact that, though his grandfather and father were chief, he was not chosen as chief. Another presumed member of the Miami scolds him for claiming natural rights to leadership, and Levasseur admits "feeling a sentiment of esteem for the Miami nation, who do

not believe that legitimacy in a prince can supply the place of all the virtues" (135). The republican Levasseur reads the admonishment of the chief's son by his fellow tribesmen as a republican statement denying the divine right of kings. The encounter with the Miami serves as a second instance where Levasseur imagines an affinity between himself and the degraded races.

Levasseur takes every opportunity to learn more about the local native population during his brief stay in Kaskaskia. He next visits an "Indian encampment" a short distance from the town. He is disappointed to find the village deserted except for one old woman who largely ignores them. However, while there he sees a small mill-wheel which he takes to be a child's toy that had been thrown on the bank of the river by the current. He places it back on the two stones that served as its base. This excites the old woman for reasons that remain mysterious to Levasseur until he returns to the village later that evening to retrieve a native woman, Mary, who had requested a meeting with Lafayette. This time upon his return Levasseur is finally afforded the Native American encounter that was previously denied to him. Upon returning to the village, he is recognized by the old woman and immediately engulfed by a throng of dancers who "rushed round me in a circle, and began to dance with demonstrations of great joy and gratitude" (138). Levasseur is simultaneously thrilled and terrified, "every thing gave to this scene something of an infernal aspect, and I fancied myself for an instant in the midst of demons" (138). Mary, who it turns out was converted to Christianity as a result of being raised by a local French family, puts a stop to the dancing. She explains to Levasseur the reason for the honor bestowed upon him. By local custom, the mill wheel is deployed when the natives "wish to know if an enterprize [they] meditate will be happy." If the wheel turns undisturbed for "three suns" it is a sign of good omen, if the river's current carries it away the "project is not approved by the Great Spirit, unless, however, a stranger comes to replace our little wheel before the end of the

third day." Levasseur was this stranger who restores the "hopes" of the people. Mary, a good Christian, is dismissive of the superstition and Levasseur snaps out of his fancy. Nonetheless in this third encounter, Levasseur undeniably enjoys imagining himself as the tribe's savior. Restoring the turning of the wheel serves as an almost too neat symbol of setting the revolution back on course.

The reason Mary requests an audience with Lafayette is to present him with a letter given to her by her biological father, who she identifies as Panisciowa, an Indian chief of one of the Six Nations.[38] Mary refers to the letter as a "manitou" a powerful charm which her father told her she could "employ with the whites to interest them in thy favour" (141). Levasseur opens the letter and finds that it was a letter thanking her father "for the courageous manner in which he had served the American cause" signed by Lafayette and dated Albany, June, 1778.[39] Levasseur agrees to escort Mary along with a Native entourage to meet Lafayette who was attending an impromptu celebration at the house of a Kaskaskia dignitary.

During their journey back into town, Levasseur notes the fireflies and asks Mary if they have any significance to her people. Mary relates a ballad about a brave warrior, Antakaya, who left his betrothed, Manahella, to fight off the encroaching whites who were bringing "murder and robbery" to the frontier. Another warrior reports to Manahella that Antakaya had fallen in battle. The warrior calls him her "oak" and her his "ivy" and commands Manahella "Die, poor ivy, die! for the oak which was to give thee support is fallen." Two days later, Manahella died. But Ankara, it turns out, survived and upon returning to the village is devastated to find that

[38] The Six Nations presumably refers to the Iroquis confederacy.

[39] The location suggests that the letter refers to circumstances that surrounded the aborted Canada Invasion that Lafayette was to have led in the spring of 1778. However, the date would suggest it refers to circumstances surrounding actions at Barren Hill, Pennsylvania or the Battle of Monmouth.

Manahella had did. That night he prayed to Manahella to appear and lead him "to the world of the Great Spirit." "At the same instant, a vivid light, pure and lambent, appeared to the eyes of the unfortunate Antakaya. He saw in it the soul of his beloved, and followed it all through the night" (146). The light appeared the next night, too, and Antakaya builds a canoe to follow it across one of the great lakes. However, "it again disappeared before the light of the sun, and with it vanished the slight breath of hope and the life of Antakaya" (147). Though Levasseur does not offer any commentary on the story, he is clearly moved by it. Despite the lack of commentary, we can infer that Levasseur sees himself in this story about hope extinguished by yet another tragic side effect of European prejudice, and this serves as a fourth encounter in which Levasseur sees himself in allegiance with the disparaged victims of European prejudice.

Upon arriving at the celebration, Mary asks Levasseur to bring Lafayette down to meet her in a lower chamber of the house in order to save her the "mortification" of the "contempt and pity" her coarse dress would inspire from the ladies of Kaskaskia "in their most brilliant dresses" (147). Lafayette eagerly listens to Mary's story and is clearly moved to learn of the "holy veneration [with which the letter] had been preserved during nearly half a century in a savage nation, among whom he had not even supposed his name had ever penetrated" (147). During a half hour of conversation, Lafayette related "further evidence of fidelity and courageous conduct of some Indian nations towards the Americans during the revolutionary war" before Mary retires for the night. Mary's insistence on expressing her gratitude in private, beneath the public celebration upstairs is significant. The meeting is reminiscent of the secret meetings of Boston patriots had in the lead-up to the Revolution that Levasseur reported on with great admiration earlier in his narrative. Levasseur is clearly pleased with himself for arranging the meeting and Lafayette's recognition of Mary serves also as an authentication of the allegiance Levasseur has

imagined himself to have forged with the Indians of Kaskaskia. Mary, the Christianized Indian who lives between two worlds, serves as a tantalizing ally for Levasseur. And through her, he is allowed to glimpse a possible democratic future that once and for all escapes the dark shadow of European prejudice, as ultimately embarrassed as he is to admit it. Levasseur's narrative again abruptly changes course as the entourage moves down the river to Nashville, and the possibilities of his Kaskaskia allegiances are left unexplored.

James Fenimore Cooper was among those who were both the first to welcome Lafayette to the United States and the last to see him off during his two visits to New York City. He would narrate an account of the first visit for the *New-York American* in an article that illustrates how taken Cooper was with the display of popular sentiment for the "Hero of Two Worlds" and the overwhelming nostalgia for the Revolutionary War.[40] Cooper had been interested in Lafayette since learning about him from his second teacher, Oliver Cory in the 1790's.[41] Lafayette would continue to influence Cooper, and his *Notions of the Americans: Picked Up by a Travelling Bachelor* (1828) was written in response to Lafayette's repeated requests to write a book about his tour when the two became associates during Cooper's sojourn in France. Cooper, who did not wish to serve as Lafayette's mouthpiece, instead wrote a book that "would be Cooper's attempt to correct European errors on the subject of American political and social realities, errors that often arose from deep distrust of democracy among Old World partisans" (Franklin "Everything was Subordinated, n.p.). Cooper also encouraged the Philadelphia publishers Lea & Carey to print Levasseur's narrative (ibid).

[40] See Adams (25-26).

[41] See Franklin, *James Fenimore Cooper: The Early Years* (27-28).

Cooper's third novel of the Revolution, *Lionel Lincoln*; *or*, *the Leaguer of Boston* represented the author's own attempt to seize upon nostalgia for the Revolution that was reaching all corners of the United States. As such, it represents another instance of a cultural formation that participates in forming collective memories of the Revolution at a time when the dominant mode of remembering was shifting from communicative to cultural. In this novel more than his two previous Revolutionary War novels, Cooper would question the truth claims of those formations and practices of Revolutionary commemoration guided by a restorative vision of history in an attempt to defend his own version of democracy.

CHAPTER 2

Lionel Lincoln and Democratic Disorder in Revolutionary Boston

[I]t would be much more true to say that democracy refuses to lend itself to unnatural and arbitrary distinctions, than to accuse it of a tendency to level those who have a just claim to be elevated. A denial of a favor, is not an invasion of a right.

--James Fenimore Cooper, *The American Democrat* (1838).

The principle of democracy is not the leveling—real or assumed—of social conditions. It is not a social condition but a symbolic break: a break with a determined order of relationships between bodies and words, between ways of speaking, ways of doing and ways of being. In this sense we can oppose 'literary democracy' to the classical order of representation.

--Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Literature* (2011).

The refusal of or breaking with existing orders of relationship and representation is a central preoccupation not only of democracy but also of the Enlightenment. The first lines of the *Declaration of Independence,* for example, are concerned with the dissolution of extant political affiliations and the assumption of new ones. The dissolution of extant orders is authorized by a right entitled by "the Laws of Nature." The Laws of nature are the most just because they are issued by the decision of the most sovereign, "Nature's God." The experiments in government that Enlightenment ideals are said to authorize are often understood as attempts to create more just political affiliations based on legal orders more completely representative of natural and divine law. Yet, in the end, the distinction between the divine justice of natural law and the injustice of manmade law remains unbridgeable. Thus, for the Enlightenment, justice, if it exists, is incumbent both on the refusal of unnatural and arbitrary distinctions and the ethic that compels one to be accountable to something that exceeds the limits of one's own self-understanding.

In Cooper's 1838 political essay *The American Democrat,* natural justice is also a principle more sacrosanct than law. Generally, the infallibility of justice is placed in juxtaposition to the fallibility of legal systems. In the first treatise from the essay, "On

Governments," Cooper explains that governments consisting of laws "founded on the immutable principles of natural justice" must be established to protect humankind from its own "weakness." Such laws protect against unjust incursions against individual and collective freedoms such as "the feeble against the violence of the strong; the honest from the schemes of the dishonest; the temperate and industrious, from the waste and indolence of the dissolute and idle" (1). By Cooper's formulation, laws and governments can be founded by men in the name of justice, but they are not in and of themselves just. Therefore, because all governments are manmade, they have a tendency towards injustice. The most unjust governments are those in which artificial distinctions made by law become so impressed on a society that they become mistaken for natural. For Cooper, aristocratic governments are the most artificial. Cooper describes the aristocratic form of government in its "unmitigated form [as] one of the worst known" (67) and also argues that "[a]ristocracies wound the sense of natural justice, and consequently unsettle principles, by placing men, altogether unworthy of trust, in high hereditary situations" (79). Cooper posits the democratic republican government of the United States as the best of all known worlds, but it is still far from perfect in carrying out the edicts of natural justice.[1] Thus, Cooper's preference for republicanism as a political form and democracy as a political principle should be understood as a pragmatic choice that amounts to a preference for the least of all evils. Republicanism, in Cooper's estimation, is best because of its allegiance to the right of the

[1] Justice at times becomes associated with pure equality and pure liberty. For Cooper, the achievement of both is not possible in civilization. See particularly the sections "On the Republick of the United States," "On Equality," and "On Liberty."

community.[2] Democracy as a political principle is best, the quote above suggests, because of democracy's tendency to stand against "favor" achieved by benefit of "unnatural and arbitrary distinctions" and thus democracy stands on the side of justice. However, as the rest of Cooper's essay makes clear, neither republicanism nor democracy is ever divinely, naturally, or otherwise just.

Cooper is clear in his contention that though divinely ordained natural justice is an immutable fact, it remains absent from manmade legal and governmental systems. His fiction is commonly read as exploring what happens when legal order is imposed on neutral spaces and the injustice that inevitably accompanies the imposition of order. Typically, Cooper's exploration of these themes is read as an attempt to order the various registers of American experience. For example, Henry Nash Smith's classic work of myth and symbol criticism, *Virgin Land,* makes order synonymous with justice for Cooper. Using Cooper's advent of Natty Bumppo in his third novel, *The Pioneers,* Smith argues that even though he points to various issues irreconcilable to legal proceduralism, "Cooper displays a genuine ambivalence toward all [of them]…in every case his strongest commitment is to the forces of order" (62). The notion that order stands for justice to the point where a search for order becomes synonymous with a search for justice has since become common place in readings of Cooper. These readings also tend to uphold the

[2] Republicanism and democracy are seen as synonymous in Cooper's political thinking. Yet, I make the case that in *The American Democrat* they remain distinguishable on the basis of form versus principle. Cooper maintains republics and monarchies can both be made to serve an aristocracy or a democracy. Cooper's preference for republicanism is chiefly due to its commitment to the right of the community over the right of the sovereign. He associates "republic" with "commonwealth" taking wealth "in its political sense, to mean prosperity in general, and not riches in particular" (3). Presumably, aristocracies define community much more narrowly than democracies do.

exceptionalist claim that American democracy is synonymous with divine justice.[3] That is, it has become a given that Cooper believes that justice lies at the core of "America," whether America is defined by its people, land, government, history, or any combination thereof, and therefore the forces of order that originate from this authoritative core can be just.[4] In such a scenario, law would be perfectible much like art. And in fact, much of the criticism suggests that, for Cooper, law is a perfectible art form that, in the hands of master practitioners, could perfectly represent an already existing universal natural principle.

However, the fact that the bulk of Cooper's fiction seems to belie this premise has been the fruit of much displeasure to critics who seek to describe what exactly would constitute a just legal order for Cooper.[5] Cooper's novels tend to be more preoccupied with the inadequacies of systems of American order than they are with perfecting them. In his novels, laws are often enforced without regard to justice. Characters with the most astute sense of justice often operate outside of the law and in opposition to established social orders in the name of justice. Paradoxically, once social crises are resolved and order is restored, the same characters are subject to tragic fates because there is no space for them in the new order they helped to bring about in the first place. Cooper's most famous character, Natty Bumppo from the Leather-

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[3] I would argue that such a claim is central to the criticism that places Cooper as an early patriot and believer and exponent of the myth of American exceptionalism. W.M Verhoeven glosses the body of scholarship that establishes this particular conception of Cooper from D.H. Lawrence to James Beard in his introduction to *James Fenimore Cooper: New Historical and Literary Contexts*. See particularly pages 9 and 10.

[4] John P. McWilliams has been the most responsible for establishing this argument. See *Political Justice in a Republic: James Fenimore Cooper's America.*

[5] In his entry on James Fenimore Cooper in *Prospects for the Study of American Literature (II)*, Lance Schachterle argues for more study on Cooper's nuanced and complicated understanding of politics. He points to a troubling trend in Cooper scholarship that tends to "filter Cooper's troubling uncertainties through the conventional assumptions of what he allegedly means" (2).

Stocking Tales, is the prime example of a character subjected to a tragic fate despite the fact that he protects members of established social orders from themselves. In *The Pioneers*, he is instrumental in making the town of Templeton legitimate after it is revealed at the end of the novel that he and John Mohegan had been sheltering Major Effingham, the original loyalist owner of the land patent for the town. Marmaduke Temple had been given the patent in trust during the war and, after assuming Effingham had died at sea, founded the town. After the Effingham and Temple families are reconciled thanks to Natty's efforts, Natty picks up stakes and heads west never to be heard from again. The fact that he is prosecuted for disobeying unjust laws makes it clear there is no space for Natty in the town he helped legitimize.[6] Harvey Birch from *The Spy*, is another character continually subjected to injustices whom I will discuss more in depth below.

More recent re-conceptions of Cooper's legacy assert that Cooper's preoccupation over how natural justice is and is not translated into existing forms of government and legal codes coincides with one of Cooper's chief professional preoccupations. Cooper was struggling to support himself as a professional author at a time when being an author was not an established profession. As a struggling author whose primary subject matter was a young country still very much defining itself, Cooper undoubtedly would not have been very certain about the course of his literary career or the young Republic. What he was more certain about was that sustained engagement with inherited forms was a necessity not only for his survival as an artist, but also for the survival of his country. Jerome McGann argues that the latter concern was in fact more

[6] Stephen Railton addresses the legacy of Natty Bumppo in his contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to American Novelists.* In "Cooper's Pioneer: Breaking the Chain of Representation," Hans Löfgren offers an excellent and nuanced reading of Natty's departure at the end of the novel as an exemplary moment in the construction of the post-Enlightenment subject.

important to Cooper than achieving aesthetic symmetry in his work. He writes, "Cooper's fictions do not turn on normative moral character, the resolution of elaborated plots, or the construction of self-subsistent imaginative worlds. Their artistic center—their source and test and end—lies in Cooper's effort to provoke critical reflection" (126). The fact that Cooper was firmly entrenched in the nuanced political currents that affected all Americans in the early republic is starkly different from the picture much of the critical history paints of Cooper as an ambivalent democrat or a lofty gentleman of letters cranky about a literary market that did not appreciate his talent and originality.

In this chapter, I want to argue that an underappreciated political aspect of Cooper's fiction is also an understudied aspect of the genre known as the American Historical Romance. I will call attention to this genre's dependence on the literary challenges of what Jacques Rancière terms the determined orders of ways of speaking, ways of doing, and ways of being. Cooper's ambivalence to the order he seems at other times to so strongly insist on is often read as an unconscious response to a need to separate himself from his own father's legacy; I want to read it instead as, McGann suggests, a political engagement that involves sorting out existing political orders. This sorting is particularly apparent in Cooper's third novel of the Revolution, *Lionel Lincoln, or, The Leaguer of Boston.* We can read this novel as a discourse on democracy's refusal to lend itself to the "unnatural and arbitrary distinctions" that always organize societies. However, it also expresses a generalized fear of the anarchy of a democratic world order in the absence of codified systems of representation. Moreover, as a professional author, what McGann calls Cooper's anti-aesthetic was likely tempered by the demands of both the American and English literary marketplace. So, Cooper was especially concerned that literature which did not

obey the formal structures the market demanded would not sell.[7] What emerges, then, in the romance that accompanies Cooper's careful historical depiction of pre-revolutionary Boston is precisely the effects of the anarchic politics of democracy and literature alike. In writing the romance, Cooper struggled against literary conventions of the marketplace while at the same time trying not to totally subvert them. The aesthetic struggle matches democracy's struggle against any form of artificial order. Cooper found in his careful research that democracy is amoral; it does not operate by any divine or natural justice and thus poses a certain danger. As Ian Dennis observes, "[the novel's] vision of the political and social processes of revolution is shaded with a dark pessimism" ("Radical Father, Moderate Son" 85). Though an adequate treatment of the numerous other historical romances that appear at the same time as *Lionel Lincoln* would define a project of a scale not achievable in the limited space of this chapter, the extent of the break from established orders that the Revolution did and should represent was a concern shared by the majority of them as, Shirley Samuels has forcefully argued.[8] I contend that, in the studies of the American Historical Romance in the early to mid-nineteenth-century, the novels about the Revolution have often been overlooked in favor of the subgenre of frontier romance. By the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution, the politics of civilizing the frontier was largely settled. Thus, the settling of the frontier was a historical subject that lent itself to acts of restorative nostalgia that, as I argued in the previous chapter, are incumbent to the formation of

[7] Joseph Rezek, for example, has recently argued that Cooper and Scott were both partially beholden to the London literary marketplace and its power to grant transatlantic authors literary prestige.

[8] In his excellent essay "Cooper and the American Revolutionary War Novel, 1784-1825" Lance Schachterle reads *Lionel Lincoln*, *The Pilot*, and *The Spy* in the context of American novels of the Revolution which preceded them. Though Cooper uses tropes similar to the earlier novels, Schachterle finds him to be much more uneasy about the legacy of the Revolution and the justice of the rebel cause than earlier writers.

cultural memory. On the other hand, as the members of the BHMA were well aware, though the politics of the United States' break from Britain had been settled by 1825, the revolution in political ideals was not yet over. That the enlightenment promise of liberty and justice for all has not yet come to pass was and continues to be a common political position. Fifty years out from the Revolution, as the United States was reorganizing economically from agrarianism based on an egalitarian ideal to industrialism based on a libertarian ideal, Cooper and others feared America was on the verge of trading one form of aristocracy for another.

The political engagement I outline above largely mirrors Cooper's aesthetic engagement with Sir Walter Scott's model for the historical romance, *Waverley*.[9] In Scott's novel, the chaos of history can always be made to fit into a classical aristocratic order that underscores the infallibility of the English national form. In *Lionel Lincoln,* Cooper raises questions about how *Waverley* orders history and the nation by re-crafting Scott's wavering romantic hero.[10] McGann rightfully argues that instead of sharing Scott's overriding concerns over "imaginative and aesthetic issues," Cooper instead exposes the limits of Scott's model particularly "their illusions—factual, ideological, [and] aesthetic" (129). Where Scott's historical romances mirror

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[9] George Dekker discusses the influence of Scott and particularly *Waverley* as providing an aesthetic model for Cooper in Chapter 2 of *The American Historical Romance.* Joseph Rezek examines how the English literary marketplace shaped the writing of both Scott and Cooper. Juliet Shield has a recent reassessment of the Scott's influence on Cooper in "Savage and Scott-ish Masculinity in *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Prairie:* James Fenimore Cooper and the Diasporic Origins of American Identity." She examines how, "the Leather-Stocking Tales borrow selectively from the Waverley Novels, rejecting their valorization of feudal chivalry while incorporating their representation of cultural appropriation as a mechanism of teleological social development" (140). For another relatively recent comparison of Scott and Cooper see Armin Paul Frank. In "Radical Father, Moderate Son: Cooper's *Lionel Lincoln*," Ian Dennis makes specific comparisons between central characters in *Lionel Lincoln* and characters from several of Scott's novels. See pages 78 and 79. Dennis expands on his comparison between Cooper and Scott in *Nationalism and Desire in Early Historical Fiction.*

[10] For another take on how Cooper critically re-crafted Scott's Waverley character see Ian Dennis, "The Worthlessness of Duncan Heyward: A Waverley Hero in America."

hierarchical aristocratic orders in their aesthetic, Cooper finds aristocratic politics and aesthetics ultimately antithetical to a democratic republic and instead insists the writer must subsume aesthetic and formal concern to the primary cause, "to elucidate the history, manners, usages, and scenery, of his native land" (Cooper qtd. in McGann, 129). I will argue that Cooper's commitment to historical accuracy makes Scott's aristocratic resolution to *Waverley* an unsuitable model for the romance in *Lionel Lincoln.* Cooper cannot make the British bred Lionel convert to an American rebel because his careful historical portrayal of revolutionary Boston casts doubt on the justness of the rebel position. The two most developed patriotic characters are the maniac Ralph and the idiot Job. The political complexities surrounding the Revolution require a more nuanced position than both Scott's blueprint and the opposing sides Cooper sets up in *Lionel Lincoln* would allow. At the end of the novel the main characters are either dead from infestations of human weakness that have contaminated their political convictions, or, out of human fallibility, have realigned themselves with old hierarchies already proven corrupt. In the end, Cooper could not reconcile himself to the marketable aesthetic mold set by his predecessor because of his meticulous historical research. The resulting novel was considered a failure by Cooper and his readers alike. Yet, I argue, this failure also constitutes literary resistance.[11] The remainder of the chapter will formulate how the novel's characteristic wavering can be read politically in contradistinction to the usual formulation of the romantic hero as apolitical.

[11] James Weldon Long also reads Lionel Lincoln as constituting a form of what I have called literary resistance. He argues that the critical history has predominately read the novel in two ways: "one perceives Cooper's project as a patriotic attempt at providing an accurate, historically valuable depiction of the Revolution; the other regards it as a critique of America's growing national mythology" (71). Long aligns himself with the second reading and argues that Lionel represents an Atlantic perspective that offers a space for antebellum Americans to escape America's "growing fanatical devotion to its role as a national power" (72).

Jacques Rancière's definition of the political activity of literature provides a useful framework for linking literature to politics. "Political activity…introduces new objects and subjects onto the common stage. It makes visible what was invisible, it makes audible as speaking beings those who were previously heard as noisy animals. […] The expression 'politics of literature' thereby implies that literature intervenes as literature in this carving up of space and time, the visible and the invisible, speech and noise" (4). The "carving up" that literature participates in is strikingly similar to the politics of refusal that democracy participates in. Both exist as pure political activity, that is, their politics are not driven by any ethic or morality other than, as Rancière puts it, the fact that "there is no reason why some persons should rule over the others" ("Should Democracy Come" 377). In his two earlier novels of the revolution, *The Spy* and *The Pilot,* Cooper was much more confident in the immutability of American justice. The characters of Harvey Birch and John Paul Jones remain purely just despite changes in the legal order that cause them to be seen as public outcasts. As John P. McWilliams describes, "Cooper was evidently searching for an unchanging code of political justice that would correspond to timeless divine laws. Yet his very definition of America was an unformed land of endless change. When American change could no longer be called progress, one of Cooper's impulses was […] to continue to believe that absolute justice was unknowable and that the evils of American society would somehow work themselves out" (26). In *Lionel Lincoln,* Cooper has much less faith in the infallible position of justice in the course of American history. In this novel, his protagonist Lionel tends to fetishize old world political orders even when justice demands they be dispensed with. However, democratic challenges to old world political orders tend to transform into violent revenge quests in the hands of the masses. Lionel ultimately fails to break free from his upbringing and aristocratic order becomes preferable to contagion by the

masses. Yet, against the comfort and wealth the classical order provides him, Lionel's wavering does point to a democratic political vision that amounts to a radical critique of established aristocratic hierarchies. In my last chapter, I will argue that later American authors will seize upon a similar political vision as part of much more radical democratic politics that imagines political alternatives to the nation on scales that approach the global.

Shirley Samuels argues that romances of the Revolution like Catherine Sedgwick's *The Linwoods* (1835) are primarily concerned with disassembling the patriarchal family and reassembling it in models that allow for more individual freedoms for individual members under more benevolent fathers. These recreated families, for her, are analogous to the foundation of a new republican state authorized by the Revolution. She writes, "Put simply, the marriages of the characters in these novels typically depend on their political commitments and produce a founding of the family that found the state. Indeed, the reciprocal work of the family posited here seems to be to create selves who create families who create states in the image of the family" (17).[12] The Bunker Hill Monument Association sought to concretize a similar vision of the family. In Webster's oration, for example, the patriot farmers who fought at Bunker Hill are recast as fathers of the republican ethos. As their children, subsequent generations of Americans have a filial duty of sacrificing the individual self for the larger idea of the nation. The story of the survival of the nation brought forth at the expense of the lives of revolutionary fathers

[12] For more on the relationship between the family and political affiliation in antebellum American fiction see Barbara Bardes *Declarations of Independence: Women and Political Power in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction,* Glenn Hendler *Public Sentiments: Structures of Feeling in Nineteenth Century American Literature,* Gillian Silverman *Bodies and Books: Reading and the Fantasy of Communion in Nineteenth-Century America,* and Ashley Shannon "Madam, I am an American': Lydia Maria Child's Romantic Revolution". Charlene Avallone reads *The Linwoods* for how Sedgwick uses historical romance as political comment on slavery and race in "Catharine Sedgwick's White Nation-Making: Historical Fiction and *The Linwoods*".

becomes an assurance of immortality for the citizenry. Individuals die, but as citizens of a nation they live forever.

The historical sections of *Lionel Lincoln* tell a contrary story. Nonetheless in both his 1825 and 1832 prefaces, Cooper firmly states a commitment to historicity as firm as any by the BHMA. In the 1832 preface, though admitting the novel was "not what its author hoped it would have been," Cooper maintains that the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill were

> to be as faithfully described as is possible to have been done by one who was not an eye-witness of the important events. No pains were spared in examining all the documents, both English and American; and many private authorities were consulted with a strong desire to ascertain the truth. The ground was visited and examined, and the differing testimony was subjected to a close comparison between the statements and the probability (Cooper 1984, 7).

In fact, his historical accounts of these battles were praised by historians of his generation for their accuracy. The *Memorial of James Fenimore Cooper* (1852), a collection of letters and speeches remembering Cooper after his death in 1851, contains encomiums by the leading historians of the time including George Bancroft, William H. Prescott, and Frances Parkman which testify to Cooper's importance as a historian. Bancroft said in his address that, " In Lionel Lincoln he has described the battle of Bunker Hill better than it is described in any other work" (19). Unlike the addresses by Webster and Everett that sought to mold the history of Bunker Hill into an origin story for democratic republicanism, Cooper's telling of the battle from the point of view of an American born British bred Major in the Royal Army with mixed loyalties attempts to suggest that the history of the early days of the revolution was much more complicated. However, as Cooper also learned from the somewhat tepid response to the novel, "there is no

blunder more sure to be visited by punishment, than that which tempts a writer to instruct his readers when they wish only to be amused" (6). Market tastes demanded celebrations of revolutionary era Boston that extolled the clear vision of those early patriots, not portrayals of reticent loyalists mired in the complexities of a civil war.

McWilliams notes that the historical chapters of *Lionel Lincoln* "lie outside the Massachusetts commemorative tradition" because "Cooper the author was an impartial and accurate historian in fiction" (91). He notes narratives of the Battles of Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill that had been prevalent almost since the conclusion of the battles themselves provided "sudden historical validation of the patriots' collective identity as oppressed farmers and homespun martyr-heroes" (91). Thus, by their fiftieth anniversaries, April 19th, 1775 and June 17th, 1775 were heralded by Edward Everett and Daniel Webster as among the most important in all of human history. In his analysis of Everett's speech commemorating the Lexington Fight, an early attempt to gain subscribers for the Bunker Hill Monument, McWilliams argues, "Everett exhorts his audience to join in a communion with a forefathers' spirit that is at once secular and aesthetic…Considered collectively, the Minutemen and yeomanry should now summon up in every reverential citizen's eye a picture, a canvas a 'spectacle' in which one may see 'the height of the moral sublime' embodied in the most ordinary human forms and callings" (98). McWilliams argues that Cooper's "decision to describe the battles from a worriedly impartial point of view" provided by his wavering protagonist Lionel amounts to a serious critique of the New England commemorative tradition. He notes that the chapters which describe the battles are infused with "realist literary techniques" reminiscent for a modern reader of Tolstoy and Hemingway that stress "the chaotic impressions of war's senselessness" (101) such that victories are mourned rather than celebrated.

In particular, Cooper describes the Battle of Bunker Hill from two perspectives. Each perspective provides a different historical meaning. First, the battle is described from an aerial perspective as the reader sits with Lionel atop Copp's Hill across the Charles River from Breeds Hill, the actual site of the Battle. From this vantage point, the gathered militia is described gallantly. "[T]hey stood, sustained only by the righteousness of their cause, and those deep moral principles which they had received from their fathers, and which they intended this day should show, were to be transmitted to their children" (178). McWilliams says of the above description, "Cooper provides his reader, in one ringing sentence, perhaps the most concise summary in American literature of the way antebellum Americans wished to remember the Revolutionary patriots" (105).[13] Though the major moments of the battle are described from the same perspective, the narrative progressively obscures the clarity of this initial vision. The scene is clouded in smoke from the battle, and Cooper stresses "the overwhelming anxiety of the moment" and the odd temporality of combat where "time flies as imperceptibly as life slides from beneath the feet of age" (183). Oddly, the commentary on the battle is provided by other British soldiers gathered near Lionel. Job, the only patriotic voice, is literally ejected from the scene by the other onlookers. Without any patriotic commentary, the scene becomes strange, and the reader must question his own allegiances.

The perspective then shifts to the middle of the battle. After the Americans repel the second British charge, Lionel finds his resolve. "Until this moment the feelings of Lionel had vacillated between the pride of country and military spirit, but losing all other feelings in the latter sensation, he looked fiercely about him, as if he would seek the man who dare exult in the

[13] Though critical of the Massachusetts' commemorative tradition, McWilliams still reads the novel as patriotic. For an opposing reading of the novel as critical of the Revolutionary mythology see Chapter 4 of Ian Dennis *Nationalism and Desire in Early Historical Fiction.*

repulse of his comrades" (185). From here, the reader enters the battle with Lionel as he joins in Major Pitcairn's charge. "A scene of wild and savage confusion succeeded the order of the fight" (187). We see with Lionel, "the dying and despairing look from [Pitcairn's] eyes after he falls into the arms of his son" (ibid). Then Lionel's uniform "caught the glaring-eyeballs of a dying yeoman, who exerted his wasting strength to sacrifice one more worthy victim to the manes of his countrymen" and Lionel is shot, falling unconscious in the field (188). "The fall of a single officer, in such a contest, was a circumstance not to be regarded, and regiments passed over him" (ibid). Though the British end the day with a marginal victory, the royal lieutenants "mourn their victory" (ibid). McWilliams observes, "Consistent with Cooper's troubling characterization of Ralph and Job Pray, the patriotic ardor of the 'dying yeoman' is revealed to be inseparable from the 'glaring eye-balls' of insanity" (106). The chaos of battle exposes the "righteous cause" springing from "deep moral principles" to be essentially meaningless. The Revolution, especially at this early moment, is nothing but a break from an existing distribution of the sensible, a refusal of an existing hierarchy. Democracy manifests here as an act of revenge spurred by the souls of the dead.

Cooper thus creates a very different memory of the Battle of Bunker Hill than the Bunker Hill Monument was designed to inspire. For Everett and Webster, the patriots at Bunker Hill symbolized the origin of the nation and of republicanism itself. Cooper's description explodes that symbol. The patriots' righteous ideals do not even seem to survive the battle much less to become a legacy to be transmitted from father to son. In one instance, a father falls dead into the arms of his son, in another, revenge becomes the dominant principle transmitted from the dead to the living. Yet, for critics from Bancroft to McWilliams, this fragmented history reads as historically realistic. I argue that Cooper's historiography is guided by a nostalgia of a different

sort than that restorative nostalgia which guided Webster in his address at Bunker Hill.[14] Cooper's nostalgia is consistent with what Boym calls reflective nostalgia, which, together with restorative nostalgia, are the prevalent forms of collective memory in the modern era. According to her, reflective nostalgia "dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity" and "calls into doubt" the absolute truths that restorative nostalgia insists on (Introduction). Boym rightly argues that reflective nostalgia is valuable for the "ethical and creative" opportunities it presents through its marking out of an interpretive framework for creating possibilities for community in an increasingly fragmented world.

> Reflective nostalgia does not follow a single plot but explores ways of inhabiting many places at once and imagining different time zones; it loves details, not symbols. At best, reflective nostalgia can present an ethical and creative challenge, not merely a pretext for midnight melancholias. This typology of nostalgia allows us to distinguish between national memory that is based on a single plot of national identity, and social memory, which consists of collective frameworks that mark but do not define the individual memory (Introduction).

In the sense that they both seek to overcome the fragmentation of the present moment, reflective nostalgia, like restorative nostalgia, is as much oriented towards the future as it is towards the past. The difference is in their political aims. As I have shown in the previous chapter, restorative

[14] Cooper's reluctance to unquestionably celebrate Boston as the national origin has a personal dimension as well. In his biography of Cooper, Wayne Franklin identifies a lifelong distaste for Yankees that originated with Cooper's New York upbringing and was confirmed by his expulsion from Yale. Franklin writes, "his expulsion turned him against the college, the state [Connecticut], and the region [New England], confirming in him the anti-Yankee prejudices of his New York youth" (60). Franklin astutely notes that Cooper acknowledges his personal bias is partially to blame for the failure of *Lionel Lincoln* in his 1832 preface to the novel in which he admits that Yale could not be blamed for "all his blunders" (Franklin 60).

nostalgia seeks to control what the future will be by controlling how the past becomes transmitted in cultural memory. This transmission of memory is often done with the aim of valorizing and solidifying the nation. On the other hand, reflective nostalgia remains open to what the future will bring because it remains hospitable to and in fact yearns for the possibility of social collectives that have not (yet) existed. Acts of reflective nostalgia, I argue, are more concerned with doing justice to the people and events in the past than they are in validating the past to the glory of the nation. Often this justice is done by keeping alive those memories which acts of restorative nostalgia attempt to forget in their rush to solidify memory, or, as with *Lionel Lincoln*, by questioning the value of what acts of restorative nostalgia attempt to concretize in cultural memory and national identity. If the BHMA attempts to ennoble the genealogy of the national family, Cooper's novel makes it dysfunctional. As Abigail Pray muses about Lionel's father as she tells the story of how he abandoned her for Lionel's mother, "[H]e proved how easy it is for us to forget, in the days of prosperity, the companions of our shame" (353).

Boym argues that "off-modern" authors and artists provide an archive in which we can find the workings of reflective nostalgia. Off-modern works are "based on an alternative understanding of temporality, not as teleology of progress or transcendence but as a superimposition and coexistence of heterogeneous times. […] Off-modern art and lifestyle explores the hybrids of past and present" (Introduction). Though Boym associates off-modern artists and writers primarily with the twentieth century and nations where "modernity developed in counterpoint to that of Western Europe and the United States," I contend that we can read historical romances of the revolutionary war as sharing traits of Boym's "off-modern" movement precisely because they challenge the teleology of more clearly restoratively nostalgic narratives such as those which the BHMA created. I think what Boym terms "the eccentric adverb *off"* also

accounts for the charges of literary inferiority which have plagued historical romances about the Revolution since they were first read and have served to effectually keep them on the margins of the nineteenth-century American literary canon. Thus, "off modern," "nostalgic," and "reflective" prove good adjectives for the type of commemoration Cooper performs in *Lionel Lincoln* and provide a frame through which we can begin to delineate ways historical romances remember the revolution that existed antithetically to the politics of more restorative efforts.

Historical Romance and the Mythos of the Revolution

As I have already suggested, concern over the historical legacy of the American Revolution became of great interest, especially over the question of the kind of citizenry the revolution authorized. In nineteenth-century discourses about democracy, the ordering of the Demos, the mass which serves as the collective sovereign of a democracy, becomes of central concern. Restoratively nostalgic narratives about the revolution tended to establish the masses as the base of the revolutionary struggle and those who developed the revolutionary consciousness as forefathers. However, these nostalgic acts also tend to mourn the loss of the original demos. Generally, the revolutionary mass is depicted as a pre-modern class of self-sufficient, modest, and loyal patriot farmers turned reluctant revolutionaries. For example, in Child's *The Rebels*, the Dudleys, an honest farming family, are made symbols of this heroic class. With the advent of the Stamp Act, Mr. Dudley changed his son's name from George, after the English king, to Hancock, for John Hancock, the popular Massachusetts patriot. When the Stamp Act is repealed, Mr. Dudley is glad that the impending war has been forestalled and looks upon his boys and says, "I have looked on them hearty young boys by the hour together, and thought I could see them all fall in the cause of liberty, and not shed one tear over their graves. But I am glad the trial was spared me; I had rather they would be left to help me plough the fields" (Child 150). In

restorative narratives, farmers like the Dudley's represent a heroic and autonomous pre-modern society whose extinction is threatened by the march of modern progress. Particularly in the minds of would be Whigs, the nineteenth-century demos had lost their sense of purpose as a consequence of the artificiality of modern progress separating them from their moral core. As such this wayward mob was feared to be easily manipulated through demagoguery by egotistical and pandering politicians in the Democratic Party. Frequently the demos were accused of having no sense of history or responsibility for the future, making them even more subject to baseless whims of the present. Though not appearing until 1854, Herman Melville's *Israel Potter: His Fifty Years of Exile* parodies both the noble farmer and the democratic mob. Israel, the yeoman farmer who fights in Bunker Hill and then goes on to take part in several key events in the Revolution entirely by accident, is almost trampled to death by a fervent mob so intent on commemorating the myth they do not even recognize him when he returns to an unrecognizable Boston on the Fourth of July fifty years later.[15]

There were similar conservative charges of the decline in the class of leaders which the nineteenth-century demos authorized. Those who had distinguished themselves in the Revolution were seen as composing a quasi-aristocratic class of their own saddled with the responsibility of maintaining the Republic. As Jefferson would anoint them in his famous letter to John Adams in 1813, this class was deemed a natural aristocracy distinguished by virtue and natural talents, not an artificial aristocracy distinguished by the arbitrary condition of birth and wealth such as had developed in England. In kind, character became a hotly contested issue among political leaders throughout the nineteenth-century, and accusations of playing to the whims of the masses for the benefit of a politician's personal gain were common. By the end of Jackson's presidency, Ralph

[15] Melville is one of Kammen's "half a dozen significant writers" who offers a "dissenting version" of the Revolution in *Israel Potter.* See pages 224-233.

Waldo Emerson had grown tired of some of his contemporaries' over reliance on history as is evident in the famous opening lines of his essay "Nature" (1837), "Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe?" (Emerson and Whicher 21)

It is perhaps their insistence on retrospection and patriarchal order which, when classified generically, causes American Historical Romances about the American Revolution to most often be read as conservative responses to the perceived dangers of popular democracy. These novels have often been read as efforts of recuperating the lost ethos of the revolutionary generation as a corrective to the ahistorical tendencies of popular democracy. In these readings, the novels are meant to reacquaint a mass readership to their mythic past and train them how to properly understand themselves as members of an "American" family. Michael Kammen defines the myth these novels help to create as a national *rite de passage* with the explicit goal of "de-revolution[izing] the revolution" by casting it as a necessary step in the maturation of the national body (its separation from its parentage) that should never be repeated" (211). In other words, " as the American people put more and more distance between themselves and their Revolution, and as that Revolution came to be regarded as the determinative event in our evolution as a state, limitations had to be imposed upon what could or could not be justified in the name of Revolution" (Kammen 213). By Kammen's account, literary commemorations of the Revolution are so consistently conservative, "we have in fact had some half a dozen significant authors who tried to offer dissenting versions. They are too few in number, however, too discontinuous in sequence, and too neglected by their contemporary popular cultures to comprise a nay-saying tradition" (223). Thus, for Kammen, by insisting that the American Revolution was

once and for all complete, the historical romance is primarily a lesson against perpetual revolution, a condition common to sister republics all around the nineteenth-century world. They encourage readers to feel a familial relationship to this earlier generation by giving them access to history through the eyes of their forefathers. In the process, these commemorations establish a genealogical link between the revolutionary fathers and their modern sons and daughters

However, historical romances about the Revolution are not merely historiographies of the revolutionary war, but instead one of several media for fixing cultural memory of the Revolutionary War. Concentrating on how historical romances remember the Revolution allows for the possibility of more than one prevalent cultural mythos about the Revolution. Lloyd Pratt has recently argued that the antebellum American historical romance serves as an archive of temporalities aside from and in addition to the national temporalities with which it has long been associated. He writes that like Southwestern humor and African American life writing, historical romance

> offers an account of modernity that focuses on its restructuring of time and how that restructuring relates to the consolidation of national, regional, and racial identity in turn. If these genres identify and diagnose the condition(s) of modernity, however, they also operate as literary genres not strictly mimetic in nature. They contribute to modernity by engaging readers in conceptualizations and formal enactments of time that are not exclusively 'modern' in cast but that go into the making of an American modernity rather different from that which has been imagined. (20)

I argue that even if scholars like Michael Kammen are correct that the dominant political mode in these novels is a manifest conservatism consistent with Whiggish calls for an ordering of the national family, or even early yearnings of a desire for a nation firmly wedded to a republican

ideology that could not be totally codified until it could be linked to the federal legal mechanisms legitimized by the Civil War, there are still remnants of other political positions articulated in these novels which challenge the commonplace characterization of American Democracy as a progressive republican movement. At the very least, these other positions force us to denaturalize what became the American ideal of democracy as universal enfranchisement in order to discover other forms of democracy more concerned with universal justice. Reading for these overlooked political points of view can importantly inform the way we approach the problem of democracy today.

Thus, if formally the literary treatments of the history of the Revolution in the Historical Romances complicate history through a method that can be characterized by Boym's notion of reflective nostalgia, these novels politically democratize the history of the Revolution in a manner consistent with Jacques Rancière's recent theorizations about the democratizing politics of literature. Focusing on the nineteenth-century, Rancière provocatively claims the literary revolution of that century is in fact a formula for radical egalitarianism. "Raising style as an absolute meant first pulling down all the hierarchies that had governed the invention of subjects, the composition of action and the appropriateness of expression…The absolutization of style was the literary formula for the democratic principle of equality" (*Politics of Literature* 10-11). Revolution as a radical break in the distribution of the sensible is precisely the way historical romances view the American Revolution. In other words, revolution, which is commonly depicted in these romances as a fundamental break from an already existing family, is a radical break from an existing world view. This break does not necessarily mean the origin of a new world view. In fact, the lack of world view is a central preoccupation of all of these novels. Thus the modes of cultural memory in these romances are radically different modes of cultural

commemoration from those proposed by the founders of the BHMA that the Revolution founded a new national family that has since become commonplace in the current cultural memory of the Revolution. Historical Romance about revolution, then, can be read in part as an anarchical counter-narrative to the distribution of the sensible found in national family origin narratives. Many nationally minded Whigs and Democrats alike sought to close off the category of the nation by narrating a virtual nation in restorative cultural memory projects that re-scripted several of the tenets of the "classical order of representation" to square Republicanism with the democratizing effects of the advance of modernity. In contrast, the literary sphere's "off" narratives remained preoccupied with the Revolution's radical "break" in ways of seeing, ways of doing, and ways of saying by scripting history through acts of reflective nostalgia. Concentrating on reflectively nostalgic moments in literature about the Revolution challenges Kammen's claim that the bulk of American literature sought to de-revolutionize the Revolution.

Public demand to forget uncomfortable details of history is perhaps an under-examined component of what is generally given as Cooper's stated reason for not continuing the series of novels about the Revolution in each of the original thirteen colonies. In the 1832 preface written in Paris for the edition of *Lionel Lincoln* that was republished in London, Cooper writes:

> Perhaps there is no other country, whose history is so little adapted to poetical illustration as that of the United States of America. The art of printing has been in general use since the earliest settlement, and the policy of both the Provinces and the States has been to encourage the dissemination of accurate knowledge. There is consequently neither a dark, nor even an obscure, period in the American annals: all is not only known, but so well and generally known, that nothing is left for the imagination to develop. (Cooper 1984, 6)

If we take Cooper at his word, the above passage confirms the simultaneity of American history and print culture. The history of the United States is decisively contained in the print archive to the detriment of the historical romancer who seeks to de-ontologize history. Cooper is apparently conceding the fact that, especially in regards to the history of the Revolution, the people of the United States are too well read to have any use for romanticized mythic tales and are probably too modern to believe in them anyway.[16]

However, the remainder of the paragraph suggests that Cooper is displeased with what has become the prevalent myth of the Revolution. He continues somewhat sarcastically:

> It is true that the world has fallen into its usual errors on the subject of individual character; taking those parts which are the most conspicuous and the best understood, as guides in establishing a harmony that it almost always insists on; while he who thoroughly understands human nature is not to learn that the most opposite qualities are frequently the inhabitants of the same breast. But it is the part of the poet to humour these mistakes; for there is no blunder more sure to be visited by punishment, than that which tempts a writer to instruct his readers when they wish to be amused. The author has had these truths forced upon him by experience and in no instance more obvious than…writing this his only historical tale, and its reception by the world. (6)

Here, Cooper voices displeasure with how the past is restored particularly when the complexity of history is ordered by "those parts which are the most conspicuous and the best understood." In this sense, Cooper articulates a concern over what consensus models of history forget. Further,

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[16] Donald and Lucy Ringe, the editors of the Writings of James Fenimore Cooper edition of *Lionel Lincoln* cited here, end their historical introduction with the above quote from the 1832 preface as further evidence of why the novel, since its initial publication, was received as successful history but unsuccessful fiction. They write, "[Because the facts of history are so well recorded in print] no American historical novel could ever be successful. The facts of history interfere with the poetry of romance" (xxxv).

he seems displeased with what he sees has become the relegated role of the "poet" which is to humor these errors by succumbing to a demand to entertain instead of instruct. To put it another way, Cooper points to a void in consensus and progressive historiography that only literary methods can fill. Simultaneously, he laments the fact that despite this void, there is no public demand for literary treatments that complicate restorative myths of the Revolution. Portrayals of the Revolution that are anything other than a celebration of a moment of national unity populated by clear-sighted heroes whose hearts swelled with patriotism are not entertaining. The real complexities of the Revolution, it would seem, are destined to be forgotten. Furthermore, the romance that accompanies Cooper's more reflective history does not allow us to forget. In the romance, there are no winners to organize how history is told, and thus the reader must make sense of history.

Cooper's commitment to historical accuracy is precisely the quality that makes the accompanying romance a failure for generations of critics.[17] Donald and Lucy Ringe detail Cooper's meticulousness in his historical reading about Revolutionary Boston. His historical sources included a letter written by William Gordon on the Lexington-Concord affair published in 1776 based on interviews with British and American soldiers who had fought at the battle; *The History of the Origin, Progress, and Termination of the American War* written in 1794 by Charles Stedman who was a Loyalist officer who returned to England after the Battle of Bunker Hill; a first-hand account of the Battle of Bunker Hill written from the top of Copp's Hill (the site of Lionel's aerial viewpoint of the battle); and James Thatcher's *Military Journal during the American Revolutionary War* which was published in 1823 (xvii). These primary sources would have provided Cooper with starkly contrasting viewpoints from individuals who lived through

[17] For a representative reading of Lionel Lincoln as a failed romance see Donald A. Ringe "Cooper's *Lionel Lincoln*: The Problem of Genre."

the events themselves, and, when read together, an even more striking contrast to the patriotic acts of restorative nostalgia produced in conjunction with the fiftieth anniversary of the war. Undoubtedly, Cooper's meticulous research is what made his depictions of the battles themselves so successful as history. As McWilliams notes, these scenes are sometimes imbued with the realism of war novels written by authors like Tolstoy or Stephen Crane. However, the way that these primary sources led Cooper to imagine the past was much more reflective than American readers in 1825 were accustomed to.

Wayne Franklin argues that Cooper's two visits to Boston prior to writing *Lionel Lincoln,* the first in 1810 as a Navy Midshipman and then in 1824 to research the novel, gave Cooper new ways to think about the relationship between past and present. Franklin notes that the differences in the Boston landscape would have been striking for Cooper, and suggests that they spurred his artistic imagination. "Part of Cooper's pleasure in writing the book came from the process of thinking himself backward through the present scene to some older version of the town—and of the country. He did not invent the past out of whole cloth; instead, he used his imagination as a means of carefully re-envisioning its now obscured features" (420). In particular, the Province House, the seat of the British colonial government, served as a prominent landmark in Revolutionary era Boston and as a key setting for much of the action in the novel. Between being vacated by the royal government in 1776 and Cooper's visit in 1810, it had been used as a Massachusetts state government office, and then donated to the Massachusetts General Hospital. By 1824, it had been leased to private developers. Once set back from the street in its own large lot, the mansion had become obscured by the houses and shops built on the lot by the developers. Franklin argues that Cooper's visit to the mansion mirrors how Hawthorne used the mansion in "Legends of the Province-House" as "a portal to romance," Cooper "doubtless found the same

contrasts richly suggestive of how his art might revive and reuse the past" (420).[18] The disorientation between past and present made evident in the rapidly changing urban landscape of Boston led Cooper the artist to a kind of reflexivity that is not as evident in his earlier Revolutionary novels. The same rapid progress that was leading to the disappearance of the Charleston battlefield led federal politicians trying to construct a virtual nation that would support their state building project to histories of the Revolution guided by a restorative nostalgia.

Rancière further explicates how literature works towards collapsing the hierarchies between great and average characters that nineteenth-century histories based on acts of restorative nostalgia are intent on establishing:

> [I]n the histories of great characters and closely linked events, literature recognizes, precisely, its own past: the representative hierarchy that linked the dignity of genres to the greatness of characters; that of unity of action and the well-put-together plot driven by characters who follow their wishes to the very end. The science of historiography was still at the *belles lettres* stage at that point.[19] Literature comes into it at a different stage, when the distinctions of dignity no longer hold sway. The life of any nobody is just as

[18] Franklin describes Cooper's likely visits to other landmarks that are significant settings in the novel, Faneuil Hall, the Triangle Warehouse, and the Clark-Frankland house which was used as the Madame Lechmere's mansion, as providing him evidence that "the rapidly developing present was obscuring the local and indeed national past" (420).

[19] The "point" in time Rancière refers to here, it must be clarified, is the appearance of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* in 1869. The revolution in literature that Tolstoy represents for Rancière becomes analogous to what he posits as Bloch's and Febvre's (two founders of the French Annales School) challenge to what he calls commentator' history "by the secretaries of the powers that be" through "a new scientific history of the masses and the long cycles of material life" almost one hundred years later (74-75). The binary I have set up between acts of restorative nostalgia in the commemorative orations and acts of reflective nostalgia in the literary sphere that exist concomitantly at the fiftieth anniversary of the American Revolution reflects a similar difference in historical vision.

> interesting as the lives of great characters – even more so in what it reveals of the secrets of the great anonymous life" (*Politics of Literature* 75).

Further, Rancière argues, literature shows us that "the very model of action ordered to certain ends finds itself put to rout" (76). The same complicated narrative structure characterized by disordered senses of space, notions of temporality, and devolution into chaos that have been said to make *Lionel Lincoln* good history have been said to make it bad romance. I want to suggest that the novel's fictive qualities actually serve to deconstruct an ideology which many would-be nineteenth-century historians still fully upheld. This ideology is rooted in a hierarchical structuring of history consistent with hierarchical political forms such as aristocracy and monarchy and intrinsic to the generic form of the epic. Thus, I argue Cooper's romantic narrative in *Lionel Lincoln* complicates the way we have heretofore understood the political engagement of historical romances of the Revolution in general.[20] The political engagement can be described as a deconstruction of aristocratic hierarchy in dismantled epic form. Through the disorientation of the novel, the Revolution loses its ontological status as a foundational locus for the sovereign people of the subsequent model of American democracy as envisioned by the powers that be, and instead revolution functions as a fundamental trope of democratic refusal of "unnatural and arbitrary forms." I use trope here in Derrida's sense of the word as connoting one of the turns ("by turns, by tropes, by tropism") through which the ideal of democracy to come, that is

[20] The disorientation I am identifying here is often characterized in Cooper scholarship as ambivalence. Charles Hansford Adams, for example, juxtaposes McWilliams argument that Cooper's public endorsement for the rule of law as social order illustrates Cooper's role as social critic with Stephen Railton's identification of Cooper's "complex and ambivalent" private relationship with his father, Judge William Cooper, in order to argue for what he sees as Cooper's often ambivalent attitude towards how law creates order in novels like *The Pioneers* (Adams 1990, 16-24). For me, naming Cooper's tendency to leave social tensions unresolved in his fiction as "ambivalence" not only strips Cooper's fiction of any political agency, but is indicative of disciplinary blindness to the political agency of literature more generally.

democracy with no ontology or no proper meaning, can be defined (Derrida *Rogues*, 37).[21] I will expound on alternative political forms that were imagined through an anarchic relation to history more thoroughly in my fourth chapter. There I will argue that as the possibility of a nation-state model predicated on chattel slavery was proving increasingly untenable in the 1850s, off-modern authors and texts began to look at the history of the Haitian revolution with an anarchic world view to imagine extra-national political affiliations in the shadows of modernity and the Enlightenment.

In the romance of the Lincoln family in *Lionel Lincoln*, I do not question that the fall of a familial patriarch serves as a symbol of revolution. What I will question is the extent to which this novel mourns the stable patriarchal or quasi-patriarchal family form and the extent to which the novel actually participates in the political project of re-ordering the family. I wish instead to focus on the political possibilities that occur when an aristocratic family is dissolved. In a literary sense, the dissolution of form that occurs with revolution poses the potential for an idyllic site of pure artistic expression in which the romantic is freed from the artificial constraints of inherited forms. In a political sense, the dissolution of form constitutes a site of anarchic politics that allows the political subject absolute sovereignty to re-define his or her sensible world free from any constraint. However, the novel also makes it clear that the "neutral ground," Boston in this novel, is not a sustainable site. Decisions are made both for the sake of plot and for the sake of politics, and in the end different iterations of the same forms are reinstituted by the author bound by history.

[21] Hayden White's definition of tropics as "the process by which all discourse *constitutes* the objects which it pretends only to describe realistically and to analyze objectively" in the introduction to his *Tropics of Discourse* (1978) is also useful here.

Thus to say *Lionel Lincoln* constitutes the origin of a radical new political vision is a mistake. This novel like all cultural productions is irrefutably a product of its own time and remains subject to filial ideas of the nation from the old world to thoroughly develop its romantic critiques into a cohesive political form. Still, at its most "off" moments—moments often read as failures, excesses, or diversions from the plot—*Lionel Lincoln* offers glimpses of possibilities for life otherwise. Thus, in my close reading of the romantic plot of this novel, I do not intend to close off any particular meaning of the passages I examine nor pass any judgment on their literary worth. I feel these two methodologies have already guided the critical history of this text to the point of almost disallowing any acknowledgement of its merit.

In *Lionel Lincoln*, the Lincoln family does not read as a representative American family in the romance that accompanies Cooper's history of the first battles of the Revolution. In the fifth chapter of the narrative, the third person limited narrator fills the reader in on the family history. The Lincolns are an aristocratic family who hold a baronetcy in England. A century before the novel begins, Reginald Lincoln, the younger son in an "extremely ancient and wealthy family," left England for the Massachusetts Bay colony. Reginald's arrival foreshadows the arrival of his great-great grandson, Lionel, who is also the younger son of a Baronet. The narrator hints that the Lincolns were allies of Cromwell and thus their baronetcy was allowed to remain during the period of the British Commonwealth. Already the inheritor of the family tendency towards "morbid sensibility," Reginald became an "ascetick puritan and an obstinate predestenarian" following the death of his beloved wife during the birth of their first child. Reginald "had little to connect him with his native country" under the opulent rule of Charles II and left with his son for the religious colony of Massachusetts. Reginald soon was able:

> to obtain both honourable and lucrative employments in the plantations; and after the first glow of his awakened ardour in behalf of spiritual matters had a little abated, he failed not to improve a due portion of his time by a commendable attention to temporal things. To the day of his death, however, he continued a gloomy, austere, and bigoted religionist, seemingly too regardless of the vanities of this world to permit his pure imagination to mingle with its dross, even while he submitted to discharge its visible duties. (53)

Reginald qualifies here as a dubious romantic. Consistent with the romantic hero, his removal from society keeps his imagination pure. However, his austerity leads him to engage in practical and temporal pursuits that result in material gains. This character trait is quite different than the fantastical and imaginative pursuits that result in spiritual gains that occupy more stock romantic characters like Scott's Waverley. This antagonistic blend of romantic insight with pragmatic materialism seems to be the root of the family's "morbid sensibility" that allowed them to thrive in the American Colonies, but also would nearly tear the family apart.

Though the family heirloom leads to the "gathering of honours and riches" in this early generation, in a later generation family history repeats itself to different ends in the case of Reginald's great-grandson, Lionel Lincoln. This Lionel is the father of the protagonist and appears in disguise for the majority of the narrative as a mysterious old man named Ralph.[22] Following Reginald's departure to the new world, the inheritors to the baronetcy in England all fail to produce offspring, so new baronets are plucked from the more "fruitful" Massachusetts branch of the family. Thus, Massachusetts-born Ralph is the third generation of American born Lincolns called to the baronetcy and is forced to leave his wife and young son behind. Like his

[22] For the sake of clarity, I will refer to Lionel's father as Ralph throughout this chapter even though in chapter V he is referred to only as Sir Lionel Lincoln to preserve Ralph's disguise until his unveiling at the end of the novel.

great-grandfather, he loses his beloved wife to a sudden death. However, we learn that at the time of her death, Ralph was not in England, but instead had been fighting "with a hardihood that rather sought death than courted honour" in the North American theater of the Seven Years War alongside "mild and peaceful colonists [who] were seen to shake off their habits of forbearance to enter into the strife with an alacrity and spirit that soon emulated the utmost daring of their more practiced confederates" (55). Many of these colonists would again take up arms as members of the continental army. Ralph abruptly abandons the war to collect young Lionel and return to England where his whereabouts remain unknown. His aunt, Madame Lechmere, is left the matriarch of the Massachusetts branch of the Lincoln family that now consists only of her, her granddaughter Cecil Dynevor, and her great-niece Agnes Danforth. The narrator also suggests that Madame Lechmere has spread a rumor in the community that Ralph had been locked away in a private insane asylum. The basis for his insanity is traced to his inheritance of the family heirloom, but the cause of his insanity is debated around Boston until the commencement of "the contest for principle between the parliament of Great Britain, and the colonies of North America" caused all "to look keenly into the distant effects that were to succeed the movements of the day" (56).

The unveiling of the other cause for Ralph's insanity drives the plot of the romance. By the end of the novel, we learn that prior to falling in love with Lionel's mother, an orphaned ward of Madame Lechmere, Ralph had an affair with Abigail Pray who appears in the novel as the poor spinster friend of Madame Lechmere. She is also the mother of Job Pray, the simpleton patriot characterized as an "ideot" who, in exchange for his protection from angry British grenadiers, serves as Lionel's guide around Boston. Job, it will also turn out, is the illegitimate son of Ralph making him the older brother of Lionel. Following Lionel's mother's death,

Madame Lechmere together with Abigail concocted a story that she had been unfaithful during Ralph's absence in order to punish him for not marrying Madame Lechmere's own daughter, the mother of Cecil Dynevor. Doing so would have kept the title and wealth within her family. Madame Lechmere convinced the jealous Abigail to lie and say the "wretched infant" Job was the product of Lionel's mother's affair and giving birth to him had killed her. In fact, Job was the product of Abigail and Ralph's unholy union, and Lionel's mother had died of a disease. Heartbroken, Ralph took the orphaned Lionel and retreated to England and eventually insanity.

In addition to representing aristocratic dysfunction, the Lincoln family also clearly stands as a metaphor for the political strife between England and America. The family seat of power is in England, while the wealth exists in the colonies. The distinguishing family trait leads to prosperity in the colonies, but infertility and insanity in the metropolis. Further, when the aristocracy demands that heirs be plucked from the Massachusetts family, the family becomes disordered. The family also clearly represents aristocratic corruption that drives the history of the strife between England and America as told in the second half of Chapter V. In a long footnote added in 1832, Cooper argues that "the true nature" of the conflict has never been understood. By his estimation, the cause is the usurpation of monarchical authority by an aristocratic parliament. Under the authority of the King, the colonies were mostly free and allowed to govern themselves separately through each province's own constitution or charter all of which were "essentially republican and several perfectly democratical." Following the Glorious Revolution, the aristocracy was allowed to rule mostly unchecked by the King to the detriment of the American colonies. Cooper's note continues, "It is easy to imagine circumstances in which the English aristocrat, to protect his local interests, would invade the rights of the Americans, and to which a king, who had an equal sovereignty in the two countries, would oppose his veto. But the

revolution of 1688 gave its death-blow to the legislative power of the crown" (58). Consistent with his later theorization of aristocratic governments in *The American Democrat*, the aristocracy left unchecked by the disinterested sovereignty of the crown results only in egregious acts of injustice in the name of personal greed. Cooper credits the colonists' loyalty to the monarchy for forestalling open rebellion. The strange mixture of monarchism and republicanism, Cooper says, results in a situation "so peculiar, that it may be doubted whether history furnishes a precise parallel. Their fealty to the prince was everywhere acknowledged, while the laws which emanated from his counselors were sullenly disregarded and set at naught" (59). However, this situation "was encumbered with contradictions that, sooner or later, must have produced a crisis" (58). Boston on the brink of crisis is thus painted as an uneasy neutral ground.

Occupied Boston is the setting that opens the novel as Lionel and his mysterious shipmate Ralph sit on the becalmed waters of Boston Harbor on their return from England in 1775. Immediately, Lionel feels a mysterious tie to Ralph and then to Job, whom he rescues from angry soldiers as Job taunts them near the dock. This triumvirate of a father and two sons are not recognizable as the forefathers who sired the country or their patriotic sons who fought their battles. The youngest son is a major in the British Army. Ralph and Job are the two most patriotic characters in the novel, but they are labeled a "maniac" and an "ideot" respectively. In fact, grandiose depictions of the American heroes of the Revolution are entirely absent from this novel. A maniacal and frenzied Ralph hijacks a sure appearance by Washington in the narrative when Lionel's young bride Cecil penetrates into the rebel camp in Cambridge in order to ask the newly appointed Commander-in-Chief of the colonial army for help in finding her husband who has unexpectedly disappeared on their wedding night. Ralph, by this point, has become practically evangelical in his frenzy to convince Lionel to join him in a revenge quest he has

disguised as allegiance to popular rebellion. The militia members and their mothers and fathers that populate the encampment appear gullible victims of popular fervor. Ralph easily outwits a commoner sentinel who suspects him of being a "spy of Howe" by complimenting his alertness as compared to the "hirelings of the crown." He tells the sentinel, "Thus it is with Liberty! The sacred spirit hallows its meanest votaries, and elevates the private to the virtue of the proudest captain." The flattered sentinel bashfully sends him on his way as he "continued his walk, humming a verse of Yankee-doodle, in excellent favour with himself and all mankind." The narrator appends a sarcastic commentary to the scene. "To say that this was not the first instance of well-meaning integrity being cajoled by the jargon of liberty, might be an assertion too hazardous; but that it has not been the last, we conscientiously believe" (334).

Ralph, much like the ghost of Hamlet's father, haunts the entire novel, urging Lionel to take up the patriotic cause first out of obligation to the land of his birth and then to revenge his own victimization at the hands of a corrupt aristocratic system. His hulking shadow is taken as a ghost at the wedding of Lionel and Cecil Dynevor. Though Lionel and Cecil marry out of love and Ralph later names her blameless, the spectral appearance by Ralph foreshadows the fact that their wedding fulfills Madame Lechmere's conspiracy. As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that Ralph's politics are guided more by his desire for revenge against an aristocratic system he feels personally slighted by than any patriotism or commitment to the guiding revolutionary principles. Ralph, like the ghost of Hamlet's father, even momentarily persuades an impassioned Lionel to swear allegiance to the rebel cause out of allegiance to his disgraced mother and betrayed father. He commands Lionel to "swear eternal hatred to that country and those laws, by which an innocent and unoffending man can be leveled with the beasts of the field and be made to rave even at his maker, in the bitterness of his sufferings" before he will provide proof of his

claims by revealing himself to be Lionel's father (340). Though Lionel swears he will, he never joins the rebels as the rebels themselves prevent Ralph from providing proof. Fittingly, Ralph's slighted former mistress, Abigail Pray, finally provides the truth and Cecil makes the connection that Ralph is Lionel's father when they reconvene at Job's death bed.

Ralph's death scene is worth closer examination. Job, whom I will discuss at greater length below, takes his last breath as his mother reveals he is Ralph's son. Ralph, furious to hear of her and Madame Lechmere's treachery, moves to strike Abigail. Lionel jumps up to stop him, but is forestalled by Cecil's exhortation that Ralph is his father. Cecil knows this information because it is immediately revealed that the stranger who had accompanied her to retrieve Lionel from Cambridge was in fact Ralph's ward from the insane asylum in England come to retrieve him. The stranger, who, through Ralph's conniving, had been left in custody with colonial troops, bursts into the scene and reveals himself to Ralph. His ward's entrance distracts Ralph from Abigail, "Ralph abandoned his hold the instant this hated object appeared, and he darted upon the breast of the other with the undaunted fury that a lion, at bay, would turn upon its foe" (355). The struggle is animalistic, and Ralph emerges on top with his fingers around his ward's neck. Amidst a burst of "horrid laughter," Ralph cries out his last words, "Vengeance is holy! … Urim and Thummin are the words of glory! Liberty is the shout! die, damned dog! die like the fiends in darkness, and leave freedom to the air!" (355-56). The ward cries out, "For the love of heavenly justice, come to my aid! will you see a man thus murdered" (356). However, the other characters in the scene are left immobile. "The females hid their faces, in natural horror; … and Lionel still looked upon the savage fray with vacant eye" (356). The ward is able to struggle free and stabs and kills Ralph. Upon the conclusion of the violent act

> a ray of passing reason lighted [Ralph's] ghastly features…his look, gradually softening, settled on the appalled pair [Lionel and Cecil], who took the deepest interest in his welfare. A calm and decent expression possessed those lineaments which had just exhibited the deepest marks of the wrath of god…stretching forth his arms, in the attitude of benediction, like the mysterious shadow of the chapel, he fell backward on the body of the lifeless and long neglected Job, himself perfectly dead" (356).

Ralph's death throes echo a central concern in the novel over whether revolutions are merely an act of vengeance by scorned men acting as gods, or are a turn towards more just systems of life in common. For Ralph, vengeance became holy. Urim and Thummin, oracles from the bible which were worn on the breast-plates of Jewish high priests to determine the will of Jehovah, are the "words of glory" that Ralph uses to authorize his actions.[23] Ralph's invocation of liberty reduces liberty to nothing more than a metaphor for God's vengeance committed through acts of man. Ralph's ward, on the other hand, evokes heavenly justice in his plea for assistance. However, in the end the ward must act in his own defense. Lionel is characteristically struck dumb. Perhaps in the end, he is too much his father's son and too entrenched in an aristocratic world view to act justly. On the other hand, the ward, an English commoner, is charged with restraining aristocracy gone mad and his act finally fells the mad patriarch. Ralph is still able to bless the union of his son and first cousin, correcting his initial cursing of it at the chapel, and the aristocracy lives on. The revolution has gone full circle and the son takes the seat of the father. Lionel's compliance redacts his previous swearing of

[23] Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, also claimed to have come into possession of the oracles Urim and Thummin and used them to decipher the Golden Tablets that became the Book of Mormon. In another note from 1832, Cooper writes "It is a singular coincidence that while the author was writing this sentence, a privileged and harmless, but decided madman came into his room. He was excited, at the moment, and uttered the precise words of the text" (356).

allegiance to the rebels in the name of his father. Instead, taking his father's seat in the baronetcy becomes the proper way to honor his memory. Family history has again repeated itself, and a beleaguered and battle wary second son born in the colonies and subject to the family curse will again return to England to reclaim the baronetcy and protect the family's holdings. Through his incestuous union to Cecil and the death of the matriarch Madame Lechmere, the aristocratic family is made whole again and Lionel can bring the family home from the colonies once and for all.

Lionel's submission to his destiny as an aristocrat is a denial of all signs that point to a resolution where the Boston born Lionel will forego his British upbringing and corrupt aristocratic title to side with his father, brother, and native countrymen. Upon his return to his birthplace, Lionel feels that Boston is more a disorienting maze than a homeland. Though very reasonable, he generally comes across as an apolitical and unquestioning soldier. He is largely immune to the political rhetoric of both sides, preferring instead to ascertain the truth of matters by observing them first hand. This commitment to deciding for himself is also the root cause of his wavering. Lionel volunteers for the mission to Lexington and Concord to get to the bottom of rumors about armed men in the country so as "to be a witness of whatever may occur" (94). He thus finds himself in the Lexington-Concord affair by chance. His life is saved by Job who is in the country with the armed colonials at the skirmish. Job's motives for being there are characteristically unclear. Lionel, however, devoid of proof, refuses to consider that Job might have been fighting with the rebels. As previously mentioned, though Lionel was ordered to be a bystander by General Howe when the Battle of Bunker Hill begins (his political value as a native born Bostonian loyal to the crown cannot be risked), he enters the battle not out of allegiance to either side but out of loyalty to his brothers in arms.

Before Ralph falls victim to his insanity, he convincingly petitions the American cause to Lionel on multiple occasions through Enlightenment-based theoretical arguments about the individual right to liberty and historical arguments detailing the various injustices of the monarchy. He and Job give Lionel an impromptu tour of the various sites of popular insurrection in Boston including the Liberty Tree and a secret Sunday meeting of rebel patriots. The meeting is the point at which Lionel is most impressed with the rebel cause. Lionel at first mistakes the meeting for a religious gathering. However, he observes the men at the meeting are of rough exterior, but that "there was a composure and decency in the air common to the whole assembly, which denoted that they were men who possessed in a high degree of self-respect. A very few minutes sufficed to teach Lionel that he was in the midst of a meeting collected to discuss questions connected with the political movements of the time, though he felt himself a little at a loss to discover the precise results it was meant to reproduce" (73). Lionel is continuously unable to decipher the meaning of what he sees and hears in his native country because of his estrangement from it. Even the men's accents are inflected "with the peculiar tones and pronunciation of the province" which make their otherwise deliberate and logical statements difficult for Lionel to understand (73). Unable to believe that it is possible for the "mechanics and tradesmen" of the town to conduct themselves like gentlemen, Lionel surveys the scene "from face to face, with a strong desire to detect the secret movers of the scene he was witnessing" (74). His eyes rest on a gentleman whom Lionel reads as "abusing his powers by urging others to acts of insubordination" (ibid). Eventually, their eyes meet in a moment of mutual recognition. "Glances of marked meaning were exchanged between them during the remainder of the evening" (74). Lionel remains obstinate when, after the meeting, the gentleman, "speaking in a friendly accent" asks him, "Does Major Lincoln meet his countrymen

tonight as one who sympathizes with their wrongs, or as the favoured and prosperous officer of the crown?" Lionel counters with a quixotic reply, "Is sympathy with the oppressed incompatible with loyalty to my Prince?" (75). The two debate the constitutional legality of the sentiments that were expressed in the meeting, but Lionel refuses to give in. Ralph questions Lionel if, "after seeing some evidence of the spirit that pervades this people, think you still there is no danger that the volcano will explode?" Lionel answers, bewilderedly, "Men on the threshold of rebellion seldom reason so closely, and with such moderation. Why, the very fuel or the combustion, the rabble themselves, discuss their constitutional principles, and keep under the mantle of law, as if they were a club of learned Templars" (76).

Lionel's constant inability to discern the meaning of what he sees in Boston is symptomatic both of the novel's reflective vision of the past and an impasse in the novel's political vision. In this case Lionel, though an entirely rational observer, is too ideologically enmeshed in his aristocratic world view to correctly read the plot of what is happening around him. He is fundamentally incapable of accepting the scene at the meeting house as a democratic political space predicated on fundamental equality among men who "possessed in high degree the quality of self-respect" and who deliberated "in perfect and firm unanimity" through "each expression of common feeling." In the end, the accented voices of the Bostonians are too strange. The ever rational Lionel searches out cues for comprehending what he sees. Upon ascertaining that he is not witnessing a religious gathering, Lionel latches on to the familiar face of the gentleman stranger, a presumed fellow aristocrat, to order the scene in a manner similar to how Rancière's classical historian might look for a familiar face as a means to reproduce familiar hierarchies that make sense of history. As Rancière astutely observes, in violent battle scenes hierarchies collapse and all things become equal (*Politics of Literature* 72-79). In this novel,

however, the owner of that mantle of law which collapses the hierarchies at the meeting house will remain mysterious.[24]

As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that Lionel has underestimated the stranger. He is not an aristocratic manipulator of the "rabble," as Lionel initially thought, but rather proves to be their secret consultant. Lionel encounters the stranger three more times. The second time is just a couple of days later, again at night, when Lionel sees from a distance two figures holding "secret and suppressed communications" (90). As Lionel comes nearer, he identifies one of the figures as Job who explains his presence with a characteristically riddled explanation delivered in the third person before dashing off in his canoe "with a stillness and swiftness that showed the idiot was not ignorant of the business he had undertaken" (91). Lionel and the stranger then recognize and acknowledge each other under the light of a street lamp. Though Lionel is known to the stranger, the stranger withholds his identity despite Lionel's request to make himself known. He tells Lionel he desires to remain a stranger "yet a little longer … though I think the time is at hand when men will be known in their true characters" (91). The third meeting again occurs at night, just days before the Battle of Bunker Hill. This time their exchange is much icier. Lionel accuses the stranger of being "afraid to walk the streets of Boston in open day," and the stranger takes offense stating "The man you address … has dared to walk the streets of Boston both by day and by night, when the bullies of him you call your master, have strutted their hour in the security of peace; and now a nation is up to humble their pretensions, shall he shrink from treading his native soil!" (163). The two part, vowing not to meet again "until we can meet as friends, or as enemies should, where we may discuss these topics at the points of our weapons"

[24] Lance Schachterle argues that contemporary readers would have recognized the stranger as Dr. Joseph Warren ("Cooper and the American Revolutionary War Novel" 262). I do not see decisive evidence that this is so.

(163). Lionel sees the stranger the final time while he looks upon the scene through his looking glass from atop Copp's Hill. The stranger is consulting with William Prescott, the leader of the rebel forces, just before the first charge of the British at the Battle of Bunker Hill. The identity of the stranger is never revealed nor is his secret, yet whatever secret he imparts to the rabble is forceful enough to make them believe they can refuse the entire ideological and military strength of the British Empire. The stranger can thus be read as a metaphor for a democratic political current that does not, as Cooper defines it, "level those who have a just claim to be elevated" but instead "refuses to lend itself to unnatural and arbitrary distinctions" that make one man unequal to another.

Job Pray is another enigma who cannot be adequately narrated in the novel. Lionel's guide around Boston and his illegitimate half-brother is usually characterized as a simpleton with an idealistic patriotism that is as much a parody as a celebration of the patriotism the BHMA attributed to the yeoman class of Revolutionary era Massachusetts. Job is rescued from frenzied British grenadiers by Lionel and other British military brass on multiple occasions for offenses that range from mild misunderstandings to shooting and killing their Captain at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Both the central characters in the novel and the reader are forced to constantly question whether this "idiot" is a victim of circumstance or a conniving double agent reminiscent of Harvey Birch, the spy in Cooper's earlier novel of the Revolution, *The Spy* (1821). Until he is revealed as being in collusion with George Washington himself, the reader is not sure whether Harvey is allied to the crown, the patriots, or is neither, and is merely a peddler who maintains neutrality as good business practice. Job's propensity to speak only in the third person and in puzzling euphemisms blocks access to his interior motives in this novel. He yells, "Job loves the King, but he don't love Rum," when Lionel first rescues him from a group of drunk soldiers who

are incensed that he will not drink with them to the King's health. Is this merely the idiot Job contradicting himself? Is it a shrewd lie to cover his patriotism? Is it evidence that Job and his idiocy both are representative of the "peculiar" colonial allegiance to monarchical law but resistance to aristocratic rule Cooper points to? Ian Dennis offers a provocative reading of Job in which he describes him as possessing an "irreducible dimension of otherness."

> He is provoking not just because he refuses, in short, to recognize who he is, but because this refusal suggests a being completely impervious to the socially shaping power of acknowledged models of behavior, the mimetic ordering and limiting which, in the Old World at least, makes life comprehensible, and endurable. He wants too much. His idiocy, finally, is a kind of autonomy, within which he seems able to pursue, and perhaps even to possess, those unimaginable freedoms his oppressors cannot permit themselves to desire. (83)

In an ironic twist on his role as Lionel's guide, Job proves the most disorienting presence in the novel.

Perhaps Job's most complex deception occurs when he convinces Lionel that the voices he hears the night before the Battle of Bunker Hill at the old cemetery at Copp's Hill are ghosts rather than the militia entrenching on Breed's Hill across the river. Lionel had found himself there "unexpectedly" after a restless night walk through "the narrow and gloomy streets of the North End" (164). Lionel stops to sit and reflect, careful to avoid the cannon battery that had been installed there by the British troops. His thoughts are disturbed by the sounds of a mysterious figure in a lone canoe gliding across the water from Charleston, the site of Breed's Hill. The mysterious figure climbs the hill and sits ten feet away. Lionel observes that this figure

also sits in repose. After they are disturbed by the British watchman, whom Lionel abruptly dismisses, Lionel asks Job what he is doing there.

> "Job loves to come up among the graves, before the cocks crow; they say the dead walk when living men sleep."
>
> "And would you hold communion with the dead, then?"
>
> "'Tis sinful to ask them many questions, and such as you do put should be made in the Holy Name…but Job loves to be near them, to use him to the damps, ag'in the time he shall be called to walk himself in a sheet at midnight" (165).

The tone of Job together with the scene "caused the blood of Lionel to thrill," so that Job easily convinces him that the voices which it turns out are the rebel forces could well be the dead. The reader is left equally uncertain if Job was there for his stated purpose, as a rebel spy trying to gain intelligence about the English battery. In the next day's battle, Job's patriotic bray of "Hurrah! let the rake-hellies go up to Breed's; the people will teach 'em the law!" which he shouts during the Battle of Bunker Hill is what leads to his ejection from Breed's Hill. Lionel watches him disappear in his canoe towards Charlestown where Job will also join the battle and shoot and kill the British Captain M'Fuse, a personal friend of Lionel. Lionel will be knocked into a coma after he joins the battle.

It is not even certain, however, that Job kills Captain M'Fuse intentionally. As a result of Lionel's injury, there is a seven month gap in the narrative causing the reader to learn about M'Fuse's death after the fact. Job's simple-mindedness together with the fact that there is no account of the act in the narrative itself forces the reader to question whether or not Job actually acted with intent, even after Lionel's other childhood friend, Captain Polwarth, finds evidence in Lionel's chamber that Job did in fact shoot M'Fuse. Towards the end of the novel, Job falls

victim to the smallpox epidemic after Lionel unknowingly sends him to a family who is afflicted with the disease gather kindling and candles to light the fire for his winter wedding. Bedridden in his and his mother's abode, Job is accosted by riotous British regulars angry that he shot their captain. This time Job is saved by the arrival of Captain Polwarth who insists on a proper military trial. Job freely admits to his juror that he shot their comrade at Bunker Hill, and the troops again demand blood. The sudden appearance of Cecil stops them when she evokes the authority of her husband. In one of the most touching scenes in the novel, Polwarth takes pity on Job and his mother after the plump gourmand hears they have not eaten properly in weeks. He prepares a feast for them with the provisions the insatiable Polwarth had hired Job to procure for him from the rebel held territories. Polwarth even has the feast cooked over a fire started using his own wooden leg (his real leg was another casualty of Bunker Hill), and the three dine like kings. Ironically, it is possible, though never made clear, that Job might have loyally procured the provisions for Polwarth as cover together with his feigned "idiocy" to cross back and forth between British held Boston and the rebel held outskirts for purposes of espionage. Also ironic is the possibility that by feeding Job's fever, Polwarth hastens his death. Finally, in another action that mirrors Harvey Birch, Job dies a martyr towards the end of the novel as his true identity is unveiled. Job, it would appear, has no agency. During the War of 1812, Harvey dies and a letter signed by Washington proves he was in the service of his country all along. Harvey's unwavering allegiance to George Washington and the ideals of his country paradoxically made him a victim. Job's morals are similarly pure but also the root of his downfall. They, like him, are simpleminded. They, like him, are the deformed outcome of an unholy union between aristocrats and commoners. They, like him, are susceptible to contagion by the masses spitting

wrong-headed patriotic rhetoric. Their death, like his, is hastened by the sustenance of aristocrats, who, in the last instance, prove to be puppet-masters.

And yet, Job is also a holder of the stranger's secret. His resistance and stubbornness are also evidence of democratic refusal to submit to artificial systems of order. In this sense, his idiocy is a metaphor for both his purity of purpose and Cooper's skepticism about this purpose. Just as with Harvey's purity of purpose, the spark that ignites the revolution is also a casualty of revolutionary violence. By Cooper's pen, human frailty and aristocratic corruption are destined to be the prevalent forces as the turn of the revolution goes full circle. However, as compared with Cooper's earlier novels of the Revolution, he is not as obsessed with narrating a new legal order through which characters like Job, the stranger, and Harvey Birch would be afforded discernable subject positions. Yet, these characters still serve as markers for what could have been and still might be. Unlike classical histories, these characters are not narrated out of history, but left ambiguous as ghosts who were not given form in the present distribution of the sensible.

After his father and Job's dramatic death scene and the subsequent British evacuation of Boston, Lionel decides to return to England to reclaim the family's baronetcy despite his father's scathing (and it would seem justified) condemnation of aristocracy. The new Boston that Cooper writes proves unsuitable for his chief protagonist. Instead of a patriotic moral, the novel thus ends with an act of forgetting. "Of all the principle actors in the forgoing tale, not one is now living…The historical facts of our legend are beginning to be obscured by time; and it is more than probable, that the prosperous and affluent English peer, who now enjoys the honours of the house of Lincoln, never knew the secret history of his family, while it sojourned in a remote province of the British empire" (Cooper 1984, 364-65). From the perspective of the Lincolns, the family title and the aristocratic system itself remain too strong to be greatly affected by the

troubles of any one family, just as the British Empire is too great to be overly troubled by the loss of one colony.

Even in the former colonies not much has changed. Agnes Danforth, the patriot daughter of Mrs. Lechmere's niece and the distant cousin of Lionel, remains in the former colony despite countless marriage offers from Polwarth before he leaves with Lionel and Cecil. We learn that a week after their departure from Boston, Agnes marries an American officer "in the bosom of her own family" and that they take over the Lechmere estate. Later, after the war, Lionel "commissioned the husband of Agnes to place him in a situation, where, by industry, his future comfort was amply secured" (364). Even the newly independent patriots are able to let bygones be bygones and retain their ties to British aristocracy. In this novel, the early days of the War were a tumultuous and confusing time devoid of meaning. Meaning and order are restored in the rush to forget the airing of uncomfortable truths. The novel's resolution where, in the end, the Revolution was merely a generational turn where old family trees are pruned rather than chopped down may be another instance of Cooper's fidelity to historical accuracy. As an act of cultural commemoration, however, the novel makes certain that uncomfortable historical details are not forgotten even if they cannot be reconciled into the present distribution of the sensible. It is probable, nonetheless, that a market preference to forget the messiness of history in favor of the neatly ordered, restoratively nostalgic fiction supporting historical narratives that were quickly becoming cemented as public memory was likely an important reason why Cooper opted not to continue with his original plan of writing novels based on the revolutionary histories of each of the other original colonies. In fact, despite his early success at writing revolutionary fiction, Cooper would not write another novel that would take up the Revolution as its subject matter

until *Wyandotte* in 1843.[25] His next novel, *Last of the Mohicans,* set during the more remote history of the French and Indian War is now read as his most canonical work of American literary nationalism.[26]

[25]Lance Schachterle argues that among the possible reasons Cooper dropped the Revolution as a theme after *Lionel Lincoln* the most probable is that Cooper was becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the idea of radical equality for which the Revolution increasingly served as a symbol in the antebellum period. Schachterle reads this as evidence of Cooper's socially conservative ideal republic ("Cooper and the American Revolutionary War Novel," 264-269). Arguably, his discomfort lies more with articulations of radical equality associated with Jacksonian democracy. In "Cooper's Turn: Satire and the Age of Jackson" Stephen Carl Arch makes a more nuanced argument about how Cooper's understanding of himself as a democrat changed in the 1830s. Arch identifies his "turn" from certain versions of democracy in his simultaneous "turn " from the historical romance genre to other genres such as satire in novels such as *The Monikins.* He identifies Cooper's turn as part of a larger rhetorical turn in American society in the 1830s.

[26] See Jonathan Arac, *The Emergence of American Literary Narrative* for a characterization of Cooper as an originator of what Arac terms National Narrative. Also see chapter 3 of Dana D. Nelson, *The Word in Black and White* for a discussion of how *Last of the Mohicans* works to establish Anglo-American racial hegemony. A more recent examination of the role of race in the Leather-Stocking Tales is Deidre Dallas Hall's "Remarkable Particulars: David Gamut and the Alchemy of Race." The ten essays edited by Jeffrey Walker in *Leather-Stocking Redux; or, Old Tales, New Essays* examine issues of race, gender, ethnicity, politics, and economics in *Last of the Mohicans* and the other Leather-Stocking Tales.

CHAPTER 3

The Tragedy of Revolution in *Conquest of Mexico* and *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*

When William Henry Harrison became the first Whig president in 1840, the party had transformed from an alliance of socially minded yet conservative statesmen reticent to participate in party politics into a formidable party machine. John Quincy Adams neither anticipated nor desired this development when he took office in 1825 and sought to advance Henry Clay's and his programs for national improvement. Neither did Daniel Webster anticipate it when he extolled the core values of patriotism, social improvement, and republican allegiance as the moral legacies of the Revolutionary War when he delivered his address on behalf of the Bunker Hill Monument Association the same year. Both men, nonetheless, would factor importantly in growing the Whigs into the main oppositional organization to the Democrats. The leaders of both parties persistently struggled to distinguish themselves from their rivals in their efforts to court an increasingly politically active citizenry. These differences were both pragmatic in terms of their policies and ideological in terms of their values and visions of what the nation was and should be.

In this chapter, I concentrate in particular on the Whigs' use of history to interpret and contest the Democratic Party's stance on expansion. Democrats and Whigs understood their relationship to the old world republics and empires very differently. As Daniel Walker Howe argues, though both parties saw the U.S. as the most exceptional democratic republic the world had yet seen, Democrats tended to understand the American Revolution as liberation from the history of the Old World while Whigs tended to understand it as the climax of Old World history

(*Political Culture,* 70).[1] Thus, for Democrats, the greatness of the United States was already a foregone conclusion. Whigs, on the other hand, saw the United States as the inheritors of Old World republican history and believed the country's survival hinged on learning from and improving upon that history. The Whig view of history mirrored their belief in progress through moral improvement, and in their eyes the nation had a moral imperative to perfect the failed republican experiments of the past. The differing relationships to history between the two parties also reflect the split then occurring between the two prevalent views of Protestant millennialism. As Howe points out, postmillennialists, who believed that the millennium would be initiated by human design, tended to side with the Whigs while premillennialists, who believed that the millennium would require God's intervention, tended to side with the Democrats (*What Hath God Wrought,* 284-285, 580). A postmillennial view therefore found more use in lessons that could be learned from human history while a premillennial view that already perceived Americans as God's chosen people had little use for human history. The Catholic Church, which rejected the doctrine of millennialism, was a common foe of both post and premillennials. The rejection of millennialism together with opposition to liberal political doctrine and an adversarial view of modern progress convinced many American postmillennialists to believe that abolishing the Catholic Church was analogous to overthrowing the Anti-Christ and therefore a necessary precursor to bringing forth the millennium (Howe *What Hath God Wrought,* 319).

In what constitutes a golden age of Whig history writing in the 1840s and 50s, historians like William Hickling Prescott and John Lothrop Motley turned to the history of the Spanish

[1] Howe notes that this distinction did not necessarily mean Democrats were uninterested in history. Democrat George Bancroft was one of the most renowned historians in the nineteenth century. However, Howe points out that the difference between Bancroft and the Whig historians like William Hickling Prescott and John Lothrop Motley was that Bancroft "defined American nationhood in terms of popular will, not in [Whiggish] terms of tradition or the acceptance of historical limitations" (70).

Empire in the sixteenth century to make meaning of troublesome imperialist policies manifested in the Indian removal during Jackson's administration, the Mexican American War, and the ideology of Manifest Destiny. Patricia Jayne Roylance has characterized these histories as "narratives of imperial eclipse" that "capture moments in world history when the trajectories of two great states, one on the rise and one on the decline, intersected" (1). Prescott's *The History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1843) and Motley's *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1856) are two prominent histories written during this period that examine the Spanish Empire during moments of revolution. For Prescott, the overthrow of the Aztec Empire at the hands of Cortèz is a key moment in the rise of the Spanish empire. For Motley, the rise of the Dutch Republic constitutes a key moment in the decline of the Spanish Empire. Roylance argues that in researching and writing narratives of imperial eclipse historians understood "the reincarnated versions of [early modern empires'] problems" haunted the rise of the American nation in the nineteenth-century (12). Thus, for Roylance, these narratives primarily represent contemporary anxieties of the feared eclipse of the American Republic resulting from what seemed to be its inevitable transformation into an empire at the hands of the Democrats. Though these histories seem to predict that all republics are destined to become empires and that all empires must eventually fall, their authors did not necessarily believe that the American Republic was destined to fall. They did believe, however, that the more Jacksonian Democrats denied historical precedent the more the American Republic would move toward repeating the history of earlier republics. Whig historians' return to revolutionary moments where one empire rose and another fell thus served a political purpose that was anti-Democratic party, but not anti-democracy. Instead, as scholars have noted, these historians drew on reflective literary techniques used to great effect by romantic historians like James Fenimore Cooper to give a more thorough picture of history in an

attempt to find an escape from the seemingly inevitable cycle of the rise and fall of republics turned empires. A chief question Prescott and Motley attempted to answer in their expanded historical pictures was how an increasingly expansive and heterogeneous republic can protect the fundamental democratic values of liberty and equality for a diverse population.

The Rise of the Second Party System

Andrew Jackson's presidential administration had radically changed the office of the president and the character of the federal government. In so doing, it propelled his opponents into a party system they were not comfortable with. During his presidency, Jackson successfully melded his authoritarianism with a democratic ideology to, as Howe writes, "define himself as defender of the people against special interests…The populist rhetoric of Jackson and his political associates combined ceaseless condemnation of elite corruption with the antigovernment political ideology they had taken over from [John] Randolph, [John] Taylor, and the Old Republicans" (*What Hath God Wrought* 330).[2] Jackson and Van Buren both were able to paint the national improvement projects of Henry Clay, John Quincy Adams, and Daniel Webster as veiled attempts by a quasi-aristocratic class of industrialists to profit at the hands of southern planters and the common man. Jackson seized upon his image as the spokesman for the popular will to battle Congress and even the Supreme Court. He used the veto power freely to stop several national improvement programs and, most notably, the Second National Bank Charter. He freely went around the law in the matter of Indian removal in Georgia, but, paradoxically, insisted on federal authority over the states during the secession crisis over the tariffs he supported. Still Jackson's opponents remained reluctant to engage in partisan politics,

[2] The Old Republicans was the name adopted by a group of state's rights congressmen who opposed the nationalist agenda of James Madison. See Howe (*What Hath God Wrought*, especially pages 68 and 82).

and even after the Bank War and secession crisis caused several Democrats to join the Whigs, they were unable to beat Jackson's hand-picked successor, Martin Van Buren, in the 1836 presidential election.

In the elections of 1840 the Whig party finally gained control of the White House, Congress, and many state governments. The elections that year marked the Whigs' greatest success in gaining the favor of white male voters in opposition to the Democrats.[3] Michael F. Holt writes that these elections would establish the face of the party until its demise in the 1850s. "[The Whig party] would pose as the champion of liberty, morals, and prosperity…they would attempt to demonstrate that their response to an issue differed from that of democrats" (113). William Henry Harrison, the Whig presidential candidate, was chosen at the party's first national convention held in 1839. Harrison won over party stalwarts Henry Clay and Daniel Webster precisely because the party feared that these two party hardliners would alienate certain pockets of voters. John Tyler was chosen as his running mate because, as a states' righter, he would bring southerners to the ticket. In reality, the Panic of 1837 and the Democrat's reluctance to deploy the federal government in order to help bail out the people probably would have been enough to get any Whig into the White House. Nonetheless Harrison's raucous Log Cabin and Apple Cider campaign clearly represented a strategy to beat the Democrats at their own game. Harrison was successfully (if deceitfully) painted as a man of the people who was on the poor man's side, while the Democrats were painted as favoring an executive monarchy that disregarded the will of the people.

[3] According to Michael F. Holt, 80.2 percent of adult male voters voted in the 1840 election as compared to 57.8 percent in the 1836 election. Whigs carried elections in every state with the exceptions of New Hampshire, Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri, and Maine. Holt argues that these "subnational" results suggest that "the Whigs hardly needed a military hero or campaign hoopla to win the White House" (112).

In hindsight the decision to put forward Harrison and especially Tyler suggests that the Whigs were not very adept at playing the Democrat's game. After Harrison died thirty days into office, Tyler became the first president to take office without having been elected. Tyler, who had split from the Democratic Party over Jackson's handling of the Bank War and the secession crisis, proved no friend to Clay and the American System. He remained an adamant states righter and vetoed Whig tariff bills that included provisions for distribution of public land sales to the states. By 1842, he faced an impeachment trial by the Whig-controlled congress and was kicked out of the Whig party. Tyler pursued an expansionist agenda centered on the annexation of Texas, which he finally achieved in his last days of office. The Whig and Democrat divide over expansionism would continue during the administration of Tyler's successor, the Democrat James K. Polk, who instigated the war with Mexico over strident opposition by the Whigs. Howe states that in opposition to the Democrats, "the Whig Party conceived of American development more in terms of qualitative economic improvement than quantitative expansion of territory. […]Whigs […] saw America's moral mission as one of democratic example rather than one of conquest. (*What Hath God Wrought*, 706).

A New Republican Grand Narrative

Though Whigs were still firmly allied to republican ideals first formulated in the revolutionary era, as the United States continued to expand in the years following the Treaty of Ghent in 1814 the meteoric rise of disparate individuals that occurred as a result of the increase in population as the nation expanded geographically continued to challenge the possibility and desirability of a homogenous people. These challenges led to a fundamental reassessment of the possibilities and pitfalls of a political system based on a democratic ideal of universal popular sovereignty. In light of the ever expanding union, various suffrage movements, and subsequent

wars for territory, the need for an all-encompassing origin story for American style democracy that would resonate with an increasingly multitudinous conception of the authorizing people had outgrown the well-wrought New England-centric, yeoman farmer-based story of American independence as spun by Daniel Webster, Edward Everett, and other members of the BHMA. As I established in the first chapter, the story had barely inspired enough momentum to get the monument completed following the brief moment of patriotic fervor that accompanied the Bunker Hill Monument's dedication in 1825. By its completion in 1843, the West had expanded significantly, and the ties that many people who now called themselves American had to the original thirteen colonies were becoming increasingly loosened. In addition, to whatever degree white America could claim English heritage was challenged by other European peoples whose presence in new states predated the United States. The arterial vein of the Mississippi river was largely French. Points west were largely Spanish. The people who populated these areas were a multiracial polyglot who shocked the sensibilities of Anglo-Americans arriving from the more segregated communities of New England and the South. The image of the yeoman farmer was rapidly losing whatever status he had as the moral center of American society and morality among an increasingly diversified population and economy.

In the same post-War of 1812 period, the United States was increasingly establishing itself on the world stage. With the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, the U.S. declared ideological independence from Europe by claiming itself guardian of already existing independent republics in the western hemisphere. The Doctrine also pledged that the United State would not interfere with the already existing western hemisphere "colonies or dependencies" meaning that the United States recognized the right of other independent republics to exist in the Americas. Thus within the North American context, the federal government would not interfere with British

holdings north of the 49th parallel or with Mexico's right to exist as an independent republic. Ideologically anyway, the U.S. Federal Government recognized that any self-authorizing people had their own unalienable rights and any independent nation in the Western Hemisphere that was the product of a democratic revolution was just as legitimate as the United States. The laws authorized by the people of these other republics were as sacred and inviolate as those of any other country. As troubling as it was to the racial hierarchies which contaminated American democracy, the doctrine ostensibly conceded that the principles of democracy were transferrable even to people of mixed European and indigenous ancestry such as in Mexico, or from predominately African ancestry such as in Haiti.

However, the ideological acknowledgement of the right to universal popular sovereignty that underpinned the doctrine did not square with presumptions of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority among enfranchised Americans. Racist ideology was indeed evident in how the Monroe Doctrine established the United States as guardian of the western hemisphere and set the United States as the democratic republic *par excellence* in the hemisphere. Thus, even though the American Revolution could no longer claim to be the material origin for the increasing number of democratic republics that were springing up throughout the hemisphere, it could still serve as an ideological origin of democracy in the western hemisphere. By benefit of its national longevity and perceived stability in the 1820's, the American northeast could still serve as a model of ideal democracy for the hemisphere. In chapter one I argued that this was a role that New Englanders in particular took quite seriously, particularly when it came to the formation of exceptionalist narratives that celebrate Anglo-Saxon Protestantism as representative of core nationalistic values. In chapter two, I argued that Cooper's literary representation of the Battle of Bunker Hill complicated the Revolution, and Boston in particular, as an origin of democratic

ideals while also questioning both the feasibility and desirability of inclusive democratic forms. In this chapter I will argue that romantic historians, and in particular those historians who turned to chronicling events that occurred outside the temporal and spatial borders of the United States in the era of United States expansion were engaged in a historical project that sought to continue to establish New England as the pinnacle of democratic political organization. This historical project was also carried out in the service of authorizing the United States, and especially New England, as the progenitors and moral center of a democratic future not just for the western hemisphere, but for the world. Despite the desire for Anglo-American cultural homogeneity that fueled these historical projects however, the histories themselves fail to establish democracy as a closed system, indicating a vision for the authorizing demos that is discordant with both the Whig's expressed desire for cultural uniformity and the Democratic Party's desire for maximum liberalism.

The contrapuntal political vision is especially evident in Prescott's and Motley's histories of the Spanish Empire. Both histories establish the Inquisition as the driving force behind the Spanish imperial project. The Spanish Inquisition itself is depicted as a brutal authoritarian and totalitarian regime that sought to stamp out both non-Christian others and Protestant reformers. These histories depict any action done in the name of Catholicism, no matter how deceitful or immoral it may appear, as sanctioned by the absolute legal authority of the Church. The possible realization of the complete domination of the Holy Roman Empire, is then portrayed as the triumph of authoritarianism and the death of democracy. A world clear of the messiness of heterogeneity also means the end of modern progress and a return to the dark ages. The lesson in these histories is that for republican ideals to thrive, republics must seek ways to democratically incorporate the maximum number of voices.

Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico* opens with an idyllic sixteenth century republic. The Aztec empire is painted as a "semi-civilized" society of indigenes which the narrator positions as more advanced than the North American tribes and less advanced than the white European civilization. Enter the Spanish, represented by Hernán Cortés, who, though an agent of the Spanish Empire, exhibits a sense of liberal individualism more akin to a Byronic Hero. Representative of the best and worst of European idealism and ambition, Cortés and his band of conquistadors are more in pursuit of individual wealth and fame than the expansion of the Spanish Empire. Initially Cortés's incursion into Mexico seems to be a mission to liberate the various Mexican republics from the tyranny of the Aztec Empire, not a mission of conquest. His arrival is foretold by Aztec mythology in which a bearded man with pale skin was said to have left the empire in the hands of Aztecs until he would one day come back from across the ocean to reclaim it. In the appendix, Prescott even suggests that the Aztecs themselves may have been invaders from Asia, and he engages in a quite extensive proto-anthropological project to suggest as much while also insisting that such "philosophic" speculations lack the objective authority of history. Thus, Cortés's expedition becomes a metaphor for a postmillennial desire to clear the hemisphere of the influence of various encroaching empires so that it may finally become the paradisiacal sight for universal liberty as it was imagined since the first arrival of the Europeans.

However, the problem of the bodies that populate the hemisphere remains. The narrative's staging of the first contact between two occupying empires seemingly suggests that radical religious and cultural difference is ultimately unbridgeable. The demagoguery of the Aztec religion, the degree to which its priests control the operations of the state, and its propensity for human sacrifice and cannibalism reflect protestant paranoia about Catholicism to an absurdist point. The possibility of a hybrid culture of indigenes and Spanish settlers appears

untenable if not terrifying over the course of the narrative. The only solution, tragic as it is, is a revolution which consists of complete extermination of the Aztec civilization and construction of a new "civilized" Spanish colony in its place. However, the genocide ultimately fails. The indigenous culture is never fully extinguished. A new hybridized race is born out of the violent clash between these two cultures. The new capital resurrected on the ruins of the old capital is emblematic of the violence that conjoined the two races and ends up a monument to the memory of the fallen empire and to the injustices which the Spanish ultimately used to conquer the Aztecs.[4] In the end, Cortés, the liberator of Mexico, never achieves the same exalted status as other leaders in the pantheon of Enlightened civilization. Cortés's blatant disregard for the law and his insistence on his own sovereignty in this case eventually lead to his downfall. Prescott's history thus makes a case for national unity through cultural homogeneity as a way to right the wrongs of Cortés and the Spanish Empire.

Motley, on the other hand, names a commitment to absolute tolerance as the key to republican preservation. In his history, Motley establishes Dutch protestant tolerance for the simultaneous practice of various branches of Christianity as a metonymy for universal tolerance. Here, prior to incursion by the Spanish, the Netherlands serves as an idealized republican nation in which everyone is allowed maximum individual freedom. In this ideal republic, no difference is unbridgeable. Instead, any dispute that occurs among the multitudes is easily resolvable through reasoned negotiation among a Teutonic race portrayed as naturally liberal and inherently capable of balancing individual freedom with respect for their brethren's equal rights. Foreign invasion then becomes the agent that disrupts natural harmony and magnifies minute differences

[4] For more on the Gothicism with which Prescott portrays the hybrid Spanish-Aztec race as well as how it has an uncanny position in the nineteenth century American political unconscious, see Jesse Aleman, "The Other Country: Mexico, the United States, and the Gothic History of Conquest" (2006).

so as to turn friends into enemies. Demagoguery, which is represented by religious fondness for idolatry, incites the mob by stoking their passions. The revolution that William of Orange leads is driven by the goal of reinstating the rule of law authorized by the original constitution. In a Whig fantasy of non-partisan politics, William is so committed to democratic harmony among disinterested public citizens, he refuses to lead the republic and initially refuses even to challenge the authority of the king. Like the Whigs, however, his refusal to commit to political distinctions is at the root of his tragic downfall.

History as Romantic and Tragic Art

In what remains a genre defining study of the major antebellum American historians, Bancroft, Parkman, Prescott, and Motley, David Levin defined their historical methodology as a romantic art. Thus, for Levin, the construction of their narratives is largely a literary act guided by romantic ideals.

> The subject had to be an interesting narrative on a 'grand theme,' in which a varied group of remarkable, vigorous characters acted heroically on the largest possible stage. The grand theme involved the origins of a nation (preferably, in some way, America), the progress of Liberty in her battle against Absolutism, the conquest of a continent, or all of these. It included if possible, some "poetic"—that is, melancholy incidents. The scenery had to include something of the picturesque, and as much of the sublime as possible. (Levin, 11)

Levin identifies this methodology as springing from all four historians' shared backgrounds in Unitarianism with its emphasis on the historicity of miracles over the dogma of trinity, extensive study of classic Greek and Latin historians, and affinity for the imaginative literary histories of Sir Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper, and the high romanticism of the poets

Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Byron (6). The methodology results in a historical chronicle supplemented with literary flourish that "gives the meaning as well as the experience of history an immediacy in [the authors'] own time." For Levin, these histories serve to posit "history as a continuing development toward nineteenth-century America, the most 'natural' of nations" (ix). Thus, for these historians, just as for the Bunker Hill orators, all history leads to the U.S., and more precisely to Boston. New England, we might extrapolate from Levin's characterizations of these histories, is painted not only as the guardian of liberty in the western hemisphere, but the inheritor and guardian of all democratic currents originating in the civilized world.

The inheritance is usually read in terms of a progressive history in which democracy becomes yoked to modernization in a positive history of democracy which will finally be realized in a quintessentially American quasi-millennial moment. For example, Motley's reviewer in the *North American Review* writes that the *Rise of the Dutch Republic* is of natural interest to American readers because "it was in this same Holland, the land where the stern fight for freedom of religious opinion had been waged…that the little band of pilgrims rested, before they set sail, in obedience to the voice of the spirit of Liberty" first to England and then to America "to aid in carrying into effect the same plan that had seemed to William of Orange, some seventy-five years before, in the darkest days of his struggle against absolute power, to offer the only refuge of despair" (3-4). The history of the Dutch Republic is, therefore, really the history of the United States. The seeds of democracy germinated in Holland but were transplanted and made to flourish in the United States.

If we concentrate exclusively on the elements of tragedy and failure in these narratives, a negative history of democracy as antinomies, limits, and disappointments begins to appear. A history in which democracy as "the voice of the spirit of Liberty" is also ghostly, found not in the

events of the past themselves, but the specters that drove what the same reviewer calls "conscientious and successful revolution" characterized by a "constant succession of striking incidents, the full development of remarkable and opposite characters, and the display, in the most vivid colors, of all the virtues and vices that adorn or disfigure human nature" (n.p.).

The negative history of democracy is also a tragic view of the past seen through the same reflective lens that I identified in Cooper's *Lionel Lincoln* and that Svetlana Boym associates with her category of off-modern fiction in general. Levin's assertion in conjunction with his appraisals of these historians' commitment to accuracy that "[t]he romantic historian considered himself a painter" is also integral to the reflective character of these narratives (12). Instead of tracking only the great men, these histories succeed at bringing the background into sharper focus as well. Though both Prescott and Motley's histories concentrate heavily on the "great men" Cortés and William of Orange, their success at detailing the background tends to make these great men indistinguishable from it.

Both of these histories, then, are engaged in accounting for and giving voice to a central aporia of Enlightenment thought and democratic political forms. Mark Chou contends that at the rise of western democracy in Athens tragedy became "an intrinsically democratic art form." Chou notes that, though, like all political forms, the Greek version of democracy tended towards privileging a rational and ordered state, the challenge that disorder presents is an integral part of the democratic process. Disorder is what keeps democracies vibrant and challenges the political fictions that, through force-cum-rationality, become instituted as reality. Tragedy, Chou contends, is one of the chief genres through which people and ideas de-politicized by official channels are given a public voice. Thus, as entrenched as these histories may be in ideologies of white racial superiority, Whiggish political platforms, and New England-centric conceptions of

the nation, they still bring dissident figures and anathematical topics reminiscent of tragedy on to the historical stage. Though their representations of order and disorder are often resolved through both implicit and explicit assertions of Anglo-American racial superiority that has justly been problematized by recent generations of critics, the tragic stagings of democracy, a chief characteristic of these histories, offer fruitful insight into what, in antebellum America, were prevailing uncertainties over what kind of ends democracy might bring to what many Whigs understood as the American experiment. This is a reading that has been overshadowed by the prevalent tendency to read these histories as historical narratives that forecast the reality of American democracy post-Civil War and into the twentieth century.[5] I maintain these histories should be read as written in an unsettled present in which the future was far from clear.

The visions of democracy contained in these histories have sometimes woefully and sometimes thankfully not (yet) come to pass. The moments when these histories are concerned with painting a disordered and tragic past populated by "dissident voices and anathematical topics" have characteristically been dismissed as part of these historians over-active romantic imaginations that have little basis in fact. However, as in the historical romances of Cooper and his contemporaries from earlier in the century, the ghosts who haunt these tragic histories establish that democracy can be quite terrifying as a result of both its autoimmune tendencies and its insistence on unknown futures that cannot be articulated or imagined in a future perfect tense. These are faces of democracy that are often buried in many of the dominant aesthetic

[5]For a reading of Prescott that complicates assertions of his tendency towards uncomplicated ethnocentrism and nationalism see John Ernest, "Reading the Romantic Past: William H. Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*." Eric Wertheimer adds a more detailed perspective on race and the figuring of the other to Ernest's argument in "Noctography: Representing Race in William Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*."

arrangements of historical events. Giving voice to these ghostly democratic remnants still proves unsettling to what we often take for granted as our political realities today.

As Wai Chee Dimock has forcefully argued, when we view Americanist texts as nodal points in the deep history of literature on a global scale, national boundaries become hazy. In particular, focusing on these two histories as belonging to the genre of tragedy (Dimock focuses on the epic and the novel, but the same holds for the equally long history of tragedy) gives access to a reading practice that affords interpretations of these texts that are not dictated by nationalist paradigms. Readings over-determined by the national lens have had the unfortunate side effect of limiting the number of possible readings which these texts might otherwise invite. Additionally, if we see tragedy as an early form of literature that makes imaginative political interventions in the way the world is ordered, a long history begins to come into focus where it no longer makes sense to claim the United States as origin of democracy or of a democratic literature. Rather, the conceptions of space and time that have variously been used to encompass the United States serve as stages where democracy has, often tragically, been acted. Democracy is present on this tragic stage, for sure, but its presence cannot be recognized ontologically, that is as the theme or subject of the tragic story. Rather democracy can only be said to be present "hauntologically," Jacques Derrida's neologism for the logic of the specter or ghost. Democracy as tragedy is like a specter, neither here nor there, present nor absent. It can only be said to reside in, to borrow Mark Chou's term, the "inextricability" between order and disorder, reality and fiction, form and principle that tragedy dramatizes through what he terms "tragedy's mulitvocal form—its ability to bring a variety of otherwise marginalized stories, characters and voices onto the public stage and into democratic debate—which reaffirmed a crucial democratic interplay that was implicit in the rise of democracy though not always realized through it thereafter: the insight that order and

disorder and reality and fiction are *inextricably* wedded together" (8, emphasis mine)[6]. In *Rogues*, Derrida clarifies how democracy operates under the logic of hauntology when he claims, "[what] is lacking in democracy is proper meaning" and thus "democracy is defined only by turns, by tropes, by tropism" (39). As inflected as a term like multivocality is with a certain neo-liberal, late capitalist sense of multiculturalism, I instead focus on the tropes, the ways literature organizes the sensible world, through which anarchic democratic currents are integral to the interplay of order and disorder, fiction and reality, and form and principle as expressed by histories of revolution made tragic.

Thus, I am essentially advocating for a tragic narrative arc that supplements what has become the dominant reading of these histories that focuses on the epic emplotment of Enlightenment progress. Focusing on solely delineating an epic historical narrative creates what Hayden White calls a "diachronic or processionary" narrative that celebrates the progressive rise of the Enlightenment-cum-modernity such that "structural transformation is uppermost as the principal guiding representation" (10). Characterizing these histories as epic holds only so far as the narrative abides by a great man theory of history where, through "the hero's transcendence of the world of experience, his victory over it, and his final liberation from it" the story becomes "a drama of the triumph of good over evil, of virtue over vice, of light over darkness, and of the ultimate transcendence of man over the world in which he was imprisoned by the Fall" (White, 8-9). I argue a tragic emplotment exists concomitantly with the epic plot. The epic plot fades if

[6]I must insist here on clarifying that these voices are not marginalized by democracy as such, but rather by something like official Democracy which paradoxically, as Derrida reminds us in *Rogues*, is not democratic at all. Chou alludes to this point later on the same page in his reflections on the "severe limits" put on democracy in Athens by limiting political access to the citizen. Thus, Chou might just as well claim that on the tragic stage, official democratic debate is marginalized by the multivocality of tragedy.

we, like antebellum Americans, draw into question the United States' status as the destined telos of an Enlightenment history.

Yet, when we make democracy rather than America the historical subject, the narratives take on a very different shape. If, as I have suggested, democracy can only serve as a "hauntic" not "ontic" subject, than the history of democracy cannot be told diachronically. Rather, because it cannot be said to exist at all, a narrative of democracy would have neither origin nor a telos. Nonetheless, these narratives can still be said to exist in the time of democracy because, after all, the paradoxical desire for and fear of a fully empowered demos remains a political concern just as important now as it was then. Thus, as histories of democracy, these narratives can be characterized as what White calls "synchronic, or static, narratives" where "the sense of structural continuity or stasis predominates" (10). The hauntological democratic forms that appear and disappear in the narratives leave the structural conditions of the political unchanged. This stasis of the political is plotted tragically as White describes:

> In Tragedy, there are no festive occasions, except false or illusory ones, rather, there are intimations of states of division among men more terrible than that which incited the tragic agon at the beginning of the drama. Still, the fall of the protagonist and the shaking of the world he inhabits which occur at the end of the Tragic play are not regarded as totally threatening to those who survive the agonic test. There has been a gain in consciousness for the spectators of the contest. And this gain is thought to consist in the epiphany of the law governing human existence which the protagonist's exertions against the world have brought to pass. (9)

The tragic histories of democracy lead to an "epiphany" that if one is to remain faithful to democracy, there is no way out of the political. Democracy, rather, is always an agonic test, and

the violence that comes with any attempt to end this struggle is the most tragic of all. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe argue that agonism should be the very condition of pluralist democratic politics.

> [W]e maintain that without conflict and division, a pluralistic democratic politics would be impossible. To believe that a final resolution of conflicts is eventually possible—even if it is seen as an asymptotic approach to the regulative ideal of a rational consensus—far from providing the necessary horizon for the democratic project, is to put it at risk. Conceived in such a way, pluralist democracy becomes a 'self-refuting ideal', because the very moment of its realization would coincide with its disintegration. This is why we stress that it is vital for democratic politics to acknowledge that any form of consensus is the result of a hegemonic articulation, and that it always has an 'outside' that impedes its full realization…[W]e do not see this as something that undermines the democratic project, but as its very condition of possibility. (xvii-xviii)[7]

In other words, democracy cannot and should not be placed on diachronic timelines, the time for democracy is always now and any form of consensus has an ethical obligation to remain open, or as Derrida would have it, hospitable, to the outside. The ethical obligation to openness, if it can even be conceived of as a law, would be the only law of democracy.

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[7] Habermasian forms of "deliberative democracy" predicated on his theorization of the public sphere have informed much scholarship on American literary history since Michael Warner's *The Letters of the Republic.* A chief aim of this dissertation is to trace an agonistic tradition of democratic politics that often runs counter to the well documented deliberative forms characteristic of official publics such as those that form the basis for republicanism or what has been theorized as the literary public sphere. For a study of an agonistic tradition of democracy from the perspective of the paradox that comes from conflicting desires for multiculturalism and monoculturalism during the American Renaissance see Timothy B. Powell's *Ruthless Democracy: A Multicultural Interpretation of the American Renaissance.*

In tracing the tragic history of democracy, however, I do not mean to deny the prevalence of American exceptionalism in the antebellum historical imagination. Instead, I mean to dissociate the concept of democracy from the concept of America. American exceptionalism is still the predominant episteme that guides the historical vision of both authors. Both Prescott and Motley, like Bancroft, Parkman, Cooper, William Gilmore Simms, and other men and women of letters who had postmillennial beliefs undoubtedly understood America as the telos for whatever the enlightenment would bring—for better or worse. However, these two narratives display an acute understanding that America was not yet, and perhaps never should be democratic. Both Prescott's and Motley's histories see their Americas as occupying the same time of democracy as the historical figures and events they chronicle. For Prescott, the history of the conquest of Mexico opens with a convergence of the new world and the old that seems ripe with possibility for founding a new political order that would bridge radical difference. Yet, in the end, differences become unbridgeable and the possibility for a heterogeneous utopia devolves violently into a totalitarian regime. Prescott's project is largely to repopulate Mexico before the fall through an imaginative reconstruction of the conquest story told by the victors. The result of the conquest then becomes less an example of civilizational progress than a tragic staging of the genocide of a people who may have been the basis of a radically different democratic order. The catharsis of the tragedy is very similar to what Gordon Sayre identifies as the catharsis of Indian tragedy in which the victims will hopefully be the victors of tomorrow (31). This catharsis, Sayre argues, prevents the closure of the republican epic and the "sympathy may take the form of pointed political dissent, a vague millennial vision of justice, or a more local cause" (ibid). Sayre also argues the catharsis of Indian tragedies is capable of resolving "wrenching moral and

political ambivalence" felt by readers who have benefitted from the violence of imperial and national policies (7).

Motley's history is largely an origin story for American democratic excess that begins in Holland. He paints an ideal world of democratic pluralism that, as insistent as it is on universal toleration, remains decidedly Christian, white, and male. William of Orange, in Motley's history, is not the romantic heroic liberator who finally brings forth democracy, but rather is an arbiter of reasoned democratic agonism. Tragedies occur when democracy runs wild, that is, outside of a reasoned legal order. Both histories can thus be read as cautionary tales that ask self-determined sovereign arbiters of manifest destiny to remain conscious of the violence they authorize as they seek to instigate a new era of American empire. Though it is outside of the scope of this chapter, one could argue that Prescott and Motley's cautions highlight the violence inherent in the constant calls for founding America anew that are central not only to the ideologies inaugurated by the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny, but also to the calls for founding a new American literature in literary journals such as the *North American Review* and the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* (where John O'Sullivan in fact turned the phrase Manifest Destiny), as well as various transcendentalist tinged projects created in response to Emerson's criticism in nature that "Our age is retrospective." Essentially, all of these calls revolve around a millennial desire to end the history of European models of civilizational progress and begin a new history of American civilizational progress.

Cortés as Tragic Hero

Prescott's history can only be read as an epic rendering of Cortés's march through Mexico if the importance of the last book which covers Cortés's life, death, and legacy after the conquest is downgraded and the first book, a study on the pre-contact culture of Mexico, is read

in anticipation of Cortés's impending arrival. The history of Prescott scholarship is often predicated on these two conditions. Levin, for example, writes that the first book "establishes the romantic atmosphere and the moral basis for conquest" and that the "sole artistic value of Prescott's debatable epilogue" (164) is to carry one of the chief thematic patterns of "the rhythmic succession of crises that Cortés must face" to his death (172). Thus, in Levin's reading, both books only serve to emphasize the romance of the hero quest portrayed in the middle books.

Prescott himself seemed to predict this criticism in his preface, and, in preempting this criticism, he also establishes an important component of his historical methodology.

> I have preferred to continue the narrative to the death of Cortés, relying on the interest which the development of his character in his military career may have excited in the reader. I am not insensible to the hazard I incur by such a course. The mind, previously occupied with one great idea, that of the subversion of the capital, may feel the prolongation of the story beyond that point superfluous if not tedious; and may find it difficult, after the excitement caused by witnessing a great national catastrophe to take an interest in the adventures of a private individual. (Preface)

The extension of the history beyond the Conquest and beyond Cortés as a public representative of a particular imperial and romantic spirit is thus one of Prescott's central concerns in the history. In this sense, Prescott exhibits a remarkably democratic historical vision that not only removes Cortés from his "great man" pedestal, but repopulates the historical stage with a number of important actors that represent complexity in social and racial categories that, for Prescott, are problematically absent from the histories written by his predecessors. Prescott continues:

> Notwithstanding these objections, I have been induced to continue the narrative, partly from deference to the opinion of several Spanish scholars who considered that the

> biography of Cortés had not been fully exhibited, and partly for the circumstances of having such a body of original materials for this biography at my command. And I cannot regret that I have adopted this course; since, whatever the lustre the Conquest may reflect on Cortés as a military achievement, it gives but an imperfect idea of his enlightened spirit, and of his comprehensive and versatile genius. (Preface)

The unprecedented access that Prescott had to "a body of original materials" is a direct result of increased public access to the official colonial archives of the Spanish government that was likely only made possible after Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821 following a lengthy war. Thus, Prescott's decision to complete the biography of the Spanish national hero was likely at least in part a repayment of a debt owed for access to the colonial archive. The large body of material available in the archive, however, also allowed Prescott to imagine an unprecedented complexity for both the historical actors in his narrative and the chief protagonist in his tragedy.[8] Underscoring these complexities is meant to temper the initial "excitement" felt by readers who are the "witnesses" of the main plot which is fully resolved at the end of book six in order to draw them back to reality in case they had become lost in the romance of the picaresque narrative of Cortés and his intrepid band of conquistadors. The tendency to overly romanticize the conquest narrative is typical of what Prescott calls the "undiluted panegyric" of the prose in the classic history of the conquest written by the seventeenth century historian Antonio de Solìs. One reviewer of Prescott's history even goes so far as to label Solìs as a bigot for his uncompromisingly positive portrayal of Cortés, and says of the story of the Conquest, "Few events in history are more extensively known in their general outlines" (Art. VI.)

[8] James Lockhart discusses the reasons why Prescott had access to the colonial archive as well as the conditions to his access in his introduction to the Modern Classics edition of *The History of the Conquest of Mexico*.

Furthermore, the accuracy of Cortés's portrayal as a perfect embodiment of an enlightened spirit may rest more in the irresolvable paradoxes that come into focus in Prescott's biographical sketch where his "comprehensive and versatile genius" is not only the root cause of his military success, but also the root cause of his tragic flaw. Cortés's complex character also arguably serves as a synecdoche for the tragic flaws of Enlightenment ideology itself. Prescott's final biographical assessment of Cortés is a list of paradoxes that comprised his character. "His character is marked with the most opposite traits, embracing qualities apparently the most incompatible. He was avaricious, yet liberal; bold to desperation, yet cautious and calculating in his plans; magnanimous, yet very cunning; courteous and affable in his deportment, yet inexorably stern; lax in his notion of morality, yet (not uncommon) a sad bigot. The great feature in his character was constancy of purpose; a constancy not to be daunted by danger, nor baffled by disappointment, nor wearied out by impediments and delays" (Book VII, ch. V). Prescott establishes Cortés as an avatar of both Enlightenment leadership qualities and flaws among which are a constancy of purpose that will be inherited by legatees that include enlightenment heroic leaders like Washington, Napoleon, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Simon Bolivar, General Santa Anna, and so forth.

Prescott places much emphasis on Cortés's rogue status to establish him as a man more representative of enlightened theories of liberal individualism than as an individual suited to be a subject of a theocracy. Prescott depicts Cortés as coming from an aristocratic but not royal background. His elevated class status perhaps contributes to his natural tendency to be "too willful to be guided by others," and it is his willfulness that drives Cortés to the new world "where gold as well as glory was to be won, and where the very dangers had a mystery and romance in them inexpressibly fascinating to a youthful fancy" (Book II, ch.II). However, Cortés

proves too willful even for the colonial government in Cuba and he sets out to Mexico after his own mini-revolt against the governor, Velazquez. In the course of the conquest, Cortés both invokes and ignores the authority of the Catholic Church and the King of Spain as it suits his purpose, and the narrative makes it clear that the conquest itself is at least extra-legal if not completely illegal. Cortés repeatedly insists on his sovereignty, and even continually creates the conditions to make sure his authority cannot be threatened. For example, once arriving in Mexico, his men begin to question Cortés's authority. Cortés sinks his fleet so that the men have no choice but to submit and join him or die. Different dispatches who were sent by Velasquez to rein Cortés in end up enchanted by him and join the expedition. Cortés sends a delegate with a sample of the riches he acquired back to King Carlos I in hopes of swaying him against Velazquez. And, once the capital city falls, the king recalls Cortés and reprimands him, though lightly, for his disobedience of the law. His disregard of the prescribed legal and social order of the day is largely what keeps him from receiving adequate recognition in his own or subsequent generations.

Yet, for however much Prescott characterizes Cortés as a man of the Enlightenment, Prescott is just as careful to remind us that Cortés is a man from a different era. In anticipation of accusations from English and American readers that he will use this argument to excuse the actions of the Conquerors, and from Spanish readers (and patrons) that he treats them too harshly, Prescott writes:

> I can only say, that, while, on the one hand, I have not hesitated to expose in their strongest colors the excesses of the Conquerors; on the other, I have given them the benefit of such mitigating reflections as might be suggested by the circumstances and the period in which they lived. I have endeavored not only to present a picture true in itself,

> but to place it in its proper light, and to put the spectator in a proper point of view for seeing it to the best advantage. (Preface)

Throughout his narrative, Prescott also reminds the reader that though Cortés, his men, and the various Mexican nations exhibit enlightenment-like characteristics, they are not yet enlightened and thus should not be judged too harshly.

Cortés and his conquistador's "not yet enlightened" status serves as the basis for the cathartic experience of the reader that results from the coming tragedy. The reader is made to understand that so long as he or she feels an affinity with the chief actors in this drama he or she is not yet enlightened either. The odd temporality of "not yet" in this narrative vein marks time as moving towards a still yet unknown end. The reader recognizes his or her time, the time of the narrative, and the as yet unknown future time as connected in the sense that they are all part of the time of Enlightenment, for better or worse. As I have been establishing throughout this dissertation, the central political promise of the Enlightenment is universal democratic rights for all enlightened subjects. Thus, the reader is also made aware that the Enlightenment promise of universal democracy has not yet come.

For Prescott, it is largely out of a shared accountability for the better and the worse of the Enlightenment that demands readers to forgive but not excuse the worst of actions committed in the name of the Enlightenment or democracy that has not yet come. "We must extend to [the Conquistadors] the same justice which we shall have occasion to ask from Posterity, when, by the light of a higher civilization, it surveys the dark or doubtful passages in our own history, which hardly arrest the eye of the contemporary" (Book III, ch. 7). Different epochs can be delineated within the time of the Enlightenment. Prescott makes his epoch of liberty and equality under nineteenth-century American Anglo-Saxon male hegemony look different from the version

of liberty and equality Cortés and his men imagine as their reward should they help bring about the universal Catholic empire in the New World. In turn, both will undoubtedly be flawed to the imagined future enlightened epochs of "Posterity."

Prescott associates the Spanish vision of liberty and equality as a product of the age of chivalry, "that stirring and adventurous age, of which we can form little conception in the present day of sober, practical, reality. The Spaniard, with his nice point of honor, high romance, and proud, vainglorious vaunt, was the true representative of that age" (Book VI, ch. III). After establishing that the Europeans of that age had not yet learned to "accommodate" themselves to what in the present age had become the "life of literary toil" or "the drudgery of trade" or "the patient tillage of the soil" they naturally saw "arms [as] the profession worthy of gentle blood." In turn, "the New World, with its strange and mysterious perils, afforded a noble theatre for the exercise of this calling, and the Spaniard entered on it with all the enthusiasm of a paladin of romance" (Book VI, ch. III). From here, Prescott goes on to establish other motives for other European nations that also "entered" the New World theatre. The French missionaries "dwelling among the heathen" who did the work of "winning souls to Paradise are content to wear—nay, sometimes seemed to court—the crown of martyrdom." He defines the Dutch mission as guided by the want of "worldly lucre" found as a reward for "toil and suffering in their gainful traffic with the natives." And finally, "Our own Puritan fathers, with the true Anglo-Saxon spirit, left their pleasant homes across the waters, and pitched their tents in the howling wilderness, that they might enjoy the sweets of civil and religious freedom" (ibid). The motives for the arrival of the indigenous nations is absent from this section because, unlike the European motives, they were not recorded as part of the historical record. Yet, later, in his philosophic musings about the origins of the Aztecs, Prescott considers various Aztec origin theses that include speculation that

the Aztecs were the lost tribe of Israel or that, based on their cultural practices, they were displaced from an ancient Asian or Egyptian culture until he finally concludes, "First, that the coincidences are sufficiently strong to authorize a belief, that the civilization of Anahuac was, in some degree, influenced by that of Eastern Asia. And, secondly, that the discrepancies are such as to carry back the communication to a very remote period; so remote, that this foreign influence has been too feeble to interfere materially with the growth of what may be regarded, in its essential features, as a peculiar and indigenous civilization" (Appendix, Part I). The reader can also infer that the Aztec's ancestors had the same motive for coming to the Americas as later Europeans, a chance for absolute individual liberty that comes with equal opportunity. Prescott establishes the New World, what in the nineteenth-century was called the Western Hemisphere, as the sight of democratic opportunity for a multitude of different versions of freedom and equality from time immemorial.

However, from Prescott's perspective, the history of occupying empires' projects to seize upon opportunity in the New World-cum-Western Hemisphere had also been caught up in a dialectic of failure from time immemorial. His tragic depiction of the Spanish conquest of Mexico as a revolution by a faulty empire with a hubristic leader against an already occupying faulty empire with a hubristic leader is a first instance. For an 1840's readership aware of the rise of the self-fashioned "Napoleon of the West," General Santa Ana, the Mexican revolution for independence from Spain had become a second instance. With Anglo-American control of the western hemisphere already established by the Monroe Doctrine, expansionist policies guided by slavery, a looming war with Mexico that many saw as a bald faced land grab, and a Democratic Party trend set by Jackson that tended to value individual sovereignty over constitutional sovereignty, a reader must question whether the United States was destined to become a third

instance of a corrupt Republic. Prescott's use of the first person plural possessive to establish a patriarchal relation with the Puritans and his adamant claim that they and "us" both possess the true "Anglo-Saxon spirit" in the passage above betrays his alignment with the prevalent racist belief of his time that Anglo-Saxon Americans had the best shot at arresting the dialectic of failure that characterized the history of republican empires encroaching on Mexico so that everyone could enjoy "the sweets of civil and religious freedom."

Part of what fuels Prescott's desire to revise and revisit the history of this early failure of the Enlightenment is a hope to uncover pathways that could lead out of the dialectic of failure. Though the doctrine of Anglo-Saxon racial dominance was still unquestioned in the official U.S. politics of Prescott's time, Prescott and his circle widely acknowledged that Anglo-Saxons who claimed Puritan origins had a poor history of forming civil relationships with other races. Indian removal and slavery both were cause for national shame, particularly among Whigs in the Northeast. Additionally, most European empires had already banned slavery at home and in their colonies, and the fact that the United States had not was often used by abolitionists as evidence of American inferiority on the world stage.[9] The impending integration of Mexican territory into the United States included a problem of how to or even whether to integrate another non-Anglo-Saxon race perceived as inferior into the Union. Furthermore, after establishing the U.S. as the protector of free republics in the western hemisphere in the Monroe Doctrine, the genocide or

[9] I discuss this point of view further in Chapter 4.

enslavement of Mexicans was not an option. Thus, the racial problem Mexican integration presented was rife with opportunity for more national shame.[10]

Democratizing the Past

My aim in this section is to identify Prescott's aesthetic arrangements of the central events of the conquest by close reading the tragic plot of Enlightenment failure that exists concomitantly with the more dominant epic plot of European conquest in *The Conquest of Mexico*. Doing so begins with an assertion that even conceding the points that, as one of Prescott's reviewers makes, "Cortés fills the canvas" of Prescott's historical painting, and that his depictions of Cortés succumb to the same over-romanticized flourish of his historic predecessors, Cortés is far from the only representative character of dominant enlightenment currents in the narrative. What makes Prescott's history different, perhaps even radically different, from those esteemed historians who precede him is his attempt to paint the history more democratically such that minor or non-existent characters from previous histories are shown as complex historical actors deserving of places in the historical record. Though Prescott, and perhaps generations of readers, did not and have not known what to do with the ghosts of history he unearthed because of the dominant epistemes of their times, I maintain there is an ethical obligation to read for these pathways and attempt to account for them politically.

To put it another way, the question is: Though Prescott and his readers did not know how to account for these historical excesses in their times, how can we account for them in ours? This is a political question central to democracy that is as urgent in our present as it was in Prescott's. It is a question that demands longer consideration and great deliberation, and is also a question

[10] It is important to keep in mind that, in the context of the official politics of the American nineteenth century, the racist doctrine of white racial superiority was not seen as fundamentally counter to achievement of democracy as it does in our own time as Dana Nelson has convincingly shown. See also Sean Wilentz and Anna Brickhouse.

that highlights the difference between politics as manipulation by the powers that be, and the political as encompassing the excesses of the domain of those powers. Prescott's reviewer in the *North American Review* describes the scope and challenges of Prescott's new methodology:

> Nothing is more difficult than to give an attractive character to a thorough and detailed history of an event, which has been made universally popular by a well-written, though superficial sketch. It is like taking a traveler by slow stages, in an ordinary carriage, over a country through which he has been already whirled with the magic speed of steam. Such a journey can only be made pleasant by contriving that the resting-places shall be in spots interesting from their associations, or charming from their natural beauties of scenery and situation, and which the rapidity of his former mode of travelling compelled him to overlook. A somewhat similar necessity is imposed upon the historian who holds up to the view of the reader a subject in its full size and natural proportions, of which he has before seen a reduced copy in the pages of a skillful compiler. He must make his new matter so attractive, that the reader shall feel no impatience at the deliberative steps and slower movement by which the same point must now be approached. (Art. VI).

The temporality represented by the difference in speed between travel by carriage and travel by steam in the reviewer's extended metaphor allows for a more reflective pace in which to linger and search for complexities forgotten by the modern modes of organizing the world. This reflexivity is a characteristic of what Hayden White identifies in the nineteenth-century historical imagination as anarchy as a mode of explanation. For White, both the modes of radicalism and anarchy are ideologies which seek to change the present structural organization of the world rather than to perfect its current state of organization. However, whereas radicalism views Utopia as imminent and is concerned with identifying the revolutionary means of how to achieve Utopia

now, anarchism tends to idealize a remote past of natural-human innocence from which men have fallen into a corrupt social state. Anarchism projects Utopia on a non-temporal plane and sees its achievement as possible at any time if men will only seize upon their essential humanity. To do so destroys belief in the legitimacy of the current social establishment (White 25). White's definition of Anarchy is also consistent with the Whig desire for an ethically and morally perfected humanity that would usher in the millennium. A reflective mode of remembering which finds no essential or originary truth in the past can contribute to what amounts to an anarchic critique of the present. Such an anarchism can be seen as consistent with democracy's tendency to disrupt any order of politics predicated on the arbitrary power of one member of the polis over another as theorized by Rancière or with what Derrida identifies as the autoimmune tendency of democracy which always already denies it any presence. Anarchy is also at the core of what Rancière identifies as the politics of literature, that is, in the way the anarchy redistributes the sensible.

The kind of anarchic historical critique I am delineating here is dependent on Carl Schmitt's identification of romanticism's occasionalist interventions into the world. We can distinguish, however, between conservative and radical kinds of occasionalist intervention—that by a romantic who sees his intervention as akin to the transcendental authority of a god, or that by a romantic whose intervention is characteristic of Walter Benjamin's notion of "weak messianism." Alexander Gelley summarizes weak messianism as a mode of writing about the past using figurative and tropological language to invoke a collective of readers not yet realized. Thus, in Prescott's narrative, Cortés serves as a romantic hero representative of a conservative anarchism. He is made god-like most especially when he is mistaken by the Aztecs for a descendant of their god, Quetzalcoatl who, according to Prescott's telling of the legend, had led

the Aztecs to the land and "who after giving them laws and ruling over the nation for a time, had withdrawn to the regions where the sun rises" (Book III, ch. IX). Cortés is mistaken as one of his descendants who according to the legends "would again visit them and resume his empire." A devout Catholic, Cortés of course never believes he is this pagan god, but instead capitalizes on being mistaken for the god to aid his conquest. Prescott, his reviewers, and his readers alike never believe it either, and instead Cortés's hubris in acting like a god is what drives the narrative to its tragic end; the destruction of the first new world republic. The catharsis of these tragic scenes that Prescott stages, as I have argued, can awaken a radical political consciousness on the part of the reader.

Prescott's curation of his historical sources opens up reflective spaces in the narrative which invite a reader to ponder the progression of history. Prescott is meticulous about citing the sources for his own narrative, and at the end of each of the history's seven books he included annotations of his sources that include his critical assessment of them. Prescott sees four sixteenth and seventeenth Spanish historians of the New World Spanish empire as his predecessors, Bartolomè de las Casas, Don Antonio de Solìs, Francisco Lopez de Gomara, and Bernal Diaz. Of these four, de las Casas and Diaz were actually witnesses of events they wrote about leading Prescott to label their accounts most trustworthy. Diaz was among Cortés's men during the events of the conquest and wrote his *Historia Verdadura de la Conquista de Nueva España* thirty years after the Conquest ended. Prescott cites de las Casas's *History of the Indies*

often in his account of how Cortés and his men went about dismantling the Aztec empire.[11] Though not a part of Cortés's crew, de las Casas was a Domincan Bishop and one of the first Spanish inhabitants in the New World. He was known as the "Protector of the Indians" for his efforts to curb the genocide of the indigenous tribes and spent the majority of his life attempting to gain legal rights for indigenous people and speaking out against the Spanish government's treatment of them.

Prescott positions Gomara and de Solìs as his historiographical predecessors. Gomara served as Cortés's personal chaplain after Cortés returned to Spain and Prescott credits his *Chronicò de Nuevo España* as epically narrating the conquest to serve what amounts to a panegyric to Cortés. Gomara's liberties in crafting his narrative inspired Diaz to write his own memoirs as a corrective to Gomara's claims about Cortés. Prescott credits de as the first of the Spanish historians to bring literary artistry to the craft of history writing in his *Conquista de Mejìco* first published in 1684. Prescott is both admiring and critical of de Solís's history, and thus *The Conquest of Mexico* is in many ways Prescott's attempt to correct de Solìs's history. Prescott admires de Solìs's literary craftsmanship, but not what he calls de Solìs's "bastard patriotism." He notes critically, "no one, not even Gomara himself, is such a wholesale encomiast of the great Conqueror; and, when his views are contradicted by the statements of honest Diaz, de Solís is sure to find a motive for the discrepancy in some sinister purpose of the

[11] Bartolomè de las Casas is best known today as an originator of the Black Legend that is critical of the actions of the Spanish in the New World. Prescott, as I have mentioned, was largely critical of the actions of the Spanish as well and tends to be sympathetic to de las Casas's point of view though suspicious of de las Casas's accounts of the atrocities committed by the Spanish. For a recent biography of de las Casas see Clayton. For more on the Black Legend see Maltby and Gibson.

Gordon Sayre traces the figure of Montezuma as a tragic hero in early nineteenth indigenous and Spanish-American literature and historiography written around the Mexican insurgency against Spain in his first chapter.

veteran. He knows more of Cortés, of his actions and his motives, than his companion in arms, or his admiring chaplain" (Book VI). Prescott's annotation on de Solís also comes at the end of the penultimate book of *The Conquest of Mexico* which ends with the surrender of Mexico City. He begins the annotation by stating the Spanish victory is also the end of de Solìs's history. His refusal to extend his history any further is indicative for Prescott of de Solìs's overly encomiastic tendencies. Thus, Prescott's decision to use "authentic materials" to extend his history to include the "brilliant, but chequered, fortunes which marked the subsequent career of Cortés" can be understood as part of Prescott's goal to complicate de Solìs's heroic portrait of Cortés and in turn challenge the epic plot of the conquest (Book VII, chapter VI).

Prescott gives the most credence to Diaz's narrative most especially for the way it reorganizes the epic plot and heroic characterization of Cortés in the Gomara and de Solìs works. He posits that Diaz possesses an honest and democratic voice free from the taint of hierarchical methods of organizing the history around the great man Cortés common to the more panegyric accounts of the Spanish national historians. Prescott also deems Diaz more trustworthy than de las Casas largely because of what he perceives as Diaz's simplicity. Though he sides with de las Casas's political critiques of the Spanish empire and its horrific treatment of the indigenous populations, he is suspicious of the veracity of de las Casas's accounts of the massacres of native peoples. For example, in his annotation on de las Casas he writes, "His motives were pure and elevated. But his manner of enforcing them was not always so commendable" (Book II, ch. VII). De las Casas's political ideology negatively affects his trustworthiness in Prescott's eyes. In contrast, Diaz's simplicity and low station makes him more trustworthy for Prescott because, in his mind, they free Diaz from ideological corruption. Prescott claims Diaz's only "motives inducing [him] to take up his pen" were to "vindicate for himself and his comrades that share of

renown in the Conquest, which fairly belonged to them" and, despite his own dissatisfaction with his "homely" prose, "to exhibit to the world a narrative which should, at least, have the merit of fidelity" (Book V ch. vii). Prescott later again admires Diaz's account of the history precisely because of the homely and untutored style in which he writes.

> In what, then, lies the charm of the work? In that spirit of truth which pervades it; which shows us situations as they were, and sentiments as they really existed in the heart of the writer. It is this which imparts a living interest to his story; and which is more frequently found in the productions of the untutored penman solely intent upon facts, than in those of the ripe and fastidious scholar occupied with the mode of expressing them (ibid).

Diaz, it is clear, provides Prescott with a model of authenticity that allows Prescott to write a more democratic history than his predecessors who plotted the events of the Conquest using epic paradigms that upheld imperial and racial hierarchies. Doing so amounts to a political critique of his Democratic Party contemporaries who, Prescott and like-minded anti-expansionist Whigs feared, were replicating the same hierarchies in the ideologies of American exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny that authorized the United States' program of continental colonization. Prescott's reorganization of the history of the conquest by privileging the popular voice of Diaz over the studied and elitist voice of the "ripe and fastidious scholar" represented by Gomara and de Solìs marks a moment of democratic refusal of arbitrary authority. Prescott gives Diaz the final lines of the narrative by giving his assessment of the various strengths and flaws of his general quoted above.

Prescott, like James Fenimore Cooper in *Lionel Lincoln*, thus insists on narrating a much more reflective version of the conquest that both resists European hegemony and re-plots the history of European colonization of the New World. However, Prescott's reflectiveness in

Conquest, like Cooper's in *Lionel Lincoln*, is read by scholars, as Jesse Alemàn puts it, as "suffer[ing] from ambivalence: it sees much to admire in the Spanish conquest of Mexico and much to abhor about it in the same way that the narrative wavers between recognizing the Aztecs as a civilized indigenous empire and characterizing them as savage barbarians" (415). Prescott's wavering may be indicative of a failure to fully imagine a way out of a legacy of imperial racial conquest that Alemàn perceptively claims has always been felt "as a haunting history that must be excavated" in Alemàn's approach to inter-American studies that chooses to make the prefix "inter" mean "burial" instead of "across" (409). Prescott is successful, however, in bringing that buried history to the stage by narrating the history as tragic rather than epic. Prescott's reorganization of historical events according to the aesthetic conventions of tragedy unleashes an anarchic democratic current that begins to make a seemingly endless cyclical history of republican corruption by racially fueled imperial injustices seem strange.

Prescott does at times suffer from the same propensity for adulating Cortés that he criticizes Gomara and de Solís for. But for Prescott it is more Cortés's demagogic ability to manipulate people and even the course of history that fascinates him. Concern over demagogues that could sway public opinion and the course of history was one of the chief fears about democracy in Prescott's present, especially after Jackson's authoritarian transformation of the office of the president. Cortés's ability to command any scene he is in proves frustrating to the historian's commitment to accurately portray history. In *Conquest*, Cortés displays this ability to manipulate historical perception almost immediately upon landing in Mexico. In the following scene he affects the Aztec "picture writer's" ability to accurately chronicle the scene of the landing of his troops that will be sent to Montezuma.

> Teuhtlile informed [Cortés] this [Aztec picture writer] was employed in portraying the various objects for the eye of Montezuma, who would thus gather a more vivid notion of their appearance than from any description by words. Cortés was pleased with the idea; and, as he knew how much the effect would be heightened by converting still life into action, he ordered out the cavalry on the beach, the wet sands of which afforded a firm footing for the horses. The bold and rapid movements of the troops, as they went through their military exercises; the apparent ease with which they managed the fiery animals on which they were mounted; the glancing of their weapons, and the shrill cry of the trumpet, all filled the spectators with astonishment; but when they heard the thunders of the cannon, which Cortés ordered to be fired at the same time, and witnessed the volumes of smoke and flame issuing from these terrible engines, and the rushing sound of the balls, as they dashed through the trees of the neighboring forest, shivering their branches into fragments, they were filled with consternation, from which the Aztec chief himself was not wholly free. (Book II, ch. 5)

Like the picture writers, Prescott is continually distracted throughout his narrative by Cortés's ability to "fill a canvas." However, the bulk of Prescott's effort is undeniably to create a more accurate historical portrait through a careful curation of archival sources that offered perceptions of historical events not controlled by Cortés or those historians who sang his accolades. Thus, when he gives Diaz the last word in the history, Prescott is attempting to give the history back to his audience, the people. The catharsis the audience feels as a result of the dual tragedies of Cortés and the Aztecs can serve as an anarchic current that asks the audience to take hold of their essential humanity to refuse to let history repeat itself.

Tolerance, Know-Nothings, and Democrats

In March of 1847, General Winfield Scott and his American troops invaded Vera Cruz as a first step toward their eventual conquest of Mexico City in September of the same year. They would take a similar route as Cortés and his men had taken more than 300 years earlier. Though the United States exited Mexico City after negotiating the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the United States seized control of California and the land north of the Rio Grande that had previously been part of Mexico. With the land grab settled, much of U.S. national politics over the next several years would center on how best to integrate this new territory and new population into the republic. Democratic Senator Stephen Douglas would succeed in putting these decisions in the hands of the voting population. The Compromise of 1850 made the decision over whether these territories would become free or slave states a decision of the sovereign citizens of those states. The debate over popular sovereignty would intensify in 1854 over the Nebraska Act that overturned the Missouri Compromise by giving Nebraska and Kansas the same decision.

Predictably, Democrats were more enthusiastic about the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska act than the Whigs. All three went directly against the Whigs' belief in a strong cohesive union dedicated to the moral improvement of the people and economic improvement of the land that was already within the national borders. The Democratic Party, more concerned with numerical majorities than creating a homogenous national community, were much more willing to accommodate the influx of new citizens who did not share the reverence for the Whig figure of the patriotic yeoman. The integration of ethnically and culturally distinct people into the nation presented a particular challenge to Northern Whigs who remained nostalgic for the days of Federalism and the National

Republican Party. These distinct people not only included the former Mexican citizens residing in the newly acquired territories, but also the influx of European immigrants that were coming into northern ports in the same time period. The ascendancy of Catholicism that came with these immigrants presented a much more pressing local concern to Northern Whigs than what was happening in the more distant Western part of the country.

The short-lived Free Soil Party, as Michael F. Holt has argued, also changed the landscape of the Second Party System by making the Compromise of 1850 about the expansion of slavery. As a result, the Whig party could no longer monopolize the anti-Democrat vote because pro-slavery Southern Whigs were backed into voting with the Democrats out of regional allegiance and Anti-Slavery Democrats were forced to vote with the Whigs out of moral conviction. Whig President Millard Fillmore's eventual support of the Compromise drove a further wedge between Henry Clay's "Conscience Whigs" and the more conservative party members. When the Nebraska Act actually nullified the Missouri Compromise, this was more than the Whig party could handle. Many of the more conservative members of the party would splinter off to join the anti-immigrant anti-Catholic American, or, Know-Nothing Party while the "Conscience Whigs" would reorganize as the Republican Party. The Democratic Party was heavily wounded as it lost its remaining anti-Slavery and pro-union members to the Republican Party.

John Lothrop Motley's exploration of tolerance in his *History of the Rise of the Dutch Republic* was thus very timely in the politically factious and fractious 1850s. His history is remarkable for how it operates in both restorative and reflective modes in its treatment of the beginnings of the Dutch colonies' organized rebellion to expel the world's most powerful empire. Using a restorative vision he creates the Netherlands as the literal birth place of the

democratic ideals that undergird the Whig party's understanding of American Democracy. However, his voluminous history also relies on a reflective vision to explore the often troubling ways these democratic ideals manifest into resistance to the totalitarianism of the Spanish inquisition. William of Orange's commitment to tolerance amounts to the most radical and most ethical method of resistance among the many different forms of democratic resistance deployed by the Dutch against the totalitarian world view of Philip II and the inquisition. Yet, as radical the concept of tolerance might seem in the abstract, in the end Motley cannot imagine tolerance for any difference extending beyond the limits of a white male commonwealth such as existed between the seven Northern Dutch provinces that signed the Union of Utrecht. The early Dutch Republic thus ultimately becomes representative for Motley of a Whig dream of an economically heterogeneous and culturally homogenous national community that is recognizably white, protestant, male, New Englanders. Motley's discussion of tolerance, however, should not be whole-heartedly dismissed as a politically vapid fantasy of a conservative white racist misogynist. Tolerance is also an important theme for the authors I will examine in the next chapter who imagine radically different political communities.

Motley's Reflective Vision

Like Cooper and Prescott, Motley was fastidious in consulting multiple perspectives from the archive, and valued the authenticity of primary sources over secondary historical narratives that he felt were tinged with certain biases.[12] The reviewer of *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* in the *North American Review* establishes that for a history to be great it must heed the maxim

[12]For more on Motley's study and training in history and particularly on his historiographical methodology see Roylance (92). For more on his teacher, Leopold von Ranke, and his contributions to nineteenth century historiographic method see *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline* edited by Georg G. Iggers and James M. Powell. Von Ranke gives his own theory of history in *The Theory and Practice of History*.

"Melius est petere forntes quam sectari rivulos" (It is better to seek the sources then to follow the tributaries). He then writes:

> It is evident that Mr. Motley is thoroughly imbued with the spirit of this maxim, and is not content with making himself acquainted with whatever has been known heretofore in relation to his subject, he has gone to the neighborhood of the scenes of his narrative, and passed several years in a laborious and faithful investigation of everything bearing upon its details. The results of this patient and thorough search are evident upon every page, and much that was dark or imperfectly understood before has been brought forward into full light. (Art. X)

The result is a successful portrayal of historical scenes "with almost the minute accuracy of a daguerreotype" in which "the skill of the historian makes us see the whole as though a well-painted panorama were passing before our eyes" (ibid). As I argued in the cases of Cooper and Prescott, the panoramic effect is indicative of a reflective historical vision that allows for multiple viewpoints of historical events and multiple interpretations of their meaning.

One effect of the reflective historical vision in the narrative is the revelation of several "hauntic" spaces. Typically these occur during Motley's meditations on those who suffered and died under the tyranny of the Spanish inquisition. He makes it clear that the majority of the victims were Protestant burghers rather than members of aristocratic classes who typically benefitted through their allegiance to Phillip II. Motley establishes that these victims were predominantly people for whom "commerce was the mother of their freedom" and were "accustomed for centuries to a state of comparative civil freedom, and to a lively foreign trade by which their minds were saved from the stagnation of bigotry" (Part I, ch. III). Once they are made to suffer "horrible persecution" under the edicts of the Emperor, Motley deems them

"obscure martyrs" whose "names hardly pronounced in their lifetime, sound barbarously in our ears, and will never ring through the trumpet of fame." He establishes that, "fertilized by all [their] innocent blood, the soil of the Netherlands became as a watered garden, in which liberty, civil and religious, was to flourish perennially" (ibid). These martyrs thus have a spectral character in the historical record, but Motley nonetheless demands they be addressed and accounted for.

Motley's reflective historical vision also brings to light different and often competing democratic currents that opposed Spanish tyranny. He presents some of these currents as operating under an autoimmune logic that in the end were counterproductive to the restoration of civil and religious liberty. Motley shares Cooper's hesitations about democratic movements by members of the lower classes against tyrannical systems that seem primarily motivated by revenge. Motley conveys these hesitations in his account of the "image-breaking of Antwerp" in which members of the lower class destroyed most of the town's Catholic iconography. Motley describes the event as a riot by a marauding mob. "Indefatigably, audaciously, endowed, as it seemed, with preternatural strength and nimbleness, these furious iconoclasts clambered up the dizzy heights, shrieking and chattering like malignant apes, as they tore off in triumph the slowly-matured fruit of centuries" (Part IV, Ch. II). The result is a "monstrous desecration" that was a "war, not against the living, but of graven images" (ibid). At the end of the chapter, Motley argues that this was a rudderless movement spurred by a "furious fanaticism" to overthrow a dominant repressive ideology through the destruction of its material icons. His concerns over the rampant destruction of material history echo John Quincy Adams's laments over the Democratic Party's similar unconcern for history.

The furious fanaticism of the Antwerp iconoclasts is juxtaposed against the formal protest of a large group of the Dutch lower nobility under the leadership of Hendrick van Brederode. These noblemen entered the city with much pomp and were welcomed by an "immense crowd" who "looked upon [them] as the deliverers of the land from Spanish tyranny, from the cardinalists, from the Inquisition" (Part I, Ch VI). In their address to Duchess Margaret of Parma, the Governor of the Netherlands, they made their petition out of loyalty to the monarchy and concern that the implementation of the inquisition would result in popular rebellion. After being summarily dismissed by Margaret and her advisors, the body reconvened in order to discuss how to name themselves. Motley's description of their meeting implies that their hedonism made their movement as politically vapid as the iconoclasts. "The board glittered with silver and gold. The wine circulated with more than its usual rapidity among the band of noble Bacchanals, who were never weary of drinking the healths of Orange and of Egmont" (ibid). Eventually, Brederode, who "possessed the instinct by which adroit partisans in every age have been accustomed to convert the reproachful epithets of their opponents into watchwords of honor" proposed they call themselves the Beggars. Though the sobriquet would become synonymous with the rebellion, Motley sees little value in the actions of the noblemen. "[I]f a civil and religious revolution could have been effected by a few gentlemen going to court in fine clothes to present a petition, and by sitting down to a tremendous banquet afterwards, Brederode and his associates were the men to accomplish the task" (ibid).

William of Orange becomes the symbol of reasoned, non-violent revolution. Existing between the fanaticism of the Antwerp iconoclasts and the vapidity of Brederode's Beggars, William takes a tempered approach towards resisting tyranny. Before joining the rebellion, William does everything in his power "to restore order out of chaos" (Part I, Chapter IX). It is

only after all efforts at diplomacy had failed that William allowed himself "treasonable thoughts…to attempt the protection of ancient and chartered liberties against a foreign oppressor" (ibid). Though William eventually converts from Catholicism to a very temperate Protestantism, he is more committed to promoting "freedom of conscience as the great object for which noble natures should strive" and advocating for religious tolerance (Part II Ch. IV). It is through the character and actions of William the Silent that Motley's methodology turns from reflective to restorative.

Restoring the Union of Utrecht

From its initial publication, *Rise of the Dutch Republic* has been read as an allegory of the history of the United States. Patricia Jane Roylance argues that "early modern Dutch history …constituted a 'usable past" for Motley to "strengthen U.S. commitment to the civil and religious liberties for which William and the Dutch had also fought" (76-77). As the U.S. had done during its own revolution, the Dutch provinces joined together to expel the world's most powerful empire. William of Orange is made the forebear of George Washington. Both were rational statesmen and reluctant leaders dedicated to civil and religious liberty for the people they led. Motley even uses the pilgrims to link early modern Holland to early American history. "The English Puritans, who, three quarters of a century [after the events of the history] fled for refuge to the Dutch Republic, and thence departed to establish the American Republic" (Part I ch. 6). As I established above, Motley's reviewer in *The North American Review* argued the link to the pilgrims as one of the main reasons why American readers should be interested in the history of the Dutch Rebellion. The same reviewer makes the explicit link between the ideological struggles of the Dutch and the pilgrims as well. The pilgrims would later leave from the same

port to the new world carrying out a plan Orange had considered of abandoning his homeland for the New World with a group of refugees to protect their freedom to worship as they pleased.

David Levin asserts that Motley uses the history of the Dutch republic and particularly the character of William of Orange to "proclaim two complementary 'laws': that liberty and religious truth, always indestructible, are invincible when defended by a brave energetic people; and that in such a conflict, tyranny, however powerful, inevitably defeats itself because its methods and its men are as unnatural as its ends" (189). These two laws take on the character of epiphanic truths for Motley and his readers. Motley's reclamation of historical truths is evidence of his restorative nostalgia towards Dutch history. Motley turns to the history of the Dutch rebellion to establish timeless truths that will help him make sense of his disordered present and avoid an unknown future. These truths thus not only serve as keys for making sense of Dutch history, but also keys for projecting order on to a disordered state. One of the only criticisms from the *North America Review* is Motley's frequent use of the historical present tense. Though the use of this tense compromises Motley's historical objectivity for the reviewer, it does succeed in creating a sense of immediacy for nineteenth-century readers. Dutch history provides Motley and his contemporary readers an answer for their nostalgic longing for, as Svetlana Boym puts it, "a home that no longer exists or never existed" (Introduction). The fact that Motley's history was so popular with his contemporaries perhaps indicates just how much that particular history resonated with readers nostalgic for an ordered home in the 1850's. Motley is rarely studied by scholars today arguably because popular interest in that particular period of Dutch history that peaked in the 1850s due to perceived similarities between it and U.S. and international politics did not hold the same interest after the Civil War.

Motley's description of the Union of Utrecht and the resulting Netherland Republic provides his most substantive instantiation of the two truths Levin identifies. For Motley, the unification of the seven northern properties is example par excellence of how energetic and brave liberty loving people can triumph over tyranny. Here, the Netherland Republic not only predicts the United States republic, but also provides a spectral reminder of what the United States had yet to achieve. Motley notes that though the Republic was "in many respects the prototype of our own much more extensive and powerful union…It was, finally, to differ from the American federal commonwealth in the great feature that it was to be merely a confederacy of sovereignties, not a representative republic" (Part VI, Ch. II). According to Motley, the Netherlands Republic is more perfectly democratic in its union because it permitted "internally a variety of sovereignties and institutions" that permitted a "greater proportion of sovereign attributes" to individual states than the American Republic would (Part V, ch. V). The odd desire for a present that did not ever come to pass is indicative of Boym's observation that "[t]he nostalgic feels stifled within the conventional confines of time and space" and thus nostalgia is usually directed sideways rather than to the future or the past" (Introduction).

The Netherland Republic grew out of the Union of Utrecht. The Union was formed out of the seven Northern provinces' unanimous desire to "more conveniently defend themselves against their foes" (ibid). The threat of external violent force temporarily alleviated the need for a state structure to bind the Union together in a manner similar to the Articles of Confederation. By Motley's estimation, the individual liberties of all provinces and their respective members were protected and respected under the doctrine of universal tolerance. In this sense, the short-lived Utrecht Union was not only perfectly democratic, but it also represented a libertarian ideal in which, as Peter Marshall defines it, "liberty [is] to be a supreme value and … powers of

government [are limited] to a minimum compatible with security" (Introduction). Motley describes the terms of the Treaty of Union adopted in January 1579 at length:

> The contracting provinces agreed to remain eternally united, as if they were but one province. At the same time, it was understood that each was to retain its particular privileges, liberties, laudable and traditionary customs, and other laws. The cities, corporations, and inhabitants of every province were to be guaranteed as to their ancient constitutions…For the expense occasioned by the protection of the provinces, certain imposts and excises were to be equally assessed and collected. No truce or peace was to be concluded, no war commenced, no impost established affecting the 'generality,' but by unanimous advice and consent of the provinces. Upon other matters the majority was to decide…In case of difficulty coming to a unanimous vote when required, the matter was to be referred to the stadholders in office. In case of their inability to agree, they were to appoint arbitrators, by whose decision the parties were to be governed. (Part V, Ch. V)

The Treaty even makes provisions for expansion. Any "neighboring princes, provinces, or cities" who wished to join the Union needed unanimous consent from the United Provinces and "provided they obeyed the articles of union, and conducted themselves as good patriots" (ibid). Finally, Motley makes clear that at its inception the members of the Union "intended no political innovation of any kind…They intended to form neither an independent state nor an independent federal system" (ibid).

Clearly, for Motley the Union of Utrecht is a nostalgic rendering of a Whiggish ideal of a non-political unified nation that was never and would never be achievable in the United States.

The libertarian ideal of the Union barely outlasted the adoption of the Treaty of Utrecht. Motley writes:

> The Union of Utrecht, narrowed as it was to the nether portion of that country which, as whole, might have formed a commonwealth so much more powerful, was in origin a proof of this lamentable want of patriotism Could the jealousy of great nobles, the rancor of religious differences, the Catholic bigotry of the Walloon population on the one side, contending with the democratic insanity of the Ghent populace on the other, have been restrained within bounds by the moderate counsels of William of Orange, it would have been possible to unite seventeen provinces instead of seven, and to save many long and blighting years of civil war" (ibid).

Despite its commitment to tolerance, the Union could not adequately account for the differences among the seventeen provinces. Similarly, their similarities to the union could not spur enough patriotism for the remaining provinces to join them. The Union existed for two years and, though still under the authority of the Spanish Crown, it was for all intents and purposes independent thanks to the conditions of the Ghent Pacification. Motley is clear that the framers of the Union of Utrecht had no political designs other than to strengthen the Ghent Pacification signed in 1576. The Netherland Republic's break from Spanish monarchy, he insists, was not an inevitable result. Rather, the Union of Utrecht was a political end in its own right. In this sense, Motley tries to preserve the Union outside of the time and space of history and politics in order to protect it as the nostalgic space of the lost home. Existing sideways of history and politics, the Union also qualifies as a spectral space that cannot ever be recovered.

The failure of the Union to spur a truly united republic foreshadows the central tragedy in the history, the death of William of Orange. As Motley establishes, the death of William at the hands of a hired assassin corresponds with the death of the dream of seventeen united provinces.

> The life and labors of Orange had established the emancipated commonwealth upon a secure foundation, but his death rendered the union of all the Netherlands into one republic hopeless…So long as the Prince remained alive, he was the Father of the whole country…The pistol of the insignificant Gèrard destroyed the possibility of a united Netherland state, while during the life of William there was union in the policy, unity in the history of the country. (Part V, Ch VII)

In the end, Motley is every bit as nostalgic for the impossibility of a leader such as William of Orange. In his final comparison, Motley establishes that "no man—not even Washington—has ever been inspired by a purer patriotism (ibid). It is thus William of Orange who is the specter that calls from the ruined site of the Utrecht Union in a voice that captures the historian's and reader's imagination. Though the history ends on a note of desperation that, in hindsight, can be read as also foreshadowing the demise of the U.S. republic in light of the forthcoming Civil War, the history also sounds a note of hope in its attempt to remember William. Motley's attempt to seize hold of William of Orange foreshadows Benjamin's insistence that "to articulate the past…means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger…to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to a man singled out by history at a moment of danger" (255). Motley clearly felt the Republic and the Whig party crumbling around him as a result of what he saw as the tyranny of the new Democracy, which in his eyes was, much like the Antwerp iconoclasts, attempting to erase history. Motley, like Prescott, seeks to fight back by turning to the past. As Benjamin claims, "only the historian will have the gift of fanning the

spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins" (255). In Motley's history, tolerance marks that spark of hope that he sees as rapidly extinguishing in the context of the disputes that were ripping his party and his republic apart.

Patricia Jane Roylance does an admirable job of reminding us of the limits of Motley's vision of tolerance through tracing the critiques of reviewers in the *Democratic Review* and the *Southern Quarterly Review*, both Democratic Party publications. These reviewers question Motley's allegiance to the doctrine of universal tolerance which he espouses throughout the history by pointing to his often damning portrayals of Catholicism. Roylance reads this as a latent tendency in which Motley "undermines his goal of furthering civil and religious liberty" by aligning himself rhetorically with "elements of U.S. society that the writer for the *New Democratic Review* saw as the new face of the Inquisition…led by the Know-Nothings" (94). Though Roylance does not, one could easily turn the same critique of latent intolerance back on the Democrats. In addition, consideration of racial and ethnic difference is entirely absent from Motley's history. To rephrase Jesse Alemàn's identification of the unhomeliness of Prescott's narrative, Motley's nostalgia, like the Whigs more generally, largely ignores how racial intolerance disorders the home. However, both Prescott's and Motley's histories lead to a cathartic moment that illustrates unresolved tensions and emotions about the United States' own history. In the next chapter, I will turn to how historically minded writers writing from the margins attempted to inspire political action to address the irresolution of these tensions and emotions from extra-national spaces.

CHAPTER 4

Haitian Dionysus: Revisions of the Haitian Revolution in Historical Romances of the 1850's

National borders become blurred when we turn to the prevalence of narratives appearing in the time period 1855-1861 that consider the Haitian Revolution and the hero of that revolution, Toussaint L'Ouverture. [1] Scholars like Eric Sundquist, Anna Brickhouse, and Robert S. Levine have argued that the literary sphere of this era reflected hemispheric politics regarding slavery, nation building, and empire. Brickhouse denotes an "obsession with Haiti in the US public sphere of the 1850's" as part of her argument that the American Renaissance should be understood hemispherically (13). Levine uses Frederick Douglass' interest in Haiti as part of his argument for the existence of a multitude of nationalisms extant in nineteenth-century American literary texts. Sundquist insists that slavery was recognized as a hemispheric problem in the era and as such the fullest literary representations and fullest political critiques demand a transnational and transcultural view. He has forcefully argued that the Caribbean and in particular Haiti became an important literary and political subject in the antebellum period throughout the hemisphere. The success of the Haitian Revolution had paved the way for the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 which awakened "a conscious policy of America's manifest destiny to revolutionize the continent—eventually the entire hemisphere—[by] spreading Anglo-Saxon free institutions" (42). Throughout the nineteenth-century the Caribbean became of interest

[1]The cluster of nineteenth century narratives of the Haitian Revolution as well as the scholarship present an etymological issue for the place name of the nation we now call Haiti. The Republic of Haiti was officially known as San Domingo until 1804 when it declared its final independence from France and formally adopted the name Haiti. Throughout the nineteenth century it was called alternatively San Domingo, Santo Domingo, Haiti, and Hayti. I have chosen to use the contemporary name and spelling of Haiti because I am more concerned with later representations of the revolution and the country than I am with the history of the nation itself. I have kept the name and spelling from original sources when using direct quotes.

among American pro-slavery extremists as a potentially lucrative holding to bolster the Southern slave economy against abolitionist pressures from the Northern States and Europe as well as industrialist pressures from Central and South America (142). For South American revolutionaries, Haiti served as both an inspirational and cautionary example of what happens when non-Europeans forge a free republic. Sundquist also describes the wealth of symbolic meanings the Haitian Revolution had for readers in the 1850's. "San Domingo's slave revolution offered to both American slaves and American writers a distilled symbolic representation of the doubleness [the physically and linguistically liberating forces] of the democratic ideal born in the Revolution of 1776 and 1789, matured in continuing European revolutions, but still awaiting fulfillment in the colonial holdings of Latin America as well as in the southern United States" (34). Advocates for and against slavery saw Haitian revolutionary leader Toussaint L'Ouverture as occupying the same pantheon as other Revolutionary Era heroes like Washington and Napoleon when they were not attempting to disparage him through comparisons to Nat Turner or other leaders of slave rebellions deemed radical and dangerous (ibid). Additionally, white Haitian emigrants told terrifying stories of slave insurrection which bolstered white fears of black rebellion. Stephen G. Hall argues the Haitian Revolution figures prominently in nineteenth-century African American historiography as well. In particular, many African American intellectuals looked to the history of Haiti after the Compromise of 1850 when the accompanying Fugitive Slave Act seemed to make integration impossible. Hall writes that "the pre- and post- Revolutionary War history of … Haiti…offered tangible examples for African Americans of the possibilities of a world of their own making" (222).

Sundquist argues that Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno" (1854) symbolizes Haiti and the Haitian Revolution as "an explosive heightening of the conflict between American

democracy, Old World despotism, and Caribbean New World revolution. Its pervasive aura of paralysis, its revolutionary gestures held in perilous suspension, replicates in narrative form a crisis in temporality in which past, present, and future […] seem one" (143). His commendable reading of Melville's complex novella asserts that the hapless Spaniard Benito Cereno is an allegory for Spain's loss of control over its New World colonial holdings. The clueless American captain Amasa Delano who seeks to provide aid to Cereno's ship the *San Domingo* is a symbol of northern paternalistic benevolence which is mocked through the slave insurrectionist Babo's subversive version of minstrelsy. Sundquist bases his reading of Babo on Saidiya Hartman's argument that minstrelsy "calls attention to the artifice of racialism but at the same time aggressively asserted the black subject's given place in the social order" that echoes the prevalent grammar of sentiment (153). Sundquist argues that Babo and Benito Cereno together constitute a performance of Orlando Patterson's revision of Hegel's master/slave dialectic as a parasitism "in which the master…camouflaged his own parasitic dependence on the slave with the pretense that slaves were parasites upon their masters. For their part, slaves in turn camouflaged, or masked, their resistance to slavery…only on occasion removing the mask and exposing the parasitic relationship of slavery as an 'ideological inversion of reality" (42). This exploitation of the parasitic relationship in Melville's narrative results in what Sunquist calls a tautology that "asserts the virtual equivalence of potentially different authorities or meanings" which highlights Delano as representing "the revolutionary mind at odds with itself, impassioned for freedom but fearful of continuing revolution, energized by the ideals of paternalistic humanism but blind to the recriminating violence they hold tenuously in check" (154-55). Melville's description of Babo's crafty insurrection aboard the *San Domingo* suggests that, hemispherically at least, the revolution against slavery had already happened by 1854, but white

Americans of both the north and the south, together with the federal government, were so intent on preserving a façade of national union that they had become dangerously oblivious to this fact. Sundquist's reading suggests that should the legal apparatuses of the federally controlled state not adjust accordingly, the outcome could only be extreme violence whether it is by the enslaved against their masters, the masters against their slaves, the state against the people, or the people against the state. Melville's story ends with the transcript of the investigation of the events on the San Dominick by the vice-regal court in Lima, Peru in which Babo was found guilty. Babo's head on a stake following his execution is the final image in the story. The fact that Babo is never given a chance to testify, together with the exclusion of his point of view from the entire narrative, highlights the inadequacy of the juridical decision. That Babo's head, "that hive of subtlety," remains gazing at the whites shows forcefully that in Melville's estimation the disruption in the stability of the U.S. federal state caused by the overturning of the ideological system of slavery had not been corrected.

The Political Force of Literary Narrative

As astute as it is, Sundquist's literary analysis still sees literature as primarily representative of political reality. For Sundquist, literature like "Benito Cereno" can provide a contemplative critique of the political sphere, but this critique is always passive. In this sense, Sundquist's methodology relies on the "New Determinism" Gregory S. Jay identifies in the New Historicist tradition. Because the imaginative constructions of literature lack correlation in the perceivable world, Sundquist views literature's attempts to create or contemplate other forms of life in common amounts to an essentially apolitical practice and in this respect is similar to what Carl Schmitt calls an emphasis on criticism and discussion without decision that he associates with romanticism. In the Schmittian formulation decision, most famously the decision between

friend and enemy, is the basis of politics. For Schmitt, by refusing to make that decision, liberalism and romanticism get in the way of political action. Following Schmitt's logic, then, romantic critiques of the state in the end only serve to reify the primacy of the bourgeois individual and the maintenance of the division between public and private spheres synonymous with the liberal state. A similar logic allows Jonathan Arac, who claims that romance was a synonym in nineteenth-century America for the kind of fiction writing we now call literature, to label his genre of American literary narrative primarily as a product by and for an American aristocratic leisure class that possesses the skills and time to comprehend it. For Arac, romantic tropes have little function in the political sphere and are incomprehensible among those whose time is occupied by labor. However, Arac's view of romanticism as always apolitical is only possible if the progressive teleological ideology he associates with national narratives is allowed to stand as the only comprehensible political paradigm in the period. It is his assumption that people whose time was occupied by labor lack the interiority and the capacity for deep contemplation. In other words, Arac's literary narratives are only apolitical and esoteric when we look at them with the nation-colored glasses of the oligarchic class.

Even though Eric Sundquist reads American literature with a lens that does not privilege nationalist political paradigms to show how literature represents non-national political paradigms, he still sees *Benito Cereno* as primarily reflecting and not participating in nineteenth-century hemispheric politics. We have seen his reading of *Benito Cereno* grants the narrative an extra-national political point of view that goes beyond Arac's reading of the narrative as merely deploying gothic tropes and a version of personal narrative to reflect a romantic-cum-bourgeois cultural view of the way the national past haunts the national present. However, for Sundquist, literature's primary political value is how it represents the material realms of politics or culture.

Literary critics attentive to political paradigms that escape the long shadow of the nation still maintain that literature participates in extra-national political paradigms only as a passive participant at best.

If we were to follow in the tradition of these two critics, when we adjust our historical-political scope to global scale, we would expect literature to have a similarly representative role. There is another way to read literature. Wai Chee Dimock has diagnosed the scholarly tradition that sees literature as a supplement to nation building from a view where "Nationhood […] is endlessly reproduced in all spheres of life. This reproductive logic assumes that there is a seamless correspondence between the temporal and spatial boundaries of the nation and the boundaries of all other expressive domains" (3). I suggest that a similar diagnosis applies to the turn to hemispheric studies as well. Dimock has used the term "deep time" to talk about how American literature threads together the "topical events of other cultures, while also threading the long durations of those cultures into the short chronology of the United States. The double threading thickens time, lengthens it, shadowing in its midst the abiding traces of the planet's multitudinous life" (3). She agrees with Immanuel Wallerstein that capitalism is one analytic object around which it is possible to trace other worlds with a deep structure and a long duration. However, she also insists that there are other world-making categories particularly suited to literature such as the morphology of language, categories of experience, world religions, and long-lasting genres that have similar deep structures recognizable only on a global scale of analysis. I argue that on a global scale, these categories for imagining life in common stand on equal political footing to other political world systems with roots in the nineteenth-century like capitalism and liberal nation building.

Looking Beneath the American Renaissance

In this chapter, I push against the scholarly tradition that makes American literature supplementary to national and/or hemispheric politics in the years immediately preceding the Civil War. Doing so necessitates delineating the space the literary sphere had in the global political landscape of the nineteenth-century. I suggest that literature had an equal yet often contradictory role to liberal political philosophy and free market economic philosophy in imagining social collectives. The role is primarily visible in how literature resists rather than conforms to nation-state formation to actively create other forms of life in common. The politics of literature, as Jacques Rancière has suggested, is radically democratic, an imminently equalizing force that resists the hierarchical forces which assume inequality and that always drive state formations. Literature offers a politics of renegotiation through translation and retranslation of the order of the sensible to maintain and respect difference not reducible to liberal conceptions and celebrations of the individual I have associated with the antebellum Democratic Party. Namely, Democrats insisted that individuals (and by extension individual states) are fundamentally free from any constraint imposed by culture, community, or (federal) state and were not responsible for anyone or anything but themselves. To this extent I want to insist that literature and particularly romantic literature exploits the ambiguities and tensions it finds in present forms of organizing the world and becomes fixated on resisting all forms, whether they be poetic, state, national, or hemispheric to insist on the possibility of life otherwise. The romanticist insistence on criticism and discussion is not just the noise that Schmitt would say obstructs the real politics of distributing the perceivable world under the authority of the state, but is an insistence on a fundamentally equal and radically democratic

distribution of the sensible world. Romantic narratives can and do inspire individuals to make the decisions politics requires out of a desire for democratic justice that they see as always to come.

To establish how romantic narratives could and did inspire political action in the nineteenth-century, I have chosen two all but forgotten historical romances of the Haitian Revolution that appeared in 1854, the same year as Melville's *Benito Cereno*, William Wells Brown's *St. Domingo: its Revolutions and Patriots* and Frances Hammond Pratt's *La Belle Zoa; or The Insurrection of Hayti*. Both of these texts come from that space beneath F.O. Mathiessen's American Renaissance articulated famously by David S. Reynolds in *Beneath the American Renaissance* and meet his category of "Subversive literature which was bizarre, nightmarish, and often politically radical" (8). Both authors use tropes characteristic of historical romance to articulate anarchic democratic currents such as those I have argued are found in Cooper's *Lionel Lincoln* and the histories of Prescott and Motley. At the same time, they express voices that do not come from the same privileged spaces as the other authors I have examined thus far. Instead, they are among the category of the masses that were marginalized by most articulations of the nation that came from the two dominant political parties of the era. As such, they have little interest in maintaining the union as it existed in their present day. Instead they look outside of the United States in an attempt to create a global audience of politically sympathetic citizens.

William Wells Brown was one of the most public advocates for the abolition of American slavery in this period. However, because of the difficulty of placing his reform efforts in relation to more squarely U.S. minded abolitionists like Frederick Douglass or William Lloyd Garrison or to more militant black nationalists in the vein of David Walker, Henry Highland Garnet, or Martin Delany, Brown has often been characterized as the trickster of African

American reformers tailoring his arguments to his specific context. Indicative of his curatorial style of authorship, I will argue his romantic history of Haiti can be read as providing a historical basis for an argument he often presented to a global cosmopolitan audience he actively solicited while in Great Britain that, like him, was dedicated to universal enfranchisement. Brown hoped to unite this audience around an understanding that slavery was the greatest barrier to peaceful international relations.

In the narrative, Brown portrays the history of the sister Republic to the United States in terms familiar to nineteenth-century readers well-versed in the arguments for democratic reform; Haiti is a colony whose own material conditions were predicated on an unequal economic system which proved unsustainable in the face of the demand for Enlightenment ideologies of freedom and equality. However, the deep time scale he deploys in the narrative plotted the Haitian Revolution, the American Revolution, and the French Revolution on a world historical timeline that extends the Enlightenment struggle to a more distant period. Both Haiti and the United States are consequences of a history that begins with the landing of Columbus on the island that would become Haiti. The subsequent colonization of the North American continent which historian George Bancroft seized on as an origin of democracy is, in Brown's narrative, just another event on the world-historical timeline Brown terms "the gloomy history of human servitude." Thus, though Brown's history does rely heavily on American ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence, it makes a convincing argument that the United States is not the seat of these ideals.

In the preface to Frances Hammond Pratt's narrative of the Haitian Revolution, she poses a political question. "[W]here is the individual, or who are the class of individuals, endowed with wisdom, will and power sufficient to eradicate the evil [of slavery], with justice to all parties?"

(1). For Pratt, this is a question which cannot be fully answered by history. Thus, it is also a fundamentally literary question demanding an answer that cannot be found in the present distribution of her perceivable world, and can only be imagined through a democratic redistribution of the sensible. The question sets the parameters for her historical romance that uses the Haitian Revolution as the backdrop for a globally oriented tragedy about the failures of the Enlightenment. A central trope of the narrative is the search for a leader with the romantic sensibilities and insight of a stock Hawthorne character, but with the power and agency to change minds that approaches Motley's estimation of William of Orange. This leader would be revolutionary only in the sense that he or she justly responds to the messianic call to action inherent in all revolutionary moments and acts justly and tolerantly towards all classes of people involved. This leader would not turn to a totally destructive violence which would lead to the death of not only unjust ideals, but all ideals. The question also points to the narrative imagining a new form of life in common, a radically democratic form predicated on a romantic conception of love for strangers and an anarchic conception of free cooperation between individuals in the absence of an authoritarian state.

These two narratives taken together illustrate that creation of radically alternative forms of life in common that counter dominant national paradigms becomes of urgent concern in narratives written in the years between the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the reforming of the Union after the Civil War. I contend that the political potential of these narratives has been overshadowed by other contemporaneous events in the national political arena, the establishment of a strong state system to back ideological forms of the nation with recognizable antebellum roots which took place after the war, and subsequent generations of scholars overly influenced

by the nation or the hemisphere as the dominant frame of analysis. The full potential of imagined radical political forms in the Antebellum United States has not been sufficiently understood.

William Wells Brown: Global Author and Reformer

William Wells Brown is a difficult figure to place. William Edward Farrison characterizes Brown as "Author and Reformer" in the title of his biography on Brown from 1969.[2] Of these two designations, we can be certain. Brown was prolific as an author. In addition to his little studied history of Haiti published in Boston in 1854 which I will return to below, between 1847 and 1854 Brown wrote and published his autobiographical narrative, a song book of anti-slavery songs, a catalogue that was part of a panorama exhibition of slavery drawings which he curated, two travel narratives, a novel, and multiple lectures. All went through multiple printings on both sides of the Atlantic. As a reformer, Brown advocated for the abolition of slavery and various other causes in the name of universal freedom. From the time of his escape from slavery in 1834 he used his position as a steamboatsman based in Buffalo, NY to help fugitive slaves escape to Canada. His advocacy took him throughout New York and New England, Haiti, the West Indies, and the United Kingdom. In 1849 he went to Paris as an American delegate to the Second International Peace Congress. He clearly saw American Slavery as part of a global problem in need of international intervention.[3]

Yet, when looking at Brown's biography and the corpus of works which he authored, it becomes difficult to say with any certainty just what kind of author and reformer he was. This is

[2] Ezra Greenspan published a new biography of William Wells Brown in October 2014 which was after the bulk of this chapter was written.

[3] In *Democratic Discourses*, Michael Bennett provides a useful overview of the variety of democratic alternatives radical abolitionists offered to Jacksonian Democracy. He argues that in the antebellum era, abolitionists were "the people most committed to a vision of the freedom and equality of those of different races, class statuses, genders—the whole range of bodies that make up the democratic body called the United States" (1).

especially the case when we try to pigeonhole him as a representative only of African-Americans or narrow his reform efforts to the abolition of American slavery. In comparison to some of his contemporaries like Frederick Douglass who saw national reform as their chief cause, Brown might seem an anomaly, a man so ahead of his time his efforts went largely unheard. When we place Brown within a world-historical context he becomes less an anomaly and his vision for reform comes into sharper focus. I will highlight some of Brown's often ignored biographical history that suggests that Brown had access to a cosmopolitan vision not often granted to Antebellum African Americans. This vision, I contend, is apparent in his lectures and artistic creations that coincide with the years he spent in Britain from 1849 to 1854. I see Brown as honing his argument that slavery in the United States was an issue of world-historical importance during his time in Europe. Though he lacked a consistent platform on which to base his arguments in favor of abolition before leaving to Britain, by the time he returned to the United States, Brown was insistent that the system of American slavery was the greatest obstacle to the success of democratic reform movements all over the globe. I will end by reading Brown's history of the Haitian Revolution as his attempt to give this argument a historical basis.

The Development of a Reformer 1837-1854

One might associate Brown with other Black American Abolitionists in the mid-nineteenth-century like Frederick Douglass, Martin Delany, and Henry Highland Garnet were it not for the fact he often seemed determined not to be associated with such men. Though active in William Lloyd Garrison's American Anti-Slavery Society, Brown cannot be properly termed a Garrisonian abolitionist. He often voted alongside and was a strong advocate for William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass at several anti-slavery conventions after he first heard Douglass speak in 1843. However, Brown's abolitionist activities began before he met Garrison in 1843

and he remained an effective leader in the black civil rights movement long after Garrison faded away. He also established a reputation for himself among international abolition and freedom movements separate from Garrison's influence while in Great Britain. Finally, his legacy as an author gave him a reputation and an audience that extended beyond Garrison's shadow. His autobiography *Narrative of William Wells Brown, A Fugitive Slave* alone went through four American editions and five British editions. Garrison was well aware of Brown's desire for autonomy. He wrote in a private letter in 1849:

> Mr. Brown does not go out officially from any anti-slavery society, simply because he prefers to stand alone responsible for what he may say and do…Nor does he go out to be a pecuniary burden or to make himself an unwelcome guest to any one; but he hopes that, by the sale of his Narrative, (the stereotype plates of which he takes with him,) he shall be able to meet such expenses as may arise beyond what the hospitality of friends may cover. (qtd. in Farrison, 143)

In 1855, Brown and Douglass also had a public schism in the anti-slavery press that Farrison suggests might have stemmed from Douglass's estrangement from Garrison and the American Anti-Slavery Society. Brown had given a number of lectures for the American Anti-Slavery Society in the same year, and in a convention in Cleveland Douglass rose after Brown's speech against union with slaveholders and spoke in support of African-Americans who voted pro-union and pro-constitution (Farrison, 263-267).

Brown's contemporaries in causes for reform likely would have called him a contrarian. At the 1843 National Convention of Colored Citizens of the United States in Buffalo, Brown voted along with Douglass against Henry Highland Garnet's resolution for using violence in order to free slaves. On the second day of the convention, he and Douglass were two of seven

dissenters against a resolution supported by Garnet claiming it was "the duty of every lover of liberty to vote the Liberty [party]" (qtd. in Farrison, 78). Two weeks later, Brown was present at a session of the national convention of the Liberty Party in Buffalo at which Garnet spoke. It was clear that Brown was not impressed with Garnet, the Liberty party or its platform when he slammed Garnet and the Liberty party in what was likely his first published writing; a letter to the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. Towards the close of the letter Brown railed, "When I see such quibbling, by such men as Henry Highland Garnet, it makes me tremble for the fate of the slave at the hands of political parties. I am willing that Mr. Garnet should receive all the praise he can from his political friends; but as a member of the convention, I am not willing that he should misrepresent the convention" (qtd. in Farrison, 79).

Brown remained an active participant in various suffrage, anti-slavery, and African American associations until he left for Great Britain in 1849, but he never fully aligned himself with any of them. By 1846 he had come out against all forms of government, against all organized religion, against the U.S. Constitution, and against the Mexican-American War all on the basis of their hypocrisy. By 1848 he had opposed an initiative in favor of an African American press because he was afraid that African Americans would not be able to support it, an initiative for the establishment of African American colleges perhaps because Garnet was for it, and the establishment of an anti-slavery party. Though he had gained a reputation as a forceful orator and he consistently demanded that the system of slavery be abolished, he did not articulate a clear vision of how that might be achieved. He was suspicious of revolutionary movements that echoed existent political movements precisely because in the history of revolutions he saw a tendency for revolutionary victors to recreate different versions of the same hierarchies they fought to overcome. This is an important point of difference between Brown and the American

Anti-Slavery Society under Garrison. Robert Fanuzzi argues that Garrison sought to resurrect the revolutionary spirit associated with the Federalist era. "The abolitionist's publicity campaign […] supplied the historical medium for resurrecting a public identity from another era; the obsolete idioms of republicanism, of Enlightenment, and of progressive democratic revolution […]" (xvii). Fanuzzi claims this appeal to history was ultimately ahistorical in light of the rough and tumble Jacksonian public sphere intent on solidifying social hierarchies based on race, gender, and class. Henry David Thoreau and Fredrick Douglass are Fanuzzi's examples of abolitionists who found their way out of the ahistoricism of Garrisonian abolitionism to distinguish the movement from the revolutionary struggles of a different age.

Brown's departure to Europe marks his own attempt to distinguish the movement from Garrison's framing of it. Brown gave two reasons for going to Europe in the introductory note to the first edition of his autobiographical narrative published in London. One was to attend the International Peace Congress and the second was to "to lay before the people of Great Britain and Ireland the wrongs that are still committed upon the slaves and the free coloured people of America" (qtd. in Farrison, 140). Brown likely understood the benefit of positioning the abolitionist argument alongside other democratic movements happening in Europe that were not associated with the Jacksonian brand of democracy that had taken hold in the United States. First, however, he had to convince his audience that chattel slavery was a cause more worthy of their attention than other reform movements. Though he seemed open to international coalitions in favor of peace through universal enfranchisement similar to the Congress of Nations proposed by the 1849 International Peace Congress in Paris at which he was a delegate, he was displeased with the Peace Congress event on the whole. He remarked in the second of his travelogues that the planning committee, under pressure from the governments of participating nations, had

"permitted the Congress to be gagged before it had met" (qtd. in Farrison, 153). Still, in his speech at the convention, Brown was able to get the congress' ear on American slavery despite the congress' rule against debating intranational issues. In his address to the congress, he described the institution of slavery in America as a state of perpetual war and concluded his remarks stating, "If therefore we can obtain the abolition of war, we shall at the same time proclaim liberty throughout the world, break in pieces every yoke of bondage, and let all the oppressed go free" (qtd. in Farrison, 150). To Brown, there was no impediment to world peace and international democracy greater than slavery, and this would form the basis of his arguments for the rest of his time in Europe.

Brown saw benefit to an alliance with labor organizations suggesting that he had a nuanced understanding of the economic impact of slavery. At the 1848 annual convention of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, he argued that slave holders were actively opposed to the best interests of the laboring classes. He also seemed to be well aware of the material conditions that African Americans were reduced to under the laws of slavery. In an oft-cited biographical anecdote which he fictionalized in *Clotel*, Brown insisted on paying only the freight charge for his passage on the Lake Erie Railroad because he was forced to ride on the open freight car while the coaches were reserved for white passengers. Regardless of its truth, the anecdote suggests that Brown had a keen understanding of how slaves and former slaves were regarded as objects under the legal authority of the U.S. Constitution and Brown remained strident in his opposition to the Constitution based on this fact.[4] The chief reason for his extended sojourn in Great Britain, moreover, was the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act shortly after his departure. Brown feared

[4] Brown frequently commented on his object status under the Constitution in his speeches. See the various works in Garrett and Robbins edited collection *The Works of William Wells Brown: Using His "Strong, Manly Voice."*

that if he were to return to the U.S. he would have been returned to bondage because of his much publicized fugitive status which led his last owner, Enoch Price, to demand either his return or adequate compensation. Consequently Brown often painted himself to great effect as a man without a country during his speaking engagements in Great Britain. Brown did not return to the U.S. until friends in England negotiated his freedom with Price in 1854.

Brown's disfranchisement under the laws of slavery, the Fugitive Slave Act, and his expatriation in Great Britain all allowed him the distance from the American Anti-Slavery Society to carve out his own space from which he could more forcefully articulate his opposition both to the experience and mechanisms of slavery.[5] The change in rhetorical strategy is .evident when we compare two speeches that bookend his time in Britain from 1849 to 1853. Adequately exposing the system of slavery was, for Brown, the first step in the process of eradicating it. However, while touring New York and New England the best expository method was not always clear to him. In his 1847 *A Lecture Delivered before the Female Anti-Slavery Society of Salem* given just months after the appearance of his autobiography and two years prior to leaving for Great Britain, he struggled to fully articulate how slavery works despite recognizing it as his charge to do so.

> My subject for this evening is Slavery as it is, and its influence upon the morals and character of the American people. I may try to represent to you Slavery as it is; another may follow me and try to present the condition of the Slave; we may all represent it as we think it is; and yet we shall all fail to represent the real condition of the Slave. Your fastidiousness would not allow me to do it; and if it would, I for one, should not be

[5] See Chapter Four of John Ernest's *Chaotic Justice: Rethinking African American Literary History* for a discussion of how nineteenth-century African American writers navigated the social, legal, and historical forces to which they were subjected to articulate the dynamics of African American life.

> willing to do it;--at least to an audience. Were I about to tell you the evils of Slavery to represent to you the Slave in his lowest degradation, I should wish to take you, one at a time, and whisper it to you. Slavery has never been represented; Slavery never can be represented. (4)

Instead of representing slavery to his fastidious audience, Brown went on to reframe it as an abomination of nature that was the chief threat to "the foundation of society." An integral facet of slavery is an injustice which springs from the same patriarchal oligarchy that, as Paula Garrett and Hollis Robbins suggest, left a wide swath of Americans, notably the women of his audience in this speech, "not altogether sure that America's foundational documents included them in the category of 'men'" (xvii). Brown asserted in his lecture, "Give one man power *ad infitum* over another, and he will use and abuse that power; no matter if there be law; no matter if there be public sentiment in favor of the oppressed" (4). In essence, fighting against slavery becomes a democratic imperative that transcends all social classifications. Yet, despite his impassioned argument for abolition, the experience of slavery itself remains private for Brown.

By the end of Brown's sojourn in Great Britain, the reluctance about publicly representing slavery disappeared completely. In one of his last speeches given in England at the Manchester Town Hall on August 1, 1854, it is clear the Fugitive Slave Law gave Brown a frame by which to more clearly represent how the dehumanizing mechanisms of slavery institute a chain reaction that strips away the liberty of individuals everywhere.

> We hear people speak of free and slave states; but I hold that there is no such distinction; for now there are no free states in the United States of America. There are none of them free, because that cannot be a free state which cannot protect the freedom of its inhabitants; and there is no state in the union now which can give Liberty, or even secure

his liberty, to the coloured man. His rights are nothing if the slaveholder pursues him. (37)

Brown's shift from insisting that slavery cannot be represented to insisting that slavery cannot be exaggerated is also evident in the speech.

> I know that some suppose that the evils of slavery are exaggerated; I have been asked again and again if certain portions of Uncle Tom's Cabin were not exaggeration. Of the working of slavery, in my opinion, I don't think anything can exaggerate that infamous system. When we look and see that there are at the present time enslaved between three and four millions of God's children, who are put upon the auction stand and sold to the highest bidder, no language which we can use can exaggerate the workings or the evils of the system of slavery as it is carried on in that country. (35)

Whereas in 1847 Brown may have feared that representing the real effects of slavery publicly to a fastidious audience would have been imprudent, by 1853, perhaps partially because of the Fugitive Slave Law and partially because of Harriet Beecher Stowe, he felt fully able to insist that the effects of slavery can in fact not be exaggerated to a public committed to abolition. Between 1836 and 1854, we can thus discern a significant shift in Brown's public persona as a reformer. Starting as an unpublicized conductor on the Underground Railroad, Brown transitioned to a regional lecturer reluctantly offering his testimonial in support of the anti-slavery movement which employed him. Finally, in Europe, Brown became an accomplished international author with his own anti-slavery platform and capable of generating great sympathy from international audiences. From struggling how best, or whether it was even possible, to represent the system to which he was subjected, by benefit of the distance from the American abolitionist movement his time in Great Britain afforded him, Brown became an imaginative

storyteller that could sway varied audiences to support his cause while suspending their concern for the truthfulness of his arguments. Brown had learned that when it came to representing slavery in order to sway support for its abolition, nothing could exaggerate that infamous system.[6]

A Curatorial Author: Art in the Service of Abolition

We can also discern a significant shift in how Brown saw himself as an author in the same time period. *The Narrative of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave* is a fairly conventional slave narrative chronicling his transition from slave to freeman. In his preface to the narrative, Joseph C. Hathaway, the president of the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society, characterizes it as "another volume to the rapidly increasing anti-slavery literature of the age," written by one who "has been behind the curtain" (Brown *Narrative*, preface). For Brown, however, *The Narrative* would serve as source material for various other projects he would undertake in Great Britain to distinguish himself from the other volumes of anti-slavery literature. Republication of the narrative in Great Britain was one of his chief sources of income. Consequently, the narrative can be seen as both the creative and economic source from which a variety of his endeavors sprang.

In addition to liberal use of his own life story, Brown had also long seen the benefit of supplementing his speeches with songs and audience interaction. Farrison notes that Brown would often sing anti-slavery songs as part of his speaking engagements "believing that such songs contributed to the progress of abolitionism" (122). His 1848, *The Anti-Slavery Harp: A*

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[6] In *Fugitive Vision*, Michael A. Chaney writes that many black writers adapted the "signifying practices" of the abolitionist cause by "recoding conceptualizations of the slave through hyperboles, ironies, and metonymies that exceeded the abolitionist norm" (6). See especially his discussion of how Brown used a satirical cartoon called "The Virginian Slave" to publicly protest the exhibition of Hiram Power's sculpture *The Greek Slave* while it was on display in London's Crystal Palace (49-79).

Collection of Songs for Anti-Slavery Meetings was a collection of such songs. Several songs such as, "Am I not a Man and Brother!" "The Blind Slave Boy," "The Fugitive Slave to the Christian," "Song of the Coffle Gang," and "Fugitive's Triumph" are written in first person from the point of view of a slave or slaves articulating the experience of slavery. Arguably, Brown used these songs as part of a multifaceted approach to presenting his arguments. The emotional appeal of these songs and his interaction with the audience rounded out the logical arguments he made in his speeches. What he could not represent in the well-reasoned logic of his oratory, he sought to elicit in the audience through the performance of songs. The songbook also contains a song credited to *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* called "Jefferson's Daughter" about the allegedly true sale of Thomas Jefferson's daughter at a slave auction in New Orleans. He would use this story to great effect in his first novel *Clotel*. The songbook also is the first instance of Brown anthologizing the creative work of others, a skill he would use to great effect in two significant creative endeavors he undertook while in Great Britain.

In 1850 Brown debuted his panorama project called *William Wells Brown's Original Panoramic Views* in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The panorama contained twenty-four views Brown commissioned and displayed in a rotunda in which spectators would be immersed in what he described in the preface to the accompanying pamphlet as "the life of the Slave, from his birth to his death in bondage, or his flight from the 'Stars and Stripes' to the British possessions of North America." Brown wrote in the preface that he conceived of the project after visiting a panorama of the Mississippi River valley in Boston in 1847. "I was somewhat amazed at the very mild manner in which the 'Peculiar Institution' of the Southern States was there represented, and it occurred to me that a painting, with as fair a representation of American Slavery as could be given upon canvass, would do much to disseminate truth upon this subject, and hasten the

downfall of the greatest evil that now stains the character of the American people" (191). The panorama had several views of Washington D.C. including one described in the pamphlet as a gang of slaves passing by the Capitol building while politicians inside debate passing resolutions in favor of the French Revolution of 1848. There are also views in which a free black man is being sold as a slave because he was not able to produce his papers. Other views include various white slaves whose freedoms are withheld despite being phenotypically white. For example one view, adapted from his narrative, was of "two men in the act of tanning a white boy, that he may be readily retained in slavery" (203). The lengthiest description in the pamphlet is of two apparently white girls being sold in New Orleans. Brown's narrative of the scene tells of a physician from a free state who fell in love with a mulatto slave while visiting New Orleans. Upon returning to the north he married her but he never manumitted her and after the couple's death his teenage daughters were sold at an auction as part of his estate (198-200). Spectators likely emerged from the panorama with the sense that all aspects of American life were tinged by the institution of slavery as well as a sense that slavery was an equal opportunity provider of dehumanizing injustices to all members of society.

In 1853 Brown published his novel *Clotel or The President's Daughter* in London. Amidst various digressions into subplots detailing the various terrors of slavery recognizable from some of the songs or from some of the views in the panorama, the through-line plot of the novel begins with a scene familiar from a song in *The Anti-Slavery Harp*. Currer is a fair skinned mulatto and former slave of Thomas Jefferson who also gave birth to two of his now teenaged daughters named Clotel and Althesa. The three are put up for sale in Richmond, Virginia after the death of the man who became their master once Jefferson was called to Washington. Clotel is bought by Horatio Green a white gentleman who previously swore to free her and marry her. She

becomes his common law wife, and they have a daughter named Mary. Horatio becomes involved in politics and eventually marries a white woman who out of jealousy makes him enslave his daughter Mary and sell off Clotel. Clotel eventually escapes to Ohio with an accomplice, William. Their escape is a retelling of the story of William and Ellen Craft's escape to freedom.[7] Clotel disguises herself in drag as a white landowner and William acts as her slave. Once they escape, Clotel returns to Richmond in hopes of freeing Mary, but is caught and held in Washington D.C. She escapes her cell and while being pursued across the Long Bridge commits suicide by jumping into the Potomac. Meanwhile, Althesa is purchased by Henry Morton, a northerner, and the two marry and have two daughters. In a retelling of the eighth view from the Panorama, their daughters are sold into slavery after Althesa and Henry die. Currer is bought by a hypocritical preacher named Mr. Peck and dies of yellow fever just before his decidedly more enlightened daughter was going to free her. At the end of the novel, another of Horatio Green's slaves named George is imprisoned in conjunction with the uprising caused by Clotel. Mary, who is in love with George, trades places with him in prison and George escapes to Canada dressed as a woman. As fortune would have it, Mary is sold to a sympathetic and romantic Frenchman and the novel ends ten years later after George relocates to England and he and Mary meet by chance in France and are married.

Largely because of this novel, it is even difficult to conclusively label Brown an author. At the very least, he must also be considered editor and anthologizer of anti-slavery tales of all sorts in *Clotel*. If he had been writing in the twenty-first century we would undoubtedly call him

[7] Brown had toured with the Crafts in Massachusetts just prior to leaving for Europe. See Farrison, 136-8.

a plagiarist.[8] In the conclusion to the novel, Brown acknowledges a number of sources and even presents himself as a compiler of testimonies describing slavery. Of "the incidents and scenes related" in the novel Brown writes:

> Some of the narratives I have derived from other sources; many from the lips of those who, like myself, have run away from the land of bondage. Having been for nearly nine years employed on Lake Erie, I had many opportunities for helping the escape of fugitives, who, in return for the assistance they received, made me the depositary of their sufferings and wrongs. Of their relations, I have made free use. To Mrs. [Lydia Maria] Child of New York, I am indebted for part of a short story. Abolitionist journals are another source from whence some of the characters in my narrative are taken. All these combined have made up my story. (226)

Brown used more than a part of Child's 1842 short story "The Quadroons." It was not only the source for the story of Clotel and Horatio Green it was actually reproduced practically word for word over the course of three chapters. Clotel's leap from Long Bridge comes directly from a poem written by Grace Greenwood in 1851,which he reprints in the novel with an added final stanza. In Robert Levine's impressively edited Bedford edition of *Clotel*, he located most of the reproduced sources Brown used including a number of sermons, portions of John R. Beard's 1853 biography *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture* which he also borrowed extensively from in *San Domingo: Its Revolutions and Its Patriots,* and various snippets from abolitionist newspapers like *The Liberator*.

[8] For more on plagiarism in *Clotel* see Sanborn " 'People will Pay to Hear the Drama': Plagiarism in *Clotel*." Avallone examines Sedgwick's impact on Brown in writing *Clotel*.

Levine gives an apt suggestion for how we should interpret these plagiarisms. Riffing on plagiarism's Latinate root which means kidnapping, he notes the various kinds of metaphoric plagiarisms that occurred under slavery and specifically the authority of the Fugitive Slave Law to bolster his argument. "Writing *Clotel* in the wake of the Fugitive Slave Law's edict to return escaped blacks to their 'proper' place on the southern plantation, Brown attempts to liberate a variety of texts by placing them in 'improper' relation within his literary narrative" (Brown *Clotel,* 6). Brown's unconventional authorial technique then gets to the root of the system of slavery he has struggled to adequately represent and his literary reimagining of his sources has a profoundly political effect on his readers. Levine continues, "Central to Brown's revisionary relation to his sources then, is a massive, complex, often brilliant effort to recontextualize his source materials, using techniques of pastiche (a typically ironic rearticulation of cultural discourses) and bricolage (a reassembling of 'found' documents) to raise questions about the ways in which meanings are produced in a white racist culture, and ultimately to suggest new ways of reading that culture" (223).[9] Brown is thus not only challenging conventional authorial practices, but is simultaneously encouraging a new set of reading practices through his narrative sleight of hand, which, John Ernest argues, invites a radical re-visioning of how culture is perceived. Ernest writes that "by drawing from the materials of the culture [of antislavery] and then serving as cultural editor, rearranging those materials in revealing demonstration of cultural contradictoriness and tension… he establishes himself into being in a grand act of self-governance, rearranging the materials of his life and of his world into a new economy of perspective" (24). Brown's use of his sources is similar to the way Cooper, Prescott, and Motley

[9]Wilson uses Levine's identification of bricolage in *Clotel* as the basis for his argument that paying attention to the peripheral characters in the novel brings to light "different iterations of democratic possibilities [which] emerge on the U.S. political horizon" (39).

curated their own historical sources as part of their method for creating a reflective vision of history in their own narratives, but Brown's methodology results in a much more cohesive political vision. [10]

Brown as Political Romantic

Scholarship on Brown typically reads his politics in one of two ways. Historically, Brown is seen as a slick talking confidence man to Frederick Douglass' pragmatic and honest speaking black founding father persona.[11] Lately, Brown has been made a representative figure in various conceptions of Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic.* Elisa Tamarkin, for instance, characterizes Brown as one of a number of self-fashioned black Anglophiles who saw their sojourns in Britain as providing a kind of gentlemanly finishing not available to them in the New World. These men came back worldly cosmopolitans with idealized versions of Britain to hold up as a model for what a still backwards American culture could be if only slavery was abolished. Martha Schoolman has argued, in contrast, that instead of idealizing Europe, Brown "develops a procedure of mining and inverting Europe's political and cultural fictions toward a geographically displaced imaginative alignment with modernity's epochal reply to Enlightenment universalism: the Haitian Revolution" (7). Schoolman's reading of Brown's

[10] Brown's method of reprinting in *Clotel* is a different sort of the culture of reprinting Meredith L. McGill describes in, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853.* Her maxim that "unauthorized reprinting makes publication distinctly legible as an independently signifying act. In all the multiplicity of their formats and points of origin, and in the staggered temporality of their production, reprinted texts call attention to the repeated acts of articulation by which culture and its audiences are constituted" is very applicable to the curating Brown performs in his novel (5).

[11] See Garret and Robin's introduction to the *Works of William Wells Brown* for a gloss of these readings of Brown. In *Liberation Historiography: African American Writers and the Challenge of History* John Ernest calls Brown a "trickster narrator" and "historical confidence man" in his examination of Brown's three post-Civil War histories (334-336).

cosmopolitanism is consistent with how his histories have been read as containing a vision of international or hemispheric black alliances.[12] As suspicious as Brown was about extant political forms, and as insistent as he was that slavery was not an issue limited to blacks or Americans but in fact a blockade to the realization of freedom and justice anywhere, we can justifiably label Brown's political stance concerning slavery as consistent with the tenets of romanticism I outlined in the introduction.[13] At the end of Brown's time in Britain, we find him in a state of pure critique where he struggles against any kind of defined community to which he has access, where he is prevented access to other communities for reasons beyond his control, but, yet, he still remains ever hospitable to an ideal dynamic organic community that has not yet come. Jacques Derrida has theorized that this is a space that was identified first by Nietzsche. Derrida describes it as that "community without community [...] which thinks it possible to hold out in the shade of Enlightenment, where the light of Enlightenment is not thought, where a heritage is

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[12] In "Reclaiming Revolution: William Wells Brown's Irreducible Haitian Heroes" Ben Fagan argues that Brown's Logic in *San Domingo*, "opens up the possibility of developing an international revolutionary continuum deeply dependent upon black liberatory goals" (367). In *Black Cosmopolitanism: Racial Consciousness and Transnational Identity in the Nineteenth-Century Americas* Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwankwo argues that people of African descent throughout the Americas defined their identities against the Haitian Revolution in a multitude of ways. In *Impossible Witnesses: Truth, Abolitionism, and Slave Testimony* Dwight McBride frames the Anti-Slavery debate as a transnational and cosmopolitan discourse . For a somewhat different take on how Brown formed transnational civic social alliances using the language of temperance, see Carole Lynn Stewart "A Transnational Temperance Discourse? William Wells Brown, Creole Civilization, and Temperate Manners." In *A Nation within a Nation: Organizing African-American Communities before the Civil War* John Ernest examines how African Americans organized themselves in the United States at the local level.

[13] In *Romanticism and Slave Narratives: Transatlantic Testimonies*, Helen Thomas argues that, "by foregrounding the ways in which marginalized slaves and alienated radical dissenters contributed to transatlantic debates over civil and religious liberties" using Romantic writing draws attention to "a broader canvas of cultural exchanges, geographical migrations and displaced identities" (5). In *Slavery and Sentiment: The Politics of Feeling in Black Atlantic Antislavery Writing, 1770-1850* Christine Levecq argues that Black Atlantic writers used the language of sentiment and the power of feeling to powerfully articulate their political visions.

misappropriated. For us there is no Enlightenment other than the one to be thought" (Derrida, *Politics of Friendship, 42*). Derrida's use of the first person plural objective pronoun us, emphasizes that the community without community nevertheless remains an aggregate of disaffected individuals. Brown's time in Great Britain had separated him from the static mechanisms of both slavery and an increasingly mechanized abolitionist movement. However, because of his fugitive status and race he was barricaded from full membership in the United States Republic. His critiques instead led to the possibility of a new political order imaginable in terms of Enlightenment ideals, but not in terms of present political orders said to conform to the Enlightenment.

His commandment for what the English people should do to support the abolitionist cause given at the end of the aforementioned 1854 speech at Manchester Town Hall, is essentially to become hospitable to those like him forced into a community without community. He addressed his audience on the brink of his return to the United States from a thoroughly displaced subject position. He terms himself as alternately and simultaneously "identified with the most ultra of the abolitionists," "one who has nothing to lose and everything to gain" and/or "almost an Englishman," yet not quite any of them. He tells those English people who wish to help that "we do not ask you to take up arms; we do not ask you to do any act, or utter any language, unbecoming to Christians; but we ask you to learn the facts and the truth of this matter, and honestly and strongly to speak upon it" (38-39). Essentially, like Brown during his expatriation, he implores English supporters to take advantage of the safety of their distance from those effects that obscure the mechanisms of slavery to become good readers of them. After reading them, they should then, following Brown's lead, describe what those mechanisms are. Brown's insistence that the effects of the infamous system of slavery could not be exaggerated

licenses a whole range of articulations under the rubric of "the truth of the matter" which emphasizes that telling about slavery is an integral facet of determining what slavery actually is so as to eradicate it.

In summoning a community of readers given access to a path for political change not predicated on violence, Brown was also essentially solidifying an international community of individuals who in their disaffection at the hands of slavery had become downright revolutionary. This was a community which sought to barricade themselves from the ratiocinations of pro-slavery arguments based on supposedly pragmatic legal, economic, or social arguments. Instead, Brown's pronouncements against slavery in both his artistic work and his speeches served to strip away the poeticism of pro-slavery arguments that occluded the injustices slavery was predicated upon. In turn, slavery is demystified and becomes, like any system, interpretable as a relationship of signs which could also be arranged into a more just system. Jacques Rancière argues that interpretability is one of the key ways in which literature, for him the art of writing itself, has a politics. To repeat his maxim from *The Politics of Literature*, "[L]iterature intervenes as literature in [the] carving up of space and time, the visible and the invisible, speech and noise. It intervenes in the relationship between practices and forms of visibility and modes of saying that carve up one or more common worlds" (4). For Rancière, this is an imminently democratizing intervention that does not reproduce reality, but rather shows "prosaic reality as an immense fabric of signs that bear, as written, the history of a time, a civilization or a society"(15). Thus, literature, conceived broadly as the art of writing, can offer an opportunity for interpretation that can result in real change because it "transforms the forms of visibility a common world may take and, with them, the capacities that ordinary bodies may exercise in that world over a new landscape of the common" (30).

Brown, like Schmitt's romantic, takes an occasionalist approach in the political reinterpretations in his writing, but he refuses to subordinate the imaginative critique that creative expression has to the supposed "real" political action of the state. The occasionalist intervention by the individual such as Schmitt describes that is invited by the interpretive regime of literature Rancière describes is analogous to what Brown identified as a site from which real political change could originate. Pro-slavery arguments based on State sanctioned rationality and logic are untenable in Brown's court of readers. One of the first lectures Brown delivered when he returned to the United States is also one of the last that he delivered in London. "St. Domingo: its Revolutions and its Patriots" is Brown's imaginative political intervention that attempts to narrate a history for a romantic political collective. This collective stands in opposition to the system of slavery and the political bodies that either uphold that system or are ambivalent to it. He first identified it in Britain, but he knew the citizens of the United States would find its cosmopolitanism so appealing they would give up slavery to join it. Thus, we can see that this is properly understood as an international community. In Brown's history, American chattel slavery becomes scripted as yet another act in what any romantic would recognize as the worst tragedy in world human history—the subjection of natural life to an unnatural form. Thus, there is no decision to be made when it comes to what future slavery should have.

Recreating the Haitian Revolution

The transatlantic scale of *Santo Domingo: Its Revolutions and its Patriots. A Lecture Delivered Before the Metropolitan Athenaeum, London May 16, and at St. Thomas' Church Philadelphia, December 20, 1854* is immediately noticeable. Though bearing a publisher's mark dated 1855, the pamphlet is copyrighted 1854. The *Liberator* announced its publication and reviewed it on December 22 of that year. Farrison notes that the pamphlet was printed and titled

in anticipation of the lecture being delivered in Philadelphia (255-56). In typical Brown fashion, the history is largely a bricolage of his source text, *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture, The Negro Patriot of Hayti* by Reverend James Relly Beard that was published in 1853 in London. Beard's biography is sympathetic to Toussaint, the Haitian Revolution, as well as the abolitionist cause and thus the draw it must have had for Brown is clear. Brown mostly uses Beard's biography as a source for central facts of the revolution, but the authors do share a historiographical bias as well. Beard writes in his preface that his chief purpose is "A hope of affording some aid to the sacred cause of freedom, specially as involved in the extinction of slavery, and in the removal of the prejudices on which servitude mainly depends […]" (v). Beard also is critical of the bias he finds in the biography of Toussaint written by Saint Remy whom he characterizes as a "mulatto" who "obviously values his caste more than his country or his kind" (vi). Beard also laments the lack of black authored histories of the revolution, and thus his impetus for writing the biography likely came from what he saw as one of his main callings in the Mid-Victorian Unitarian movements of giving voice to the voiceless.[14]

One of Brown's larger editorial concerns for his version of the history of the Haitian Revolution of sixty years before is to make it more immediately relevant to an American audience mired in the controversy over slavery in 1853. He achieves this immediacy by emphasizing how the history of the Haitian revolution and the life of Toussaint L'Ouverture fits within the more typical American national narratives that were being used in support of both pro

[14] See Alan Ruston's entry on Beard in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

and antislavery arguments.[15] Sometimes, Brown achieves this through what read like marginal interjections into Beard's narrative. For example, early in the lecture, Brown summarizes Beard's account of how after the news of the 1787 French Revolution reached Haiti the mulattoes sent a delegation to the Constituent Assembly in Paris led by Vincent Oge to assure their equal rights to the whites. The white planters responded that the proposal was unacceptable. Brown misattributes to Antoine Barnave a declaration in favor of universal equality that Beard attributes to Charles Lameth, "*Perish the colonies, rather than a principle!*" (Brown 7, Beard 54-55). Brown interjects, "Noble language this! Would that the fathers of the American Revolution had been as consistent!" (7). Brown's comment should be read here as both his own reading note, and an annotation to guide his audience. The comparison to the American Revolution at once highlights both its similarities to and differences to its sister revolution in France predicated on similar enlightenment ideas. Using Haiti as a lens for examining the principles of both revolutions makes a familiar American national narrative read quite strangely.

The comparison of the Haitian Revolution, the French Revolution, and the American Revolution extends to their revolutionary leaders as well. Brown amplifies comparisons that Beard makes between Toussaint and Napoleon and Toussaint and Washington. The comparison between Toussaint and Napoleon is lifted almost word for word from Beard. The "striking parallels" include a humble birth, exceptional character, "renown" in government and warfare, and "[b]oth fell the moment they had attained supreme authority. Both finished their careers on a

[15] Federick Douglass's *The Heroic Slave* (1852) provides an interesting counter here. In Douglass's novella based on the revolt of the slave Madison Washington, he plays on the irony of the slave's name, insisting he is of equal character to George Washington and James Madison. In the revolt on the ship that occurs during a passage from Baltimore to New Orleans, Madison Washington hijacks the ship and forces it to the British West Indies where the slaves are ensured their freedom. For a reading of how Douglass's story fits into transatlantic thinking, see Levine (*Dislocating Race and Nation,* 179-236).

barren rock" (Brown, 36, Beard 281-282). Among the contrasts are that "Toussaint fought for liberty ; Napoleon fought for himself. Toussaint gained fame by leading an oppressed and injured race to the successful vindication of their rights; Napoleon made himself a name and acquired a sceptre by supplanting liberty and destroying nationalities, in order to substitute his own legitimate despotism" (Brown, 36-37, Beard 282). For Beard, the ultimate difference comes down to each man's relationship to God. "[W]ith Bonaparte, God was a name, with Toussaint L'Ouverture, God was at once the sole reality and the sovereign good" (283). Brown, however, leaves the matter of how their legacies will be remembered as a secular matter. "While Toussaint's memory will be revered by all lovers of freedom, Napoleon's will be detested" (37).

Brown's comparison of Toussaint to George Washington results in a much harsher criticism of the American Founding Father than Beard's comparison does. Beard's comparison comes at a moment where Toussaint had an opportunity to become king of Haiti, but instead chose to become president.

> Does the reader think of Washington, who, when he might possibly have become a king, became a private citizen? We are not sure that Washington's means for establishing a throne in the midst of the high-minded republicans of the Anglo-Saxon race were equal to those which Toussaint possessed among the uncultured and recently liberated Haytians, whom nature made fond of parade, and custom had habituated to royalty. […] Nor must it be forgotten that while Washington could, with confidence and safety, leave his associates to their own well-tried and well-matured powers of self-government, L'Ouverture had, in comparison, but children to deal with and provide for. (142)

Beard makes a racist argument to compare the fitness of each leader's countrymen for the privileges of self-government to determine that Toussaint's refusal to ascend to the throne over a much more easily dominated people makes him of a higher character than Washington.

Unsurprisingly, these types of racial categorizations are absent from Brown's narrative. Toussaint's superiority to Washington is solely because of his superior commitment to liberty. Brown makes their chief similarities that each was "the leader of an oppressed and outraged people, each had a powerful enemy to contend with, and each succeeded in founding a government in the New World" (37). However, Brown notes that the governments each founded resulted in much different legacies based on their different conceptions of freedom.

> Toussaint's government made liberty its watchword, incorporated it in its constitution, abolished the slave-trade, and made freedom universal amongst the people. Washington's government incorporated slavery and the slave-trade, and enacted laws by which chains were fastened upon the limbs of millions of people. Toussaint liberated his country-men; Washington enslaved a portion of his, and aided in giving strength and vitality to an institution that will one day render asunder the Union that he helped to form. Already the slave in his chains, in the rice swamps of Carolina and the cotton fields of Mississippi, burns for revenge. (37)

Brown uses Washington as a foundational figure in a teleological narrative about the nation. However, it is a teleology we do not typically find in U.S. national narratives. Here, Washington's nation is fundamentally broken due to its government being based on a misappropriation of the values from which the nation was born. Thus, it is destined to be "rendered asunder" under the lead of those countrymen who have been denied the rights guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence. Brown goes on to quote the passage from

Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* which famously begins, "Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events" (qtd. in Brown, 38). The words of yet another founding father lend credence to Brown's obverse national narrative.

Brown ends his lecture with his insistence that revolution invoked by the Declaration of Independence in 1776 is not over until justice is served. He exhorts in response to Jefferson's tremble:

> And, should such a contest take place the God of Justice will be on the side of the oppressed blacks. The exasperated genius of Africa would rise from the depths of the ocean, and show its threatening form; and war against the tyrants would be the rallying cry. The indignation of the slaves of the south would kindle a fire so hot that it would melt their chains drop by drop until not a single link would remain; and the revolution that was commenced in 1776 would then be finished. (38)

A violent iteration of the 1776 revolution seems imminent in Brown's estimation. An earlier comparison in the lecture between "Nat Turner, the Spartacus of the Southampton revolt who fled with his brave band to the Virginia swamps" and Toussaint and his generals who regrouped in the Mountains after the invasion of Napoleon's troops almost suggests that the violent iteration is already under way (23).

At the end of the lecture Brown gestures also to "the friends of freedom in other lands" who hold the U.S. government "in scorn and contempt" for its unjust limitations on liberty. Evoking this audience underscores Brown's insistence that the abolition of American slavery was of world-historical importance. Indicative of the cosmopolitan ethos Brown had cultivated

while in Britain, Brown's history of the United States told in comparison to the history of Haiti is also a world history. The teleology of America's rise and preordained greatness resulting from enlightenment values brought in embryonic form to Plymouth Rock by the pilgrims becomes fractured if not entirely reversed when Haiti is used for historical comparison. Using Haiti as the locus for his history also widens the historical scale through which the history of the United States must be understood precisely because Haiti is both central and liminal to a number of traditional scales used by restorative historians to write the origins of the United States into existence. The U.S. becomes less an isolated and exceptional cradle of liberty and instead becomes part of a much more complex and dirty history of the collision between the old world and the new with reverberations felt throughout the globe. Haiti's geographical location puts it on the margins of both the old and new worlds. However, its history marks it as the setting for one of the central events of the modern era, the old world's arrival into the new world. Brown and Beard both begin their history with the discovery of the island by Columbus in 1492 and his almost immediate enslavement of the population of dark skinned inhabitants which he found there. The initial act of enslavement results in a rapid genocide of the native population and the need for new laborers, which thus makes the island a central part of the economic system which drove the African slave trade. A new population emerges out of the amalgamation of whites with blacks "a class known as mulattoes and quadroons. This class, though allied to the whites by the tenderest ties of nature, were their bitter enemies. Although emancipated by the law from the dominion of individuals, the mullatoes had no rights; shut out from society by their color, deprived of religious and political privileges, they felt their degradation even more keenly than the bond slaves" (Brown, 5). The island is thus the site of a class of people made liminal and untenable under the system of slavery. Brown sees the mulatto class as untenable both because it

hangs in legal limbo between citizen and slave, and because of the clear injustice the mulatto class was subjected to as a result of their legal status. The result is that the mixed races were subject to "low and vindictive passions" which "were haughty and disdainful to the blacks, whom they scorned, and jealous and turbulent to the whites, whom they hated and feared" (5). Also because of their liminal position, the Paris educated mulatto class become the first to seize upon the revolutionary sentiment found in "the principles of freedom that were being advocated in the United States" (ibid). The news of the French revolution is depicted as "being hailed with delight by both the white planters and the mulattoes […]. And even the slaves regarded it as a precursor to their own emancipation" (ibid). Thus, the Island's colonized status puts it both inside and outside of those Enlightenment currents which demanded individual liberty in France and territorial sovereignty in the British Colonies. Haiti thus serves as a tumultuous setting for Brown's history making for an unstable beginning to a story in which we can already see the possibility for a number of plotlines.

Working through Plotlines

The multiple plotlines are perhaps another reason that Brown found Beard's biography an interesting read. Brown's notion of Haiti as always providing an unstable basis on which to script a plot, mirrors Beard's own depiction of Haiti that concludes his chapter on the long history from Columbus to just prior to the birth of Toussaint. Beard writes:

> On that land of servitude there were on all sides masters living in pleasure and luxury, women skilled in the arts of seduction, children abandoned by their fathers or becoming their cruelest enemies, slaves worn down by toil, sorrow and regrets, or lacerated and mangled by punishments. Suicide, abortion, poisoning, revolts and conflagration,--all the vices and crimes which slavery engenders, became more and more frequent. [M]eanwhile

> thirty thousand whites, freemen, lived in the midst of twenty thousand emancipated men of colour, and five hundred thousand slaves. Thus the advantage of numbers and of physical strength was on the side of the oppressed. (22)

It is against this volatile depiction of Haiti that he begins his next chapter on the birth and education of his quasi-messianic hero, Toussaint.

> In the midst of these conflicting passions and threatening disorders, there was a character quietly forming, which was to do more than all others, first to gain the mastery of them and then to conduct them to issues of a favourable nature. This superior mind gathered its strength and matured its purposes in a class of Haytian society where least of all ordinary men would have looked for it. Who could suppose that the liberator of the slaves of Hayti, and the great type and pattern of negro excellence, existed and toiled in one of the despised gangs that pined away on the plantations of the island? (23)

Beard presents Toussaint as a kind of secular messiah who as a result of being a self-taught reader develops a unique reading of Abbè Raynal and the Bible. This, along with his natural attributes, leads to the development of a character that combines the compassion of a Christ figure with the reason and good sense of an enlightened statesman.[16]

Brown seized on both the portrayal of Toussaint as quasi-messiah and as a sophisticated reader. However, unsurprisingly given Brown's feelings about organized religion, he concentrates more on Toussaint's secular study. In his summary of Toussaint's self-education, Brown writes:

> By [Toussaint's] liberty and perseverance he had learned to read and write, and had carefully studied the works of Raynal and a few others who had written in behalf of

[16]The portrayal of Toussaint as a messiah and as a founding father was a common trope in the American Antebellum period. See for example Alfred N Hunt.

> human freedom. This class of literature no doubt, had great influence over the mind of Toussaint, and did much to give him the power that he afterwards exercised in the island. His private virtues were many, and he had a deep and pervading sense of religion, and, in the camp, carried it even as far as Oliver Cromwell. It might be said that an inward and prophetic genius revealed to him the omnipotence of a firm and unwearied adherence to a principle. He was not only loved by his fellow-slaves, but the planters held him in high consideration. (13)

For Toussaint, just like for any enlightened gentleman, religion is relegated to the private sphere and used only in the confines of the camp. Brown is more concerned with Toussaint as a secularist. Sensitive as he was to the power of image, Brown may have taken into account the engraving of Toussaint reading within the confines of his cabin in Beard's biography as he wrote this summary (fig 1). [17] In this engraving, Toussaint is shown as master of his private domestic space. His wife is caring for the house, the children are playing in the background. Meanwhile, Toussaint sits with Raynal's book, not the Bible, in his lap, writing quill on the table, and the remainder of his library on the mantle. Toussaint is clearly portrayed as the equal of any bourgeois gentleman with access to the leisure time to become more than sufficiently introspective. Literacy is clearly power.

Outside of the door in the common space we see what are likely a male and a female slave in a repetition of the scene from inside Toussaint's house. The female is at work, a basket on her head, but clearly she is not working for the master because the male is not working. He is seated leisurely on the ground seemingly smoking while discussing something with the woman, clearly not concerned with being caught by the master or an overseer. In another re-plotting of a

[17] In addition to the views in his panorama, Brown also had engravings in *Clotel* including a depiction of Clotel throwing herself from the Long Bridge.

familiar national narrative, we see a rather unexpected representation of a decidedly non-bourgeois society that is nonetheless divided into public and private spheres where print plays a central role.[18] However, this access to privacy is not by an economic benefit, it is by benefit of sheer number. Beard uses a complicated racial calculus to determine the extent to which his majority outnumbered the minority.[19] In what had perhaps become clear to the Englishman Beard in the context of the Revolutions of 1848, majority rule was a statistical inevitability. In the case of Haiti, even an enslaved majority had opportunity to develop a revolutionary will outside the watchful eye of their minority oppressors. For Brown, who for five years had worked to convince an audience of "free" men and women that lived in a country where slavery was illegal that they were in fact never free while slavery existed anywhere, the oppressed majority extends beyond practically all national or social classifications on the way to a global scale. A revolution of a majority who not only physically suffer under the whip of slavery, but also read themselves as metaphorically suffering under the ideology of slavery becomes not only a likelihood on the local scale of the American south, but, in fact, becomes likely on a global scale.

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[18] I am, of course, referring here to Jurgen Habermas's conception of the Bourgeois Public Sphere as reconceived in Early America by Michael Warner in his influential *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth Century America.*

[19] In his notes to the biography, Beard outlines a system of human color classification a French scientist adapted from a system developed by Benjamin Franklin that is based on 128 shades between white and black. One is nearer to one color or the other based on the how near or far they are from sixty four. Anyone without eight shades of white is black. Between the black and white ends of the spectrum there are nine shades. In the middle is the mulatto for whom, out of the twelve possible combinations, four are majority white, six are majority black, and two are equal parts white and black. The scale was used by Franklin, Beard writes, to show " that by the infinite power and goodness of the creator; thus the species always reforming itself by varieties is renewed at the end of generations, without retaining any of the organic elements which would debase it." (Beard, 321-24)

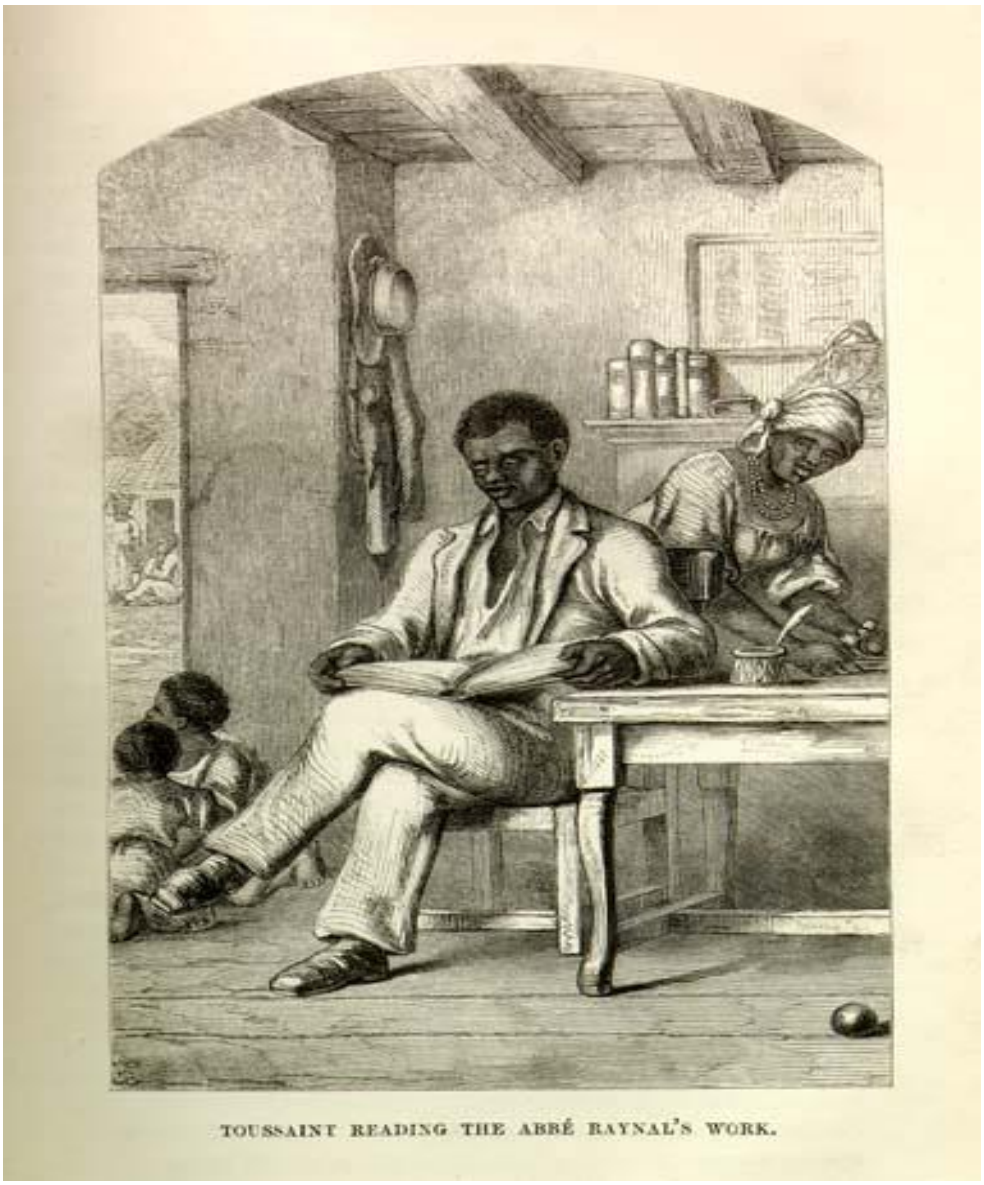

Figure 1: Beard, J.R. "Toussaint Reading the Abbe Raynal's Work." *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Negro Patriot of Hayti: Comprising an Account of the Struggle for Liberty in the Island, and a Sketch of Its History to the Present Period***.** London: Ingram, Cooke, and Co., 1853. *Documenting the American South.* The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Any reader trained by Brown would see slavery not as a natural part of the order of things but as the structural monad of which Walter Benjamin's historical materialist sees his historical subject. "In this structure he recognizes the sign of a Messianic cessation of happening, or, put differently, a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past" (Benjamin, 263). Indeed, this is a moment of "awareness that [the revolutionary classes] are about to make the continuum of history explode" (261). Brown predicts the locus for the emergence of the next messianic revolutionary movement of world historical importance to be the Deep South.

> Who knows but that a Toussaint, a Christophe, a Riguad, a Clervaux, and a Dessalins, may some day appear in the Southern States of this Union? That they are there, no one will doubt. That their souls are thirsty for liberty all will admit. The spirit that caused the blacks to take up arms, and to shed their blood in the American revolutionary war, is still amongst the slaves of the south; and if we are not mistaken, the day is not far distant when the revolution of St. Domingo will be reenacted in South Carolina and Louisiana. (32)

There is one other annotative interjection Brown makes to Beard's history that gives Brown's world history an even deeper time scale. Harking back to ancient Greece, Brown's interjection is not an unexpected move in an American national narrative, but again it serves an unfamiliar purpose. Among the most literary passages in Brown's lecture, the language also comes from an unacknowledged source.

> In the gloomy history of human servitude, there are few chapters more horrible than that which relates to the Helots of Sparta. […]The news of the earthquake became the watchword of revolt. Up rose the Helots; they armed themselves; they poured in, --a wild, and gathering, and relentless multitude,--resolved to slay, by the wrath of man, all whom

> nature had yet spared. The earthquake that leveled Sparta […] is one of the sublimest and most awful spectacles in history—that city in ruins—the earth still trembling—the grim and dauntless soldiery collected amid piles of death and ruin; and in such a time, and such a scene, the multitude, sensible, not of danger but of wrong, and rising, not to succor, but to revenge […] It was as if the great mother herself had summoned her children to vindicate the long abused, the all-inalienable heritage derived from her; and the stir of the angry elements was but the announcement of an armed and solemn union between nature and the oppressed. (32)

This event is the deepest origin Brown can locate for the blockade that slavery poses to universal liberty. The blockade here is unnaturally unjust as suggested by the union between nature and the oppressed as symbolized by the earthquake against it. Brown then writes **"**What the Helots were to Sparta at the time of the earthquakes, the blacks were to St. Domingo at the time of the French Revolution." What the Helots were to Sparta becomes the analogical basis for a cyclical **"**gloomy history of human servitude" in which the violence that occurs when the oppressed inevitably rise up against their oppressors is a repeating event. He continues, "And the American slaves are only waiting their opportunity for wiping out their wrongs in the blood of their oppressors," waiting only for their turn in the revolution Brown says began with "the glorious sentiments of the Declaration of Independence" (32).

However, his history also suggests that bringing the revolution full circle is not necessarily equivalent to progress towards universal liberty. Brown also asks if the next iteration of violence will only be a repetition of an old history, a return to Haiti in a retelling of an old story of oppressed versus oppressor with a new cast of characters, or if the next event will bring the gloomy history of human servitude to an end. Contrary to pro-slavery arguments which

claimed that a debased class was a necessary condition for allowing society to function, Brown's readers saw the mechanized oppression of the system of slavery as an impediment to the natural growth of freedom.[20] Slavery becomes suddenly graspable as a material product of a seemingly mechanized historical cycle. The present becomes the moment when the incessant revolutions which drive the history of gloomy human servitude that had all but naturalized oppression and slavery, can be stopped. The present is a moment when yet another revolution of this history that commenced with the Declaration of Independence can end before coming full circle. The end of this history would allow a new history driven by liberty and tolerance rather than revenge and oppression to finally begin. Brown's nineteenth-century audience would have recognized immediate and peaceful abolition as the just event that could inaugurate a new history that would circumvent another violent revolution of the cyclical history of oppression. A twenty-first century reader likely recognizes an event in Haiti that makes the earthquake symbolism of Brown's passage eerily prescient. Whether that event will be plotted in another iteration of an old story or inaugurate the plot of a new story is not yet clear.

Searching for the Community of Dionysus in *La Belle Zoa: or the Insurrection of Hayti*

Like other antebellum historical romances set in the midst of revolutions, Frances Hammond Pratt's *La Belle Zoa: or the Insurrection of Hayti* follows several different narrative arcs despite being only ninety-six pages long. The central plot concerns the Docou family and their demise which occurs as a result of the titular insurrection of Haiti. The family is portrayed

[20] South Carolinian Senator James Henry Hammond made this pro-slavery argument in a speech to the U.S. Senate on March 4, 1858. "In all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is, a class requiring but a low order of intellect and but little skill. Its requisites are vigor, docility, fidelity. Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, civilization, and refinement. It constitutes the very mud-sill of society and of political government; and you might as well attempt to build a house in the air, as to build either the one or the other, except on this mud-sill. Fortunately for the South, she found a race adapted to that purpose to her hand." (Hammond).

as compassionate slave holders who were conscientiously protected by the black insurgents by Adelle, a "yellow girl" initially presented as Zoa's handmaid, but who we later learn is also her half-sister. Adelle is presented as chief author of the insurrectionary plot along with her beau Christoph, meant to be Henri Christoph, and Toussaint Louverture. Monsieur Docou is the patriarch of the family, introduced as "thoughtful, benevolent, and wise." Madame Docou only has a brief appearance in the narrative because the events of the insurrection, most notably the murder of her son, are too much for her to handle and she dies in a fit of hysteria. The titular La Belle Zoa is Monsieur Docou's daughter whose beauty and purity of heart often manifest themselves in actions of sublime "love and gratitude" that lead to emotive responses from even the most hardened revolutionaries including Toussaint himself. She is betrothed to an impetuous and "sarcastic" beau, Francis Eugene Pallette, whose family is French Jacobin exiles.

Following the onset of the insurrection, which commences on the second page of the narrative, Adelle and Christoph, under the authorization and occasional intervention of Toussaint, become protectorates of the Docou family. The two assure the Docous that they will continue to be provided for from the profits of their plantation though they will no longer own it. Eventually, due to the aid of these three leaders, Docou, Zoa, and Pallette are able to gain safe passage to Boston. The perils of the journey, old age, and a spirit broken by the horrors he has witnessed prove too much for Monsieur Docou and he dies at sea after declaring his wish that his death "could serve as a beacon to warn the wide world of the sin of slavery" (62). Once they arrive in Boston, Pallette and Zoa are married and attempt to settle into the "intelligence and sobriety" of Boston society which "afforded no pleasure to Pallette; the latter being a restraint on the volatility of his nature, obliging him to observe rules of decorum repugnant to his feelings" (64). Zoa too finds Boston to be isolating and her chief sense of community comes in an

epistolary exchange between Adelle, Christoph, and the Docou's English friend Sarah Howe who had taught Adelle how to read after Adelle saved her daughter from drowning while the child was entrusted to an incompetent nurse during a visit to Haiti. The last third of the novella becomes an epistolary narrative, and through the letters we are told of the birth and death of Zoa's first daughter, named for Adelle, the Haitian victory over Napoleon under the leadership of Christoph, Christoph and Adelle's rise to King and Queen of Haiti, the birth of Christoph and Adelle's baby named for Zoa, Christoph's overthrow and subsequent suicide, and Adelle's exile to England under the care of Sara Howe. Meanwhile, Pallette becomes increasingly distant, and Zoa begins to suspect his infidelity. Her suspicions are confirmed after a lead given to her by her chamber maid results in her witnessing his infidelity with her own eyes. The pain is too much to bear, Zoa takes her life and the life of her infant second daughter by ingesting poison after ensuring that her body would be found in dramatic fashion once her husband returned home. Pallette, overcome with guilt, shoots himself in the head—the close of the novella.

Between the onset of the insurrection and the surviving Docous' flight to Boston, the narrative shifts to Adelle's first person account of how she both learned to read and later became involved in the insurrection after meeting Christoph. In the course of Adelle's narration, we also learn of Christoph's personal history through Adelle's reading of Christoph's own slave narrative that he had shared with Adelle as part of courting her to join the insurrectionary movement. Adelle is also the chief protagonist for the first two thirds of the novella despite not being the titular character. Even when the scene of the narrative shifts from Haiti to Boston at the end of the novella, Adelle continues to have a central role, and it is important to underscore that she is the only main character to survive the narrative. Christoph and Adelle are also the two most fully

developed characters in the novel, and we are told more about their personal histories than the histories of any other character.

In addition to historical romance, Pratt's novella borrows from many other genres. It follows the same conventions of other antebellum literature by women.[21] Though biographical information on Pratt is non-existent, we do know the novel was published in Albany by Weed, Parsons, and Company, part of the Thurlow Weed publishing empire, in pamphlet novel form.[22] Thus, it is one of the tens of thousands of dime novels published between the 1840s and 1890s.[23] Pratt has no other published books nor were there any prominent reviews of this novel. Although it seems to have survived better than many others, it is overshadowed by Leonora Sansay's better known and more thoroughly studied semi-autobiographical epistolary novel *Secret History, or the Horrors of St. Domingo* published in 1808. Pratt deploys several conventions of sentimentalism and women's fiction to great political effect—particularly the sense of

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[21] There is an extensive body of work on women's fiction in the antebellum era. A partial list of foundational works includes Nina Baym *Women's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and About Women in America 1820-1870,* Richard Brodhead *Cultures of Letters*, Susan K. Harris *19th-Century American Women's Novels: Interpretive Strategies,* Jane Tompkins *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction 1790-1860.* More recent works that focus on sentimentalism include Elizabeth Dillon *The Gender of Freedom: Fictions of Liberalism and the Literary Public Sphere,* Glenn Hendler *Public Sentiments Structures of Feeling in Nineteenth Century American Literature,* Dana Luciano *Arranging Grief: Sacred Time and the Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (particularly pages 119-168), Shirley Samuels *Sentimentalism and Domestic Fiction*, and Travis Foster "Grotesque Sympathy: Lydia Maria Child, White Reform, and the Embodiment of Urban Space". Other recent notable works on nineteenth century women's literature include Anne E. Boyd *Wielding the Pen,* and Laura Laffrado *Uncommon Women.*

[22] Thurlow Weed was a prominent member of the Whig party and was instrumental in organizing the Republican party. See Pomper 159- 183.

[23] Michael Denning covers the material history of the dime novel as well as its cultural and political significance in *Mechanic Accents.* Anne E. Boyd discusses the diversity of nineteenth century women writers as well as the unique challenges they faced as authors in the introduction to her anthology *Welding the Pen.*

community portrayed by the exchange of letters at the end of the novel, the various ways in which the Haitian Insurrection intrudes upon the domestic autonomy of the Docous, and how the system of slavery is predicated on the complete denial of a sense of selfhood for slaves.[i]

Because the novella is extremely critical of the three nations in which it is set, it makes the most sense to read it as representative of a body of literature which falls under the monikers of transatlantic or Atlantic Studies. One of the guiding organizing principles of this methodology is the diasporic movement of black African populations through channels dictated by the economy of slavery. This novella, however, is more about the displacement of slave owners than slaves or former slaves. Here, the former slaves stay in Haiti, and the slave owners are sent back through the trade channels they created, a return to sender of sorts. The novella might also be read as a failed abolitionist text, but the author elides that purpose in her apology. We can glean from her apology that Pratt is decidedly both anti-slavery and racist--a seeming paradox to modern readers, but a common position for many Northerners in the nineteenth-century. In the dedication to Henrietta Potts from Philadelphia, we learn that the narrative is inspired by Mrs. Pott's grandmother who is "now beyond the reach of the black man's rage, and the tear for the butchered colony will no more tremble in her eye" (n.p.) The narrative is imbued with a sufficient amount of terror over racial mixing and unjustifiable violence against kindly white people from black insurrectionists to make Pratt's feelings about the undesirability of slave revolt in the United States clear.

I argue that the most fruitful reading of Pratt's novella comes from locating it at the margins of both the canonical and popular genres which a new historicist tradition of literary scholarship has delineated. This work has been extremely useful for exploding the canon of white male authors F.O. Matthiessen created with his seminal study of the American

Renaissance and for developing the multicultural character of the literary culture of the period. Genre studies have also challenged the presumed homogeneity and predominance of national conceptions of space and time as well as a reorientation away from New England literary dominance to other local spheres of rich literary production. These challenges to the literary canon have also contributed to arguments that have reshaped the way scholars think about the rise of American democracy as well as the exceptional character of the American democratic model. Similar to the critique these studies levy against the canon, however, one shortcoming of emphasizing genre over individual literary works is that some literary works tend to be ignored because, as individual specimens, they either elude genre classification or are judged subpar under the standards set for the particular genre they most closely resemble. This is likely the reason that *La Belle Zoa* has been virtually unstudied by literary scholars.

Another unfortunate side effect is that genre studies often cloud the way in which we read individual literary works. Genre studies have taught us to read literary works for classificatory purposes rather than for the unique artistic and imaginative qualities a specific literary work might be said to possess. Though perhaps one of the aims of revisionist historicist approaches to cultural or generic studies was to show us just how tied up the literary is in various social, political, and economic systems of power, as I have argued throughout this dissertation they have perhaps also led us to be too skeptical of imaginative engagements with these same systems that we might perceive as revolutionary or radical. No literary work, as I argued earlier, can in any politically meaningful way escape limits set by the time and place in which it was produced or the genre which the author deployed to write it.

Since the historicist assault on the canon Herman Melville is perhaps the one author who has been afforded the most possibility of a literary imagination inconsistent with his time and

place. His lack of market success in his own time has led to the conclusion that Melville's imagination resonates more with current readers than it did with readers of his own time. Jonathan Arac, for example, associates Melville with the rise of a literary nationalism characterized by an aesthetic that is so esoteric that it stood almost completely at odds with the tastes and sensibilities of the culture at large and was thus devoid of any real political import. Other critics like Dana Nelson have gone on to show that even Melville's fiction which seems radical to a reader today, is still so largely defined by the racist and patriarchal attitudes of his day that it ultimately vacates the political import.[24]

I must underscore, however, that I am not advocating the fetishization of some version of Arnoldian high culture, or the reestablishment of the rarified air of a bourgeois sphere of cultural production. Jameson's imperative to "always historicize" remains crucial, and the same critics I have named above have been essential in teaching us that all literary works are undeniably marked by the material conditions of their production. Yet, Jameson also reminds us that as useful as cultural objects are in helping us delineate larger paradigms of power, these same objects can also resist dominant cultural paradigms, or more generally the forces of history, in important ways. Historicist critiques that become too entrenched in narrating a literary history

[24] More recent studies of Melville have begun to reassess the complicated nature of the politics in his works through the complex aesthetics in his writing. For example the essays in *Melville and Aesthetics* edited by Samuel Otter and Geoffrey Sanborn read several works using Rancière's argument that aesthetics can represent a radical democratic politics. In *Specters of Democracy* Ivy Wilson reads political significance in how the slaves organize space on the *San Dominick* in "Benito Cereno" (126-144). In "Reading in the Present Tense: 'Benito Cereno' and the Time of Reading" Trish Loughran argues that in "Benito Cereno" Melville was able to address his contemporaries' demand for "disposable" literature while also satisfying his own artistic need to create "durable" literature. She argues that this combination has allowed for disposable scholarship that reads "Benito Cereno" as an analogy for contemporary political concerns. Other recent examples of political readings of "Benito Cereno" include Chapter 3 of *Melville and the Idea of Blackness* by Christopher Freeburg and Shoko Tsuji's "Melville's Criticism of Slavery: American Hispanophobia in 'Benito Cereno."

from macro levels such as genre, race, gender, or spatial scales from the local to the global can serve to desensitize us to what the literature of the period can tell us about the experience of life in common at an intensely micro individual level. As critics like Sandra Gustafson and Trish Loughran, who have examined the history of American literary production from spatial scales other than the nation, have shown clearly, the antebellum period is most remarkable precisely because of the absence of the strong scaffolding of a centralized national government which would give hegemonic rigidity to troubling national ideologies which we struggle against today. Accordingly, just as authors and critics of literature today are more sensitive to the nuances of the racist and patriarchal ideologies of the nineteenth-century than writers of the time period could have ever been, I would argue that the same nineteenth-century writers were in a better position to see life outside of the paradigms of empire and capitalism which did not dictate the terms of the nation and national politics in the same way they do today. We need to be particularly sensitive to how individual works of literature of the period imagine and represent life in common in ways that are not immediately recognizable to us by the dominant political paradigms of their day or ours. Nineteenth-century Americans, after all, were still living out the consequences of one political revolution on their own soil while living in a world where revolutions were occurring all around them. Marx's specter of communism haunted more than Europe.

La Belle Zoa, then, is a narrative that is undeniably a product of its time but not necessarily over-determined by the generic conventions which might be recognized in it nor by the dominant paradigms of control which we commonly see reflected in narratives by white, middle-class women with abolitionist sympathies in the mid nineteenth-century United States. Instead, especially in the way the narrative attempts to imagine a transnational, multiracial

community of women predicated on a politics of love and tolerance, the narrative presents a rather intriguing ideologeme, Jameson's name for the "smallest intelligible unit of the essentially antagonistic collective discourse of social classes" (76). In this instance, the ideologeme serves "not as a mere reflex or reduplication of its situational context, but as the imaginary resolution of the objective contradictions to which it thus constitutes an active response" (ibid). The desire for resolution to the many contradictions *La Belle Zoa* opens up is the central desire that drives the narrative. Essentially this desire is for the resolution of two contradictory democratic ideals. One ideal is freedom, most often manifested in the demand for radical individual sovereignty, a demand similar to Derrida's notion of *ipseity*, defined as a sense of the "'I can' or at least the power that *gives itself* its own law, its force of law, its self-representation, the sovereign and reappropriating gathering of self in the simultaneity of an assemblage or assembly, being together or 'living together' as we say" (Rogues, 11). The opposing demand is for radical social equality, in effect the radical recognition of the sovereign rights of the wholly other. The various instances of mingling in the narrative serve as the predominant image of the reconciliation of this desire. However, just as the images of mingling in the narrative are inevitably a result of violent encounters between dialectically opposed communities; the narrative depicts the desire for equality as ultimately aporetic. Communities of mutual recognition in the narrative often end in suicides by characters overcome by their inability to reconcile liberty and equality. The constant movement towards suicide in the narrative is consistent with Derrida's analysis of the autoimmunity of democracy in *Rogues*. The narrative, however, does not see the source of this aporia as based on a fundamental racial difference that cannot be bridged, but rather as an effect of the paternalistic marshalling of sovereignty through acts of violence and revenge instead of love. The narrative becomes preoccupied with the way that the violence of the revolution

eradicates all existing models of affiliation between blacks and whites of which the problematic model of master and slave is only one. It is the eradication of love, as yet another casualty of revolution, that ultimately leads to the suicide of La Belle Zoa.

Mingling with the Other

The two sisters Adelle and Zoa provide the most overt symbol of mingling in the narrative. Though bonded as sisters, they have several irreconcilable differences which mirror their equally irreconcilable social spheres. In addition to their physical and social differences, they also have significant differences in character. Zoa, particularly in the first half of the novella, is remarkable for her sublime beauty and purity of heart. But, she also has brains to go along with her beauty. When introduced in the narrative, she is described as having instilled in her mind "feelings of humanity" for the "colored population" and her "intellectual endowments" together with her beauty make her "even more captivating." Zoa proves so captivating that "wherever she appeared, the cry was, 'Voici la belle et bon Zoa.'" The image of Zoa at the harp at the moment "when sullen revenge burst the manacles of slavery and plunged the murderous dagger into the bosom of an effeminate French population" provides a striking contrast and also, perhaps, evokes an image of a feminine Orpheus who had the ability to charm all living things, man and beast, with his beautiful songs (8). It is this sublime charm which seems to provide the vital essence to Zoa, whose name is Greek for "life." The imagery and symbolism in this opening description of Zoa also serve as a first instance of several references to Greek mythology in the novella.

The "belle et bon" Zoa is far from the passive effeminate beauty she is made out to be. Instead, her sublime characteristics lead her to take an active role in the events of the revolution. After her rather insolent beau, Francis Eugene Pallette, is abducted by black insurrectionists, Zoa

is able to convince Toussaint to free him because her "graceful countenance [which] told the overflowing of her grateful heart […] to the hero of Hayti was more powerful than words." Toussaint, after stating the indictment against Pallette based on his judgment that because of Pallette's "sarcasm and contempt [he] consequently must feel our power," commands Zoa to answer for him. Her answer is not quoted in the text, only the image of the raising of her "soft blue eye." Toussaint demands Pallette's release declaring it is evidence "that the mossy curl and dark skin are not always the appendages of a hard heart." Zoa agrees, later confiding to Adelle her belief that "beneath a dark skin there are hearts where all the kind emotions, all the virtues reside" (18-19).

After Zoa frees the insensate Pallete from his prison cell, he declares he will live his life, should they survive, as "one continued act of recompense" for the inestimable "love and gratitude" which Zoa has shown him. Christoph, who hears this scene from nearby, is struck by the profundity of Zoa's actions, and perhaps too, their political potential, and he is moved to "soliloquize… 'Love and gratitude, how powerful the combination!'" Zoa's response to Pallette is again emotive, she answers only with tears (21-22). Thus, it becomes apparent that neither a disruption in the racial hierarchy nor political necessity can taint Zoa's beauty or her goodness.

In fact, as shown in this scene, both traits can have great political import and are even seen, at least temporarily, as political assets by the revolutionaries Toussaint and Christoph. Zoa's propensity for love and gratitude verges on radical and has lasting effects on Toussaint and Christoph's own political philosophies. Adelle later relates to Monsieur Docou that Toussaint's decision to free Pallette because of Zoa's influence proves politically divisive among the other leaders of the insurrection, Dessaille and Regaud. But, she also forebodingly assures both Monsieur Docou and the reader that Toussaint the "cool, calculating chief" will no doubt soon

restore unity. The negotiating process will undoubtedly depend on Toussaint compromising his love and gratitude for cold political maneuvering. Adelle explains the rules of the insurgency as set by Toussaint. She tells him that, in addition to prohibitions against the violation of female chastity, every slave is "privileged" to grant amnesty to kind masters and help them seek passage from the island so far as there is no evidence of the master's prior cruelty. No master except Docou, however has a guarantee of protection by Toussaint. Docou in this and subsequent scenes questions whether or not he is worthy of being spared as he was complicit in the unnatural evils of the slavery system, and he even goes so far as to find the violent actions of the insurrectionists just. Indeed, the opportunity for any slave owner to establish his innocence by virtue of the love and gratitude shown to his slaves also proves to be small. The "privilege" is not often afforded by the freed slaves, who are reluctant to express any love or gratitude to their previous master. We later witness through Adelle's eyes the scene of the slaughter of another aristocratic slave holding family, that of Edward de Fouliere, who, like the Docous, were swindled by a dishonest captain promising passage from the island. Apparently, it is only because of the incomparable beauty and goodness of Zoa and her unparalleled ability to show love and gratitude that the Docous are spared.

It is also worth noting that an unflinching ability to show love and gratitude, though admired by rationally minded masculine leaders like Toussaint and Christoph, is nonetheless a singularly feminine quality in the narrative, and the longevity of its effects on a masculine heart are seen as minimal. Despite his oath to Zoa, Pallette is unfaithful to Zoa after the two later escape to Boston and are married. Pallette, perhaps, serves as an allegory for the inability of all men to remain loyal to ideals of love and gratitude, especially upon leaving the domestic sphere of female influence for the masculine controlled public sphere.

Toussaint makes two more appearances in the narrative. The second time he is moved to tears when he returns Zoa to Docou after she was abducted by black insurgents and sees the toll her abduction has taken on the old man. Toussaint then goes on to admit his surprise over how "sanguinary" the revolution has proven to be, though he blames it on the French not having learned the lessons of Robespierre and refusing to surrender to a superior force. His third appearance occurs just before Zoa, Pallette, and Docou leave for Boston. Toussaint takes Docou by the hand and essentially exonerates him of any guilt for his involvement in the system of slavery, an institution which, Toussaint claims, Docou "neither sought for nor justified." He tells Docou that his prosperity will be provided for by the "annual avails" of his large plantation, and expresses his hopes that at the end of his journey he will be "safely moored on that peaceful shore where the clouds of affliction cannot again darken [his] prospect or disturb [his] eternal repose—where the redeemed of all nations shall meet, and together, strike the golden lyre in praise of Him who, with equal beneficence, created the white and the black man." It is Docou whose response is emotive this time: "Docou, too full to respond, bowed gratefully, and Toussaint withdrew his hand." Toussaint's blessings, it turns out, foreshadow Docou's entrance into the afterlife rather than his arrival to Boston as he dies at sea. Toussaint's blessings might also be seen as prophetic of his own death and his reunion in a paradisiacal hereafter with Docou, who like Toussaint, is described as "thoughtful, benevolent and wise" (8). A Boston newspaper account informs Zoa, Pallete and the reader that confined in a French prison, Toussaint "soon died broken-hearted. The death of Toussaint affected the fugitives even to tears" (76).

There are minimal diegetic cues in the narrative as to the significance of the relationship between Toussaint and Docou, but the mimetic cues suggest that Toussaint's statesmanship is a throwback to an aristocratic ethos represented by the benevolent master Monsieur Docou.

Characterizing Toussaint as the benevolent dispassionate leader is consistent with the common motif of representing Toussaint as the Afro-Caribbean version of George Washington since Toussaint's first appearance in the American press.[25] However, in this narrative the inspirational value and leadership potential of the aristocratic ethos shared by both men has become hopelessly antiquated if not totally eliminated by the youthful impetuosity of the direction the Revolution took under the younger and more ostentatious leadership of Christoph. Pallette says upon hearing the news, "'Had it been Christoph […] they would have had the mainspring of the insurrection; but Toussaint, poor Toussaint, was the most magnanimous of the insurgents'" (76). The narrative is equally ambivalent about the leadership qualities of Christoph. Every celebration of his commitment to liberty is countered by a criticism of his vengeance.

Though the narrative is adequately sentimental about the passing of Docou, his death seems to have little lasting significance in terms of the larger aims or lessons of the revolution. Upon his death, Docou hopes that his passing will "serve as a beacon to warn the wide world of the sin of slavery" but has little hope that it will and indeed it does not as his body is buried unceremoniously at sea (62). In Christoph's letter of condolence to Zoa and Pallette he says of Docou, "His memory will remain in Hayti, though not perpetuated by a polished marble, or his body resting in the sarcophagus of the great" (64). Indeed, the only remaining testament to Docou's character are his two surviving daughters. Both seek to infuse their traits of wisdom, thoughtfulness, and benevolence with compassion and love in service of an essentially anarchic ideal of a community of mutually recognized citizen-subjects free from the imposition of patriarchal hierarchies predicated on violence, political compromise, and economic inequality.

[25]See Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America*. Chapter 3.

Towards an Ideal of Non-Violent Revolution

If Zoa is meant to represent life in the narrative, her sister Adelle, as the European and Hebraic origins of her own name suggest, represents nobility and kindness. Adelle, as mentioned, was a central coordinator of the insurrection. Minutes prior to the onset of the insurrection, she hands a warning letter to Monsieur Docou which is worth quoting in its entirety:

> My prophetic visions have been the emancipation of my colored race. I have learned from the historic page that the concentrated energy of the oppressed will insure success; we determine upon a war of extermination, for we have physical strength, courage no fear of death, and the justice of Almighty God to aid in retribution. Were our bondage merely like that of the children of Israel, we would submit; or, indeed, were we to pass under the harrow or the axe, we would not complain for we would choose total extinction rather than protracted suffering; but the plan of our salvation is matured, and the destruction of the French, at this unexpected moment, will be like that of the Trojans when assailed by furious veterans from the wooden horses; but you sir (for I will not pollute my lips with master), need not fear; your kindness, and that of Mademoiselle Zoa, have saved you. We shall take your plantation, but you can have your money and goods, and are privileged by Toussaint to embark to whatever place may best suit you. Remain in your house. You are old and can do nothing. We are united. We have all the strength of Hayti, and wise and powerful leaders. Precisely at seven the blow will be struck, and Hayti, with all its wealth and beauty will be ours. I will return and give you notice when you can leave the island. (9)

The letter is significant for three reasons. First, Adelle's single minded goal of emancipation and her withholding the title of master from Docou are significant because Adelle abandons both theoretical ideals almost immediately after putting them into practice. Second, Adelle's choice of Greek History over Old Testament History as her main historical referent is significant. Greek symbolism will occur again in Adelle's first person narrative of the awakening of her revolutionary consciousness. It also goes against a tradition of assimilating the plight of enslaved blacks with that of the Jews in Egypt, a motif that David Walker seized on in his *Appeal* (1829) and one that Harriet Beecher Stowe also relied heavily upon in both *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) and *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856). Finally, the notion of the plantation as a source of wealth that is no longer privately owned by the Docous is also important. The plantation becomes re-proportioned in the service of the larger community so that some of its prophets will continue to sustain the displaced Docous, but only after adequately providing for the liberated slaves that will work it. The allocation of funds is controlled by Toussaint and later Christoph, the designated leaders of the Haitian state after independence.

The chaos and violence of the revolt prove too much for Adelle to bear. The narrative suggests that the result of the revolt is not a rendering of justice, but a mere repetition of past evils. Looking from his window, Docou witnessed "in the houses deserted by the French, female blacks, dressed in the rich clothes of the murdered owners, and ornamented with the jewels of plundered shops; saw their merry dance and heard their jovial song, forming a dread contrast with the groans of the dying" (16). Essentially, the early aftermath of the insurrection is a reversal of roles pantomiming the scene just prior to the onset of the revolt where the rich French aristocrats are engaged in "jovial song and merry dance" (8). Adelle immediately regrets asserting of her own freedom along with the insurrectionists under Christoph. Though "her

whole soul was in the insurrection, and to the French she no longer felt bound to either render service or show respect," she takes pity on her fallen master and though she appears before him in rich English dress, "her heart was not steeled to feelings of humanity." She tells Docou, "[Y]ou have one faithful slave who will not forsake you. […] I said I would not pollute my lips with the word master, but I retract" (14-15).

Though Adelle's actions and the image of liberated blacks committing acts of revenge so violent that slavery seems preferable to its end are likely fueled by the author's own racist fears over the capacity of blacks to handle the freedoms afforded "civilized" whites, I contend that we can also discern a narrative desire for the creation of an alternative to both the injustice of slavery and the vengeful acts of violence associated with revolution. For Adelle, vengeful acts of violence against the other as represented by the unfettered expression of sovereignty against an oppressor that occurs in violent revolts are too much for Adelle to bear. Instead she seeks to reestablish the only identity she knows—slave to the kindly Docou family. However, her recuperation of this identity is symbolic only. It is significant that her soul never waivers from the insurrection and that she remains loyal to the Docou family as their benefactor and not their slave. It is also significant that the Docou family turns out to be her family, and thus Adelle's symbolic return to her prior position in the family also serves as an attempt to keep the family intact. The remainder of the story is largely an attempt to narrate an identity for Adelle that bridges the gap that comes from her not being able to recognize herself apart from the undesirable conditions that produced her. Her assertion of freedom can only come through violence against the family that cannot exist without slavery. Thus, for Adelle, the violent overthrow of the slave system is also a suicidal act. It is only by clinging to the residue of the master-slave relationship that she can remain committed to the familial model represented by the

Docous. Adelle's insistence on calling Monsieur Docou, Master, and Zoa, Mistress is a clumsy articulation of the narrative's desire to overcome the senseless eradication of all existing social orders in revolutions that resort to total violence. In the end, the dysfunctional family totally disintegrates. All of the Docous except for Adelle succumb to death. The narrative ends when Zoa, commits suicide. Adelle, alone in England, has finally achieved her freedom, but at what cost?

Revolution as a Rebirth or a Repeat?

The cost may very well be the cost of total revolution, that is, complete destruction of the social order as it exists in favor of something radically different. To this extent, we can read the narrative as a precaution against the leveling forces of revolution by asking the reader if she is prepared to sacrifice Zoa. However, if we work backwards from the death of Zoa, we can also see that the narrative becomes an exercise of Cartesian doubt in which foundations of the social system represented in the narrative are methodically tested for their veracity. Zoa pens her suicide note as she ingests poison and dies. She writes that in the absence of country, friends, and parents, her love for Pallette that exceeded even her love of God was all that sustained her. "Yes, Pallette, when I looked on you, and thought myself the sole, the only object of your love, the multifarious misery of the past lost its sting." She recounts that his infidelity aroused her passions so that she would rather die. Recounting her own act of love when she saved his life and his subsequent pledge of eternal gratitude, she drinks the poison and also feeds it to her daughter. As her passions abate along with her life, she writes. "How solemn, in this moment, are the evolutions of my mind! I feel all the kind emotions of my nature predominate; love, that unconquerable passion, pervades my whole soul. I would it were possible to eject the poison and go back to life, for the palsy of death is spreading over me; […]I can even forgive her who has

stolen your heart from me. I feel at peace with the whole world, as I wend my way along the dark avenue of death" (96). Here, in the face of death, Zoa's mind is still, and her feelings, most significantly the feeling of love, takes hold. With this love comes forgiveness and finally peace. The primacy of feeling is underscored by the final revolutionary act that Pallette commits when he takes his pistol and discharges it, not into his head, but "at the region of thought" (ibid). Both Pallette's and Zoa's heart stay intact. Zoa chooses poison despite her repeated threat to plunge a dagger into her heart. The final violent revolutionary act in the narrative is against the seat of reason.

After Adelle helps Zoa rescue Pallette, Docou asks her to tell how she was able to organize the insurrection. Thus begins Adelle's extended first person account of the development of her revolutionary consciousness, a tale riddled with imagery of the Greek God Dionysus. Resting under an orange tree while carting the family's laundry back and forth to the laundress , she explains she had a:

> strange vision … I saw coming towards me a stranger of martial mein, holding in his hand a vine scorched with the intense heat of the sun, and covered with blessures, from which issued blood and sweat. A strong feeling of sympathy overcame me, which the stranger observing, desired me to draw near and breathe on the vine. I did so. It instantly ceased to ooze blood and sweat; it branched forth, the leaves assuming the freshness of May verdure, and rising in height, while it overshadowed the Island of Hayti. I saw our dark race pass and repass under its shadow. I saw churches and halls of science rise, from which came forth people of color. Meanwhile the stranger remained with his feet firmly fixed on the ground, around which the vine clung for support. (24)

She awoke from this vision to see slaves working in the cane field, "reeking with sweat, the blood dripping from many whose limbs had been bruised by cruel taskmasters, men callous to the very feeling of humanity, and whose savage look with the expression of the infernal regions" (24). On her next trip to the laundress, Adelle again rests under the tree, this time to read the History of Greece, and encounters Christoph "whose yellow skin-told me he could claim relationship with the whites; the force and dignity of his air, brought to mind the bearer of the vine" (25).

Though there is a bit of ambiguity as to the bearer of the vine, in light of the other allusions to Greek history in the narrative as well as the History of Greece that Adelle is reading, we can assume the allusion is to Dionysus. For the contemporary reader, it is impossible to dissociate the Greek god from Nietzsche's conceptions of him written seventeen years later, which generally serves as the first entry of Dionysus as a symbol associated with the fragmentation of Modernity. As Richard Seaford writes, "Dionysus exists in our own world, as an irreducible symbol for the antithesis of something basically wrong with our society. When we look at modern conceptions of Dionysus since Friedrich Nietzsche, we frequently find a Dionysus who embodies something that is beneath the surface of our society and somehow embodies a universal challenge to it" (12). Nietzsche's conception of Dionysus, though, is one that Emerson might have recognized, except that he might have recognized Dionysus as something that transcends society rather than lies beneath it.[26] Seaford argues that Dionysus has

[26] See for example Emerson's 1847 poem "Bacchus", the Roman name for Dionysus. David H. Hirsch uses the poem as the basis for what he called the "American dionysian doctrine" in a 1975 review of critical works on American Poetry in *The Sewanee Review*. Bernard J. Paris sees "Bacchus" as indicative of Emerson's assertion of the primacy of the poet and in the progress of the poem "the poet's powers become increasingly capable of meliorating the human condition" (150). (MLQ 23:2, 1962 p. 150-59). For further discussion of Emerson's vision of the poet as reconciler of opposites, see F.O. Mathiessen *American Renaissance* pp. 3-75.

long been deployed as a symbol of communality, and he particularly highlights his association with people who work the land and states his dominant feature is inclusiveness and community as a whole, above and beyond the dominant classes or the hierarchical organization of the state. (26-38). In this narrative, then, evoking Dionysus appears an appropriate response to the question raised in the Author's Apology I quoted earlier concerning the man or class of man that will end slavery "with justice to all parties."

Adelle's image is of Dionysus with a bleeding vine that her breath heals, making it flourish such that all of Haiti flourishes with it. Earlier, Monsieur Docou tells Zoa he sees her as a "tender vine" around he who is "an impotent support, that crumbles at the touch" (17). The vine image is thus predominantly feminine and is intertwined in a relationship of mutual support with a masculine figure. Later, Sarah Howe articulates what she sees to be the proper leadership role for women in the structures of society.

> I do not consider that we as females, as individuals, are blamable for the faults of government. It is not for us to attempt assuming even a slight hold of the reins, our impotent hands could not with masculine force propel the wheels of state. I do not blush to say that we are 'the weaker vessel.' My *pupille*, Adelle, is acting modestly the part of a great woman, great in every sense of the word, as it respects mind, for she is the friend and protectress of suffering innocence (72).

Here, the mechanisms of the state are coded as masculine while the humane core is feminine. In the Dionysian image, the vine and figure support one another. Thus, the people cannot flourish until the state is humane. In a corrupt state the people become impotent or issue blood and sweat. Thus, though the vine initially appears as auxiliary to the man of "martial mien" in Adelle's vision, the health of both depends on a symbiosis between the two when the two halves mutually

support and nurture one another.. Seaford points to a paradox in Dionysian communality in that it "seems to derive from the power of an individual Dionysus, who may […] be replaced by a human autocrat" (38). In effect, the Dionysian communality becomes an irresolvable tension between the many and the one. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche, famously, would restate this paradox in terms of when Dionysian essence becomes locked into Apollonian plastic forms such as the autocrat. The play between the two works itself out in the form of tragedy.

Tragic Mingling

Christoph, it becomes clear, is fated to become this autocrat. Physically, he embodies the two cultures, black and white. However, it becomes clear that this is not a symbiotic combination of the two cultures through his fixity on revenge and his narrow definition of liberty based on an English aristocratic model. Upon their meeting, Christoph tells Adelle he will revenge his race and makes Adelle swear an oath on a "small parcel, enveloped in blood and curls from a black man's head," which he tells her is from a slave who told his master of the coming insurrection. He then tells her to return to the orange tree the next day to find a paper detailing his biography and his motivations. The next day Adelle finds *The History of Christoph*, which she reads to Docou as part of her own narrative. Christoph's "paper" is structured much like a slave narrative, beginning with a memory of his family torn apart by a ruthless master and recounting his subsequent liberation from slavery. His mother, we learn, was beaten to death after a faux pas which occurred during a dinner her master hosted for Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. His master's cruel act, breeds "a burning thirst for vengeance, a thirst that has deepened with years" and evolves into a hatred of all the French. Christoph's narrative then recounts how he was sold to an English Lord, Lord Briant, who came to Haiti as his master's guest and would take Christoph back to England. In England, Briant becomes Christoph's benefactor allowing him to

become educated in the "blessing of perfect liberty' in an intensive program that included military training, which Christoph credits for awakening his own revolutionary conscience. "The enthusiasm of my nature was lit up, and I longed to emancipate my dark race, and unfurl the banner of freedom in Haiti" (33). He tells Lord Briant of his prediction that the "Jacobin tornado" that "had swept off the force of France" would soon reach the shores of Haiti in the guise of Bonaparte and a force of oppressed mulattoes, resulting in an "exterminating war" against the French slave holders. Christoph's prediction impels Lord Briant to reveal that he is Christoph's uncle, that Christoph's father was also a lord, and thus Christoph's own English lineage means "a nobler blood courses through your veins" than French blood (34). His Uncle then presents Christoph with a letter his father wrote his Uncle from his death bed in which he confesses that he is Christoph's father, and repents for his acts of impropriety—acts he blames largely on the influence of the French and "the Catholic faith [which] leads to infidelity, and is the sealing fate of the French" (35). The letter closes with a statement about how the white man's enslavement by his vices is more extreme than the "vassalage of the Black" in Haiti, and his dying wish is for his son, Christoph, to "breathe the pure air of liberty" in England for which there is no counterpart in Haiti. After sharing the letter, Christoph's uncle bids him to return to Haiti telling him, "let your ingenuity devise, and your bravery strike, a blow that shall liberate the slave and place high in the annals of fame the name of Christoph; and when you have achieved a conquest and Hayti presents to the wondering world a revolution, the like not known in the history of age, stain not your glory by a marriage with the French, but choose a mulatto companion" (39). Here, Christoph's desire to avenge his race becomes redirected into a mission of English revenge against the French, and he is presented as racially English despite his blackness. His motivation in the coming insurrection against the French then seems equally if not

more about freeing the English from the vassalage of the French. Christoph's own mixed race is more an embodiment of an allied force of two races against a common oppressor than a paradox of two different races combined in one whole. And, from the perspective of the Briants at least, a mulatto bride is a preferable surrogate for English blood than a French bride. Unbeknownst to Christoph, who continually insists that England is the only true seat of liberty, his pledge to avenge his "black brethren" has become ancillary to the primary mission he had been conditioned for, the advance of the English aristocracy.

Pallette, the son of exiled French Jacobins, believes conversely that the blacks are a lesser evil than the English. He also provides the most scathing critique of the English view of liberty.

> They rave against the slaveholder, because they have no need of slaves—were barbarians at first—could easily do their own drudgery, without the assistance of worse beings than themselves. Their country is populous, and their poor frequently starve for want of employment, while your benevolent, humane Englishmen ride in their carriages, with servants in livery, would wish the poor to prostrate themselves before them (66).

Later, in Boston, after hearing how the Haitian army ejected the English Army from the island, Pallette "ejaculated, 'Three cheers for the humane English! Let the cannon roar in honor of the darkies.' 'Rather novel,' said Zoa, 'to hear you exult in the triumph of the blacks.' 'It is not that I love the blacks more; but I do hate that government which, under a fair exterior, a show of benevolence, would gladly crush the laws of the whole world and substitute such as would conduce wholly to their own interest" (75). Despite his insight into the hypocrisy of the English view of liberty, he seems blind to the hypocrisy behind the French racial and gender limits of the extension of the ideals of liberté, égalité, fraternité. Essentially, no one, except perhaps Adelle, has much concern for the interests of the wholly disenfranchised Haitian blacks. The

predominant political interest in the Haitian revolution among the men in the novel is which colonial power will regain control of the island. The English aristocratic line, it turns out, has the trump card, and Pallette's dependence on a dowry that comes from a man of English blood is a bitter pill for him to swallow.

Christoph returns to Haiti to find a plan for liberation of the slaves already underfoot led by French mulattoes including Toussaint. Christoph decides to join despite having to hide his English heritage, "for they, being French mulattoes, have an instinctive dread for the English" (40). Christoph's secret makes the alliance with the other revolutionary leaders somewhat artificial. This artificial alliance further elides the degree to which we can read Christoph's motivations as based on solidarity with the enslaved blacks, who generally lack the means to achieve their own liberation because of the brutal conditions they live under. His compromising actions seem more an elaborate ruse on behalf of his own desire for revenge based on his father's hatred of the French. In a postscript to his narrative he tells Adelle that the seal of secrecy of blood and hair he had her swear on is the product of a "chemical process" whereby they "mingled" the blood of a traitor slave and his white master and enveloped the mixture with a curl of each of their hair. He confides he knows that Adelle's superior intellect will allow her to correctly interpret it only as a charm, but that "on the ignorant black it must be practiced; it is the only thing that will inspirit them and insure success" (40). Clearly, this is a ruse on Christoph's part to ensure his own autocratic desires which ultimately lead to his crowning as the first King of Haiti.

Christoph's ascension to the throne is the point at which Adelle recognizes that she was duped by Christoph. In a letter to Zoa, Adelle, who earlier claimed that history inspired her love of liberty, writes that for her, Christoph's crowning is:

> too nearly associated with the prison and the block. History proves the fact, and France has written the truth of this in blood. I greatly fear the unenlightened Haytians will not sustain a uniform government; but sufficient for the day is the uneasiness it brings. How different my views from those which passed over my mind when the first idea of liberty dazzled in my imagination! To be free—mistress of myself—created visions more brilliant than the rainbow splendor; the rich costume presented me by Christoph at first delighted me, connected, as it seemed, with freedom, and being presented by him. Let this account for my arrogance at the first moment of the insurrection, for my conduct was in direct opposition to my nature. (77)

Adelle's admission is not her regretting the end of slavery in Haiti, rather it is her regretting being tricked by Christoph and his aristocratic view which values individual freedom over all else. Adelle, in the end, has the most inclusive view of communality perhaps by virtue of her own double exclusion as a mulatto female. She is also most in tune with the revolutions of a dialectical history in which assertions of sovereignty by the weak invariably lead to the inevitable dissolution of the community through their own acts of corruption. Adelle is the first to negotiate the terms of her own membership in the Docou clan through a redefinition of her slavery, which in her context becomes a necessary act of subservience before the other.

Turning Away From the Past and Towards the Future

Ironically, then, the terms of Adelle's re-enslavement articulates the most radical politics in the text. As troubling as it is that the narrative cannot think about a relationship bridging difference in terms other than master and slave, and that it continually insists on the slave holding and aristocratic Docous and the pre-politicized and ignorant Zoa at her harp as the ultimate symbols of compassionate sympathy, beauty and goodness, its parallel insistence on

continually trying to negotiate a just resolution for all parties based on a commitment to an undiscriminating and all-encompassing love of the other is noteworthy.

Marx and Engels, in their *Manifesto* against the brutal Bourgeois logic that strips everything to its commodity form, would likely be displeased by the lack of a clear praxis for social change in *Belle Zoa*. They would thus relegate the narrative to their Socialist and Communist Literature category Item I subset a. "Feudal Socialism" for its tendency to forget that feudalists "exploited under circumstances and conditions that were quite different, and that are now antiquated" or perhaps under item II "Conservative or Bourgeois, Socialism" for its manifest desire for "all the advantages of modern social conditions without all the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting therefrom," or if they were feeling generous, perhaps under Item III "Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism" in that it rejects "all political, and especially all revolutionary, action; [and wishes to attain its] ends by peaceful means, and endeavour[s], by small experiments, necessarily doomed to failure, and by the force of example, to pave the way for the new social Gospel," but nonetheless "attack(s) every principle of existing society. Hence [it is] full of the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class" (106-118).

On the other hand, the mature Nietzsche who, as in his self-critique of his own attempt to articulate the Dionysian, might well have thought *Belle Zoa* also "an impossible book: […] badly written, ponderous, embarrassing, image-mad and image-confused, sentimental, in places saccharine to the point of effeminacy" but that it still "had a knack for seeking out fellow-rhapsodizers and for luring them on to new secret paths and dancing places" (19). He likely would have heard from the narrative's account of Adelle "a *strange* voice, the disciple of a still 'unknown God', a spirit with strange, still nameless needs, a memory bursting with questions, experiences, concealed things after which the name of Dionysus was added as one more question

mark," a voice to which he would have felt it necessary to listen by command of the imperative "what is the Donysian?" he found unanswerable but also irresistible (20). Fidelity to this question remains a commitment not to waiting for an eschatological end when Dionysus arrives to begin his autocratic rein, but instead a commitment to justice that results from ensuring that the Dionysian moment is infinitely deferred. We must also be cognizant, however, of William Wells Brown's recognition of the fact that, in the name of justice, decisions have to be made. An altruistic commitment to love through a promise to remain hospitable to the other can make revolutions not a return to history but a turn towards the future.

CODA

William Wells Brown's 1854 lament that, because the ends of the American Revolution defined by the Declaration of Independence had yet to be achieved almost eighty years later, the Revolution should be remembered as just another event in the "gloomy history of human servitude" is a radical departure from General William Sullivan's demand made on behalf of the BHMA thirty years earlier that the Battle of Bunker Hill be remembered as "The GREATEST EVENT in the history of civil liberty." Brown's memory of the Revolution as a failed attempt at democracy also supports a central claim of this dissertation: democracy as a sovereign force that originates equally from the collective and individual power of the people has never arrived and thus does not have an ontological history. Brown's denial of any direct correlation between revolution and the arrival of democracy should be seen as one logical outcome of James Fenimore Cooper's portrait of democracy's absence in Revolutionary Boston in *Lionel Lincoln*. Brown's denial of any correlation between revolution and democracy is analogous to the reason why both William H. Prescott's and John Lothrop Motley's histories necessarily end in tragedy. For Prescott, the way imperial policies mechanize the integration of heterogeneous peoples into imperial subjects through violent manipulation by autocrats is antithetical to the self-authorized sovereign communities that democracy requires. For Motley, living democratic ideals such as radical tolerance that animate revolutionary movements (and leaders) are too transitory. Once they are transferred to republican structures of governance they die. The catharsis readers of these tragic histories experience is akin to what Hans-Georg Gadamer describes as "a kind of self-knowledge," a "new insight [about] illusions in which they, like everyone else live" (132).

Jacques Rancière gives two options readers have for dealing with the insight that they live in an illusion of democracy perpetuated by structures of governance that falsely claim to be

democratic. Option one is that they "can attribute it to the duplicity of the ruling elites and draw the conclusion either that politics itself means duplicity and lies or that such a democracy is a false one and call for a true democracy—a democracy that would be true to its name, which means the power of the people" ("Should Democracy Come?" 275). The determination that politics means only duplicity or lies is ultimately a conservative one. To resign oneself to this option means that the political systems that exist are as good as they are going to get. One might as well just give up and give in to them. To determine that such a democracy is false and demand a true democracy at first appears a decidedly better option. There is an urgency in this demand, a call for action to end injustice now that must be taken seriously. Yet in the end one is forced to wonder if such a call will prove radical enough. To call for a true democracy implies a faith in the perfectibility of the nation-state form. It only needs enough revolutions to instigate as many dialectical turns as it will take to perfect it.

Rancière gives another option for what readers can do with their cathartic insights into the falsity of so called democratic governments. He writes:

> Alternatively, they can take a different view of that duplicity and think that it points to something more fundamental, that it points to a difference inherent in the concept of democracy itself, a difference that prevents democracy from ever being achieved as a form of government. In that case, they have to assume that democracy is something more than one form of government among others, that it is an excess with respect to any form of government. (275)

Recognition of the difference inherent in the concept of democracy itself is the place (or perhaps no-place) from which Rancière claims both he and his interlocutor in this essay, Jacques Derrida, begin to approach democracy. It is Derrida's formulation of the excess or the supplement that is

democracy in his turn of phrase "democracy to come" that is the occasion for Rancière's essay. Rancière further distinguishes two ways in which to understand democratic excess. His way is to understand "democracy [as] the supplement which sets up politics as something which is irreducible to the practice of government," and Derrida's way which is to "understand it as the excess of something that exceeds the rationality of politics and makes it dependent upon another law, which is generally conceived of as the ethical law" (276). To try to make sense of the literal meaning of democracy as the power of the people is the political way, to make no sense of it, Rancière says somewhat flippantly, is the ethical way.

In his polemic that ends *St. Domingo: Its Revolutions and Its Patriots,* William Wells Brown asks that his audience make sense of the literal meaning of democracy by reclaiming their power. Brown's democratic politics can be said to foreshadow the development of radical American democratic movements organized in the last quarter of the nineteenth-century that took up international populist movements that seek to overthrow state forms. For example, in their platform published in 1876, the Social Democratic Workingmen's Party of North America sought "to establish a free state founded upon labor" through upholding the principle of "united struggle, united organization of all workingmen, and strict subordination of the individual under the laws framed for the general benefit" (Section A and Section B:5). On the other hand, American Anarchist Benjamin Tucker in the inaugural issue of his newspaper *Liberty* published in 1881 announced, "Liberty enters the field of journalism to speak for herself because she finds no one willing to speak for her" (2). She speaks against her foe "Authority," who "takes many shapes" most commonly

> first, those who abhor [Liberty] both as a means and an end of progress, opposing her openly, avowedly sincerely, consistently, universally; secondly , those who profess to

> believe in her as a means of progress, but who accept her only so far as they think she will subserve their own selfish interests denying her and her blessings to the rest of the world; third, those who distrust her as a means of progress, believing in her only as an end to be obtained by first trampling upon, violating, and outraging her. (2)

His representative examples of each type are: for the first, "the Catholic Church and Russian aristocracy," for the second "the Protestant Church and the Manchester school of politics and political economy," and for the third, "the atheism of [Lèon] Gambetta and the socialism of Karl Marx" (ibid).

In this dissertation, I have vigorously close read my representative literary texts for instances of democratic excess that exceed government. In doing so I want to establish that nineteenth-century American literary texts can and should be read politically for unexpected spaces and temporalities that they create where unexpected political encounters can and do occur; spaces and temporalities that bear little if any resemblance to the spaces and times of nations or the attendant governmental, economic, military, or social forces that often bind space and time together through force. They should be read for heterogeneous modes of affiliation that are not entirely recognizable as relations of fraternity, friendship, citizenship, or business arrangement. They should not only be read in search of clichéd or false metaphors for democracy, but also for unexpected democratic tropes that seem strange yet intriguing in the relations they make between object and object, part and part, or object and whole. And finally they should be read for figurations of language that are fictitious only because they are not subject to the tyranny of what is called the real or rational. This is a political methodology that requires an acknowledgement of what Cooper identifies as democracy's refusal to lend itself to unnatural and arbitrary hierarchical distinctions or Rancière's later identification of democracy's

paradoxical insistence that as long as a community allows itself to be ruled by one or more structures of power it is not yet democratic.

Insisting that democracy is a supplement to politics frees it from the tyranny of national or imperial forms. Seeing democracy as a supplement to politics means first of all that we have no idea what democracy is or will be. For, to predict what democracy will be involves an outrageous assumption that present political ways of ordering the world have a relationship to democracy, or that any aggregation of past or present political orders has ever been democratic. There is a similar audacity in assuming that events in the past have any causal relationship to what passes for democracy today, or in assuming that the past did not expose any real possibility for alternatives to our present forms solely because those possibilities have not come to pass. These assumptions involve a kind of tyranny of the present. Instead, we must suspend the juridical authority of present epistemes to determine whether or not what has passed for democracy is or is not democratic.

Insisting that democracy can only exist elsewhere is an ethical project, which, contrary to Rancière's dismissal of the ethical, does something. In Frances Hammond Pratt's *La Belle Zoa: Or, The Insurrection of Hayti* Adelle remained allied to an ethics that transcended the various political maneuverings she both instigated and was subjected to. And in the end, Zoa, Pratt's metaphor for life, sacrifices herself to love so that Adelle who is her sister, her keeper, and her other finally has the possibility to live otherwise. Zoa's tragic act is an example that illustrates democracy, as Stathis Gourgouris has put it, is a tragic regime and thus, "a political condition that requires an unconditional commitment to the continuous formation and transformation of the *polis*, which, in this respect, can never settle. The limits of democracy are always under negotiation—always challenged as to how they would be recognized, always open to being

deinstituted and reinstituted, imagined and reimagined, (self-)created and (self-) destroyed" (817). Democracy can therefore never provide an answer for what Derrida calls "the enormous question of the like" except through its own self-destruction. He writes, "This is an insistence that pure ethics, if there is any, begins with the respectable dignity of the other as the absolute *unlike* recognized as unrecognizable, indeed as unrecognizable beyond all knowledge, all cognition and all recognition." Thus, any political gesture that figures "the neighbor as like, as resembling, as looking like spells the end or the ruin of such an ethics" (*Rogues* 60). We must remain cognizant of the irresolvable ethical problem of the like as we continue our political projects of remaking orders of the sensible. Yet, the ethical dilemma does not give license to not make any sense of democracy. For, it is also in obligation to the unknowable other, the other that cannot speak, or who has no other political recourse than to speak through us that we must engage in political work out of obligation to justice. The others who, under conditions of erasure, often by political laws, are what Derrida calls specters. The ethical injunction to speak to specters must be obeyed even if, as Derrida suggests, there is an inherent madness in "hoping to *unlock* the possibility of such an address" (*Specters* 12).

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